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HIGH RISK.

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DESCRIPTORS- *DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, *COLLEGE ADMISSION, *COLLEGE PROGRAMS, *PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS, *EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS, MINORITY GROUPS, SCHOOL POLICY, ADMISSION CRITERIA, DROPOUT RATE,

THIS ARTICLE REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PROGRAM TO ADMIT "HIGH RISK" DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. DATA WERE GATHERED FROM 159 PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS, 84 OF WHICH REPORTED SOME INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR HIGH RISK STUDENTS. DISCUSSED ARE SUCH ISSUES AS THE EXTENT OF THE COLLEGES' COMMITMENT, THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE INVOLVEMENT OR LACK OF INVOLVEMENT OF THE COLLEGES IN THESE PROGRAMS, AND APPROACHES USED WITH HIGH RISK STUDENTS. THE EXTENT AND SUCCESS OF PROGRAMS FOR HIGH RISK STUDENTS IN EIGHT PUBLIC AND FIVE PRIVATE COLLEGES ARE SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED, WITH BRIEF MENTION GIVEN TO SEVERAL ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS. INCLUDED IS A LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH INCREASING HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE "SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT," VOLUME 3, NUMBER 7, MARCH 1968. (NH)

High Risk

Colleges and universities have been urged to establish quotas and programs for the disadvantaged. Here is what some are doing.

By John Egerton

It is recommended that each senior college and university adopt a "high risk" quota for the admission of disadvantaged students and provide remedial and compensatory programs as necessary to raise these students to standard levels of academic performance.

So reads a paragraph on page 36 of *The Negro and Higher Education in the South,* the much-discussed report issued last August by a special commission of the Southern Regional Education Board. The report attracted considerable attention, but none of the debate and controversy surrounding it [Southern Education Report, Nov. 1967] has touched on the complex question of high risk quotas.

Just how complex the question really is can be quickly discovered by even the most casual exploration. Terms like "high risk," "quota" and "disadvantaged" are relative, meaning different things to different people. The effectiveness and value of remedial and compensatory programs are unproved and in dispute. Standardized tests to measure aptitude, achievement, ability or intelligence are both praised and condemned in heated arguments. And underlying all of this is an unexplored no-man's land which separates the prevailing culture of the American college—white, middle class and reasonably well-schooled—from the masses of citizens whose race or social class, or both, identifies them as "different."

For the past three months, Southern Education Report has been engaged in an intensive inquiry into the issue of higher education for these "different" students. The starting point was the SREB commission's recommendation quoted above; along the way, questionnaires were sent to 215 selected colleges and universities, a dozen campuses from Massachusetts to California were visited, about 10 others were con-

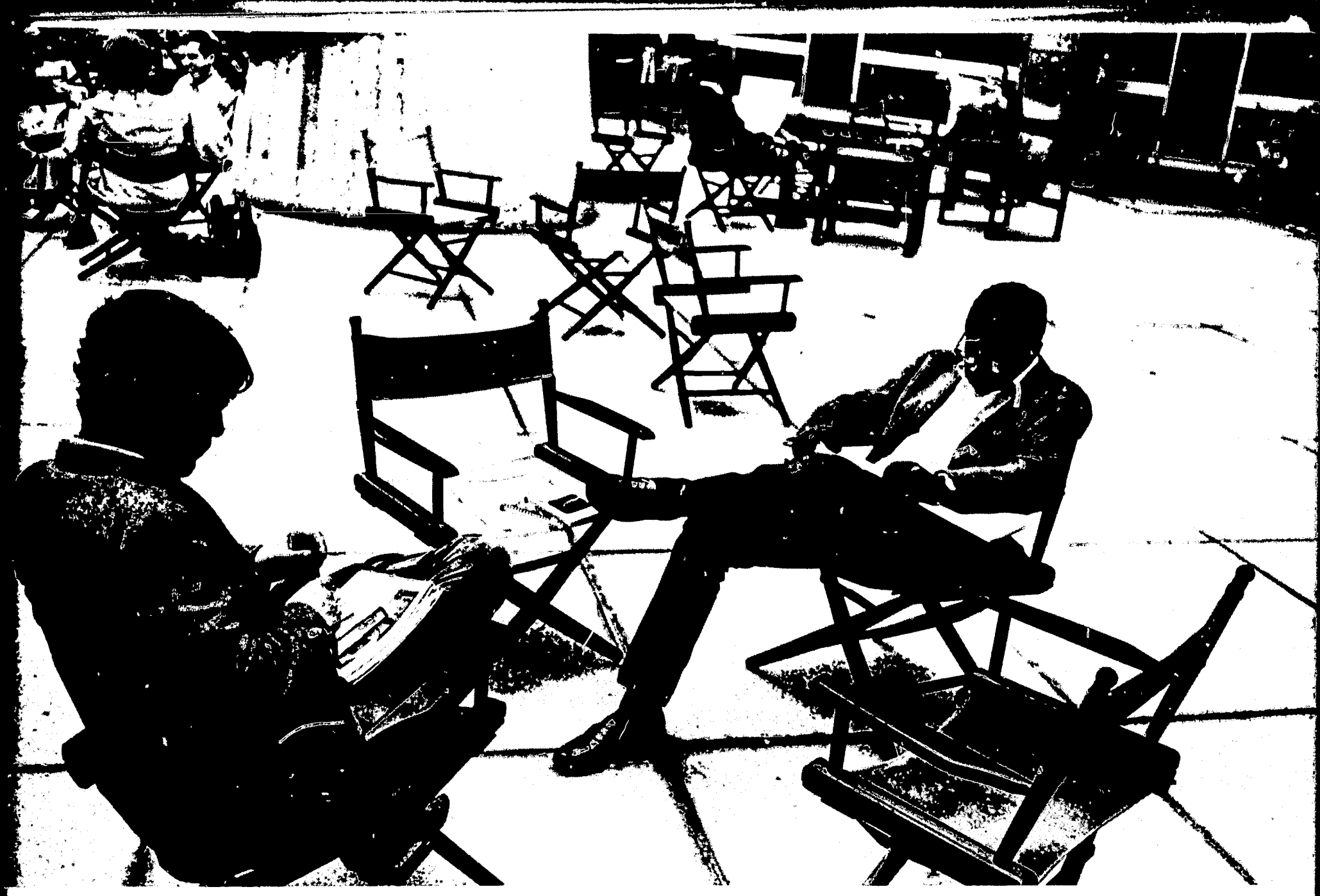
tacted by telephone, and some 25 organizations and individuals with some expertise in the field were consulted. In this and an article to be published next month, the information gathered in that study will be reported.

The terms "high risk" and "disadvantaged" are used interchangeably in this report to designate students whose lack of money, low standardized test scores, erratic high-school records and race/class/cultural characteristics, taken together, place them at a disadvantage in competition with the preponderant mass of students in the colleges they wish to enter. They are students who are long-shot prospects for success, but who demonstrate some indefinable and unmeasurable quality—motivation, creativity, resilience, leadership, personality or whatever—which an admissions officer might interpret as a sign of strength offsetting the customary indicators of success.

It can be argued that the predominantly Negro colleges and universities, most of which are in the South, have always taken large numbers of high risk students. To the extent that lack of money, low test scores and poor high-school preparation measure a high risk, this is probably true, but in terms of race and class and culture these students are not a small minority in the setting of their particular college. For this reason, and because the intent of the SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT survey was to discover what is being done by predominantly white colleges, the Negro institutions were not included in the survey. Likewise excluded were all junior colleges, because they are essentially open-admission institutions without degree programs.

The 215 colleges and universities to which questionnaires were mailed are roughly 13 per cent of all the nation's four-year institutions. They include large and small, public and private, urban and non-urban, prestigious and obscure institutions which an extensive inquiry indicated are among the ones most likely to be involved in high risk programs. The questionnaire asked whether they have "an organized program of higher education for disadvantaged students whose cultural, economic and educational handicaps (in comparison with the regular student body) classify them as 'high risk' enrollees." Those having such programs were then asked several questions designed to indicate the nature and extent of the programs.

In brief outline, returns from 159 institutions (74 per cent) show 84 of them (53 per cent) to have some measure of involvement in what could be considered high risk activity, while the other 75 reported no involvement at all. Among the colleges responding affirmatively, it is difficult in some cases to ascertain how big a risk they have taken and how far they have gone to make it pay off. Of the total, however, it appears that no more than 20 have drawn extensively from the array of possible supportive elements—recruiting, lower entrance requirements, financial aid, counseling and guidance, lighter course loads, transitional year programs, pre-freshman summer programs, tutoring, five-year degree programs, separate classes,



remedial courses, special housing arrangements, year-round programs, and redesigned curriculums. And of those which are using most of these compensatory practices, no more than six or eight are working with students who are unquestionably high risks.

These latter few institutions are plumbing the limits of higher education, in areas where American colleges have never dared to venture. They are, in effect, trying to see how far they can reach until their resources and knowledge are insufficient to transmit higher education of acceptable quality. This kind of experimentation is entered into with boldness by some and with fear and trembling by others, and it is variously viewed as admirable sacrifice, misguided idealism or outrageous tinkering. It is producing some failures on the part of both colleges and students, and some successes that can fairly be called spectacular. But perhaps most important of all, it is providing new information about some of the most perplexing mysteries of the education process.

Before examining some of the responses to the questionnaire, a few general observations need to be made:

• On campuses where debate about higher education for high risks has begun, it often centers not on how to do it, but on whether it should be done at all. Many educators contend that the cumulative effects of race and class discrimination are irredeemable by the time a youngster reaches college age, and others say that even if colleges could help they should not be expected to make up for the deficiencies of prior education.

• In spite of the federal government's sizable outlays of scholarship, loan and work-study funds for students, there is ample statistical evidence that rising costs and rising admissions standards make college progressively less accessible to the disadvantaged student. Colleges appear likely to become more stratified along class lines, and possibly along race lines as well.

• No major foundation has entered the high risk field with the intent of discovering the limits of a college's capability to reach and teach disadvantaged students, and with the exception of a venture by the Office of Economic Opportunity, neither has the federal government. There are two federal programs, however, which are leading large numbers of disadvantaged students up to the college doors. One is Upward Bound [SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT, Sept. 1966, and Jan.-Feb. 1968], OEO's college-prep program; last fall, over 4,500 Upward Bound "graduates" were enrolled in college. The other program, known as Contracts to Encourage Full Utilization of Educational Talent, is operated by the U. S. Office of Education. It is essentially a co-operative talent search project in which colleges and nonprofit corporations seek out, counsel and help to place disadvantaged students in higher education.

• A majority of the students classified as high risks

by the colleges in the survey are Negroes, but poor whites, Puerto Ricans, American Indians and Mexican Americans are also included in sizable numbers.

• The most daring high risk programs seem to have resulted more from the concern of a single individual than from any other factor. Key people with persuasion, flexibility, latitude and leverage—and with the support of faculty, administration and students—are the ones who have the most noteworthy programs. Most of them have developed these programs without detailed knowledge of what is being tried elsewhere in the country.

• Approximately half of the questionnaires were sent to private or church-related institutions (by chance, not design), and the other half went to state or municipal institutions. If the list of 215 had not included at least one major public university in each state, the South would have been grossly underrepresented; only seven institutions in the entire region were mentioned to SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT by anyone as having, or likely to have, any involvement in high risk activity.

• Response to the questionnaire almost precisely matches the sample list itself: half public, half private. But 60 per cent of the responding public institutions said they have no high risk programs of any sort, while more than two-thirds of the private ones reported some involvement. Responses from about 45 senior state universities, most of them land-grant institutions, show that fully three-fourths of them have no high risk activity. In the 17 Southern and border states, 17 of the 20 major state universities in the survey returned questionnaires, but only two of them —West Virginia University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute—reported anything resembling a program for high risk students.

• Most major universities, particularly the state-supported ones, have long had high risk programs of a sort, albeit for a different kind of student. Athletes on scholarship, foreign students supported by the federal government, and even at times the low-achieving son or daughter of a prominent alumnus or benefactor, have presented institutions with the whole range of problems encountered with minorities and the poor, and every effort has been made to help them succeed.

• Interest in disadvantaged students who are below an institution's safety margin, however, is in conflict with a welter of seemingly immutable hallmarks of most colleges. Admissions standards are on the rise; undergraduates diminish in importance as graduate programs and research grow more attractive; schools with selective admissions policies take the best students—and keep them—while nonselective ones have high enrollments, high attrition, and increasingly less time for even the middle-class students who get off to a slow start. And high risk students have neither the money, the prestige, the political pull nor the probability of success to make them attractive prospects for most colleges.

• The reasons for having high risk programs most frequently mentioned on the questionnaire were these: a tradition of public service, a sense of social responsibility, the historic mission of state universities and land-grant colleges, and the desire to have a diversity of races, classes, cultures and abilities in the student body.

• The reasons most often given for limited involvement, or no involvement at all, were: lack of funds, enrollment pressures, political worries, conflict with the institutional mission, fear of lowering institutional standards, lack of faculty support, inflexibility of the institution's system, and priority commitment to reg-

ular students.

• The biggest question facing institutions helping high risk students seems to be whether they should be accorded special attention or treated in the same manner as all other students. Some say high risk students have enough problems to overcome without the stigma of identification as a risk, and institutions which subscribe to this point of view make every effort to keep the students' academic and economic handicaps concealed, sometimes even from the students themselves. The opposite argument holds that students who are genuine risks must be given support that is bound to be visible—lighter class loads, special courses, extensive tutoring and the like—or their chances for success will be greatly reduced. The risk students themselves understandably have mixed emotions about the question, expressing at times both resentment and appreciation for either approach.

• Standardized tests, principally the Scholastic Aptitude Test of the College Entrance Examination Board (called SAT, or College Boards), were frequently cited by respondents to the questionnaire as being "inadequate" or "incomplete" or "biased" measurements of probable success for high risks. The tests are a live issue among educators, but the debate, though directly relevant to the high risk question, is too involved to be related here. The Winter 1968 issue of *College Board Review*, quarterly journal of CEEB, is entirely devoted to matters concerning the tests and the disadvantaged student. The SAT is actually two tests—verbal and mathematical—each scored on a scale of 200 to 800. Scores on the two tests are often quoted in combined form, e.g., 1,000. The widely used tests are taken during the senior year of high school. The national average for those who take the exam is about 1,000; if all high-school seniors took it, it is estimated that the average would be about 750.

• A risk for Harvard, where the median SAT score is about 1,300, would be a prize catch for many an institution which accepts any high-school graduate. Not every youngster could succeed at Harvard, nor could Harvard succeed with every youngster—without surrendering its position (based in some measure on

SAT scores) as the foremost institution in the nation. Discovering how "different" it can permit some of its students to be, how many such students it can take and how much it can do to assure their success are things that Harvard—and every other college and university—can only do on its own.

These 14 general observations outlined above summarize some of the major findings of the SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT survey. A brief look at the high risk programs of eight public and five private institutions follows.

When a public university without rigid entrance requirements is faced with the pressure of rising enrollments, it generally must choose one of two courses: raise admissions standards or increase the number of failures. Those with formula budgets based on the number of students enrolled are likely to choose the latter course, and some of these institutions now lose (or drop) as much as half of an entering class by the end of the first year. In essence, they accept a good many students who might be considered risks, but they make no special effort to keep them. Some of these universities have not only raised the attrition level but become more selective in admissions as well, in an effort to become competitive and prestigious and "national" in orientation and stature. Their costs have risen too; a recent survey by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges showed that student charges at its member institutions are up 15 per cent from just three years ago. All of this, plus the fact that a significant percentage of disadvantaged students come from racial minority groups, has prompted little daring or urgency in the universities' approach to the problem.

There are a few state and municipal universities, however, which have begun to make some significant contributions to the education of disadvantaged youngsters. Among the most outstanding are the University of California, Southern Illinois University and the University of Wisconsin, and these three, together with two private institutions, will be reported on in detail in the April issue of SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT. Eight others are summarized here.

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The University of Oregon enrolled 64 Upward Bound graduates last fall, more than any other predominantly white four-year institution in the country, and is making an effort to help these and other high risk students succeed at college. In all, 130 Oregon students (undergraduate enrollment: 10,000) are part of a program that involves recruiting, financial aid, lower admission requirements, extra counseling and guidance, some special courses and other compensations. Approximately equal numbers of whites, Negroes, American Indians and Mexican Americans are in the program, which is under the direction of Dr. Arthur Pearl, a professor of education, who also heads the university's Upward Bound project. The high risk program was started in 1964 with 75 students; about half of the entering group each year drops out or flunks out before the year is over. Dr. Pearl says the program has been "only minimally effective," and he attributes that to the institution's lack of preparation for such students. "Many faculty resent their [the risk students'] existence," he says. Few of the faculty are trained to work effectively with such youngsters, he adds.

Clashes between directors of high risk programs and the faculty have apparently taken place at several institutions. They underscore a point made earlier: that the extent and success of high risk programs are limited by the co-operation and involvement of the faculty.

Western Washington State College in Bellingham, which has 5,900 undergraduate students, is also drawing heavily on Upward Bound to include 50 high risk students a year in its freshman class. The college waives entrance requirements on the recommendation of Sy E. Schwartz, who oversees the high risk program and directs the college's Upward Bound project. Pre-college summer sessions, specially designed courses and tutoring are among the compensatory practices used.

Temple University in Philadelphia, a once-private institution now part of Pennsylvania's state system of higher education, reports 250 high risk students among its 12,800 undergraduates. About 80 per cent of the students are Negroes. The program, under the direc-

tion of Assistant Dean of Men J. Otis Smith, includes a variety of compensatory practices, up to but not including specially designed courses.

The University of Michigan this year has 327 students—about 85 per cent of them Negroes—in an opportunity awards program that involves recruiting, financial aid, and academic and personal counseling and guidance. Robert L. Marion, assistant director of admissions, is in charge of the program. The first-year dropout/flunkout rate for students in the program is about 45 per cent, compared to a reported 20 per cent for the freshman class at large. No special courses or classes are offered. One of Michigan's prime motivations in entering the program was to increase the number of minority-group students on campus. The program is limited to Michigan residents. While the recruiting effort is fairly extensive, the risk the university is willing to take is not great; in essence, it is seeking students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have at least a B-average high-school record and other indicators of probable success in college.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, the only state university in the South reporting a high risk effort of any size, has 49 students this year (among 8,500 undergraduates) who have been recruited through the university's own Upward Bound program and other sources. About two-thirds of the students are Negroes. Virginia Tech is one of six Southern universities (and the only public one) to receive Rockefeller Foundation funds for recruitment and financial aid to disadvantaged students. The primary forms of assistance offered these students are financial aid and counseling/guidance; admissions requirements are relaxed only slightly, and once admitted, the students take the same classes and course loads as other students. Like Michigan and a number of other universities, Virginia Tech is trying to broaden the racial and cultural and socio-economic makeup of its student body; it is not taking students so ill-prepared for college that they constitute a high risk for the institution.

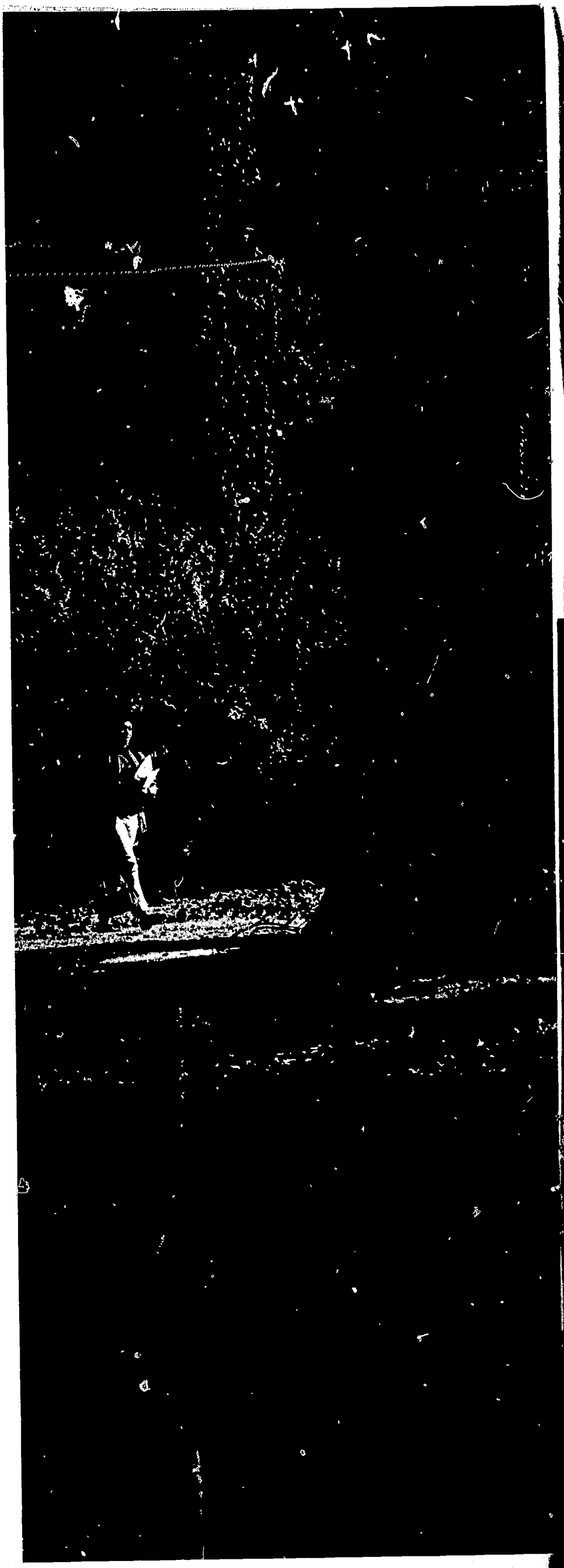
The City University of New York, a municipal university with six senior college campuses in the city and about 25,000 undergraduate students, reports

Dr. Gwen Norrell, shown here talking with a freshman from Detroit, is the "godmother" of Michigan State University's Detroit Project. Dr. Norrell, who grew up in the little Arkansas town of Eudora, believes that her rural Southern background helps her understand the problems of Negroes from Northern cities as well as Southern farms. She's now a professor in Michigan State's Counseling Center and psychology department. Replying to a question about counseling culturally deprived students, she told Southern Education Report: "The counselor should be able to love and commit himself—and this must be honest, for if it is not, these kids will soon know. There is a cultural differential between the counselor and the disadvantaged kid. To transcend this differential, the counselor must be able to experiment with living through the student's experience rather than resort to observation exclusively from without. Between any two people who try to reach each other by the spoken word stands the history and experience of their whole lives, and only as the counselor understands himself and is willing to live with the other can he be understood."

(through Dr. Leslie Burger, director of the SEEK program) that it has approximately 1,500 high risk students this year. CUNY is a tuition-free institution for graduates of academic-curriculum programs in the New York City public schools; the SEEK project will accept graduates from nonacademic programs and persons with high-school equivalency diplomas. The program, which was started a year ago, is open to students whose high-school average in academic subjects is 70 or better; normally, an average of 85 is expected of entering students. Compensatory practices supporting the SEEK program include stipends based on need, intensive counseling and guidance, tutoring and small classes. Financial support for the program comes from the city and state governments. About 90 per cent of the students are Negro or Puerto Rican.

Michigan State University announced last summer (just before the Detroit riots) that it was going to recruit high risk students from the inner-city high schools of Detroit. The program, under the direction of Dr. Gordon A. Sabine, vice president for special projects, was started last fall with 66 Negro students. Beginning next summer, 25 students will be added to the program each quarter. A Detroit high-school principal, Dr. Lloyd Cofer, has been appointed to direct the Detroit Project beginning next summer. No special classes or courses are available for the students, but their financial needs are met and they begin with a lighter class load. The major emphasis of the program thus far has been in counseling and guidance; Dr. Gwen Norrell of the university's counseling center fills a key role in this process, and she also has some authority to decide how big a risk the university will take and how long it will stick with the students. Thus far, the risk has been considerable, and while five students made all F's the first quarter and were dropped, 32 are doing quite well and 27 others are still hanging on (2 students dropped out for personal reasons). Faculty involvement in the program has not been extensive; the big factor in the students' favor appears to be Dr. Norrell's counseling, persuasion and encouragement. By all the standard predictors of success—test scores, high-school record and the like—the students in the Detroit Project rank considerably below their class. They are, by every measurement except motivation, a high risk—and nobody knows how to measure motivation.

Michigan State has between 600 and 800 Negro students in an enrollment of close to 40,000 and about a dozen Negro faculty members among 1,900 persons with faculty rank. Some of the Negro faculty accuse the university of "massive tokenism," and say there is little commitment on the part of the faculty to solving race and class problems. This feeling carries over to the Detroit Project students, who feel both appreciation for the chance to get a good college education and resentment against their identification as risks. Actually, that identification is slight; the students are scattered instead of clustered in campus housing, classes and the like, and there are few if



Dr. Arthur Pearl, University of Oregon: "Efforts to develop a successful college experience for these [disadvantaged] youngsters are hindered by the elitism of higher education. Many programs are designed to make students fail, and those who survive, who stick it out and conform to the mold, are judged the winners. But it is colleges which are failing kids, not the other way around. The kids aren't getting in, or through, college because we don't know how to teach them, not because they don't know how to learn."

any compensations they receive which make them stand out as separate from the rest of the student body. Beginning next summer, the university will conduct a precollege preparatory program in Detroit for students entering the project.

The University of Connecticut, with about 7,500 undergraduate students on its main campus, began last fall a high risk program for 20 students, most of them Negroes. Concerned about "our charge, our responsibility as a state university and a land-grant institution," several administrators and faculty members developed a program which started with an intensive six-week summer session and now includes lower admission requirements, complete financial assistance, counseling and guidance, lighter class loads and tutoring. Assistant Director of Admissions William Trueheart, Dean of Students Robert Hewes and Dr. Richard Blankenburg, an assistant professor of English, have been the principal organizers of the project. They gathered the names of 200 prospects from throughout Connecticut and leaned heavily on recommendations and personal interviews to make the selection of 20. None of the students would have been normally admissible to the university, but they were what Trueheart calls "calculated risks." They had SAT scores ranging as much as 280 points below the class median, their high-school records were erratic and they were all below the financial poverty mark, but on the basis of commendations from their home communities and their own demonstrated desire, they looked like the kind of "risk" the university felt it could and should take. Early indications are that most of them will succeed, and plans are being made to admit another 20—perhaps more—next fall.

These eight public institutions represent a range of

Fred Glimp, Dean of Harvard College: "Diversity in our student body is every bit as much an asset as in our faculty. Objective measures don't tell us much about disadvantaged students, especially Negroes. We take 10 or 15 students a year who score at about the national average on the College Boards, and we also turn down some who make perfect scores on those exams. Quite often these kids with low Board scores but a lot of toughness and resilience will outperform their classmates. The ones who do well have more of an impact than our regular students."

SOME AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE BROADENING OF OPPORTUNITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

- **The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students,** 6 E. 82nd St., New York City, has for 20 years been helping Negroes enter college. Last year it counseled with more than 7,000 students, more than 85 per cent of whom enrolled. NSSFNS has always concentrated on students most in need of its services. In earlier years that meant the very best Negro students; now that the best are in demand at a great many colleges, youngsters with SAT scores in the 800's and 900's get a lion's share of the agency's attention.

- **Southern Education Foundation,** 811 Cypress St., N.E., Atlanta, has been contributing to the education of Negroes in the South for more than 100 years. A 1967 booklet of the foundation, "Higher Educational Opportunities for Southern Negroes," lists a variety of programs and sources of assistance.

- **The College Entrance Examination Board,** 475 Riverside Drive, New York City, published *Compensatory Education for the Disadvantaged,* by Edmund W. Gordon and Doxey A. Wilkerson, in 1966. It also publishes *College Board Review,* a quarterly journal which has devoted considerable space (including the entire Winter 1968 issue) to educational problems of the disadvantaged.

- **The Rockefeller Foundation** since 1964 has funded about 20 institutional projects and two co-operative efforts involving 25 additional colleges, all designed to recruit and enroll disadvantaged students in higher education. Some of these institutions have taken considerable risks in selecting their students; most have not. All, however, have added students whose race and class are different from students previously enrolled. The intent, says a foundation official, is "not spectacular slumming, but finding minority kids who can make it."

- **The University of North Carolina YMCA-YWCA** annually publishes a booklet called "College Opportunities for Southern Negro Students" and distributes it free to counselors at high schools in the South.

- **The California Co-ordinating Council for Higher Education** has a booklet, "Increasing Opportunities in Higher Education for Disadvantaged Students," which reports on efforts in the state of California and contains a bibliography and information on financial aid.

- **The University of Wisconsin Institute of Human Relations** issued a booklet in 1964 called "Blueprint for Action," in which the Big Ten universities, Wayne State University and the University of Chicago pledged themselves to take an active role in furthering educational opportunities for Negroes and other minorities.

- **Changing Times** magazine has for a number of years published information on how to prepare for college, how to choose a college and where to find colleges with room for more students. Sidney Sulkin, a senior editor of the magazine, has written a book, *Complete Planning for College* (Harper and Row, 1968), which includes chapters on colleges for C students and educational opportunities for Negro students.

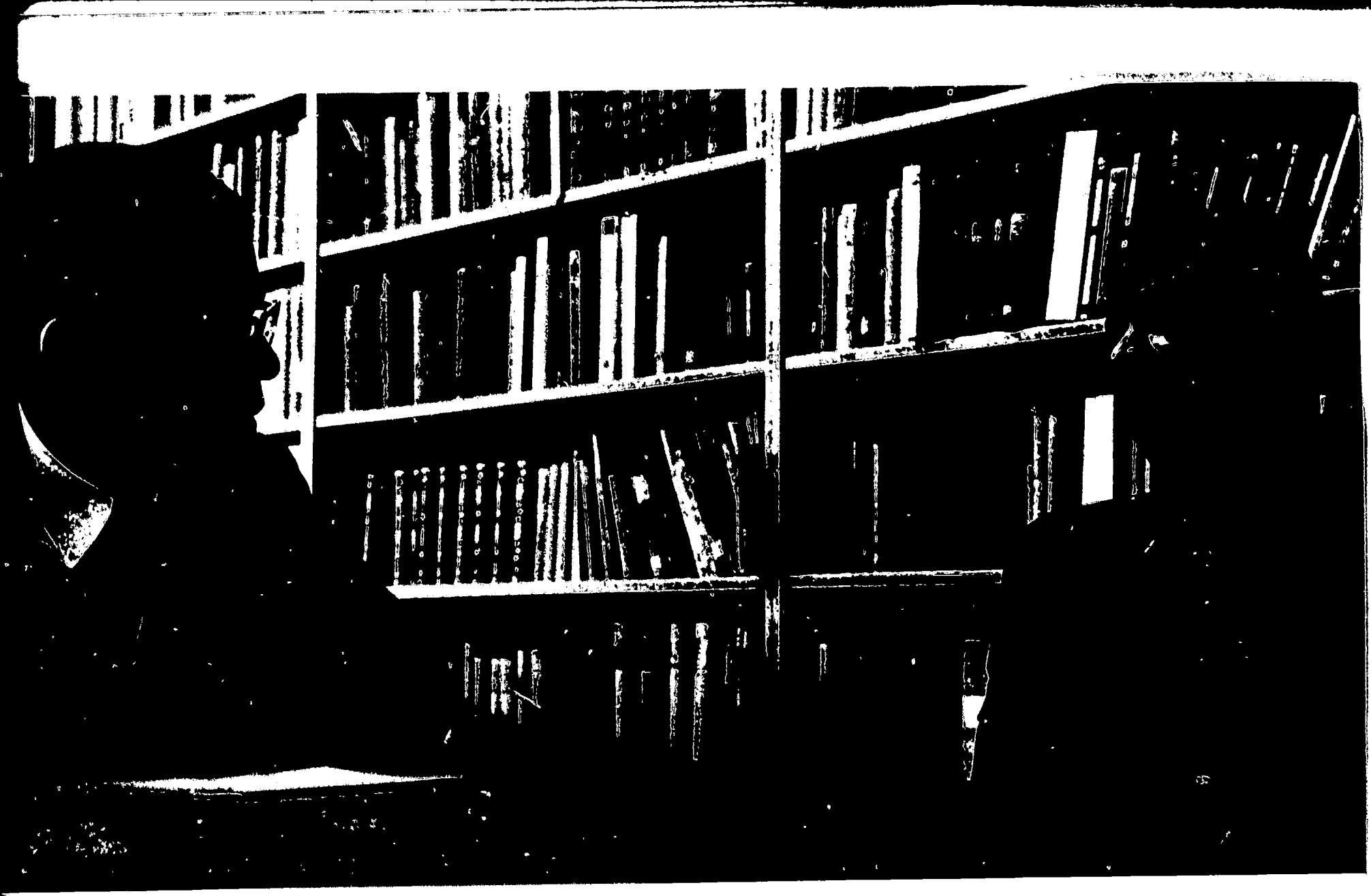
- **The United Presbyterian Church and the United Church of Christ** are assisting disadvantaged students. The Presbyterians have an educational counseling service directed by Dr. Samuel H. Johnson of Knoxville (Tenn.) College, and the UCC's Committee for Racial Justice Now, headed by Rev. Charles E. Cobb, is asking 32 colleges related to the church to reserve 10 places in their freshman classes each year for high risk students.

- **Educational Associates, Inc.,** 1717 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, is a consulting firm with an OEO contract to help implement college-level activity for Upward Bound graduates.

- **Institute for Services to Education,** another Washington-based consulting firm, is concentrating on curriculum revision that would make college more relevant to the experience and the needs of disadvantaged students.

- **A Better Chance/Independent Schools Talent Search,** 376 Boylston St., Boston, was a forerunner of the federal program to seek out, counsel and place minority-group youngsters in better schools. The program is primarily for private secondary schools, but in most cases it leads on to college for those who participate.

- **Federal programs** include OEO's Upward Bound and the U. S. Office of Education's Work-Study, National Defense Education Act, and Equal Opportunity Grants programs; the latter three provide scholarships, loans and work funds, part of which are ostensibly for disadvantaged students. A spot check in several states leaves doubt that the funds are in fact being used in that way. Another federal program, Contracts to Encourage Full Utilization of Educational Talent, is an expansion of the ABC/Talent Search idea described above, but at the college level. One of the best examples of the approximately 60 such co-operative programs around the country is the Co-operative Program for Educational Opportunity, 218 Prospect St., New Haven, Conn., which serves as a broker between several hundred students and about 40 colleges and universities each year.



effort—high risk and low, large numbers and small, substantial and modest institutional commitment. It would be difficult, even if every college and university could be visited, to evaluate and rank them on the basis of their involvement with high risk students, but it seems safe to say that these eight are among the most active. Others deserving mention on the basis of the survey returns include the state universities and state colleges of California—the only state in which the entire system of public higher education has expressed a resolve to help disadvantaged students—and a few universities which have apparently made some effort to admit and assist Upward Bound graduates and others handicapped by poor preparation for college. On the latter list would be the University of South Florida, Wayne State University, West Virginia University, the University of North Dakota, the University of New Hampshire, Portland State College, and the University of Washington. In addition, a few state institutions thought to have some involvement in high risk programs did not respond to the questionnaire. They include the State University of New York, the University of Illinois and Rutgers, the state university of New Jersey.

Among private institutions, Wesleyan University in Connecticut and Antioch College in Ohio stand out, and will be reported on in detail next month. Beyond these, about 50 institutions—two thirds of the private colleges responding to the survey—report some degree of activity. Most of them are only minimally engaged. Among those that appear to have an active interest and at least moderate involvement in the field are Carleton (Minn.), Gustavus Adolphus (Minn.), Barat (Ill.), Luther (Iowa), Oberlin (Ohio), Williams (Mass.) and Grinnell (Iowa) colleges, and Tufts, Detroit, Washington (Mo.), San Francisco and Northwestern universities. A few other private colleges and universities need further mention here.

Harvard University has had a "risk-gamble" program for 10 years, aimed at building diversity into the undergraduate student body. During that time, some 200 students have come and gone, their disadvantages concealed by qualities of "toughness, sparkle, resilience, flexibility and energy"—qualities which have borne as much weight with admissions officials as SAT scores or high-school records. In an institution where there are more than five applicants for every space in the freshman class—and where acceptance based strictly on test scores would produce an SAT verbal-mathematical score average of almost 1,500—Harvard has been willing to reach at times below the 1,000 mark to take young men who have those elusive qualities quoted above. On the whole, the risk-gamble students have performed almost as well as Harvard's undergraduates as a whole: 80 to 85 per cent have graduated with their classes. To be sure, most of Harvard's "gambles" have been on youngsters lacking nothing except the chance to sparkle; they would have been star performers at scores of good, steady liberal-arts colleges around the country. What little help and personal attention they have needed has been there for them to take. The significant thing about these students is that, not knowing they ranked 400 or 500 points below many of their classmates, they generally held their own in competition with them. In short, Harvard's experience seems to indicate that the very

best colleges and universities have more latitude in choosing students than most of them have yet been willing to exercise.

Mercer University in Georgia has had a Rockefeller Foundation grant for the past two years to support recruitment of disadvantaged students. Dean of Men Joseph M. Hendricks recruits from predominantly Negro high schools in Georgia and from the university's Upward Bound program, and now has 48 students who have entered under somewhat relaxed entrance requirements, been given all necessary financial aid, and been provided with extensive assistance through counseling and guidance, remedial courses and tutoring. The attrition rate for the first year of the program was about the same as for the freshman class as a whole—18 to 20 per cent.

Four other Southern universities—Vanderbilt, Duke, Tulane and Emory—have also had Rockefeller funds for recruiting disadvantaged students. Duke did not respond to the survey; of the other three, Tulane appears to have provided the most compensatory services—though not as much as Mercer. One other Southern university, Miami, will begin a program of tuition waiver, relaxed entrance requirements, counseling and guidance and tutoring for 25 Upward Bound graduates next fall.

Cornell University has admitted about 160 students in the past three years who are considered high risks, "to provide educational opportunities . . . for disadvantaged students and to test the reliability of the usual admissions criteria." Only five of the students have been dropped for academic reasons thus far. Recruitment, financial aid and intensive counseling are the features of the program. About 95 per cent of the students are Negroes. Last fall, the median SAT score for the 70 freshman risk students was about 175 points below the median for all freshmen. The students are obliged to meet all the usual academic requirements of the university, and no special courses are provided.

New York University enrolled 60 high risk students in an experimental program in 1965, under a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity. Only 15 of the students are still at NYU. The program was designed as a separate and intensive effort to structure academic and counseling experiences that would lead in five years to baccalaureate degrees for a group of severely handicapped ghetto youngsters. Such an all-out effort deserves more attention than can be given to it in this space. Prof. Virgil Clift, who directs the project, reports that NYU's experience with it "leads us to believe that there is a vast reservoir of untapped potential in the urban slum that is going to waste." The loss of three-fourths of its students halfway through the experiment indicates that NYU has not discovered how to tap that potential successfully, but what the university has learned from trying could be of great value to other institutions. Southern Illinois University (where 11 of the NYU dropouts have gone) now has an OEO grant for a similar experiment; it will be reported on in the next issue of SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT.

Northeastern University in Boston has the largest work-study co-operative program in the country; all the university's regular students alternate one quarter of on-campus study with one quarter of on-the-job work experience. Into this pattern Northeastern introduced 25 high risk students in 1963, with funds from the Ford Foundation; it has added 25 more each year, and continues to do so, although Ford pulled out after three years. The 25 students get whatever financial assistance they need, admissions requirements are relaxed for them (they average 100 to 150 points below their classes on SAT scores), and they attend a summer precollege session. Counseling, guidance, tutoring, developmental reading and programmed instruction are available to them as they need it. It takes five years to get a degree at Northeastern; of the 25 who entered in 1963, about 13 will graduate with their class this year. Dr. Gilbert C. Garland, dean of admissions, views the program as highly successful, and believes one major reason for the success is the nature of the work-study program. "Within two quarters you can have walking examples of academic and job success," he says. "That means a lot to these youngsters."

Among all the high risk programs about which some information was gathered in this survey, the 15 or 20 singled out in this report merit in-depth reporting. The limitations of space and resources prevent such review here. This magazine is forced instead to skim the surface, and the danger in such an approach is that brevity may imply less—or more—involvement in high risk programs than is actually the case. It bears repeating that SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT is presenting a limited overview of programs at a selected sampling of American colleges and universities. On the basis of this limited inquiry, these conclusions emerge:

- 215 senior colleges and universities widely considered to be the ones most likely to have formal programs for high risk students were queried, but on the basis of a 74 per cent response, almost half of them have no such programs.
- The bright and able student who is too poor to afford college—whether he is Negro, white, Indian, Spanish-speaking or whatever—is being sought by a growing number of colleges, but those whose past performance has been blunted by discrimination and poverty represent a risk that very few colleges are willing to take.
- A great many things are being tried by a relatively small number of institutions to mine the untapped potential of disadvantaged students, but only a handful of those institutions have marshaled all the resources available to them for this task.
- Most American colleges and universities are success-oriented—they cater to young people who have mastered 12 years of schooling in preparation for college, who are solvent, and who have adjusted to the style and the strictures of the prevailing culture. But thousands of potentially able youngsters do not qualify by those standards, and most of the nation's colleges and universities have not yet decided whether they have the responsibility, the resources, the skills or the desire to serve them. ○