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- Manuscripts (3500-4500 words for Features, 1500-2000 words for Commentary) should be printed, double-spaced on one side of 8 1/2" by 11" white paper. Since the Advisory Committee has a blind review policy, the author's name should not appear on any page of the text. A cover sheet should include the title of the manuscript and author's name, address, and phone number.

Submit one hard-copy original, and, if possible, text on an MS-DOS formatted diskette. Text should be formatted preferably in WordPerfect 4.2, 5.0, or 5.1. Eight (8) Bit ASCII format is also acceptable. Manuscripts and disks not selected for publication will be returned. Clearly indicate word processing program and version number used to enter and edit text.

Authors whose manuscripts are selected for publication will be asked to submit a short biographical statement of 35 words or less, and an abstract of their article of no more than 75 words.

- References should follow guidelines provided in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, published by the University of Chicago Press. The list of references should appear at the end of the article.

- Essential tables, figures, charts, and diagrams should be on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. They should be numbered consecutively as they appear in the text. If possible, all graphics should be camera-ready.

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Submit articles and inquiries on manuscripts and general content to:

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**Editorial Procedure**

The editor will acknowledge receipt of manuscripts and will forward them to members of the Advisory Committee for review. The committee will consider the appropriateness of the article for AACRAO's membership, current needs of the profession, the usefulness of the information, the appropriate nature of any research method used, the logical organization of the presentation, and the manuscript's style and clarity. This review may take as much as three months, after which the editor will inform the author of the manuscript's acceptance or rejection.
How Many Hats Do You Wear?

As College and University's editor, I frequently receive newly released books for review in the journal. Although I don't often review them myself, I do want to mention on such new release by Linda Sparks, College Admissions: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, published this year by Greenwood Press. Its publication is important to the profession and important to our journal because it surveys and catalogs the vast and growing body of our professional literature. Its publication not only reinforces college admissions as an important area of study and research, but it also documents the breadth of this field of study. Its more than 900 entries range from the historical role of admissions to administrative structures, international admissions, and recruitment and marketing.

The articles in this issue of College and University also reinforce the breadth of our profession. Palmer and Wei provide an excellent primer on SPEEDE and the exciting future that electronic data transmission promises us. Jim Quann surveys colleges and universities which provide narrative grading systems for students. Van Eyck and Arnold discuss student selection for a growing academic phenomenon, the combined baccalaureate/M.D. degree program, and Weinman and To Dutka present an integrated model for transfer articulation. Martin and Samuels present us yet another important role to fill, that of student mentor in the crucial process of student retention. Finally, our commentary by David James brings it all together by suggesting that, regardless of the number of hats we wear, our ability to lead depends primarily on our desire to serve. This profession is vibrant and growing because it provides us daily opportunities to wear these many hats, all in the name of service.

Georgeanne B. Porter
Editor
This paper provides a nontechnical overview of electronic data interchange (EDI) and of the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Project, which employs EDI to transmit transcripts between schools and colleges. It explores the fundamental value of the technology, the specific costs and benefits associated with it, and its potential to transform the delivery of academic support services in the years ahead.

**INTRODUCTION**

Surely everyone has noticed that American higher education has fallen on hard times. We have fallen from grace in the eyes of politicians and the public at large, and we have been asked to endure severe fiscal constraints. At the same time we have imposed on ourselves an unprecedented emphasis on the delivery of quality services to our students—to improve our institution’s competitive advantage, to restore the public faith, and, more fundamentally, to validate our life’s work and its ability to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Often the improvements we want to introduce are inconsistent with the resources at our disposal. Sometimes time is the rate limiting factor restricting innovation, especially in an era in which growth occurs only by substitution as existing programs are eliminated to liberate resources for new ones. Frequently, technology holds the answers, but too often at too dear a price. If only we had a trick up our sleeves—a trick both cheap and powerful—to “jump start” the process of client-centered, quality-oriented change in the area of academic services.

This paper deals with such a tool, electronic data interchange (EDI), and its manifestation in our profession as the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Project. “SPEEDE Made Easy” provides a general overview of a technology professionals all over the country have tapped to improve the quality of service at reduced cost to both the students and institutions.
WHAT IS SPEEDE?

There are at least three answers, all different and all correct. At the most elementary level, SPEEDE is the acronyrm for Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange. It is the label under which an AACRAO task force has worked since 1988 to develop national standards for a common transcript format that will enable colleges and schools to share transcript data electronically. An independent parallel group representing K-12 (kindergarten through grade 12) and sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is known as ExPRESS, that is, Exchange of Permanent Records Electronically for Students and Schools. Since it is now a joint venture, both acronyms should be used when referring to the project: SPEEDE/ExPRESS.

The SPEEDE task force developed the specifications for a proposed common format and submitted them to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which recently approved them for use. Thus, while in one sense SPEEDE is an acronym for the group which facilitated this development; in another sense, it is the label for the standardized format itself. However, the preferred reference to the format is “transaction set 130,” the label bestowed by ANSI. Viewed in a grander sense, SPEEDE is the leading edge application in higher education of a technology known as EDI.

WHAT IS EDI?

It is a profoundly simple idea. Like most simple ideas, electronic data interchange is very powerful and can become a forceful addition to our technology arsenal. EDI is the exchange of routine business transactions in computer-processable form. Those in the transportation industry, in procurement processes and in financial services have been exchanging data in this way for years. In its simplest form, we do it, too, every time we exchange data via a diskette rather than print. But as a profession we have not yet begun to exploit the potential of this technology and have yet to envision the full range of its implications.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To appreciate the simplicity of the electronic exchange of transcript data, we have only to consider the labor-intensive, time-consuming, and costly characteristics of traditional transcript production processes (Figure 1). A student completes a form requesting a transcript. This request in turn prompts a clerk to access the student information system for the student’s record and to issue a command that sends the record to a printer for output. The document is then validated, folded, addressed, stamped, and carried to the mail room for pick-up. Usually within a matter of days, it arrives at its destination in one piece. There it is opened, removed, unfolded, dated-stamped, logged, and filed. It becomes the source document for data entry to the admission’s module of the receiv-
be made and coursework can be evaluated for credit transfer, advisement, and placement. The receiving institution may also have invented mechanisms to capture credit evaluation decisions for an automated degree audit system.

In contrast, electronic delivery is elegantly simple (Figure 2). This time the student's record is selected and processed by a program which encodes the contents to match the uniform SPEEDE format. The resulting data file is sent as a file via an electronic network. Its arrival triggers a program at the receiving school that decodes the contents from the SPEEDE format to the requirements of local conventions and loads the data electronically to the student information system, eliminating data entry and processing delays. In evolved systems, data are electronically fed to automated transfer credit evaluation modules and degree audit systems.

Transcript delivery is only one way in which EDI can be harnessed to serve American higher education. Several others ways present themselves as obvious candidates; some of these are already in development for processing federal loans, enrollment certifications, admissions applications, financial aid applications, and financial aid transcripts. These developments allow us to imagine scenarios (Chapman 1992) like the following:

A high school student sits at a terminal in her school guidance office to apply online for admission to the college of her choice. The application data are merged with data in her high school...
record. That night a counselor transmits the data to the college via a network. Accompanying this transaction is financial authorization from the student that will enable the college to seek payment of the application fee from her bank.

An EDI transaction to the bank’s processing center triggers the transfer of funds to the college. Upon acknowledgement of payment and within hours of the student’s initial transaction, the college confirms to the high school that a complete application has been received.

That night the student’s SAT scores arrive from the Educational Testing Service via the network. The next morning, anticipating a happy outcome, the applicant tackles the electronic applications for financial aid and campus housing. Within a normal overnight data processing cycle, all of her data are loaded to the college’s student information system.

The next morning the admission’s officer is greeted by a machine-generated list of completed applications which he reviews, adding the uniquely human ingredients of judgment and experience to the evaluation process.

Optionally, he makes speedy plans to interview the candidate. Very quickly the college is in a position to send an acceptance transaction to the applicant at her high school. At any point in the process she might have queried the status of her application, but it has all unfolded so quickly she has hardly had time!

Her letter of acceptance (produced the old fashioned way and suitable for framing) arrives by regular post. That same day, the applicant’s high school is alerted by an electronic transaction from the college registrar that generous credit has been applied toward her degree for the college-level work she has taken in high school. The housing office transaction follows quickly thereafter, promising a large room with a southern exposure. The financial aid offer is not far behind. The applicant decides to lock in a good deal by sending an “intention to matriculate” transaction. The deed is done.
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

In electronic delivery systems, the senders (typically registrars and guidance counselors) benefit from the speed of the transaction. Electronic transfer is measured in minutes, not days. Not only are fewer resources committed to the task, but electronic methods are generally cheaper, with savings in supplies, postage, and staff time (Patterson 1992). At present only a limited number of institutions transmit transcripts electronically, however, documentation of the magnitude of cost reduction is imminent; early word-of-mouth and institutionally-specific reports suggest reductions in the neighborhood of one-half to two-thirds. Because there are fewer opportunities for human error, electronic delivery tends to be more accurate. All of this makes for happier customers, and that is the ultimate benefit.

But the advantages to the sender are small compared to those enjoyed by the receiver (typically admissions offices). Certainly, all the above benefits apply, but to them add reduced data entry, data verification, and filing. Obviously, institutions which devote extensive resources to these functions stand to benefit the most. SPEEDE offers the luxury of having all arriving transcripts translated to some common local format; staff can always find the same information in the same place, despite differences in the way the sending institutions display data on their own hard copy versions. This alone represents a major payoff in efficiency (Skeel 1992, Stones and Rothenberger 1992). But there is more.

Given the ease and economy of electronic data loads compared to manual data entry, odds are that more data find their way into the receiving institution's database. With the information already available within the shared environment of the student information system, several people are no longer struggling to work with a single copy of the document. This access facilitates earlier action on applications and earlier data analysis for research purposes. It also enables the colleges to give quick feedback directly to the applicant and the secondary school confirming the receipt of a complete application, reporting the absence of a necessary document, or acknowledging that a student was admitted.

But speed isn't everything; even more importantly, this process allows resources formerly invested in routine clerical functions to be used instead on activities that personalize the admissions process. It almost requires a total reconceptualization of office processes and a reordering of office work flow. In large operations, the reduction of data entry staff represents a major cost savings; in any operation their redeployment is an opportunity for improved productivity and service (Neary 1992).

IS IT REALLY SAFE?

Confidentiality and security are very important elements in delivery systems for student records. In this respect, EDI gets good grades too. On balance, security is enhanced in a world of electronic transmission. It is not foolproof. Nothing is. But EDI offers special benefits, special opportunities, and new obligations.

The reasons for inappropriate disclosure, alteration or loss of data in any operation, whether using traditional or electronic delivery systems, create a useful backdrop against which to pose the question: "How secure are we now?" (The answer, sadly, is "not
The overwhelming majority of problems (65%) in these areas come from bumbling insiders, the well-intended staff members who make mistakes. The second most significant problem source (19%) is disgruntled insiders, staff members who deliberately sabotage integrity and accuracy. Another 13% of problems arise from physical damage (e.g., the dog ate the transcript, the mailman dropped it in the gutter, or the diskette sat too close to a magnet). Only 3% of such occurrences are attributable to nefarious outsiders set on an evil course (Rothenberger 1992). These data suggest that our security concerns are better served by beefing up staff training than by living in fear of computer crime.

Practically speaking, "low tech" crooks represent a bigger threat than hackers. It takes no special skill for an enterprising and misguided student to intercept the campus mail truck and confiscate his own transcript for subsequent embellishment. But it takes a technically accomplished crook to intercept an electronic transmission to find and alter the minuscule segment of the data stream which represents his/her transcript. What about our ability to detect and apprehend wrong doers in traditional and electronic systems? Does the new technology leave us more or less exposed in terms of the capability to discover and combat fraud? Here, again, EDI wins hands down. In traditional paper-based systems we rely on gimmicks (special paper, color coding, validation machines, raised seals, etc.) which are now being routinely vanquished by the wide availability of color copiers and desktop publishing software. The plain truth is that traditional methods render us increasingly vulnerable.

The threats in an electronic world are considerably less daunting. SPEEDE users live in a world in which new questions must be posed and answered which have the effect of elevating overall security. Imagine the boon to security if every school receiving an official transcript called the sender to report its safe arrival. This procedure appended to our traditional paper-oriented systems would offer real security advantages, but it would be prohibitively expensive. In a system of electronic transmission where routine machine protocols are handling the receipt and delivery functions, maintaining logs, checking for discrepancies, and identifying anomalies for human review, such acknowledgements become practical.

"Transaction set 131" is the acknowledgement format. It provides the structure for a specially formatted file that is sent to the official electronic address of the originating school to report that

transcript information was received at University Y for Jane Doe. It includes selected data elements about Jane so that the originating institution can be sure that the entire record arrived intact. An acknowledgement verifying the receipt of a transcript which the sender never sent would be especially unsettling, as would prolonged failure of a receiving institution to acknowledge receipt of a legitimate one. Electronic monitoring processes would detect such instances. They would be few enough in number that human sleuthing becomes a realistic and nec-
SPEEDE is one innovation which does not cooperate with the natural human inclination to torture new technology to support old ways of doing business.

necessary intervention. Most of the players on the SPEEDE scene agree that a willingness to send acknowledgements will be a pre-condition for participation.

Two other transaction sets are in the works: 146 and 147. The first is a format that would enable one school to request a transcript directly from another school. This procedure is not foreclosed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as long as it is permitted by institutional policies. Finally, transaction set 147 is the vehicle for responding negatively to a request either because the student does not exist in the data set, the student's record does not exist in electronic form, or the requester has not agreed to send acknowledgements. (There are four very new transaction sets sponsored by SPEEDE in the works as well: 189, Student Educational Record (Transcript); 188, Application for Admission to Educational Institutions; 193, Financial Aid Transcript; and 187, Request for Educational Course Catalog.)

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

Change always has its downside. The electronic transmission of transcripts may introduce new problems. SPEEDE is one innovation which does not cooperate with the natural human inclination to torture new technology to support old ways of doing business, an inclination which too often reduces chances for fundamental change. SPEEDE's introduction will be disruptive to the status quo, and that is a cost. SPEEDE also does not guarantee the elimination of paper. Indeed, registrars will undoubtedly always be stuck with multiple delivery systems, since some students will not have electronic records, and some students with electronic records will want their transcripts sent to places that cannot receive them electronically. Fears about dehumanization and privacy infringement render new technologies suspect by some people. SPEEDE converts will need to keep these issues in mind to minimize their negative effects.

Another cost lies in the choice of a network or networks over which to transact electronic business. The most primitive method is lovingly referred to in SPEEDE circles as "sneaker net"—walking data stored on diskette or tape from one place to another. Those electing some variation of "sneaker net" are not going to experience large networking costs. The needs of institutions which do an enormous volume of business with one or two other schools might be satisfied by a dedicated phone line and a modem to send data in point-to-point fashion. This method isn't going to break the bank either, but it is pretty labor-intensive and particular.

In the most evolved SPEEDE environments, where there will be less routine human involvement in a mature electronic transmission process, the debate will center on the relative merits of a public network (probably the Internet, but also several statewide networks) and a commercial "value added network" (VAN). Each has advantages and disadvantages, and ex-
experts suggest that most institutions will find themselves using both (Miller 1992).

Most SPEEDE pilot sites have made use of commercial networks, at least at the beginning. They are especially suited for EDI. They are set up to handle production-oriented, machine-to-machine, business-related transactions. They are reliably “up and running” 24 hours a day. The safe delivery of transcripts is assured, even if the receiving institution’s computer is “down.” The private “mailbox” feature of commercial networks is especially appealing from a security standpoint. But the biggest reason for using a VAN is that registrars, admissions officers, and the computer people who support them do not have to worry about the technical magic required in managing and maintaining a network. The biggest negative associated with using a VAN is its cost. Costs for network services are assessed in a variety of ways—according to the number of characters sent, the time of the transmission, connect fees, storage fees, and the like.

In contrast, the Internet is unbelievably cheap. The Internet is a vast public network connecting over a million users in 107 countries (Chapin 1992). The costs of maintaining it are borne by institutional members who pay fixed fees, regardless of the number of individual users, their frequency of use, or the size of their data files. Despite the remarkable rate of growth of the Internet, not all institutions—notably high schools and prospective employers—have Internet access. Transmitting over Internet requires that both sending and receiving machines be “up.” If by chance data are sent during a period when the receiving machine has succumbed to an electrical surge, these data will be lost. The security standards of the Internet, while more reassuring than the U.S. mail, are not as safe as the VAN’s. Finally, the Internet has been used largely for interactive processes. It does not have all the built-in protocols to support a high degree of automation between machines. To handle heavy EDI traffic efficiently, the Internet will need to develop these capabilities.

Commercial users of EDI had no choice other than proprietary networks. Higher education has a unique, if imperfect, resource in the Internet and state and system-wide public networks. In states where taxpayers’ money has supported the development of these public networks, institutions will be expected to make use of them. It is safe to imagine that significant energy will be invested to render them more suitable to our purposes. Much of networking terrain remains uncharted. A significant challenge is how data might be transmitted between public and commercial networks. This fast growing field promises many surprises; breakthroughs are now occurring in building gateways between VANs and the Internet.

The final cost associated with developing an institutional capacity to send and receive transcripts electronically is for software. Will the software that encodes data to the SPEEDE format and decodes incoming data to local conventions be home-grown or vendor-supplied? Obviously, the institutions that have been involved in developmental work on this project initially had no choice; they wrote the code themselves. Commercial vendors are now offering would-be SPEEDE sites a choice. The pilot projects in Wisconsin involving the Stout and Whitewater campuses developed their software in-house. They calculated an investment of 663 hours of technical and functional staff time to complete the basic “send” and “receive” functions.
SPEEDE is not some ethereal possibility for the next century.
It is a latent force on our doorsteps, ready to take higher education by storm in the same way that automatic teller machines transformed what it means to go to the bank.

In contrast, Arizona State selected a commercial vendor when it calculated that 600-800 hours of programming time would be required if they did the job themselves. Some vendor products are applauded because they are generic; while purchased to support a transcript application, for example, they could also handle an accounts receivable application. Another vendor offers the advantage of an EDI product which is compatible with its popular student information system software. Using commercial vendors always produces mixed blessings. One gets technical support at the other end of the phone in a trice, but also predictable upgrade and maintenance fees. Individual SPEEDE sites will come to different conclusions on this question, depending largely on the depth of local resources. Either way, the task is a well defined, finite, and manageable one. It should be technically within reach of any institution capable of supporting an automated student information system.

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR SPEEDE?

Naturally, developers of SPEEDE would like to see all colleges and universities hard at work developing SPEEDE implementations on their own campuses. SPEEDE projects are already a reality on a number of campuses: at three-quarters of the public community colleges and one-half of the public universities in Florida, the University of Texas at Austin, Arizona State University, Maricopa Community College District, most postsecondary institutions in Maryland, Brigham Young University, and Ricks College. Predictably enough, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Law School Admissions Service (LSAS), the clearinghouses for medical school and law school application processing, respectively, have been interested from the outset and are poised for action.

The activity to date favors large, public institutions and state systems. Clearly, the institutions which stand to benefit most are those with a huge volume of transcript business and high traffic between a small number of feeder schools. They can accommodate a large fraction of their total business by establishing only a few trading partners. Institutions with national recruitment patterns, small enrollment, and independent status will not in all likelihood be the trend setters in this endeavor.

SPEEDE has some very important things going for it. It is not difficult to implement. In contrast with projects like touchtone telephone/voice response registration and automated degree audit systems, SPEEDE has a small appetite for financial resources. In addition, it requires a small cast of characters, so the sociopolitical dimension of implementation is not complex (Wermers, Patterson, and Scott 1992). Moreover, it has friends in high places, champions who appreciate its promise and have contributed generously to its development: the National Center for Educational Statistics, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and, by no means least, AACRAO itself.

The crux of the problem is that SPEEDE is a team sport. Nobody is going to be able to enjoy the game fully until more of us are playing. The current state of affairs can be likened to the isolated splendor of being the proud owner of the only FAX machine in the world. The project has not yet developed a “critical mass,” and its promise and utility cannot be fully realized until it does.
SPEEDE is not some ethereal possibility for the next century. It is a latent force on our doorsteps, ready to take higher education by storm in the same way that automatic teller machines transformed what it means to go to the bank. However strapped we are for resources, can we afford to ignore a technology which enhances the quality of student service and promises to reduce the costs of doing business? It will be a long time before we will fall upon a cheaper or easier way to get both leaner and better. In a very real sense, we ignore SPEEDE at our peril.

REFERENCES
Committee on the Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange (SPEEDE) of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and Exchange of Permanent Records Electronically for Students and Schools (ExPRESS) of the National Center for Education Statistics and the Council of Chief State School Officers. 1992. A Guide to the Implementation of the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Electronic Transcript.

Get Tuned in to SPEEDE/ExPRESS

Quarterly Newsletter

The new EDI publication, SPEEDE/ExPRESS Newsletter, with more than 1100 subscribers, provides quarterly news and information on EDI activity across the nation, promotes the use of SPEEDE/ExPRESS, and updates from the SPEEDE Committee and the ExPRESS Task Force.

Activity List

If SPEEDE/ExPRESS has captured your interest, a new resource you’ll want to get your hands on is the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Activity List, a continually updated report on the institutions and school districts involved in exchanging transcripts electronically. Organized by state/province, this report identifies the current implementation stage of each entity and—when possible—trading partners, translation software, and networks used. Currently, 257 institutions/school districts representing 34 states/provinces appear on the list.

General Overview

While you’re at it, if you haven’t received a copy of Introduction to SPEEDE/ExPRESS, a free publication giving a general overview of the project and the concept of exchanging transcripts electronically, be sure to order one for yourself.

Contact

For any EDI or SPEEDE/ExPRESS questions or to add your name to the mailing list, contact Betsy Bainbridge at (202) 293-7383, FAX: (202) 872-8857, or E-Mail: BAINBRIDGEL@AACRAO.NCHE.EDU.
Training Administrators to Serve as Student Mentors:
An Untapped Resource in Retention Planning

By James Martin
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Mount Ida College

James E. Samels
Attorney
Samels Associates

In 1989, Martin and Samuels founded the Samels Group, a Massachusetts higher education consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, mergers, and licensing and regulatory issues. Their book, Merging Colleges For Mutual Growth, drawing on the three institutional mergers undertaken by Mount Ida since 1984, will be published by The Johns Hopkins University Press in 1994.

Abstract
As growing numbers of institutions consider creative, low-cost methods to raise student retention rates, the use of administrators as student “mentors” to complement the academic advising and mentoring done by faculty members is shown to be an effective approach to strengthening the connections between a first-year student and her or his institution.

Introduction
Over the past fifteen years, it has become almost universally argued that freshman persistence and eventual success are enhanced when every first-year student feels attached to at least one older person at the institution. Seidman (1991), Levitz and Noel (1989), Johnson (1989), Cosgrove (1986), and Thomas, Murrell and Chickering (1982), among others, have outlined the impact a caring relationship between a freshman and a mature faculty or staff member can have on both student academic success and institutional retention levels.

Increasingly, researchers recommend the mentoring of first-year students through formal programs. Ideally, these mentors serve as information resource, attentive listener, activities advisor, academic advisor, and strategic problem-solver (Johnson 1989). First-year students involved in their own education through mentoring are also more successful. Studies such as Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty (1983) from the Association of American Colleges (AAC) Project on the Status and Education of Women, the Involvement in Learning report from the National Institute of Education (1984), and the Carnegie Commission report, College: The Undergraduate Experience in America (1987) describe the institutional enhancements derived from both formal and informal mentoring programs. The following case study, involving the implementation of an Administrative Mentor Program at Mount Ida College, a private liberal arts and career preparatory college in Greater Boston,
presents the cause and effect between retention success and the formal pairing of each first-year student with a professional administrator. It also provides guidelines for implementing similar mentor programs at other institutions, whether large research university or small private liberal arts college.

The executive leadership and key members of the faculty and staff at Mount Ida College agreed institutional retention levels needed to be raised through a special model of student mentoring which would supplement the traditional faculty-based model of academic advising. After many years of stable, relatively high retention levels (70%-75%) within the college’s associate degree programs, retention rates declined slightly during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The reasons for this were numerous. Mount Ida is located with 116 other institutions in the nation’s most “college-rich” state (when judged on a per capita basis). Confronted by the need to meet not only the academic but also the developmental and social needs of a growing cohort of students less prepared to do college-level work, it had since 1986-87 dramatically increased its academic support systems for both learning disabled and low-skilled students through a formalized “Learning Opportunities Program” and extensive remedial services.

However, the institution also faced three institutional mergers, the introduction of residential coeducation, and the addition of 18 bachelor degree programs within nine years to a long-standing junior college structure. Between 1985-90, Mount Ida had merged with three urban Boston-based colleges: an art and design school, a school of technical electricity, and New England’s only college of funeral service education. While the business and professional career elements meshed very effectively with Mount Ida’s educational mission, the differences in expectations among art and design, electrical, and funeral service students were jarring at points. Layered on top of these merger issues, the college was completing a successful, decade-long licensure and accreditation campaign to establish the range of new bachelor degree programs and introduce male students into its residence population (now at approximately 40%). These internal factors converged during the early 1990s and added to the strain on the college’s traditional retention planning program. Against this background the new Mount Ida Administrative Mentor Program was created and implemented during the fall semester of the 1991-92 academic year.

**Creating the Administrative Mentor Concept**

In *The Freshman Year Experience*, Johnson notes, “Each campus must decide who should mentor its freshmen, based on its mission and its freshmen and its commitment to the mentoring program.” Johnson indicates that mentored students demonstrated increased confidence in their ability to set goals, make decisions, and solve problems. The authors’ review of the literature on formal mentoring programs found no reference to models designed to include every administrator at an institution as a mentor. Typically, mentors were upperclass students, junior faculty members, academic counselors, minority student advisors, residence life directors, and student affairs staff members. However, for Mount Ida the prospect of inviting the entire staff to serve as student mentors made sense from a variety of perspectives.
Asking the registrar, bursar, and dean of admissions to guide 15 freshmen each through their first year of college life is exactly the kind of entrepreneurial concept that can produce the "breakthrough" thinking about one's position, and institution, that so many colleges and universities need.

Many smaller institutions have a decided shortage of available student development and academic advising personnel who cannot accept additional responsibilities, particularly those of the time-intensive individual student mentoring. Distributing these activities evenly across an entire administration, and including the president and members of the executive cabinet, may reduce burnout and high turnover among student services staff members, demonstrates a solidarity with the frontline providers of student support programs, and helps colleges and universities recapture a kind of human resource coherence and revitalization absent from present academic and curricular programming.

Equally important, administrative mentoring may also enhance retention strategies and tighten systems and procedures which bring together students and staff members on a regular basis throughout the year. Rush (1992), Drucker (1989), and Keller (1983, 1989) have argued the need to "reinvent" the management of higher education institutions in order to maintain academic quality in light of shrinking resources.

Asking the registrar, bursar, and dean of admissions to guide 15 freshmen each through their first year of college life is exactly the kind of entrepreneurial concept that can produce the "breakthrough" thinking about one's position, and institution, that so many colleges and universities need.

While headlines nationwide declared "Bad Times Force Universities to Rethink What They Are," and "In Uncertain Times, College Students See a Bleak Future After Graduation," 48 members of the Mount Ida administration initiated a high profile Administrative Mentor Program in September 1991 with 16 mentees each. The original objectives of the program were outlined in Guidelines for Administrative Mentors:

- To improve the quality of student life at Mount Ida College.

- To retain a greater percentage of students from each rising class.
- To assist students in the various life-adjustment phases of attending college.
- To increase the percentage of students matriculating into Mount Ida Senior College.
- To serve as a nonacademic complement and support to the ongoing advising activities undertaken by program directors.
- To increase new forms of dialogue between two core constituencies which lack a standard channel of effective communication.
- To implement a new total curriculum approach which can more effectively assume responsibility for educating the whole student.
- To provide administrators with a direct and expanded source of student-centered information to aid them in short-term decision making and long-term institutional policy formulation.

**PROGRAM METHODOLOGY**

All first-year students at the college participated. They were randomly selected by the registrar according to social security numbers. No subpercentages of male, female, minority, or international students were designated. Administrative mentors included all professional staff members of the college except the director of the Counseling Center and college physician (to avoid potential conflicts of interest). Mentors included the president, all executive officers and senior staff, the business manager and, for example, the directors of campus security, alumni relations, annual fund, and personnel. Each mentor had an average of 16 students, with some receiving fewer...
due to half- or three-quarter time employment status. Other mentors received more than 16 students to accommodate mid-year entrants. College staff served as mentors on an annual basis with participation subject to a mutual agreement among the mentor, her or his immediate supervisor, and the vice president for academic affairs, who serves as the director of the program.

Each mentor met with each student individually, in small groups, or in collective meetings of all assigned students at least three times during the academic year. Meeting formats were left to the discretion of each mentor; however, a combination of meeting formats for each student was recommended over the course of the year. Mentors were expected to hold a meeting with each student prior to the second Friday of each semester’s classes.

Student orientation was scheduled on a designated summer preregistration day, and at a special meeting during the opening week of fall semester orientation. In addition, two mailings were included in Office of Student Life summer correspondence packets in June and August. In their initial meetings, students were asked to share their comments and suggestions on the quality of student life at the college and were encouraged to raise issues and pose questions that might not generally arise in a standard faculty advising session.

Although the Mount Ida program focuses specifically on student transitions during the first year of college life, upperclass students remain in the program on a separate roster and under the same administrative mentor. Mentors meet with their upper-class mentees at least once per semester.

Mentor orientation and assessment takes place in a focused, retreat-type setting at least three times an academic year:

- An annual summer orientation meeting in August in which mentors outline principal issues for the coming year and review pertinent aspects of institutional mission, strategic goal-setting, recent personnel transitions, and community cohesiveness.
- A mid-year review meeting to share information gathered from students during the fall semester, re-assess original directions and objectives, and make appropriate adjustments in specific student programs, activities, and services.
- A final evaluation meeting during June to assess the effectiveness of the mentor format in enhancing student life at the college.

To increase communication between academic advisors and administrative mentors, representatives from among the moderator of the faculty senate; chairs of the faculty committees on budget, curriculum, and learning resources; and faculty directors of all eight schools of the college are invited to each administrative mentor orientation meeting.

As documentation, each mentor summarizes every meeting on a standard Mentor Information Sheet which notes the format of the meeting, any concerns expressed, and student progress. Of particular importance are any ideas for institutional improvements and student concerns that need immediate administrative attention. Mentors also provide, when appropriate, a brief, 30-character notation on a “Critical Status Line” using a basic coding system to indicate, for example, “financial issue” or “residence issue.” All Critical Status Line references go into that student’s permanent folder and provide background for various offices addressing specific and general concerns.

As a final step to enhance the effectiveness of the system, mentors communicate with their students’ faculty advisors at least once a year.

To increase communication between academic advisors and administrative mentors, representatives from among the moderator of the faculty senate; chairs of the faculty committees on budget, curriculum, and learning resources; and faculty directors of all eight schools of the college are invited to each administrative mentor orientation meeting.
From a student development perspective, the program achieved its primary objective—improving the quality of student life in numerous, interrelated ways.

After only one year of the program, Administrative Mentors made a noticeable impact on the broader culture of the college as well as on its specific retention programming. In the process, the mission of the institution became more clarified in the form of an entity which students and staff members sincerely believe may be shaped by their efforts through programs such as this. From a student development perspective, the program achieved its primary objective—improving the quality of student life in numerous, interrelated ways. Finally, from a statistical point of view, the program also achieved its foremost goal: increased retention of first-year students. At the close of the first year of the program in May 1992, deposits for first-year students planning to return were 4% higher than for those who returned from the year before.

We believe the Administrative Mentor Program, along with excellent student affairs program support and enhanced, more diverse student activities, has potentially reversed a declining retention spiral as it has infused the college community with a new sense of cohesiveness and civility. In addition the program has...

- strengthened and clarified communication among students, administrators and faculty members;
- improved student advising, both academic and cocurricular, as faculty advisors and administrative mentors now meet regularly in groups and one-to-one settings to consider student concerns;
- increased daily contact between staff and first-year students, thus improving cohesiveness and improving long-term retention of these professionals; and
- allowed administrators during the first year of the program to "get back to" the purposes for which they had entered higher education administration; promoted a new type of community "forum" that brings staff members at all levels together as equals in a retreat setting to address the major substantive issues confronting their college; provided an important, candid opportunity to gauge the college's success in retaining and educating its students according to its mission and principles.

Challenges to the program have been

- Agreement on First Principles—Early in the program, several of the most active mentors identified the need to define the goals and parameters for the Mount Ida "mentor." As the year progressed, some administrators suggested that the very word "mentor" was too esoteric and raised student suspicions. For the second year of the program, Mount Ida participants are contemplating a name change from Mentors to Personal Advisors for Leadership, or PALs. Adding the word "leadership" to the name of the program will visibly connect it to several broad curricular and cocurricular initiatives now being undertaken at the institution, and the phrase "Personal Advisor" will carry positive associations for an 18-year-old freshman.
- Adequate Program Administration—In its initial year, the program operated by increasing the workload of the chief academic officer, as director, and the administrative staff members in his office. In future years, Mount Ida and other institutions implementing similar programs will need to determine which office should coordi-
mate the administrative responsibilities of a mentoring program, such as the designation of a director, responsible for procedures, maintenance of archives, and development of a central telephone exchange mentors can access for unanswered questions and program protocol as well as a program library of books, articles, and videotapes on mentoring styles and models. At Mount Ida, the director issued a Mentors Newsletter twice a semester which included articles on mentoring philosophy and techniques, new developments in the program, and anecdotes from fellow mentors.

- Mentor Inexperience—No matter how explicit the training and orientation program, mentors need mentoring of their own during the initial years of a program. In the first year at Mount Ida, with 48 mentors and 775 participating students, approximately two or three student incidents occurred in which mentor inexperience was a limiting factor. In each instance, the basic details of the incident were distilled and used as a teaching instrument, sometimes through role-playing sessions during a subsequent mentor orientation session.

- Mentor Remuneration—At the end of the first year a number of mentors reported the “hundreds” of meetings they had anticipated with students never materialized. Instead, after a set of introductory discussions (generally 30 minutes long), most mentors and students developed a regular routine of brief, periodic “check-in” sessions, sometimes held over lunch, sometimes through informal talks on campus. Many found subsequent shorter sessions were appropriate until one or both parties requested longer discussion times. However, even with a relatively smooth-running system, experienced mentoring has required careful planning, implementation, and assessment by every administrator at the college. Several have asked whether mentoring has formally been added to their job descriptions, whether they would be remunerated for this additional responsibility, and whether participation was mandatory. In general, we would recommend that participation not be mandatory, but strongly encouraged, and that in place of a stipend mentors be provided with an option such as one professional day of release time for each year in the program.

- Student Resistance—Not surprisingly, some students resisted the program and avoided meetings with their mentors. Particularly, nontraditional-aged students with families and careers and student athletes who received multiple forms of “coaching” and support, questioned what a “mentor” was, why he or she was an administrator rather than a teacher, and why they should talk with this person about their extracurricular lives. On this same point, we have also noted during the first year of the program that the nontraditional students sometimes needed the most structure and “mentoring” when they returned to a classroom environment. Nevertheless, it was a humbling revelation for some administrators to learn how strongly current students viewed classroom instructors as the ultimate shapers of their college experience; administrators were often indistinguishable from bureaucrats working at the Registry of Motor Vehicles or Internal Revenue Service. As examples, early in the program, the parents of two different mentees under the vice president for academic affairs called his office ahead of time to inquire why their children were being “summoned to the Principal’s Office.”

As a program matures, mentors will need to accept a public relations responsibility as well as the student retention and community-building roles which can be derived from tapping ex-
It was humbling for some administrators to learn how strongly students viewed classroom instructors as the ultimate shapers of their college experience; administrators were often indistinguishable from bureaucrats at the Registry of Motor Vehicles or IRS.

Experienced college administrators as resources.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Rush (1992), Keller (1983, 1989), Zemsky (McMillen 1991), and others, now argue for new forms of leadership on American college and university campuses. As Rush notes, "It requires ... a focus on academic quality in light of shrinking resources, and a reorienting of administrative efforts around essential tasks and activities . . . Does the institution need all of the administrative activities currently performed?" (p.42)

Direct mentoring of students by members of a college administration is an activity which should be added to their job descriptions. It enhances the effectiveness of academic advising by faculty members, raises retention levels in the process, and supports a shared belief at all levels of the organization that the institutional mission can be renewed and revised by those implementing it.

Losing even a single mentee to attrition exposes the administrator to the complexities of retaining an unhappy and unsatisfied educational consumer. In these circumstances, mentoring can substantially clarify and strengthen the basic premises by which a college defines itself. In our view, with a clearly-defined resource commitment and adequate training and oversight, most college administrators will welcome the opportunity and responsibility to lead and learn from members of the next entering class.

REFERENCES


Grading by Narrative Evaluation: Present Tense

By C. James Quann
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Prior to joining the University of California system, C. James “Jim” Quann served for 25 years as registrar at Washington State University. He holds a doctorate in higher education administration and has numerous publications including Grades and Grading (1984) and Admissions, Academic Records, and Registrar Services (1987), one of the Jossey-Bass Series on Higher Education.

Abstract
This article describes the philosophy and administrative practices related to grading by narrative evaluation, an alternative form of grading. Faculty-authored narrative evaluations are now standard practice at Antioch University, Hampshire College, and the University of California-Santa Cruz, and at least 14 other colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. While the number of colleges and universities using narratives is relatively small, these institutions send thousands of students into the marketplace and to graduate and professional schools; consequently, the “narrative” impact is more widespread than it might appear.

Introduction
The use of academic marks to admit students to higher education and to estimate their academic success has been an important part of American tradition. However, debates on the inadequacy of various grading systems are a common occurrence on most campuses and the focus of many research articles. In the mid-1960s the rhetoric on the ills of grading and marking systems nearly reached the academic boiling-point, with students and faculty calling for changes. The result was a renewed interest in alternate forms of grading, including written narrative evaluations.

The narrative concept was not new, but in 1965 the faculty of the University of California’s newest campus at Santa Cruz (UCSC) adopted and expanded on the concept. Although undergraduates could opt for regular grades in a limited number of courses, required written evaluations for all students in all courses. Now in its twenty-seventh year, the coin of the academic realm at UCSC is still the written narrative. In the UCSC Program, each instructor writes a personalized narrative evaluation of the student’s academic performance in each course in which the student receives credit. The guiding principle is that narratives will encourage students to pursue learning for
its own sake, not simply to achieve grades. In the UCSC program, a narrative evaluation

> Describes the nature and requirements of the course;

> Evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s performance in the various areas of class activity including discussion, laboratory work, term papers, examinations, and general understanding of the course content; and

> Allows recognition of additional or particularly outstanding performance.

Once collected and added to the Student Information System (SIS) database, the narratives are kept in perpetuity and are sent, on request of the student, to potential employers, graduate and professional school admissions offices, and other agencies as part of the student’s official record. Internally, copies of the narratives are available electronically or in hard copy to advisers, academic preceptors, and department offices as well as to the faculty authors.

THE STUDY

In an attempt to determine how many institutions currently use some form of narrative evaluation and how they administer their programs, this researcher identified 31 institutions reported to be using narrative grading. All were listed in the Directory of Colleges and Universities with Non-Traditional Programs, Systems, and Practices published by AACRAO. A survey instrument was mailed to the registrar of each of the institutions, and 27 (87%) responded. Of those, 17 (63%) use some form of narrative evaluations, eight (30%) do not use any form of narrative evaluation, one (4%) stopped using narratives in 1980, and one (4%) uses a grading/advisory system that might be characterized as verbal narrative evaluations.

Of those using narrative systems, 10 were private and seven were public institutions (Table 1). Data include the name of the institution, the fall 1990 enrollment, and the approximate number of narrative evaluations prepared and recorded at the end of each academic term. While all 17 use a form of narrative, seven employ narratives for undergraduates and graduates alike, and 10 use narratives only for undergraduates. Several restrict narratives to a limited number of programs, majors, or colleges, and eight require narratives for all students in all courses.

THE FINDINGS

The number of narratives produced and recorded varies dramatically with as few as 20 at the low end to nearly 30,000 each term at the high end of the scale. Evergreen State College in Washington uses an interesting variation on the number and content of the narratives. Each Evergreen State student has a faculty adviser; it is the adviser’s responsibility to obtain evaluation data from each of the student’s instructors throughout the academic year, and then to coalesce all of the information into one narrative per student per year.

Fall 1990 enrollment is listed in Table 1; however, enrollment does not necessarily correlate with the numbers of narratives produced, since some institutions only use narratives in certain academic programs or for specific classifications of students or courses. Although all 17 institutions listed use some form of narrative evaluations, the extent and levels of use differ. For in-
I

TABLE 1.
INSTITUTIONS USING SOME FORM OF NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EVALUATIONS ISSUED PER TERM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Fall Enrollment</th>
<th>Narratives per Term</th>
<th>Narratives Apply to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antioch College</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennington College</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evergreen State</td>
<td>3,340</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goddard College</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goshen College</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire College</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartwick College</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindenwood College</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia College of Art and Design</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New College of University of South Florida</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Oaks College</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1,275</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Lawrence College</td>
<td>1,193</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY at Purchase</td>
<td>2,420</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCSC</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Mass-Boston</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Minn-Twin Cities</td>
<td>40,970</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World College West</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

stance, as shown in Table 2, 10 institutions require narratives in all courses, three require narratives only in specialized programs, one uses them only in the case of seminars and independent study, one requires them only for upper division and graduate courses, and one each allows narratives at the option of the student or professor.

Among the 10 institutions that require narratives, Antioch University uses them only in courses with enrollments of less than 20. Lindenwood College requires narratives in all courses but the narratives are for advisory purposes only, and they are not officially recorded or included with or attached to the permanent record or transcript. Hampshire College supplements faculty-authored narratives with a dossier for each student which includes a record of the student's learning activities, divisional exam narratives, student self-evaluations, and examples of the student's work. And the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design limits the use of narratives to areas of foundation, craft, studio, and the master of fine arts program.

Variations on the Narrative Evaluation Theme

Several variations on narrative evaluations and corresponding grade symbols were reported (Table 3). Eight responding institutions use narrative evaluations and “Pass” notations, while three supplement the narrative system with optional or required letter grades, four supplement regular letter grades with optional narratives, one uses narratives and verbal ratings, and one evaluates students through the use of competency statements.

In addition to the narrative, 15 use a mark or symbol on the student's transcript to indicate that the course was passed. Of these 15, five use Pass/No Record (NR), two use Pass/No Credit (NC), while another uses Satisfactory (S)/No Credit (NC). Two institutional representatives of the 17 who use some form of narrative evaluation failed to respond to this item on the survey instrument.

Nine use some other form of marking in conjunction with narratives.

- Lindenwood and Sarah Lawrence Colleges use regular letter grades and narratives,

- Evergreen State and UCSC students receive narrative evaluations only if they receive credit,

- Only credit earned is recorded on transcripts at Antioch,
Examinations completed are recorded by date at Hampshire College,

World College West posts a verbal rating scale and credit if the course is passed,

Competency completed or “In Progress” is recorded at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, and

Goddard College records only satisfactorily completed courses.

Other Innovative Approaches

Several other institutions use a variation of narrative evaluations in their grading practices. Dartmouth College has for many years used standard letter grades with an optional “citation” system. At the end of each term, the instructor may file with the Registrar’s Office a citation describing a student’s exceptional or particularly distinguished accomplishment in the instructor’s course. Citations are kept in the student’s file and forwarded with the official transcript on request.

St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland, does not use written narratives. Its system is unique, however, because the college uses a procedure best described as a “verbal narrative.” Grading is not of central importance in the St. John’s system. Students are told their grades only on request. They are encouraged not to work for grades, but to develop their powers of understanding.

The most important form of evaluation is the “don rag.” Once a semester, freshmen, sophomores, and juniors meet individually with their tutors in a don rag. The rag consists of tutors and seminar leaders reporting on the student’s work. Students are invited to respond to the reports and comment on their own work. Advice may be requested and given, difficulties may be aired, but grades are not reported or discussed (St. John’s College Catalog 1990-91, p. 84).

Alverno College uses yet another variation on the theme. Students receive “S” grades for satisfactory performance of “C” or above throughout their undergraduate careers (unsatisfactory grades are recorded on internal records only). At the time of graduation a comprehensive one-page narrative is prepared by each student’s major department and the completed narrative becomes a part of each student’s permanent record (transcript).

Age and Genesis of the Various Narrative Systems

Although interest in alternative forms of grading reached a high point in the mid- to late-1960s, narrative forms of grading existed in America as far back as 1817 (Smallwood 1935, p. 45). Of this survey’s respondents, Goddard and Sarah Lawrence have used the narrative system for more than 50 years; New College of the University of South Florida and UCSC for 27; and

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### Table 2.

**Level of Narrative Evaluations Required**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent or Level of Requirement</th>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In all courses*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only courses in specialized programs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-division and graduate courses only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only in freshman seminar, independent study, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At option of the professor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At option of the student</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subject to different institutional conditions
Although interest in alternative forms of grading reached a high point in the mid-to late-1960s, narrative forms of grading existed in America as far back as 1817. Hampshire College, Hartwick College, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 21 years each. The narrative evaluation system was part of the founding philosophy of two of the responding institutions; it was created and approved by vote of the faculty or faculty senate in 13 others; approved by vote of students and faculty at one institution, and by a faculty committee in another.

The approval of narratives as an alternative form of grading was not obtained without significant effort on the part of faculty, administrators, and students. Although all do not agree, proponents cite many advantages of written evaluations.

- If thoughtfully written, they can provide students with much information about their academic performance.
- They can be geared to the individual student.
- They can be based on many factors.
- They encourage faculty to observe individual students.
- They are an excellent supplement to other grading devices.
- They are high in fidelity (Levine 1981, p. 98).

Disadvantages include the added cost and effort to produce, collect, file, and reproduce evaluations that may vary in length from several sentences to several pages. Moreover, narratives are difficult to write, especially for classes with large numbers of students, and may require large blocks of faculty time to complete. Finally, in some instances, narrative evaluations issued without standard grades may delay the student's chances for admission to transfer institutions or graduate or professional schools.

Collecting and Processing Narrative Evaluations

Preparation of narratives is generally a lengthy process requiring faculty to spend additional hours and days of effort beyond the time required to submit grades in most institutions. Once written, the narratives are submitted to the Registrar's Office in several forms, a situation that can be costly and time-consuming. Moreover, the cost and methods of collecting and processing the narratives differ significantly among institutions, primarily because of the numbers of narratives involved. In some instances, respondents reported that little extra time and money are spent because the numbers required are so small. Conversely, at several institutions including New College of the University of South Florida, Hampshire College, and UCSC, the numbers and costs are high. Table 4 provides a glimpse of the procedures and systems used to collect and process narratives.

As shown in Table 4, the number of methods of collecting and processing narratives is greater than 17 because one institution receives narratives in three forms: electronically direct; electronically on disk; and by key entry. In the 17 institutions using narratives, only four report using computer software to facilitate preparation and processing. Presumably, the numbers of narratives processed by the other 13 are relatively low and therefore are submitted in hard copy form, with the burden of preparation and processing falling primarily on the faculty. These narratives are often stored with or in close proximity to the students' official records and are photocopied and at-
tached to transcripts at the request of a student. Several institutions use narratives for advisory purposes only, thereby eliminating much of the extra cost of collection, processing, and storage.

Two institutions report using Microsoft Word or WordPerfect, presumably for preparing narratives on hard copy. Personnel at World College West employ a specialized program using Paradox 3.5 and Wordstar on a node on a PC Local Area Network. UCSC uses a home-grown on-line interactive system that allows faculty to submit narratives electronically, on computer disk, by key entry from designated offices, or through the Narrative Evaluation Central Pool operated by the Registrar’s Office on a seasonal basis.

Control and Limitations

The preparation, collection, storage and use of narrative data require extraordinary commitments of time, energy, and financial resources. Unless special guidelines or policies are in place, there can be great variations in the content of descriptive data submitted as evaluative information. In order to determine if guidelines or policies govern the submission of narratives at the various institutions, questionnaire recipients were asked to respond to several questions relating to quality and quantity.

Limitations. Most of the respondents indicated that the Registrar’s Office serves as the central point for collection of all narratives, although several designated department or divisional offices as mid-points in the collection process. With respect to restrictions on narratives, 11 reported no limit on the length of their narratives. Evergreen State limits prose to one page, Sarah Lawrence to 150 words, and Hartwick College and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to one-third of a page. World College West limits narratives to six lines of text, and Goshen College limits narratives to 60 words or less.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Grading Systems of the Seventeen Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form of Grading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative evaluations (NE) and Pass notations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily NE supplemented by optional letter grades (LG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE and required letter grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE supplemented by verbal ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress expressed in competency statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily LG supplemented by NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UCSC has no limit on the length of narratives, but each faculty member is provided with a 20-page booklet titled “UCSC Guidelines for Writing Narrative Evaluations.” The booklet provides information on narratives per se, typical audiences that receive and read narratives, expected content of each evaluation, and procedural information. The booklet also contains examples of items that are inappropriate for inclusion in narratives and grievance procedures for students to follow if they wish to dispute an evaluation. Format requirements for submitting narratives to the Registrar’s Office are also included.

Collection Monitoring. When asked how their narrative system is monitored, four respondents indicated their institutions allow no monitoring of any kind, and the remainder reported a variety of processes. Normal procedures call for the receiving office to process the narratives and, after an appropriate date, produce a list of missing narra-
Tives for unit heads and deans. Most divisions discipline faculty who continually fail to submit narratives in a timely manner, usually through threats to withhold paychecks or entries in faculty records that pertain to promotion and tenure. One respondent noted the use of "threatening telephone calls and memos," and several referred to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Submission</th>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directly to the Registrar's Office (RO)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From faculty to secretary for typing, then to RO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collected by academic units and filed with program</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To RO electronically (direct access)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To RO on computer disk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To RO for transcribing to transcript format</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From faculty to College Academic Affairs Office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From faculty directly to student (hard copy)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total is greater than 17 because at least one system receives narratives in several ways: electronically direct, electronically on disk, and by key entry.

the collection process in terms that were neither glowing nor repeatable. One reported that faculty whose narratives are two or more weeks overdue receive a call from the president.

UCSC expects all faculty to submit narratives within 15 working days following the end of the quarter. A statistical "Report of Outstanding Evaluations" by course is then circulated to deans, unit heads, and the academic vice chancellor, and a second summary report is prepared listing faculty with 100 or more outstanding evaluations, the term, course identification, and the number of delinquent narratives per course. This printout is also shared with deans, unit heads, and the academic vice chancellor, and all concerned are expected to help in the collection progress.

Quality Control. On the question of quality control, over half of the responding institutions have no quality control mechanism in place, and others report variations in the process and personnel involved. In one instance, faculty advisers are expected to review narrative content and critique the authors if the narrative is inadequate. In another, faculty authors are critiqued in a much more general way and involved in training sessions and occasional exhortations in faculty meetings or through letters addressed to specific offenders. One registrar reported that all evaluations are supposed to be checked by divisional chairs, but in actual practice "they are not." In another case, narratives are read in the Dean of Studies Office, and, if quality is in question, are referred to the appropriate college dean.

The staff at UCSC realize the sensitivity of the issue; they are careful to monitor narratives for proper format and structure only, but will correct obvious typographical or grammatical errors. However, staff are continually reminded of issues regarding the academic freedom of authors, and are cautioned to use the utmost care not to change or otherwise alter content. Staff return questionable narratives to the authors with appropriate suggestions. Serious problems can be referred to the chair of the Committee on Narrative Evaluations, a standing committee of the Academic Senate.

Cost of Narrative Evaluation Systems

A definitive cost analysis was available from only one of the 17 institutions. However, 10 of those responding emphatically stated the cost of operat-
ing a narrative system is much higher than the cost for traditional systems. Conversely, several others noted the added expense was not significant because of the very low numbers of narratives produced each term.

Why do narrative evaluations cost more to produce and maintain? Although it is difficult to quantify, the first and perhaps highest cost is in terms of faculty time and effort. Faculty in any college or university are expected to submit grades to the Registrar's Office shortly after the end of the term. Individual grades are determined by each faculty member based on each student's performance on midterm or hourly exams, term papers, participation in class and secondary sections, the final examination, and other criteria of the faculty member's choosing. The faculty member marks grades on a preprinted grade sheet or roster and submits it for machine processing according to the registrar's directions. Up to this point, the actions and responsibilities of the instructors are virtually the same on any campus. For most, the time and effort devoted to grading ends with submission of the grading sheet, but in institutions that use narrative grading, the work has just begun.

The registrar usually provides faculty with a narrative evaluation worksheet listing pertinent information the faculty member needs to know to prepare the narrative. Then the instructor spends up to a half hour or more per student writing personalized narratives that describe each student's performance in the class. Narratives can be written longhand, by typewriter, or at the instructor's preferred electronic workstation. Narratives, once submitted, must be edited for format conformity, entered into the Student Information System database (or in some cases typed and stored for future photocopying), and released to the student, registrar, advisers, and unit chairs.

The prudent administrator will also return finished copies to the author so that she or he can be certain that the narrative was entered correctly without undue interference from staff. Once completed and proofed, the narratives are usually stored or maintained in perpetuity, and made available on request of the student. All of these "extra" processes are labor and cost-intensive, hence the additional and somewhat high cost of administering narrative systems.

Lindenwood College indicated that because of the prohibitive cost, narratives are now used only for advisory purposes and are not maintained or officially recorded in any way. Evergreen State maintains them as described earlier, and finances the operation partially from instructional funds and a $10 transcript fee ($15 for rush orders). Pacific Oaks College absorbs the cost. Hampshire College, after experimenting with various funding approaches, settled on a one-time "transcripts for life" fee of $90 per student. Once students pay this fee, they may order transcripts as needed at no additional charge. Goddard College finances its narrative system through transcript fees ($10 for the first transcript, $5 for each additional ordered at the same time).

UCSC administrators calculated the additional cost of maintaining narrative evaluation systems (NES) at more than $304,000 annually, not including employee benefits, faculty time, or transcript services. UCSC currently covers the added cost through special allocations from instructional or discretionary funds and transcript fees ($10 for each complete transcript including narratives, $5 for the short version that does not include narratives).

**FURTHER STUDY**

In *Teaching Without Grades*, Marshall (1968) explores the reasons for dissatisfaction with traditional letter grading systems and explains how many new grading schemes are nothing more than the old ones with new names. He describes an alternative method of keeping students informed of their academic progress without using grades. Although he doesn't refer to his recommended system as narrative evaluations, the similarity is striking. Milton, Pollio, and Eison's book, *Making Sense of College Grades* (1986), is an excellent primer on grading and testing and what grades mean for the society in which they are given and for the students to whom they are awarded. A useful reference on "grading and labeling" and what it means in the marketplace is included in Bowen's book, *Investment In Learning* (1988). Readers are also referred to this author's treatise *Grades and Grading: Historical Perspectives and the 1982 AACRAO Study* (1984) published by AACRAO.
Some transcript-receiving agencies and institutions fail to recognize the value of the narrative and continue to require grade point averages, thereby relegating students and graduates of narrative-using institutions to second-class academic citizenship.

Satisfying the Special Needs of Graduate/Professional Schools and Governmental Agencies

Most of those involved in this survey or interviewed in the research phase of this project are satisfied that the merits of NES are greater than problems connected with administration of the system. Other than the added cost, another significant problem arises in those cases where a governmental agency or graduate or professional school requires a minimum grade point average (GPA) for admission or qualification for a special award, stipend, or grant. Since this can be a serious problem, survey participants were asked how they respond to the GPA demands of graduate schools or other agencies.

Most of the respondents reply on a case-by-case basis, explaining their institutional posture on grading and tailoring their remarks to the specific student's narrative record. Six respondents usually provide a transcript guide or other "template" statement that explains the narrative system in detail. Two simply respond using a generic letter, and two others use both methods, starting with the generic letter and, if necessary, sending a second reply with remarks and interpretations specific to the student. Most of the responding institutions also indicate they would call the office involved and volunteer to work directly with appropriate admissions personnel or agency personnel directors.

However, the practice at two institutions includes sending, on request, a personalized letter as noted above. If this is not sufficient or if the student requests it, the student's entire record can be referred to the chair of the faculty committee in charge of evaluations (or some other designated expert); and the chair, a seasoned faculty member, will provide a carefully considered personal evaluation of the student's total record, including conversion of narratives into a GPA or GPA range.

REFERENCES


SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The reexamination of the system of higher education in the 1960s brought renewed interest in alternatives to traditional A-F grading systems. Although not a new concept, faculty-authored narrative evaluations are now standard practice in at least 17 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. While the number of institutions using narratives is small, the user institutions send thousands of students on to graduate and professional schools, so the impact of the narrative concept is much more widespread than it might appear.

Narrative evaluations are used because proponents believe they encourage students to pursue learning for its own sake, not simply to achieve grades. Narratives also allow evaluation of the academic strengths and weaknesses of the student, can focus on areas of class activity (class discussion, laboratory work, term papers, and the like), and allow recognition of additional or outstanding performance.

This research project was not designed to argue the merits of one grading system over another, but to identify institutions using narratives and to determine procedures followed for the collection and processing of narratives. Ascertaining methods of monitoring the quality of narratives was also an important objective. And because the cost of producing narratives is normally well above that of regular grading procedures, it was important to discover how narrative systems are financed.

Although 17 narrative-type institutions were identified, only 10 require narratives, and the volume varies significantly, with only four preparing 3,000 or more per term. Fifteen of the 17 use, in addition to the narrative, a mark or symbol on the student’s transcript to indicate that the student has passed the course. Of the symbols used, Pass/No Record is the more common but the variations are both interesting and inventive. Collection and processing systems are also varied; only four utilize electronic media.

Methods used to monitor the narrative systems are as varied as the institutions themselves, but all appear sensitive to the rights and freedoms of narrative authors. Quality is also an important issue, but any editing done centrally is normally limited to correcting formats and obvious typographical or grammatical errors.

Participants in the survey were uniform in expressing concern over the cost of NES; in cases where large numbers of narratives are produced and processed each term, the cost is well above that for regular grading systems. At the University of California, Santa Cruz, for instance, the annual cost is approximately $304,000 over and above regular grade processing and transcript production. Given the increasing competition for scarce financial resources and the present condition of the economy in many states, new funding strategies must be found and grade reporting systems must be made more efficient and less costly, if narrative grading systems are to continue. Computerization may be a partial answer, and more institutions may wish to emulate the Antioch practice of limiting narratives to smaller courses only.

Finally, even though representatives of narrative-using institutions seemed to agree on the value of narratives, some transcript-receiving agencies and institutions fail to recognize the value of the narrative. The latter continue to require grade point averages, thereby relegating students and graduates of narrative-using institutions to second-class academic citizenship.
Selecting High School Students for Combined Baccalaureate-M.D. Degree Programs

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Medical School

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Medical Education and Research
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Dr. Arnold is chair of the Group on Baccalaureate-M.D. programs, a recently formed national organization for faculty, staff, and students involved with these programs.

Abstract
A survey of 18 combined Baccalaureate-M.D. degree programs shows that students entering the first year of the program directly from high school in 1990-91 exceeded minimum expected standardized test scores, grade point averages, and class rank. In the same academic year, 7% of the matriculants, on average, failed to meet requirements for subsequent entry into the medical school phase of the programs.

Introduction
For the last thirty years, several institutions have admitted high school seniors to medical school through combined Baccalaureate-M.D. degree programs. Recently, the number of combined degree programs has increased. About one-fifth of the medical schools in the United States currently offer alternative pathways to medical careers for high school graduates. Concern has been expressed that because of smaller birth cohorts and shrinking applicant pools these programs might try to expand their student bodies and thereby inadvertently admit students who are less qualified—rather than more qualified—into medical schools (Bates 1988).

In this paper the authors seek to determine whether that concern is justified. They first describe the processes by which these programs select students for admission. They follow up with a report on the outcomes of those admissions procedures and include the qualifications of students entering these programs and beginning the medical school phase of the programs.

Method
In the fall of 1991, the authors adapted a questionnaire by Duckwall and others (Duckwall, Smith, and Arnold 1988) to gather data about the combined degree programs: the admissions criteria, their methods for gathering information about the academic and personal qualities of candidates, the importance of various factors in offering admission to applicants, the composition of the admissions committees, the satisfaction of the commit-
tees with their procedures, and the qualifications of matriculants. Additional data concerning the qualifications of first-year students in these combined degree programs in 1990-91 and the rate at which students offered admission actually accepted those offers were derived from the 1992-93 Medical School Admission Requirements bulletin of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

Of the 27 combined degree programs listed in the bulletin, 18 completed the questionnaire. Among these institutional respondents are programs which enroll the largest number of combined degree students. Most of the responding programs have existed for at least 20 years although five of the newer programs are also included. Ten of the programs are offered in private institutions, eight in public universities. They are located throughout the United States. Their curriculum ranges from six to eight years in length.

RESULTS

Selection Procedures

All programs in the study use standardized test scores and high school academic records in determining admission (Table 1). Thirteen of the 18 programs expect their applicants to earn minimum or expected scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) Program Assessment. These scores range from the 90th to the 98th percentile. Seven programs require students to report scores on College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) Achievement Tests; three will accept scores on CEEB Achievement Tests or ACT scores. Seventeen programs use high school academic grade point averages (GPAs) in the selection process, and all but three use class rank. The expected class rank ranges from the 80th to the 95th percentile. All programs but one indicate that the quality of the applicant's high school is an important consideration in the selection criteria. In addition, all but one program require specific high school courses for eligibility. The prerequisite courses vary among the programs but usually include English, introductory calculus, chemistry, physics, and biology. Some also include social studies, humanities, and foreign language. To limit the number of qualified candidates, ten programs use academic criteria as a screening device. In order of importance, these include standardized tests, class rank, and GPA.

Personal characteristics are the next most important considerations in the selection of students for all programs. Attributes most frequently mentioned are maturity, motivation, avocational and extracurricular health-related activities, breadth, empathy, and independence. References, interviews, and personal statements are used in determining the quality of personal characteristics of applicants. Ten programs require references from teachers; six of the programs also accept references from other than high school teachers. Nine programs provide a standardized form for the reference. Fifteen of the combined degree programs require interviews, typically conducted by members of the admission/selection committees. Personal statements and essays are required of applicants to 16 programs. Thirteen programs specify the precise content of the essays. Five programs require two essays.

Nine programs use personal criteria as a screening device to limit the number of applicants. Many programs give special consideration to certain types of applicants. For example, 11 programs give special consideration to un-
Most important, as Table 1 shows, entrants in the 1990-91 classes not only met but exceeded the expected academic criteria set by the combined degree programs.

derrepresented minorities as defined by the AAMC, while none do so for children of physicians. Six of the programs restrict numbers of out-of-state students; seven do not offer admission to non-US citizens.

A third of the members of the admissions committees are female, and about a third are from racial minority groups. A little more than half hold a M.D. degree, and a third are Ph.D.s. Most (46%) of the members are from various clinical science disciplines; a third are basic scientists; and the remainder represent other disciplines such as the humanities and behavioral sciences.

Outcomes of the Admissions Process from High School

Seventeen of the 18 programs reported they are satisfied with the order of importance they give to selection factors. High school grades and standardized test scores (ACT and SAT) were given the most weight in selection, followed by interviews, personal statements, and references. Thirteen programs indicated that the quality of their applicants increased over the last five years. Five said that over the same period the size of their pool increased; four reported the size of their pool was steady, while one saw a decreased pool.

To fill the 1991 class, those programs with 50 or more places in their first year class offered, on average, admission to 40% more students than available slots. Those programs with 50 or fewer places offered admission to 50% more students than slots.

Most important, as Table 1 shows, entrants in the 1990-91 classes not only met but exceeded the expected academic criteria set by the combined degree programs. These current results match achievement levels of previous entering classes at individual programs (Herbut, Sodeman, Conly, and Asch 1969) (Blaustein and Kayne 1976) (Jacobs, Hinkley, and Pennell 1988).

Matriculants’ Qualification on Entry to the Medical School Phase

Seventeen of the eighteen schools require that students meet a minimum overall GPA, ranging from 2.5 to 3.5 (mean = 3.06) to move into the medical school stage of their degree program. The lower range represents a GPA covering both college and medical school-level coursework. In addition, nine schools require a minimum mathematics/science GPA ranging from 3.0 to 3.5 (mean = 3.20). Eleven programs require the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), but only four programs require students to achieve a predetermined score in order to proceed on to medical school.

With twelve programs reporting, the mean percentage of students who did not meet academic criteria for entrance to the medical phase of a combined degree program was 7% with a range of 5%-15%.

COMBINED DEGREE PROGRAMS

The criteria used to select students result in well qualified first-year matriculants, as judged by test scores, grades, and class rank. The noncognitive qualities of the matriculants, as a group, are difficult to describe since data collected by individual programs are not easily compared across institutions. Such data gathering instruments as the AAMC matriculating questionnaire, however, could offer a means to characterize entering students’ attitudes and values as Epstein et al. have demonstrated (Epstein, O’Sullivan, and Lindley 1991).
### Table 1.
**Expected and Observed Admission Criteria Data for 18 Medical Schools**

**With Combined Degree Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical School</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>Achievement Tests</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Class Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1188</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>&amp; 3</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1373</td>
<td>or &amp; 31</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>or 28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>90 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>or 85%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>or &amp; 33</td>
<td>&amp; 3</td>
<td>3.8 3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1284</td>
<td>or 29 30/</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>1395</td>
<td>or &amp; 31</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>or 91%</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>80 Res/93 Res 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>&amp; 90% 92%</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>&amp; &amp; 90% 28</td>
<td>&amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>or &amp; 29</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1344</td>
<td>&amp; &amp; 90% 28</td>
<td>&amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1379</td>
<td>or &amp; Program Initiated 1990</td>
<td>&amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>or 30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>or 36</td>
<td>3 .86</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>or 39</td>
<td>3 .95</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eighteen medical schools responding were:

1. UC, Riverside/UCLA School of Medicine
2. U of Miami
3. U of Health Sciences, Chicago Medical School/ Illinois Institute Technology
4. Northwestern U
5. Louisiana State U School of Medicine Shreveport
6. Boston U
7. U of Michigan
8. U of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine
9. Washington U School of Medicine
10. Brooklyn College/SUNY Brooklyn College of Medicine
11. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute/Albany Medical College
12. Union College/Albany Medical School
13. Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
14. Lehigh U/Medical College of Pennsylvania
15. Villanova U/Medical College of Pennsylvania
16. Penn State U/Jefferson Medical College
17. Brown U
18. UW Madison Medical School

† Source: '92-93 Admission Requirements, American Association of Medical Colleges
The selection criteria that combined degree students must meet for admission parallel those used for traditional medical school applicants who have graduated from college. For example, high school grades, ACT, SAT, and Achievement Tests substitute for undergraduate GPA and the MCAT. In addition, interviews, references, and personal statements assess personal characteristics of the traditional applicants (Caelleigh 1990). However, trends in the applicant pool from which traditional and combined degree programs select students have differed. The size and quality of the combined degree pool have typically increased over the past five years. On the other hand, after a four-year period of decline, the size of the traditional applicant pool has increased in the last three years; its quality, as judged by MCAT and GPA, has decreased slightly (Association of American Medical Colleges 1991).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this survey suggest that the academic criteria and personal characteristics sought among applicants to combined degree programs, together with the methods used to measure them, provide for the selection of highly qualified matriculants.

REFERENCES


Imagine this... it's registration day and all of your students have scheduled all their courses. There were absolutely no lines. The parking lot was empty. And some of your students never even got out of their pajamas.

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Transfer Articulation: Using a Team Approach

By ELAINE WEINMAN
Academic Advisor
Academic Advising Center
Montclair State College

JULIA TO DUTKA
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and Educational Media
Montclair State College

Elaine Weinman earned her B.A. from Hunter College and her M.A. from Fairleigh Dickinson University. During 12 years at Montclair, she contributed to the development of over 100 individual articulation agreements, serving as liaison between the Advising Center and the Provost’s Office.

Since authoring this article, Julia To Dutka became dean of the School of Education and Educational Services at Baruch College, CUNY. The articulation system described here was developed when she served as special assistant to the provost and vice president for academic affairs at Montclair.

In response to substantial obstacles faced by transfer students, Montclair-State College developed an articulation model based on a program-to-program approach. The system specifically addresses articulation issues related to course content, program goals, and curricular expectations. It coordinates contributions from all segments of the college community, and has effectively facilitated all facets of the articulation process.

Abstract

Growing numbers of traditional students are beginning their higher education at community colleges with the intention of transferring to four-year institutions. Cost has always been a major factor in a student’s decision to begin coursework at a two-year college, but today’s traditional student also feels the need for individual attention and personalized counseling both of which may be more accessible at a smaller institution (Collison 1991). Historically, community colleges have successfully developed two-year programs that prepare students for entry level positions in a wide range of service and technologically oriented professions. Now, however, equally important to the mission of the two-year college is the preparation of students for a smooth transition to a four-year college.

To facilitate transfer, many states have regulatory policies, stipulating the terms and conditions of transfer to a state college, to ensure that the transition is simple and efficient. In practice, however, transferring from a two-year to a four-year institution can turn into an academic and bureaucratic nightmare for students (Watkins 1990).

In 1973 the Board of Higher Education of New Jersey attempted to address transfer problems. It adopted a Full-Faith-and-Credit policy that guaranteed Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.) graduates from the state community colleges acceptance of all general education transfer credits upon their admission to a...
four-year state college. Montclair State College, the largest of the New Jersey state colleges, has been committed to implementing this policy. Nevertheless, it has become aware of the many obstacles still faced by transfer students who seek to continue their education at a four-year institution. Some of the problems are procedural; they are related to admissions procedures, course transferability, and program registration. Other difficulties lie in the academic and social readiness of the students as they meet increased intellectual challenges in a new environment. This article will discuss some of these problems and suggest how professionals at both the two-year and the four-year institutions can work together to resolve them.

DEFINING THE PROBLEMS

Perhaps the first step a student takes when contemplating transfer to a four-year college is to seek guidance from the transfer counselor at the two-year college. Many of these counselors are generally familiar with the programs at the four-year institutions to which their students regularly transfer. However, given the number of academic programs offered by four-year institutions and the programmatic changes which are taking place, it is virtually impossible for counselors to provide detailed information about transfer of credit to programs at specific institutions. The catalogs of the four-year institutions are also not particularly helpful in determining whether students’ previous coursework will satisfy program requirements. To address this problem, many two-year colleges have compiled lists of course equivalencies with four-year institutions. The list of equivalent courses is usually developed on the basis of course descriptions found in the catalogs. This course-by-course approach, though logical, has limited utility. While this listing may provide a wealth of information about how courses may presumably be comparable, it does not reflect program requirements of specific majors. It is entirely possible, for instance, for a mathematics course at a two-year college to be equivalent to a corresponding mathematics course at a four-year institution and yet be unacceptable in fulfilling the designated mathematics requirement of a particular program. Assessing course equivalency solely on the basis of catalog information, therefore, is not particularly helpful in determining the transferability of courses from one institution to another.

The Full-Faith-and-Credit policy only covers graduates with A.A. and A.S. degrees. Graduates with the Associate in Applied Science degree (A.A.S.), who are often uncertain as to how their credentials will be evaluated, may be dissuaded from transferring. Even A.A. and A.S. graduates may be unprepared for other surprises. For example, students may not be aware that certain programs at the four-year institution have particular entrance requirements, such as a specified grade point average or the completion of prerequisites. Such students may find themselves in a holding pattern and experience problems with registration. These students, who have fulfilled general education requirements but are not yet eligible for enrollment in their desired major, may find that they do not have courses to take. Even students who are in the best of circumstances after completing the admission, evaluation, and registration process may still experience difficulty adjusting to the academic demands of the four-year college (Beckenstein 1992). Given a difference in emphasis in the
The first step was to create an administrative process at the College to facilitate information input, program review, and agreement approval by the different divisions participating in the process.

Central to Montclair's transfer system is an articulation model based on a program-to-program approach. Rather than dealing with course-by-course equivalencies that are too vague to be useful to students planning their programs, this approach clarifies the expectations and requirements of specific academic majors. From the start, Montclair also recognized that the present system of delegating all transfer issues solely to counselors and other student support services would not serve the students well. Given that many of the transfer problems are academic in nature, it realized that faculty must play an active role in paving the way for an effective system (American Council on Education 1991). After three years of exploration, Montclair now has a system that coordinates the work of all segments of the college community.

The Provost/Vice-President for Academic Affairs

Because the transfer process cuts across different divisions of the institution, there was a need for centralized direction that would give structure to existing individual initiatives and bring those efforts to fruition. At Montclair State College, the provost, who is also vice president for academic affairs, played a key role in shaping the articulation project. From the start, he identified the project as a priority for the institution and supported the allocation of necessary resources. As all transfer evaluations occurred in the Academic Advising Center, it was designated as the administrative unit to house the articulation project. However, since the core of the project necessitates coordination of academic content contained in the curriculum of participating institutions, the provost realized that faculty, the driving force behind any curricular endeavors, had to become an integral part of the process.

The provost set in motion a process of academic review to facilitate articulation. To encourage faculty involvement in the project, he appointed his faculty administrative assistant as central facilitator. She was responsible for using a program-to-program approach to develop articulation agreements between Montclair State College and two-year colleges. The first step was to create an administrative process at the College to facilitate information input, program review, and agreement approval by the different divisions participating in the process. Based on the
enrollment patterns of transfer students, two-year colleges which regularly sent Montclair students were then identified. Montclair's team then met with the vice president of academic affairs at these institutions, as well as other involved personnel, to discuss course content, define program goals, and resolve differences in curricular expectation. The agreements reached for individual programs on the basis of these meetings were then delineated on forms that specified equivalent courses in the major and in general education at both institutions.

The Academic Deans

Academic deans played an important role in encouraging faculty participation from the five schools of the College. All deans attended meetings with two-year colleges. Based on their understanding of the different programs offered at their schools, the deans provided useful input to protect the integrity of their programs and, in appropriate cases, specify program variations for transfer students that would prepare them for academic work at the College.

The Department Chairs

The department chairs, being directly involved in the curriculum and instruction of the programs offered by the academic departments, were central to the articulation project. Working with the faculty in their departments, they reviewed courses and programs offered by two-year colleges and selected the appropriate courses to accept. The process was often extensive, involving discussion with chairs and faculty from two-year colleges, reviewing course outlines, and attending joint meetings. Issues related to students' proficiency in writing, appreciation of non-western perspectives, and mastery of theoretical premises of academic content were among the topics explored in these meetings. Department chairs also worked closely with the academic advisors at the College.

The Academic Advisor

An academic advisor was appointed at Montclair to address issues dealing with course equivalencies for general education requirements. Using a program-to-program approach, the academic advisor's first responsibility was a thorough review of the courses taken in the student's program at the community college. It was important to ascertain, for example, whether most of the credits in the student's program would cover specific area requirements or if the program allowed for a significant number of credits designated as electives.

The advisor's second major responsibility was to determine equivalencies between general education courses at the community colleges and Montclair State College. This task involved surveying community college catalogs and consulting Montclair State College (MSC) faculty when course titles suggested equivalency but course content reflected curricular differences. The academic advisor then prepared the portion of the articulation document which indicated how the courses taken in a designated program at the sending institution could be used to satisfy the general education requirements at Montclair. This section included an attached addendum identifying courses at the sending institution that were electives for their students but would satisfy specific general education requirements at Montclair State College. There was a conscientious effort to provide information that would be free of ambiguities so that students in occupational programs as well as transfer programs could make their elective choices most effectively or take additional courses at the community college that would be applicable.

Based on their understanding of programs offered at the two-year colleges, the academic deans provided useful input to protect the integrity of their programs. The academic advisors then outlined how the courses taken in a designated program at the sending institution could be used to satisfy the general education requirements at Montclair.
The director of admissions provided the Provost's Office with pertinent statistics on the transfer patterns of community colleges.

The director of admissions provided the Provost's Office with pertinent statistics on the transfer patterns of community colleges. This information was essential in identifying which two-year colleges should be targeted for priority in the articulation process. He also identified other community colleges, not normally considered within commuting distance to MSC, that could be included in the articulation process to broaden the geographic area. All completed documents were routed to the director for review and signature so that he could alert the articulation team to any specific provisions that might be necessary or advisable in an agreement to ease the admissions process for community college students.

The registrar also reviewed and signed all articulation documents. He played an important role in alerting the articulation team to possible equivalency problems and difficulties that could result when transfer students go through the audit process prior to graduation. Since the numbers of entering transfer students are continually increasing at Montclair State, MSC anticipates that the role of the Registrar's Office (in need projection) will grow in importance. For example, as larger numbers of students enter with degrees exempting them from general education requirements, the need to ascertain which upper level courses to offer and where adequate seats are available will increase, since these students usually register after MSC students have completed their registration.

In the future, the team approach to articulation will become more important as administration, faculty, and staff realize that the growing number of transfer students must be adequately prepared when they enter the four-year college. For instance, Montclair State has already recognized that in addition to meeting their new academic demands, students are also faced with the challenge of adjusting to student life in the new environment. Because many of the orientation programs at four-year institutions are designed exclusively for freshmen, they do not address the special needs of transfer students. To address these student concerns, Montclair State's student activities unit has begun working with the Admissions, Registrar, and Advising Divisions to organize an orientation program developed specifically for transfer students.

These efforts at MSC are a beginning and a precursor to investigating the feasibility of faculty exchanges, joint admissions, and other student oriented programs that will further enhance the transfer process.

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Follow the Leader: Some Thoughts on Leadership

Nearly every bookstore carries articles and books on leadership, ranging from classroom leadership, business leadership, the science and art of leadership to leadership for the twenty-first century. Some universities even award master's and doctoral degrees in educational leadership.

A vast body of current literature has been written about how to become a leader and the need for bold, new leaders. Business, education, and government agencies each spend millions of dollars training and encouraging potential leaders. Most people, when asked, would concur that our future as a country rests in the hands of powerful leaders yet to come.

But perhaps the emphasis on leadership training is missing the boat in the long run. As Warren Bennis states in Why Leaders Can't Lead (1989), the leadership training approach may be a mistake:

...billions of dollars are spent annually by and on would-be leaders, yet we have no leaders, and though many corporations now offer leadership courses to their more promising employees, corporate America has lost its lead in the world market. In fact, to this point, more leaders have been made by accident, circumstances, and sheer will than have been made by all the leadership courses (p. 37).

If Bennis's statement is true, then perhaps we should rethink our whole approach to leadership in the United States. Lao-tzu wrote, in the sixth century B.C., "To lead the people, walk behind them." These sage words imply that a good leader knows how to follow. A good leader can feel the pulse and direction of the group and can elicit and follow the collective wisdom provided. The good leader can focus on the bigger picture and see how each individual contributes to the whole. The ultimate leader is someone perceptive enough to follow the lead of the group and release the potential of individuals. Often, the best leader guides and directs without ever being noticed, like an invisible but powerful force (Rinne and Karl 1990).

The idea that leaders are actually people who serve others clearly emerges in Robert Greenleaf's Servant Leadership (1977), in which he states that a leader's power derives from the ultimate ability to serve. People "will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted servants. To the extent that this principle prevails in the future, the only true viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant-led" (p. 330). Greenleaf describes good leadership as caring, supporting, and serving to the extent that fosters Trust. Followers who trust the leader's ability to satisfy their needs will give the leader influence and power (Adams and Yoder 1985). Thus, the tenets of good leadership are similar to the characteristics of good followership (Bass 1960, Kelly 1988, Sergiovanni 1990). In fact, the most likely way to become a leader is to become a superb follower. The skills of a follower, honed to perfection, become the natural born traits of a leader who has matured, and has gained a larger vision of the world through age, experience, education, and, possibly, luck.

To breed a new set of leaders, we should hold conferences on "The Art of Followership" or "Followership for the Future" and award degrees in Educational Followership. In the workplace, and in the classroom, workers and students are expected to be good followers who use many of the same skills as leaders. The most successful leaders in the world in any profession are surrounded by competent and constructive followers. If people learn how to be great followers, then when, and if, the opportunity for leadership arises, they will be prepared to follow through and serve in that capacity.

By examining the most crucial aspects of leadership according to Bennis, we can see how important they are to followership.

Integrity. The best followers are honest and trustworthy, moral, intelligent, and perceptive. They carry out orders, but use judgment and even offer advice and consultation to the leader (Bass 1960). They can be trusted to complete an assignment and make appropriate decisions because they believe and understand the objectives of the institution. As independent, critical thinkers, effective followers are insightful, candid, and fearless, forming their own opinions and high standards (Kelly 1988).

Dedication. All organizations need followers who are faithful and committed to the cause. Indeed, one key to successful leadership is the degree to which the leader can communicate the mission and purpose of the institution and convince followers of its validity, through logic, personal be-
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ief, incentives, and association (Bass 1960). Dedicated followers are more likely to “go the extra mile” and are loyal to the goals of the organization. With true commitment, morale remains high and the leader benefits from the self-correcting nature of the group (Kelly 1988). Along with commitment, good followers bring competence and focus to the job as well. They seek out learning experiences focusing on overlooked problems and developing solutions to take to the leader. Their broad-based dedication and competence allow them to view co-workers as colleagues, and not as competitors (Kelly 1988).

Magnanimity. If all followers were noble, kind, forgiving, and generous, then imagine the type of cooperative working situation that would exist. Fellow workers would think nothing of helping out and picking up when others needed assistance. A community atmosphere would permeate the institution, free of petty squabbles and personality conflicts. These followers would have good self-images and would be easygoing, friendly, and purposeful.

Openness. The most effective followers embrace change, adapt to new processes, procedures, policies, and, most importantly, are flexible and positive. These followers also generate new ideas and share them with leaders. This characteristic is certainly a function of personality, but also a function of the kind of work environment created by the leader. Effective followers exercise self-control and initiative and see themselves basically as equal to the leader. They are much more likely to disagree openly with leadership and to offer opinions (Kelly 1988).

Creativity. The healthiest organization needs followers who are creative and imaginative, in the most positive sense of the words. These are people who still carry with them a sense of wonder and innocence about the world, and are idealists. The important work of an organization usually rests with the front-line employees: consequently, their ability to generate new and creative ideas to assist them in their duties is crucially important.

These five basic tenets of leadership are easily transferrable to the concept of followership. The more evident they are in both groups, the more successful and effective the particular office, school, business, or organization will be.

The primary goal of any successful leader is to create a class of followers who are essentially miniature leaders with similar skills and characteristics, people who “no longer require constant and direct supervision by the leader” (Rinne and Karl 1990, p. 7). The leader accomplishes this by creating a “climate that encourages people to learn and grow, prizes their contributions, and cherishes their independence and autonomy” (Bennis and Clawson 1989, p. 146).

Many will contend that true leaders are born, not made (Owens 1973). But this approach to leadership may be inadvertently misguided. As Robert Kelly (1988) asserts in “In Praise of Followers”:

Most organizations assume that leadership has to be taught but that everyone knows how to follow. This assumption is based on three faulty premises: 1) that leaders are more important than followers, 2) that following is simply doing what you are told to do, and 3) that followers inevitably draw their energy and aims, even their talent, from the leader (p. 147).

Our emphasis on training leaders may be creating a class of people interested more in power, money, influence, and status than in serving the best interests of an institution or society. If, however, we focus our efforts on helping people become genuine followers, then not only will we foster a more productive and creative citizenry, but we will be establishing a large pool of people who will know firsthand how to serve as leaders when the future opportunity calls.

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