DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 426 HE 004 244

AUTHOR Stark, Joan S.
TITLE The Three-Year B.A. Who Will Choose It? Who Will Benefit?
INSTITUTION Goucher Coll., Baltimore, Md.
PUB DATE Mar 73
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, March 1973

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Bachelors Degrees; *Degree Requirements; Females; *Higher Education; *Special Degree Programs; *Student Characteristics; Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS Three Year Bachelors Degrees; *Time Shortened Degree Programs

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the characteristics of students who take advantage of the option to complete the B.A. degree in 3 years at Goucher College. At Goucher, the optional 3-year degree plan has been selected by students of exceedingly diverse academic potential and background, and different ideas of what for them constitutes a successful educational experience. No evidence was found that the students who chose acceleration were those who might have been, on the basis of academic predictors, selected by the faculty or by admissions personnel to pursue such a program. Students attracted to a 3-year program include, in sizeable numbers, those who are motivated by strong vocational aspirations, often coupled with financial concerns. For other accelerants, however, the desire to graduate early has little relation to either financial considerations or career plans, but may simply be a way of escaping the educational scene. Students who prefer to stay for 4 years may represent 2 groups: those who enjoy the college scene for its social and extracurricular aspects, and those who desire to pursue graduate study but are more concerned with adequate preparation and high grades than with the time element or financial expenditures involved. (HS)

THE THREE-YEAR B.A.

WHO WILL CHOOSE IT?
WHO WILL BENEFIT?

Joan S. Stark
Goucher College

Paper presented at AERA meeting, New Orleans, La.
March, 1973

The Three-Year B.A.
Who Will Choose It?
Who Will Benefit?

Joan S. Stark Goucher College

The recommendation of the Carnegie Commission for a time-shortened B.A. degree (1971) led quickly to the institution of at least thirty-one three-year college programs (Allen, 1973). Year-round study, credit by examination, and early admission are featured, as well as reduced degree requirements, most often for those "extraordinarily able students" whose records justify selection by the faculty, but sometimes for the "typical" student (College Management, 1972; Conklin, 1972; U.S. News and World Report, 1972).

It has been assumed that the able student will often wish to accelerate his or her education in order to enter graduate or professional training earlier. Similarly, it has been assumed that limited financial resources will motivate students to finish earlier, as will exceptionally thorough high school preparation.

Prior to the Carnegie Commission report, Goucher College, an independent college for women with considerable experience in an early admissions program, (Geen, 1957) reduced both the number of courses required for the B.A. and the specific course requirements. The opportunity for early graduation at no extra cost (or the possibility of a break in formal training within the four year time span) was thereby established. The designers of Goucher's program based their thinking on the assumptions mentioned above (Goucher College, 1969). They had in mind neither of the strategies mentioned by Bok (1972), namely setting the stage for a tuition increase or making space for members of the opposite sex in the college community. They did, however, give considerable thought to the possible attractiveness of a three-year option to able students.

The Goucher program, now in its third year, provides an arena to explore motivations of women students in a small liberal arts college who elect a three-year degree option. This study presents the early exploratory stage of a longitudinal investigation and should in no way be considered an end product. When the present investigation commenced, the college lacked systematic procedures for collecting information which recent research indicates

might be pertinent to student selection of the reduced time option. The initial exploration was directed toward the identification of factors sufficiently important to merit the establishment of such procedures.

The preliminary findings are presented at this time in the hope that researchers in other institutions will contribute possible hypotheses and perhaps undertake cross-institutional efforts.

No recent empirical studies were located which dealt specifically with student choice of, or success in, an optional accelerated college program. Related studies which concerned the problems of early career choice, college attrition, and the relation of self-concept to success of college students were reviewed.

The student in the three-year option at Goucher (accelerant) meets the same 128 semester-hour requirement as her classmate who completes the degree in four years (non-accelerant). The accelerant may carry a heavier course load at the same tuition rate, or may pay extra tuition to attend summer sessions at another college. A student in either group may receive advanced placement credit or CLEP credit toward the degree. No external motivation, except the saving of a year's educational costs and time is provided for accelerants, nor is the three-year option closed to any student who wishes to pursue it.

When the program was introduced, some upperclass students, as well as entering freshmen, began immediately to register for heavier course loads. On the basis of interviews with these students it seemed that the multiple motivations involved were not necessarily congruent with the assumptions underlying establishment of the option. At one pole might be a strong career or graduate school orientation; at the opposite pole a desire to be done with the expected amount of formal schooling as quickly as possible. Further, it appeared that the most able students were quickly joined in the pursuit of a three-year degree by some of the least able. Because of financial aid policies which provide substantial assistance to very needy students, this group seemed to have less reason to accelerate than students from middle-income families.

Data from college records were used to test the null hypotheses that accelerants and non-accelerants did not differ on traditional academic predictors, receipt of financial aid, amount of college credit given for advanced preparation, selected factors in home background, and academic success as measured by grade point average and number of courses completed.

The College Student Questionnaire, Part 2, particularly the questions through which the respondent classifies herself into a campus subculture (Peterson, 1965; Clark and Trow, 1966; Kees and McDougall, 1971) was used to test the hypothesis that the accelerants bring a different orientation to their educational pursuits than the non-accelerants.

Except for teacher preparation, no studies which lead directly to a specific career are offered in the liberal arts program at Goucher. The college has traditionally enrolled mainly middle and upper-middle class young women, over 30% of whom go on to graduate study. One might expect then, that students (Ellis, 1971) would describe themselves as members of the "collegiate" or "academic" rather than the "vocational" subculture. Students with vocational orientation are most frequently found among upwardly mobile scholarship students from working class backgrounds. This group, however, has increased in size at Goucher in recent years as at other institutions (Hoge, 1970).

It was hypothesized that the accelerants would be less likely to classify themselves as "collegiate" than non-accelerants, but more likely to classify themselves as "vocational." Further, it was expected that students in the "academic" subculture would be found in about equal proportions among accelerants and non-accelerants. Accelerants describing themselves as academics might be those students who, largely for financial reasons, wished to start graduate study earlier. Students similarly oriented who lack financial pressures might feel that a firmer foundation could be gained through four undergraduate years.

Responses to the CSQ may also be used to explore the process through which a student has arrived at a decision about her major field of study. The accelerant needs to begin intensive work in her major field at a very

early stage. Waterman and Waterman (1970, 1971) found that students who had passed through an identity crisis in making an occupational choice scored differently on the Family Independence and Cultural Sophistication scales of the CSQ than those students who had made a decision without stress, or who were currently in the process of identifying their occupational goals. They concluded also that occupational decisions made in high school are at best tenuous. One might expect more parental influence in such early decisions.

While selection of a liberal arts major is more revocable than the decisions of the students in Waterman's study to pursue a focussed technical curriculum, the situation is certainly similar. Thus, it was hypothesized that accelerants would score lower on Family Independence and would indicate stronger parental influence in choice of major, consideration of fewer fields in making their choice, and less satisfaction with their major field.

Few freshmen may have a realistic conception of what the work in their chosen fields involves (Pate, 1970; Risch, 1970). Freshmen have also been found to predict their achievement inaccurately (Keefer, 1971). It might be expected then, that students who choose and persist in, an accelerated program are better able to predict their own level of achievement and feel satisfaction with their accomplishment (Bailey, 1971). It was hypothesized that accelerants, regardless of their actual grades, would feel that 1) they were doing at least as well as they had expected to do in college, 2) they were gaining from most aspects of the college experience, and 3) students should have freedom to attempt such a program without restriction.

Bok has noted that student reaction to a three-year option at Harvard is one of "massive indifference" (1972). This is certainly not so at Goucher. Some feelings about the accelerated option are revealed by the title of a student newspaper article: "Why Be Here Four Years?" (Kay, 1972). Questions from the CSQ relating to women students' perceptions of their role and their satisfaction with the college were examined because of the possibility that the women in a single-sex environment see their education in distinctive terms.

As Magill (1972) points out, acceleration of the academic program through increased course load has always been an option for the able student. In past years such students, particularly in the small private college, were "out of phase" with activities which centered around a group of students who entered and graduated together. Class-centered activities have now diminished in importance and many educators are urging flexible time spans suited to the individual student, encompassing anywhere from three to six years of undergraduate education. Despite the fact that, as more and more students attend college, some are obviously less qualified, one hears less discussion about the longer time spans than the shorter.

If the premise that individuals not only learn and mature at different rates, but also pursue education with diverse purposes, is accepted, it becomes essential to learn what factors may cause students to prefer one time span over another. It is also important to determine which characteristics may predispose students to benefit most from each time frame and to define what constitutes success for particular types of individuals.

Method

The population included female full time students, ages 17-20, who entered Goucher College as freshmen in the fall semesters of 1970, 1971 and 1972. Accelerants (N = 129) included students in the class of 1970 who had, prior to the end of their fourth semester of attendance, submitted a plan for graduation in less than four years, and members of the two later classes who had done so by November 1, 1972. Controls (N = 77) were chosen randomly from other students in the same entering classes. No controls were selected from the 1972 entering class because of the strong possibility that these students would soon declare themselves accelerants.[a]

Tables 1 and 2 about here

Data from college records were used to test the hypotheses involving academic predictors, academic success, receipt of financial aid and home background. The exploration focussed first on all students who had, at some time, intended to accelerate, then on the "successful accelerants" who will complete the degree in three years on June 1, 1972.

Chart 1 goes about here

All accelerants and controls enrolled during fall 1972 were invited to respond to the College Student Questionnaire, Part 2. A large number of controls had withdrawn from the college but the response of those still enrolled was high.[b] The response of the accelerants, perhaps because of their busy schedules, was poor. The 116 students who took the CSQ included 64 accelerants (59%) and 52 controls (100%).

---

[a] This possibility also exists, but in lesser degree, for the 1971 entrance class.

[b] The original design included a control group equal in size to the accelerant group. Of the random sample originally selected from the 1970 entrants, 30 students had already withdrawn from the college. Since data for the entire entering class was easily obtainable from college records and there was no hope of obtaining CSQ response from these students, they were not replaced.

Questions concerning motivation for acceleration and the student's view of its effect upon academic and extracurricular life were derived from student interviews, used as local option questions on the CSQ, and scored with that instrument. Accelerants and controls were given different, but comparable, questions.[c] The two groups were compared on selected questions from the CSQ as well as on the eleven scales of that instrument, the Clark-Trow typology, and on the local option questions.

The size of the accelerant groups will yet increase for the classes entered in 1971 and 1972, the response of the accelerant group to the test invitation was poor, and the CSQ may evoke different responses from students with different lengths of college experience. In light of these serious limitations no attempt was made in this preliminary study to subject the data to refined statistical analyses.

Apparent percentage trends were noted. Chi square techniques and t-tests were used where sample sizes were sufficient and when samples were considered representative. Significance was noted at the .05 level. The design of the longitudinal study includes administration of the CSQ-1 and possibly the Omnibus Personality Inventory to all freshmen at entrance, beginning September 1973.

Results

Comparisons from college records

Accelerants achieved significantly higher mean scores than controls on SAT mathematics aptitude tests and on an average of three achievement tests, but did not score differently from controls on SAT verbal aptitude or on predicted grade point average. The accelerant group included some students in the lower, as well as the higher, ranks of the student population on all academic predictors examined. In fact, accelerants, judging from their

---

[c] Accelerants who indicated at the time of testing that they had decided to remain four years were retained with the accelerant group since the original analysis was concerned with those who are motivated to accelerate. Their responses were later examined separately.

mean scores and distribution on academic predictors, were quite a representative group from among enrolled students.

Tables 3 and 4 about here

Accelerants showed evidence of more advanced high school preparation when advanced placement test credit is used as the criterion, although the number receiving such credit in both groups was small. The accelerant group, however, also included five students who had been admitted to college after the third year of high school. Accelerants were more likely to have waived a sizeable part, or all, of the foreign language requirement through high school work, although no college credit is given for advanced language placement. Such students were free to pursue courses in their chosen major earlier, or to readily complete a language major in three years.

Table 5 about here

For the accelerants who entered in 1970, summer study formed a sizeable portion of the planned three-year program. These early accelerants planned to carry the heavy course load during only some of their semesters at Goucher. The accelerants who entered in 1971 and 1972 have increasingly indicated less extensive plans for summer school attendance.

In most recent years, about 24% of entering freshmen have received some form of financial aid. Of the accelerants, 28% were financial aid recipients, as compared to 12% of the controls. In addition, accelerants were significantly more likely to be employed during the college year and for more hours per week.

Although no significant differences were found in the educational levels reached by either parent in the two groups, fathers of accelerants were considerably more likely to be employed as executives or in other business capacities. Fathers of controls were more likely to be engaged in the professions, including the academic profession. Most mothers were homemakers. When employed,

however, mothers of controls were more likely to hold professional or scholarly positions. No differences were found in the numbers of siblings.

Table 6 about here

Accelerants were more likely to have graduated from medium-sized urban high schools; controls from large suburban high schools.

Accelerants and controls in the class which entered in 1970 maintained very similar mean grade point averages for the two-year period examined. Cumulative averages for the two groups, as well as the grade distributions at the end of the two years are not significantly different. Grade comparisons for the class entered in 1971 are based on only one year, but accelerants in this class show averages significantly higher than controls, and a highly skewed grade distribution. Consideration of only those originally declared accelerants who still persist in their plan makes the difference more marked.

Tables 7 and 8 go here

Accelerants, as a group, carried about 1.1 times as many courses per semester as controls, a ratio which was nearly constant over the three classes examined. Although the possibility certainly exists, no evidence was available to indicate that the accelerants would have achieved higher grades had they taken fewer courses.

Table 9 about here

Accelerants had chosen majors in every discipline, roughly in proportion to the number of majors the college typically graduates from each department each year. The number of accelerants who planned to complete a combination or double major in two similar, or even two diverse disciplines was striking. Sixteen students had chosen combinations such as mathematics-political science,

or psychology-French. The double major is increasing in popularity at Goucher (students do not select a minor area of concentration) and it is not possible to predict whether the controls will also choose double majors. Only the controls in the entrance class of 1970 had chosen a major field, since the selection is normally made at the end of the fourth semester.

Reasons for acceleration and perceptions of its effects

The generalizations which follow are based on the subsample who took the CSQ : 59% of all declared accelerants, 100% of controls still enrolled. Except as noted, comparisons are on the basis of percentage trends only.

Accelerants gave financial considerations as their primary reason for acceleration. Ranking about equally as second in importance were 1) the feeling that four undergraduate years were unsatisfactory or intolerable, and 2) the desire to enter graduate or professional school earlier.

Controls chose a four year plan mainly because they felt it would be difficulty to carry a heavy academic load successfully. Smaller groups however, planned to stay four years because 1) they felt that undergraduate life was enjoyable, 2) they wished more time to participate in activities of interest, or 3) they desired a firmer foundation for advanced education.

Decisions about acceleration were made early. Most accelerants had considered such a plan and had filed a program prior to the end of their first year in college. One-half of the controls had never given serious consideration to acceleration as an option, and nearly half had decided on a four-year plan before entering college. Only 14% of the accelerants said that the opportunity to accelerate played an important part in their choice of a college.

Table 10 about here

About half of the accelerants said they would abandon their three-year plan if a new and desirable career idea required additional undergraduate work. One-third of the controls would hasten their education if college life became

unsatisfactory. Less than one-quarter of either group would change plans based on the college grades they received.

Accelerants and controls were equally likely to have considered from one to three fields in choosing a major but accelerants were less apt to have made any changes in their plans. Most accelerants said that their choice of major had little relation to the length of their undergraduate education. Very few chose a major primarily because it could be completed in three years without difficulty. Since it is usually quite difficult to schedule completion of two majors in three years as is planned by many accelerants, other motivations for the choice are obviously stronger.

Accelerants were more certain about their major field decision and more likely to have made a vocational choice than were controls. More of the accelerants stated that such decisions dated back to pre-college years, but, contrary to the hypothesis posed, parents were seen as less influential in the choices made by accelerants.

Far more of the accelerants planned to pursue graduate study; many controls were uncertain ($p < .05$). Accelerants were most likely to have decided on graduate work more than one year prior to testing, that is, before their second year in college. More accelerants than controls cited the doctorate, or equivalent, as an ultimate educational objective.

Table 11 about here

The majority of both groups saw themselves in the future as married career women with children. The greatest number of accelerants preferred career areas in academic or professional life. Although academic life was also ranked first for controls, they showed more interest in a life centering on creative arts. Controls felt that the most important type of job satisfaction for them was opportunity to use their abilities. This was a highly ranked item for accelerants also, but even higher was the goal "to be helpful to others and/or useful to society." ($p < .05$).

Accelerants and controls differed in their views of the effects of acceleration on both social and academic aspects of college life. Most accelerants felt that their participation in on-and off-campus activities was not affected but about half of the controls felt that this would not be true were they to accelerate.

Total reported participation in activities was about equal for the two groups, Controls were less likely to participate in student government activities and campus professional groups but more likely to participate in athletics and school spirit groups than the accelerants. The two groups indicated about equal participation in religious activities.

Only about one-quarter of the accelerants felt that they would have more time to reflect on what they learned and assimilate material better if their course load were lighter, but more than half of the controls perceived this to be a desirable reason to take fewer courses each semester.

Table 12 about here

More accelerants believe that they were at least as successful, or even more successful, in college than they had expected.. Further, accelerants tended to be more satisfied with recent grades.

The two groups differed too, in the criteria they were willing to advocate for entrance into, and continuance in, a three-year program. Accelerants were most likely to feel that any student should be allowed to try and continue to try, regardless of success. Controls, who also ranked complete freedom to try highest, advocated more strongly and about equally that some evidence of personal maturity, or maturity combined with minimal academic success, be used as criteria for acceleration.

The CSQ Scale Scores

No differences were found between accelerants and controls on the mean scores of the eleven scales of the CSQ. All t ratios were below the specified level of significance. The hypotheses formulated that accelerants would cite less family independence and less satisfaction with their major field were not supported. There was no evidence either, that accelerants had developed better study skills which assisted them in carrying the heavy course load.

The Clark-Trow Typology

Analysis of the responses of the subsamples of accelerants and controls who took the CSQ revealed a statistically significant difference in the numbers who identified with each of the four campus subculture philosophies. As hypothesized, the accelerant group contained more students with vocational and academic orientations and fewer with a collegiate orientation.

Table 13 about here

Each sample group was divided into subsets on the basis of the philosophy espoused most strongly, and reexamined on academic predictors, home background, and academic success, as well as answers to the questions posed about motivation for, and effects of acceleration. Sample sizes were too small for meaningful comparisons, thus, no correlations or interaction analyses were done at this time. The following suggestive trends will be pursued more carefully as the longitudinal study progresses.

1. Students with an academic orientation, both accelerants and controls, may come from homes where the parental educational level is high. Academic accelerants indicated the greatest feeling of congruence between their expectations of success in college and their actual performance, and academic controls the least satisfaction, of all subgroups. Academic controls more frequently cited difficulty with a heavy course load and a desire to obtain a stronger educational foundation as reasons for spending four years.

2. Among students with a vocational orientation, accelerants may tend to come from families where the father has less formal education and is engaged in an occupation other than professional or scholarly. In general, students with a vocational philosophy appear to be more grade conscious. Both accelerants and controls in this subculture strongly indicated that they would change their original time plan if their grades were very high (controls), or very low (accelerants). Further, accelerants with a vocational orientation may tend not only to have the highest predicted level of academic success but to maintain the highest academic averages in college of any subgroup.

3. The collegiate student who accelerates may have less academic potential than the other accelerants. Such students, in addition to financial reasons for acceleration, express strong concern with the satisfactions or dissatisfactions of college life. The collegiate controls also cite activities and enjoyment of college among their reasons for deciding to remain four years.

4. The nonconformist students, although a very small group, cited reasons similar to those of collegiates for choosing acceleration. Their reasons for choosing a four-year plan were similar to those of the vocationals who did so.

The Successful Accelerants

A few exceptional students have graduated from Goucher early in past years and several students did so in the spring and winter of 1972 by combining a heavy upperclass course load with summer school work. The thirty-two "successful accelerants" considered are the first group for whom the acceleration option was officially open at college entrance.

Although 65% of these students had filed an acceleration plan by the end of the freshman year, most carried a five course load during no more than four of their six semesters at Goucher. Six students carried the heavy load consistently and did not attend summer school, but one student completed 21 semester hours (16% of the required program) during the summer. The mean number of summer school credits for the group was nine.

Mothers of successful accelerants had slightly more formal education than did mothers of accelerants in general and more mothers were employed in a professional or scholarly capacity. On all other background measures this subsample was similar to the total accelerant group.

The academic records of the successful accelerants have been reported in Table 7. This group scored slightly lower on academic predictors than the total group of accelerants, yet their academic averages after two years were higher. (Neither difference was statistically significant.)

Eighteen of the thirty-two responded to the CSQ and these students reported a stronger vocational and academic orientation, and less collegiate orientation than did accelerants as a whole. The possibility exists that their higher grades at the end of the second year are related to the fact that the students were, by that stage, doing advanced work in the major field of greatest interest to them.

Students Who Withdrew or "Decelerated"

Fourteen accelerants have decided not to continue with their efforts to pursue the three-year degree. Such decisions were made in the second or third year of enrollment. As a group, these students had significantly higher scores on academic predictors (one-quarter of the students with verbal SAT scores over 700, for example, decided to discontinue acceleration) and their grade point averages were also higher.

Of the accelerants who withdrew from the college, all were performing at least at predicted potential, except two students who were dismissed from the college for academic failure.

Table 15 about here

Discussion

At the particular women's college involved in this study, the optional three-year degree plan has been selected by students of exceedingly diverse academic potential and background, and different ideas of what, for them, constitutes a successful educational experience. No evidence was found that the students who chose acceleration were those who might have been, on the basis of academic predictors, selected by the faculty or by admissions personnel to pursue such a program.

Accelerants in this study included highly prepared students who maintained outstanding grades as well as students with low predicted success who have also done well while carrying a heavier than usual course load. Two accelerants persisted in the compressed program despite academic warnings and were subsequently dismissed from the college for academic reasons. Others, with superior academic records, decided independently that their efforts to graduate in three years were unwise. The study found little evidence that grades below a student's expectations would deter her from continuing with a three-year plan or that an outstanding record would necessarily encourage her to accelerate.

Students attracted to a three-year program include, in sizeable numbers, those who are motivated by strong vocational aspirations, often coupled with financial concerns. Such students may come from middle or working class backgrounds and be least able to pay for an education in a private college. The high proportion of accelerants who indicate that job satisfaction is related to helping others or society, may be a consequence of a large number of pre-medical and pre-social work students who are anxious to proceed with their lengthy graduate studies, as well as a large group of future teachers.

For other accelerants, however, the desire to graduate early has little relation to either financial considerations or career plans, but may simply be a way of escaping the educational scene as soon as possible. Although accelerants expressed more dissatisfaction with the sex composition of the student body than did controls, a similar study in a coeducational college would be necessary to identify the single-sex atmosphere as a primary factor in such motivation.

Students who prefer to stay four years may represent two groups: those who enjoy the college scene for its social and extracurricular aspects, and those who desire to pursue graduate study but are more concerned with adequate preparation and high grades than with the time element or financial expenditures involved. A far higher precentage of students with a collegiate orientation might have been found among controls had it been possible to obtain CSQ responses from the thirty controls originally selected who had already transferred to larger coeducational institutions.

There was little indication that the degree has been "devalued" by completing it in a shorter time, if grade point average is assumed to be a measure of accomplishment. Students who have completed their requirements in three years can, as a group, be said to have gained as much or more from their education as their four-year classmates. Accelerants in later classes have, thus far, shown a more pronounced tendency to achieve at a higher level than the control group, despite very similar scores on predictive measures and despite a heavy course load in more semesters.

Accelerants also indicated considerable satisfaction with the results of their efforts and expressed little feeling of academic or social deprivation. The student with a distinct career in mind who has set realistic standards is likely to feel successful when she saves a year in progress toward her goal. A student who feels that college is not the best possible place to be is also likely to be satisfied with her progress if she sees the prospect of getting the degree sooner. There is no evidence that such students, if forced to remain for a fourth year, would develop a different feeling about their education or achieve more academically. The Carnegie Commission report refers to students as "captives" in higher education. The student who accelerates is at least "captive" for less time.

An institution which offers a flexible time degree program takes on an obligation for additional counseling at a very early stage in the student's career. Good counseling techniques seemingly would take into account the student's motivation for education and tentative vocational choice as well as financial considerations and academic potential. Prior studies have shown that the orientation a student brings to college is identifiable at the time of matriculation. This information seems, on the basis of the results reported here, to be just as important, if not more so, than the student's rank in class or SAT scores.

Early vocational counseling could help students with strong career orientations to set realistic plans. The student who has little sense of educational direction, on the other hand, does not automatically gain such by staying in college an extra year unless some effort is made to assist her in setting goals. Financial aid policies too, could conceivably take into account not only the student's economic needs but her need for an optimum amount of time to complete her undergraduate education.

As Magill (1972) and Conklin (1972) have warned, private colleges seeking the three-year B.A. as a way to attract the best students may not gain much as such options become more common. Nearly twenty per cent of the students

at Goucher have already begun to accelerate their education. Others, who do not deliberately plan to do so, find that they can graduate easily in three and one-half years. Considerable pressure to admit a larger freshman class is thus exerted on admissions personnel. Such pressure tends to decrease, rather than increase, the probability of obtaining a good student/college/time span fit.

A college offering such a program might anticipate too, a stronger dichotomy within its student body along financial-vocational versus affluent-collegiate lines. Such an effect might be further amplified as students who are vocationally-oriented are increasingly attracted to an advertised three year program. In effect, "those who can pay may stay" and "those who hurry to earn may hurry to learn."

REFERENCES

Allen, Edward L. Preliminary survey of institutions with three-year degree programs. Urbana, Illinois: National Survey Office - Three Year Baccalaureate Programs. (Unpublished report), January 15, 1973.

Babbott, Edward F. Postponing college: alternatives for an interim year. College Board Review, 80 (Summer 1971), 21-29.

Bailey, Roger C. Self-concept differences in low and high achieving students. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 27 (April 1971), 188-191.

Berdie, Ralph F. Changes in university perceptions during the first two college years. Journal of College Student Personnel, 9 (March 1968), 85-89.

Bok, Derek. The three-year degree. College Board Review, 85 (Fall 1972), 14-16.

Boyer, Ernest L. How much time for education? Educational Record, 53 (Fall 1972), 271-280.

Braskamp, Larry A. and Dueane Flessner. The congruence between parental and entering freshman expectations. Journal of College Student Personnel, 12 (May 1971), 179-185.

Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Less Time, More Options: Education Beyond the High School. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, January, 1971.

Chickering, Arthur and Ellen Kuper. Educational outcomes for commuters and residents. Educational Record, 52 (Summer 1971), 255-261.

Clark, Burton R. and Martin Trow. "The organizational context,"pp 17-70 in Theodore Newcomb and Everett Wilson (eds.) College Peer Groups. Chicago: Aldine Press, 1966.

College Management. Innovations, part I: 3-year degrees, new flexibility. (Fall 1972) 20-22.

College Entrance Examination Board. Changing Patterns for Undergraduate Education. New York: 1972.

Conklin, Kenneth. The three-year B.A.: boon or bust? AAUP Bulletin, (Spring 1972), 35-39.

Cramer, Stanley H. and Richard R. Stevic. A review of the 1969-70 literature: research on the transition from high school to college. College Board Review, 78 (Winter 1970), 22-28.

Ellis, Robert A., Robert J. Parelius and Ann P. Parelius. The collegiate scholar: education for elite status. Sociology of Education, 44 (Winter 1971), 27-58.

Geen, Elizabeth. Early admission program at Goucher College. College and University, (Fall 1957) 29-35.

Goucher College. The Report of the Committee on the Future of the College. Towson, Maryland: Goucher College, 1969.

Hoge, Dean R. College students' value patterns. Sociology of Education, 44 (Spring 1970), 170-197.

Kay, Ronna. Why be here four years? Goucher Weekly, Towson, Maryland: 58, 6, November 3, 1972, 5-6.

Keefer, Karl E. Characteristics of students who make accurate and inaccurate self-predictions of college achievement. Journal of Educational Research. 64 (May-June 1971), 401-404.

Kees, Donald J. and William P. McDougall. A validation study of the Clark-Trow subculture typology. Journal of College Student Personnel, 12 (May, 1971), 193-199.

Magill, Samuel H. Report on time-shortened degree programs. Washington: Association of American Colleges, December 1972.

Nelson, Dennis Earl. The college environment; its meaning to academically successful and unsuccessful undergraduates. Journal of Educational Research. 64 (April 1971) 355-358.

Pate, Robert H., Jr. Student expectations and later expectations of a university enrollment. Journal of College Student Personnel. 9 (November 1970), 458-462.

Peterson, Richard E. On a typology of college students. Research Bulletin RB - 65-9, Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1965.

Peterson, Richard E. Technical Manual for the College Student Questionnaires. Princeton; Educational Testing Service, 1968.

Pressey, Sidney L. Educational Acceleration: Appraisals and Basic Problems. Ohio State University Studies, Bureau of Educational Research Monograph number 31. Columbus Ohio: 1949.

Risch, Thomas J. Expectations for the college environment. Journal of College Student Personnel. 9 (November 1970), 463-466.

Spiegel, Don and Patricia Keith-Spiegel. Multiple predictors of course grades for college men and women. Journal of College Student Personnel. 12 (January 1971), 44-47.

Stetson, Robert F. Getting a head start on college. College Board Review, 81 (Fall 1971), 23-25.

U.S. News and World Report. Growth of the 3-year college. January 17, 1972, 21-23.

Waterman, Alan S. and Caroline K. Waterman. The relationship between ego identity status and satisfaction with college. Journal of Educational Research, 64 (December 1970), 165-168.

Waterman, Alan S. and Caroline K. Waterman. A longitudinal study of changes in ego identity status during the freshman year at college. Developmental Psychology, 5 (1971), 1, 167-173.

Waterman, Alan S. Relationship between the psychosocial maturity of entering college freshmen and their expectations about college. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 19, 1, 42-46.

Whitla, Dean K. The three-year A.B. - a proposal for Harvard. Liberal Education, 58 (May 1972), 247-257.

TABLE 1

The Sample

Year of college entrance	1970	1971	1972	Total N
Declared accelerants	59	49	21	129
Accelerants as per cent of entering class	19%	18%[a]	9%[a]	
Control subjects	22	55	0[b]	77
Controls as per cent of entrance class enrolled[c]	11%	25%	0	
Accelerants who took CSQ-2				64[d]
Controls who took CSQ-2				52[d]

[a] On November 1, 1972. Students in these classes may yet declare their intent to accelerate.

[b] By design, no control group was used for 1972 entrants.

[c] On November 1, 1972.

[d] The accelerants who responded to the CSQ represented 59% of those enrolled in fall 1972; the controls represented 100% of those enrolled.

TABLE 2

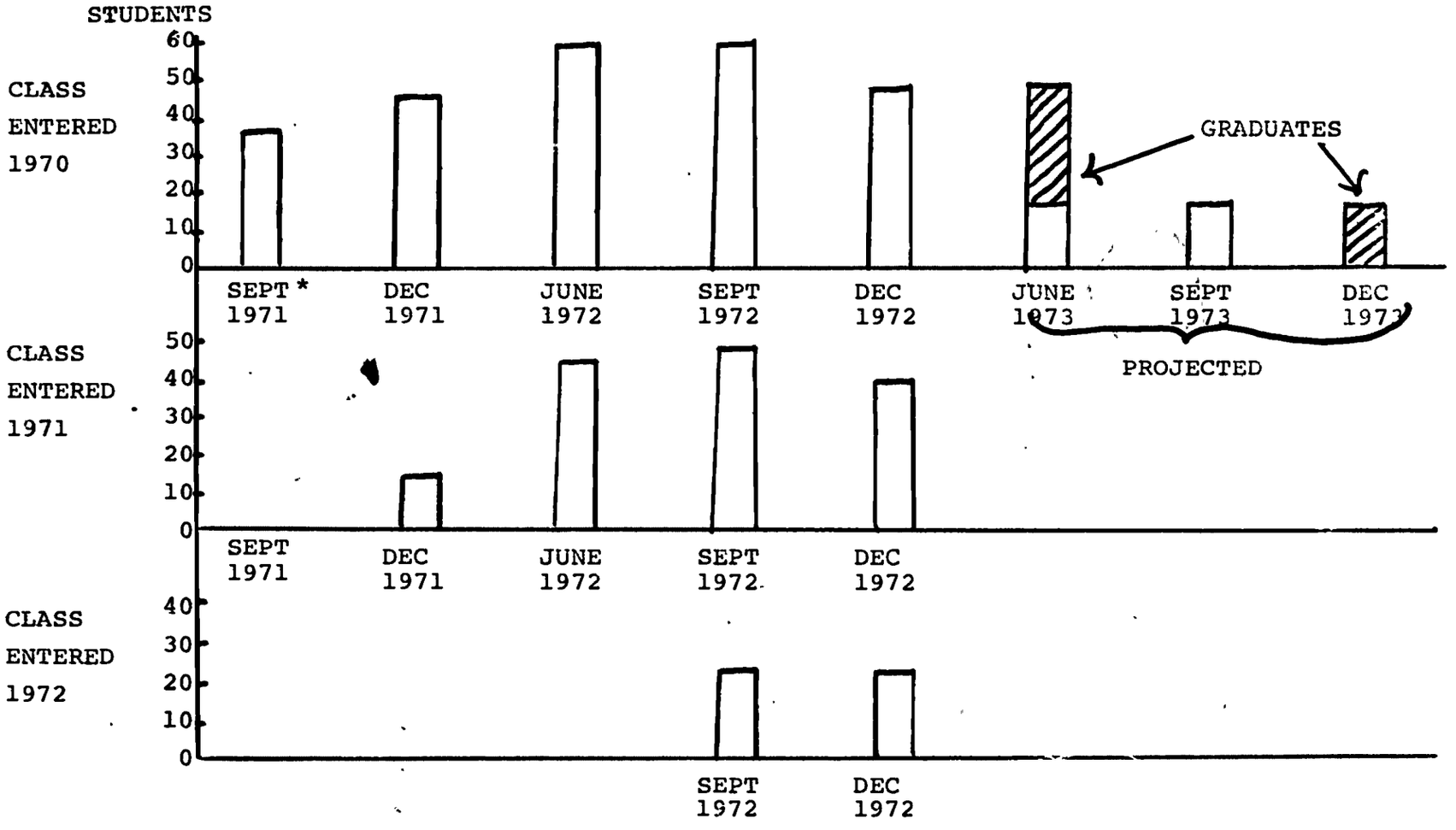
Status of Accelerants and Controls at End of Fall Semester 1972

	Accelerants N=129	Controls N=77
Voluntarily withdrew from college	9	25
Academic dismissal	2	0
Decided not to accelerate	13	--
Now considering acceleration as a possibility	--	10
Still pursuing original plan	105	52

CHART 1

EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF ACCELERANT GROUPS

BEFORE AND AFTER NOVEMBER 1972 STUDY



* No provision was made for identifying accelerants until September, 1971. This coincided with the second year of college enrollment for the group entered in 1970.

TABLE 3

Comparison of Mean Scores of Accelerants and Controls on Traditional Academic Predictors

Predictor		Accelerants N = 129	Controls N = 77	t	Currently enrolled students in recent entering classes N = 576
SAT-V	$\bar{X}$	590.2	578.4	1.15	577
	SD	76.3	69.4		82
SAT-M	$\bar{X}$	577.1	551.0	2.69 [a]	567
	SD	70.1	65.4		72
SAT-Ach*	$\bar{X}$	591.2	573.0	1.99[a]	---
	SD	59.6	64.0		
Predicted GPA	$\bar{X}$	2.46	2.40	1.74	2.40
	SD	.22	.24		.23

* Average of three highest achievement tests taken

[a] $p < .05$

TABLE 4

Per Cent Distribution of Accelerants and Controls on Traditional Academic Predictors

	Range					X^{2*}
	200-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-800	
SAT-V						
Accelerant	1	9	46	33	11	2.85, df = 8, ns
Control	0	13	47	34	6	
SAT-M						
Accelerant	0	12	48	33	6	9.24, df = 8, ns
Control	0	18	56	26	0	
SAT-Ach						
Accelerant	0	5	54	35	6	8.10, df = 7, ns
Control	0	14	51	35	3	

	Range					
	1.50-2.00	2.00-2.25	2.25-2.50	2.50-2.75	2.75-3.00	3.00-3.50
Predicted Average						
Accelerant	2	10	46	32	8	2
Control	4	15	49	25	4	1
						6.09, df = 8, ns

Per cents are rounded.

* X^2 was calculated with the degrees of freedom given. Categories were later combined to save space.

TABLE 5

Advanced Credit Granted Upon Entrance

Accelerants			Controls		
No. Students	No. Semester Hours	Total Semester Hours	No. Students	No. Semester Hours	Total Semester Hours
8	4	32	4	4	16
2	14	28	0		0
10		60	4		16

Per Cent of Accelerants who Included Various Amounts of Summer Study* in their Plans

	1970 Entrants	1971 Entrants	1972 Entrants
No summer study	29	48	67
One-two courses (3-8 semesters hours)	16	13	10
Three courses (9-12 semester hours)	22	22	19
More than three courses (more than 12 semester hours)	33	17	4

* No summer session is offered at Goucher College.

Living Arrangements of Accelerants and Controls

	Accelerants (in per cent)	Controls
Campus resident	88	92
Live at home	12	8

$X^2 = .75$, n.s.

Per Cent Employed During Academic Year

Hours per week	Accelerants	Controls
None	17	49
0 - 10	65	38
11 - 15	9	10
16 or more	10	6

TABLE 6

Comparison of Accelerants and Controls on Home Background Factors

	Education of Father		Education of Mother	
	Accelerants (per cent of group)	Controls	Accelerants (per cent of group)	Controls
High school only	21	13	31	24
Some college	17	13	20	24
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	31	25	35	39
Master's degree or equivalent	10	21	12	11
Ph.D., Juris doctor, M.D. or other professional degree	21	29	2	3
	$X^2 = 7.88$, df = 4, ns		$X^2 = 1.54$, df = 4, ns	

	Occupation of Father		Occupation of Mother	
	Accelerants (per cent of group)	Controls	Accelerants (per cent of group)	Controls
Deceased, unemployed, or housewife	5	0	64	62
Business	32	21	5	3
Executive	30	22	2	0
Clerical	3	2	10	4
Blue Collar	8	6	2	0
Scholarly	5	19	11	18
Professional	17	29	6	13
	$X^2 = 22.245$, df = 6		$X^2 = 10.12$, df = 6, ns	
	$p < .05$			

	Number of Siblings				
	None	one	two-three	four-five	more than five
Accelerants	23	31	40	5	2
Control	14	29	43	7	7

$X^2 = 5.39$, df = 4, ns

(in per cent)

	Type of community		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Accelerants	57	36	7
Control	38	55	7

$X^2 = 7.49$, df = 2
$p < .05$

(in per cent)

	Size of high school by graduating class		
	Small (under 100)	Medium (100-499)	Large (500 and up)
Accelerants	21	49	30
Control	21	33	46

$X^2 = 6.02$, df = 2
$p < .05$

(in per cent)

TABLE 7

Mean GPA of Declared Accelerants, Persisting Accelerants

Three-year Graduates and Controls

	Declared Accelerants N = 59	Persisting Accelerants[a] N = 48	Three-year Graduates[b] N = 32	Controls N = 17
Entrance Class 1970				
Predicted GPA	2.43	2.44	2.42	2.52
1st Year GPA	2.69	2.67	2.76	2.73[c]
2d Year GPA	2.89	2.82	2.97	2.67[c]
Cum GPA-2 years	2.81[d]	2.72	2.91	2.87
Entrance Class 1971				
	N = 49	N = 40	---	N = 55
Predicted GPA	2.47	2.50	---	2.32
1st Year GPA	2.88	2.92	---	2.53[c]

[a] Persisting accelerants includes all declared accelerants who had neither withdrawn from the college, nor indicated a change in the plans on December 24, 1972. Most will graduate in three or three and one-half years from entrance.

[b] Three-year graduates are those who are fully expected to complete requirements for the degree when current enrollment ends in May, 1972.

[c] Median GPA rather than mean GPA for each class during each academic year is maintained by the Office of the Registrar. For comparison: Class of 1970 entrants; 1st year median, 2.59; 2d year median, 2.79. Class of 1971 entrants: 1st year median, 2.65.

[d] Cumulative GPA of Accelerants is based upon 1.1 times as many courses as for controls.

TABLE 8

Grade Distributions of Accelerants, Controls and Three-year Graduates

	1970 Entrants			1971 Entrants	
	Declared accelerants	Three-year[a] Graduates	Controls	Declared accelerants	Controls
	N=59	N=32	N=17	N=49	N =55
	(Based on two year cumulative average)			(Based on first year average)	
3.00-4.00 (B to A)	32%	35%	33%	49%	25%
2.00-2.99 (C to B)	67%	64%	67%	46%	60%
1.00-1.99 (D to C)	2%	0%	0%	4%	15%
				$X^2 = 15.0$, 9 df, $p < .05$ Categories have been compressed for clarity.	

[a] Those fully expected to complete requirements in three years, May 1972.

TABLE 9

Number of Courses Completed by Accelerants and Controls

Class of 1970 - after five semesters *

Number of courses taken	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Total Students **	Mean Number of courses
Number of accelerants	0	0	0	5	15	12	13	7	4	0	56	23:6
Number of controls	0	0	2	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	15	21.4

* Maximum possible - 27 courses; Normal load - 21-22 courses

Class of 1971 - after three semesters*

Number of courses	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total Students	Mean Number of courses
Number of accelerants	0	0	1	10	11	19	0	41	14.2
Number of controls	0	1	7	30	6	0	0	44	12.9

* Maximum possible - 16 courses; Normal load 13 courses

Class of 1972 - after one semester*

Number of courses	3	4	5	Total Students	Mean Number of courses
Number of accelerants	0	15	7	22	4.3

* Maximum possible - 5 courses. First semester freshmen are strongly advised to start with a normal four-course load. The three-year plan necessitates five courses in all other semesters.

** In each class a few students had withdrawn for one or more of the included semesters. They were eliminated from the computation.

TABLE 10
Motivations for choice of time plan for degree

A. Main or primary reason for:

Completing education early — Accelerants N = 64	%	Completing education in four years — Controls N = 52	%
Ease financial burden on family	42	Financial or family circumstances make it no burden	0
Four years would be intolerable	23	Enjoy college - no desire to end it	21
To enter grad or prof school early	20	Four years gives firmer foundation for grad or prof school	13
Desire to earn own living	8	No desire to go to work soon	10
To be married or go with fiance	5	Fiance or husband is nearby	0
College work load insufficiently challenging	0	Would find heavy load difficult	40
---		More opportunities for activities	15
Friends are also accelerating	0	Friends plan to stay four years	0

B. First considered finishing college early:

Accelerants N = 64		Controls N = 52	
---		Never seriously considered it	50
Prior to college entrance	17	Prior to college entrance	8
During first semester in college	29	During first semester in college	6
During second semester in college	28	During second semester in college	15
After second semester in college	19	After second semester in college	19
When reading 3-year literature	6	When reading 3-year literature	2

C. Part played by opportunity to accelerate in choice of college:

Accelerants N = 64		Controls N = 52
No part, was unaware of option	48	
No part, although aware of option	28	
An important part	14	No comparable questions
A minor part	9	

D. Factor most likely to cause student to take:

Longer time to finish education — Accelerants N = 64		Shorter time to finish education — Controls N = 52	
If new career idea required additional undergraduate study	48	New career idea requiring unplanned graduate study	15
---		Offer of exciting job not available after normal graduation date	15
Receiving very poor grades	23	Receiving very good grades	17
If heavy load deprived me of valuable college experiences	16	If normal course load insufficiently challenging	10
Receipt of substantial scholarship aid	8	Loss of scholarship aid now received	8
Change in marriage plans or other personal relationships	5	Change in marriage plans or other personal relationships	2
---		Developing feeling that college life was unsatisfactory	33

* Because of rounding percents do not total 100%.

TABLE 11

Plans for Career or Graduate Study
(in per cent of responses)

	Accelerants N= 64	Controls N = 52
A. Plans for graduate study		
Yes or probably yes	81	57
No or probably no	13	22
Uncertain	6	22
	$X^2 = 8.92$, df = 2 p <.05	
B. Expect to obtain doctorate		
Yes	28	13
No doctorate offered in my field	5	8
Other negative responses	67	79
C. Graduate work first considered		
Past six months to one year ago	25	14
About a year ago	20	14
Two or more years ago	34	26
Never considered	21	46
D. Vocational decision		
Yes	89	78
No, not even tentatively	11	22
E. Preferred career area		
Academic life	34	27
Business life	8	10
Professional life	28	8
Life centering on creative arts	9	22
Life centering on home and family	6	10
Other or no response	15	23
F. Most important type of job satisfaction		
Opportunity to use my abilities	30	41
Freedom to be creative and original	8	10
Work with people rather than things	17	14
Be helpful to others and/or useful to society	41	16
Other or no response	4	19
	$X^2 = 13.87$, df = 4 p <.05	
G. Home vs career choice		
Housewife - no children	0	2
Housewife - one or more children	5	12
Unmarried career woman	3	6
Married career woman without children	5	8
Married career woman with children	66	55
Right now uncertain	22	18
H. Desired number of children		
None	14	8
One	5	14
Two	45	35
Three or more	35	42

TABLE 12

Perceptions of effect of acceleration

	Accelerants N=64	Controls N=52
A. Extent of participation in on-and-off-campus activities		
About same if accelerated or not	78	40
Less extensive if accelerated	14	48
Would not desire to participate or acceleration is (would be) during summer	8	12
B. Extent of time for reflective thought and assimilation of learning		
Number of courses has no relation to amount of time	39	23
More time with lighter course load	27	58
Better organized and thus more time with heavy load	17	6
Time not affected since acceleration is (would be) during summer	16	13
C. Relation of choice of major to time plan		
Choice of major not related to time plan	73	67
Chose major because it could be completed in three years	5	--
Difficulty in completing major in three years influenced decision to remain	--	23
Desired major could easily be completed in three or four years—did not influence choice	22	8
D. Rating of success in college compared to high school success		
Considerably less successful in college	8	12
Somewhat less successful in college	22	35
About as I expected	53	35
Somewhat more successful in college	13	15
Considerably more successful in college	5	4
E. Recommendations of criteria for three year program:		
Any student should be allowed to try and continue regardless of academic success	44	33
No minimum entrance standards but some academic success standard to continue	34	31
Minimum prior academic record, plus evidence of personal maturity	13	29
Some minimum prior academic record	8	4

TABLE 13

Mean Scale Scores College Student Questionnaire - Part 2

Scale	Accelerants N = 64		Controls N = 52			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df
Family independence	23.72	5.60	22.29	5.57	1.37	113 ns
Peer independence	25.90	4.23	24.94	5.35	1.05	113 ns
Liberalism	30.25	4.57	31.17	5.80	− .91	109 ns
Study habits	28.72	4.44	27.59	4.38	1.37	113 ns
Extracurricular involvement	19.03	3.62	19.31	3.86	− .28	114 ns
Satisfaction with administration	29.70	5.18	29.94	5.17	− .25	113 ns
Satisfaction with major	29.69	4.59	29.14	4.78	.45	73 ns
Satisfaction with students	26.37	4.84	27.49	5.18	−1.19	113 ns
Social conscience	32.31	4.14	32.00	4.43	.38	113 ns
Cultural sophistication	27.08	4.88	27.87	5.16	−.84	114 ns
Satisfaction with faculty	29.58	4.67	28.25	5.62	1.37	114 ns

TABLE 14

Per cent of Accelerants and Controls Who Selected each Campus Subculture as Closest to Their Own Philosophy

	Collegiate	Academic	Vocational	Nonconformist
Accelerants N = 64	36	30	25	9
Controls N = 52	58	17	10	15

$X^2 = 9.4$, df = 3, $p < .05$

Brief summary of the philosophies upon which the subcultures are based

Vocational	Emphasizes education as preparation for an occupation. Students espousing this philosophy are committed to a particular field of study and place less value on broad intellectual and social aspects of college life.
Academic	Emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and cultivation of the intellect. Places less value on occupational preparation or extracurricular aspects of college life.
Collegiate	Emphasizes the existence of many other aspects of college life besides the academic. Extracurricular activities, friendships, social life and college traditions are important.
Nonconformist	Emphasizes a search for personal value orientation and/or rejection of commonly held values. Little interest in practical aspects of education or social life of college.

TABLE 15

Students Who "Decelerated" or Withdrew from College

Reasons for deceleration	Performance during first year*					Total
	--	-	0	+	++	
New interests - change of major			1		2	3
Poor grades - change of major			1			1
Felt program academically unwise				1	1	2
Too difficult - was frustrated			1	1	1	3
Personal, family, illness	1	1		1	1	4
To study abroad					1	1
						14
Reasons for withdrawal						
Academic dismissal	2					2
Dissatisfied with college			1	2	2	5
Academic stress					1	1
Unknown reason					1	1
						9

* Performance was determined by comparing the student's first year average with her predicted grade point average. Students within one SD of predicted GPA were considered to be working at potential (0). A student classified as ++ had thus exceeded her predicted average by more than two standard deviations.