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ABSTRACT
                This report describes several facets of students'
experiences at Cypress College as viewed through the eyes of
students. The methodology used in this case study was
participant-observation, with observations made over a period of
months, in as many parts of the campus as possible, and at random
times during the day. The aim of this approach was to allow
collection of information that would permit reporting of students'
perceptions, whether such perceptions were "really" correct or not.
It should be noted that the student perceptions described in this
report are those of ordinary students, who were not outstanding in
any way. Among the many perceptions of the college by students were:
the physical plant and layout of the campus was both a source of
aggravation and a pleasant experience; the
faculty/administrator/staff person was accorded a higher status than
was the student; administrators were persons to be avoided and were
generally viewed as threatening; the student was, to a certain
degree, "invisible" to other non-students; and, students perceived
the "House Plan" of the college as a method of organization that
permitted decentralized, more personal sites for meetings,
activities, record-keeping, and college counseling. A bibliography
pertinent to ethnography is attached. (JDS)

NOTES ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Judy Davidson
Institutional Research Officer

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Research Report #2
June, 1976

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RESEARCHER'S STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that the data contained herein are accurate and
unbiased to the best of my knowledge and research abilities.
I further certify that I have the sole responsibility
for the content of this report and for any errors. I further
certify that this research was carried out in full accordance
with ethical standards concerning human subjects.

> Judy Davidson
> Institutional Research Officer

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1. Introduction

This report is based on field notes compiled over a period of several months from observations and conversations. Much has been written about the sociological-anthropological method of participant observation (Berk, 1970; Denzin, 1970; Epstein, 1967; Erikson, 1967; Garfinkel, 1967; Gillin, 1949; Goldschmidt, 1972; Hsu, 1969; Jarvie, 1969; Jongman, 1967; Kroeber, 1952; Lofland, 1971; Malinowski, 1967; McCall and Simmons, 1969; McSweeney, 1973; Pelto, 1970; Plotnicov, 1973; Psathas, 1968; Radin, 1966; Rohner, 1973; Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1951; Scott, 1965; Spencer, 1954; Stocking, 1974; Williams, 1967. For good examples of actual ethnographies, see Becker, et. al., 1961; Becker, 1963; Cavan, 1966; Davis, 1959; Davis, 1968; Finestone, 1957; Gans, 1962, 1967; Goffman, 1961a; Laird, 1975; Liebow, 1968; Lofland, 1970; Malinowski, 1932, 1935; Matthieson, 1961, 1962; Maurer, 1955; Miner, 1939; Rechy, 1967; Scott, 1968; Sudnow, 1965, 1967; Whyte, 1955; Whylie, 1961. For a philosophical background, see Feidegger, 1929, 1963, 1968; Husserl, 1958, 1960, 1964a, 1964b; Schutz, 1932, 1962-66, 1970, 1973); therefore, the technical details of the methodology will not be discussed in this report. The reader should remember that any single method of research has both inherent advantages and disadvantages, and that therefore the best approach to a problem is necessarily a multi-method approach. For this reason, it was felt that survey research alone would be insufficient and should be supplemented with research using a different approach.[1] The approach

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[1] Conversely, of course, participant observation research alone would be insufficient.

chosen in this particular case was that of participant observation.

Observations were made in as many parts of the campus as possible, and at random times during the day in order to prevent the introduction of possible bias from observing only at one time during the day. Sometimes but not always I dressed as a student, not for the purpose of passing myself off as a student, but for the purpose of being less conspicuous. Several House advisors had recommended to me dressing as a student for this reason. At no time, however, did I pretend to actually be a student; if asked, or if it ever came up naturally in the conversation, I would state who I was and what, in general, my research involved.[2] I also sat in on some classes (with the full knowledge and permission of the instructor, of course).

The end result of participant observation research should be an ethnography, i.e., a written description of the culture or subculture, and ideally speaking, a good ethnography should give the reader, in addition to objective information about the culture, the subjective feeling of what it is like to be a member of that culture. This report, however, is in no way meant to be read as an ethnography, since it does not contain complete information about the students' day-to-day lives but rather only a portion of it, i.e., that portion spent on campus. I would hope, however, that it does nonetheless give the reader some feeling

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[2] This is an ethical requisite, but it also turns out to be rather sound methodological for the following reason: If you, the researcher, try to pass as a member, and you are successful, then the real members of the culture may not tell you anything about that culture, since they assume you already know; if, on the other hand, you let them know that you are an interested outsider who professes to know nothing about their culture, they will usually talk your ears off in an effort to be helpful to you.

of what it is like to be a student here. This report cannot completely
describe the experience, of course, since I obviously would not be able
to describe what it is like, for example, to have to do the required
homework. For another example, many of the students at Cypress College
work (Davidson, 1976), but since I could not follow them to their
places of work, I cannot describe what it is like to attend classes all
day and then go to work for eight hours (although I can get verbal reports).
Within these limitations, however, this report will hopefully provide some
insight into the student experience.

There is yet another caution for the reader, which is also a general
anthropological concern, and it is the following: Given that the ethnography
attempts to describe the culture and impart the subjective experience of
living in that culture, for which members of that culture is that ethno-
graphy valid? In traditional anthropological research, the anthropologist
typically relied on a few members of the culture with whom he or she had
built a good rapport. The methodological problem for the anthropologist
then became that of sampling bias: had the anthropologist obtained his
data from "typical" members of the culture, or were his informants in
actuality deviants who had given him information about a deviant sub-
culture (the extreme example would be if the anthropologist had talked only
to someone who was in fact defined as psychotic by that culture). Analogous-
ly, I obviously have not talked to all students here; furthermore, I have
probably associated mostly with younger students, between 18 and about 22
or 23 years of age. Furthermore, the students I have talked to have been
typically those not involved in student government or who are campus leaders

in some other way. Furthermore, because I am female, rather colorless, and tend to blend into the crowd, the experiences I have had would obviously be those of a student who did not stand out in any particular way. The observations in this report would therefore not hold for students actively involved in student government, BMOC's, or other kinds of student leaders.

The observations contained in this report fall into two general categories: (1) Experiential observations, based on what I saw or what was reported to me, from the student's point of view, and (2) "Second-order" observations (for lack of a better term), or what I observed as student reactions to me as a member of the staff. Usually the observations in this report will consist of the former type; when they consist of the latter they will be specifically marked as such.

There is one final reading direction: This report is an attempt to describe some but not all parts of the student experience at Cypress from the student's point of view, regardless of whether or not the student's point of view is correct or incorrect. That is, in dealing with perceptions, it is largely irrelevant whether or not these perceptions are "really" correct; they are the bases for behavior and should therefore be dealt with in that way. It would probably be best when reading this report to suspend one's own ideas of what is correct, incorrect, proper, or improper, and to try instead to see through the student's eyes.

2. The physical plant

The student's first contact with the College is the parking lot, and his or her first experience every day is that of finding a parking place. Competition for parking places in certain lots is fierce between 9 a.m. and noon, particularly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Many students find it unfair that although the faculty and staff pay the same amount for parking as do students, they have special spaces marked off for them, and the student will be ticketed if he parks in these spaces, even though there may be no other place to park. This is a minor source of annoyance when there are other places to park; it becomes a major annoyance when the lot is full except for the staff parking places. Feelings range from vague apprehension at not immediately finding a place to rage after looking for several minutes and coming to the realization that one will have to pay to get out of this parking lot in order to try to find a place in another lot; hence the broken or bent exit gates and also the feeling that the particular student who breaks them is not really doing anything wrong.[3] Occasionally, the same student will "run the gate" several days in a row until a guard is stationed there, or until he is she is caught. Again, there is the feeling among some students that such a person is not doing anything wrong and in fact may be doing something admirable.

The College was designed via the "bi-level" concept; whether or not the student has abstract knowledge of this concept, he or she nonetheless directly experiences it. The upper level and the lower level appear at least in some

[3] Note to the reader: Please remember to suspend your value judgments and to try to see the situation through the student's eyes.

places to be completely different campuses, and therefore one of the by-

products of the bi-level concept is that the campus is experienced as being

larger than it actually is. The two campuses present intriguing interactional

possibilities; it is possible, for example, to pass somebody on campus and

never know it. This presents both difficulties in trying to find someone

and opportunities in trying to avoid someone.

Externally, the Houses appear to be quite similar; it is not until one

goes inside that the differences appear. A couple of the Houses, Bernstein

and Einstein, create unique atmospheres, where the atmosphere is an inter-

action of physical and socio-cultural factors. These two Houses, once the

student is inside them, give the impression of being more than just a

classroom building. The other Houses give this impression to lesser extents,

again because of a combination of physical and socio-cultural factors. Some

of these factors can only be instantiated here; first of all, the physical

arrangement of the various components of each House plays a role in deter-

mining the nature of the interactional patterns. For example, in Bernstein

House, one must walk past the snack bar area in order to get from one part

of the House to another. What this means is that the probability of

interpersonal contact and interaction is increased. Furthermore, in Bern-

stein House, Division offices are on the upper level and House offices are

on the lower level: this means that the student may have business on both

levels and thereby may pass through all parts of the House, thereby again

increasing the probability of interpersonal contact and interaction. In

contrast, in Muir-Twain House, all House and Division offices are on the

upper level; this means that if a student has business in either or both

of these places, he need go to only the upper level.[4] For another example, in Einstein House, the snack bar is more or less tucked away into a corner of the building, such that one doesn't routinely have to pass by it in order to get from one part of the House to another.

Physical factors alone, however, do not completely determine House atmosphere, although physical factors are the easiest to define. There are also socio-cultural factors which determine House atmosphere, some of which can only be instantiated here. For example, part of the atmosphere seems to be created by the presence (or absence) of vital, long-term[5] student-student and/or student-faculty interaction. Some of the snack bars and lounge areas are used largely as waiting rooms for classes and/or strictly as eating places to be left as soon as one's business there has been completed; many (but not all) of the students in these House snack bars and lounges leave their coats or sweaters on while sitting, they do not put their books down, and their posture and non-verbal behavior indicate readiness to leave the area the instant they have completed their business there. In contrast, other House snack bar and lounge areas, while of course also serving the transient functions of waiting, also serve the functions of providing a place where students study together, do homework together, sit and watch other people walking by, etc. Occasionally in these Houses, students and teachers sit together in lounges and snack bars in a sort of mini-classroom situation in which there is some teaching going on. It is also in these Houses that one

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[4]From the faculty and staff point of view, the separation by levels of House and Division may possibly be disadvantageous and may possibly lead to difficulties in House-Division communication; however, remember that this report attempts to look through the student's eyes.

[5]"Long-term" in this case refers not to long-standing relationships, but rather to those interactions of sufficient duration and intensity to require a closing conversational structure (see Davidson, 1975).

feels free to sit on the floor, which can be taken as another indicator of the

degree to which the House has managed to create a "home" atmosphere. In other

words, in those Houses, Einstein and Bernstein, in which student life seems to

be more intense, the use of the snack bar and lounge space is somewhat differ-

ent than in the other Houses, and it is this differential use of space which

contributes to the differences between the Houses in the type of atmosphere

created.[6] This different use of space itself rests on other factors, perhaps

differences in the composition of the student House population, differences

in the nature of the subject matter studied in each House, and differences

in the quality of faculty-student interaction.

[6]It should not be taken that these differences are absolute; i.e., in all
Houses, there are some students using the snack bar and lounge areas as
waiting rooms or strictly as eating places, and, in contrast, students who
are using the spaces for other activities, such as long-term interactions;
I am here referring to differences in the degree to which the House lounges
and snack bars serve these different functions.

3. The invisible student   .

One of the original purposes of this investigation was to define and
describe the role of the student vis-a-vis faculty, staff, and administration
members. One of the components of any social role with respect to another
complementary social role is that f interaction between the role occupants.
In addition to observing interaction between students and faculty-staff-
administration, I also inadvertently "passed" as a student several times,[7]
and thereby gained some insight into how some but not all faculty, staff,
and administration members interact with students. These observations
will be grouped into two headings: (1) the nature of what Goffman (1961b)
calls "unfocused interaction" between students and faculty-staff-admini-
stration, i.e., largely non-verbal interaction between faculty-staff-
administration and the student-in general, and (2) the nature of what
Goffman calls "focused interaction," i.e., interaction between persons
involving verbal behavior, i.e., between the faculty-staff-administration
and the student-in-particular. This chapter will deal with faculty-
staff-administration unfocused interaction with the student-in-general.

Often the most intriguing results of any type of research are those
which are serendipitous. As I walked around in "student clothes," I expected
to be inconspicuous, but I also expected to still be recognized by those
who know me. I discovered to my complete surprise that those faculty, staff,

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[7] I want to re-emphasize that at no time did I deliberately try to pass as
a student.

and administration members who normally recognize me and greet me by name
when I dress as a staff member how appeared not to recognize me at all
dressed as a student, but rather literally looked straight through me.[8]
From the sociology and psychology of perception it is known that (a) the
perceiver first takes in the perceived object as a whole in one glance and
then may or may not look further and in more detail, depending upon his or
her initial perception, and (b) normal (i.e., non-psychotic) adults are
constantly on the lookout for persons that they should say hello to or
greet in some way; i.e., normal adults usually do not walk around inten-
tionally not seeing others whom they know in some capacity and whom they
should greet (whether or not they choose to greet them is of course another
question). What this means is that the explanation that these faculty-staff-
administration members who looked through me while I was dressed in student
clothes simply did not "notice" me must be ruled out. They probably did
notice me, but their first global impression was "student" and they there-
fore did not look further to see if it was in fact someone that they knew
and normally would greet. It is in this sense that the student-in-general
is sometimes "invisible." This invisibility was found throughout all Houses
and throughout all levels of faculty, staff, and administration, with some
systematic exceptions.[9] The exceptions were that House clerks, House advisors,
and counselors, even those whom I did ... know very well at that time,

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[8]The existential experience of standing no more than three feet away from a
faculty member with whom I had lunched the week before and having that faculty
member look straight through me is of course absolutely indescribable.

[9]There were some individuals who would recognize me under any circumstance by
virtue of extensive interaction, and when I use the term "systematic excep-
tions," I am of course excluding these individuals.

recognized me even through my student garb. A <u>possible</u> explanation for this difference may be the following: The categories of persons who were exceptions are those who by the nature of their positions, training, or whatever, deal with students largely on an individual basis.

The implications of the invisibility of the student-in-general are not at all clear cut; i.e., one cannot make generalizations that the phenomenon is entirely bad for the student. If, for example, the student has come from a high school in which the teachers and administrators were watchdogs to make sure that the student behaved properly, then the sense of freedom here at Cypress can be exhilarating, and students have commented specifically on this wonderful freedom. For another example, if a student hasn't turned in a term paper or is in some other way remiss, then he or she may not particularly <u>want</u> to be recognized by his or her teacher while out on campus. On the other hand, the phenomenon of the invisibility of the student-in-general does help to perpetuate the differential status structure, which will be described next.

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4. The differential status system

So far we have been discussing the interaction or lack of it between faculty-staff-administration and the student in what Goffman (1961b) calls "unfocused interaction;" that is, before the actual verbal encounter begins. I shall now discuss and describe the nature of focused interaction between faculty-staff-administration and the student; i.e., once they start talking to each other, what is the interaction like and what are the status implications? Again, part of my observations came about because I ina'vertently and unintentionally passed as a student and was talked to by faculty and staff as if I were a student before I had a chance to explain who I was; however, for this section, I have also relied on (a) discussions with students, (b) observations of interactions between students and faculty-staff-administration, e.g., in meetings, and (c) observations of how students have reacted to me as a staff member. The major finding is that there exists and is maintained throughout the various occasions of inter-action a differential status system in which students are accorded lower status than faculty-staff-administration. It should not be thought that this differential status system is maintained only by faculty-staff-administration; in fact, as will be point out below, students also act in ways to maintain the status system. I shall first of all instantiate this differential status system and then discuss its implications for both students and faculty.

First of all, in those instances in which I inadvertently passed as a student in a focused interaction with a faculty-staff-administration member who did not know me personally, I was sometimes spoken to in a manner best described as neither kind nor unkind, neither friendly nor unfriendly, but

rather as parental. These sorts of interactions usually occurred when I was doing something or being somewhere normally off limits to students, e.g., trying to get into a locked staff room, or trying to get access to one of the locked stairways, or wandering back into the faculty office areas late in the day. In these cases, the faculty-staff-administration member would sometimes but not always ask me in the manner described above what I was doing there and what I needed. In one case, I had forgotten my key to a staff room, and the faculty member who talked to me did let me into the staff room. That is, this faculty member, thinking I was a student, did me a favor by letting me into a normally off-limits-to-students place, but all the while clearly maintaining the status difference through the type of verbal behavior described above. In other cases, faculty-staff-administration ers, thinking I was a student in an off limits area, did try to eject me from the area until I explained who I was. The maintainence of these sorts of off limits areas through the types of interactions described above clearly indicates a differential status structure in which the student, who either must not be in those areas or must have a good reason for being there, is accorded lower status.

A further indication of the existence of this differential status structure is the observed behavior of students who sit of committees otherwise composed of faculty, staff, and administrators. With the exception of a few student government leaders, students generally sit very quietly at these meetings, usually not speaking. When they do decide to speak, they usually raise their hands and wait to be recognized before they start speaking, even though this may not be the normal procedure for that particular meeting, i.e., even though other committee members at that meeting feel free

to start talking without recognition. Finally, when students do speak (again with the exception of a few student government leaders), it is sometimes in a deferential tone of voice sometimes so low as to be inaudible. I have a tape on which a student, a husky, six-foot male, can barely be heard even though he was very close to a rather sensitive directional microphone.

A third indicator of the differential status system, and one which is in general a fairly good indicator, is that of how the student handles the naming problem. That is, faculty-staff-administrators ·all students by their first names; however, the student must decide how to call those members of the faculty-staff-administration with whom they are personally acquainted. The _general_ solution[10] for the student in the absence of any further knowledge seems to be for the student to call faculty-staff-administration members by their titles plus last names. Two systematic exceptions (and remember the difference between idiosyncratic exceptions and systematic exceptions) seem to be that students sometimes call House advisors and House clerks by their first names. The fact that some House advisors are also faculty members then poses a further problem for the student. The students in those Houses with faculty House advisors report that they usually call their House advisor by his or her first name, although they

[10]There will be, of course, some idiosyncratic exceptions; for example, some faculty members may form relationships with students in which bilateral first-naming is obviously called for, and some faculty members make it a point to tell the student to use first names. On the other hand, some faculty members do not like students to call them by their first names and have complained to me about students who "step out of line" and call faculty-staff-administration members by their first names.

did not feel comfortable about doing it at first. Similarly, with a few
idiosyncratic exceptions, students call members of the administrative staff
by their titles plus last names, and those students with whom I have dis-
cussed this issue specifically have expressed discomfort at the idea of
calling administrators by their first names. Furthermore, as a "second-
order" observation (see page 4 of this Report), I discovered that students
whom I asked to not call me by my title plus last name but rather by my
first name felt very uncomfortable at doing so, and in fact in almost
all cases resisted doing so. This resistance took the form of either
(1) continuing to call me by my title plus last name, or (2) avoiding the
naming procedure altogether. The naming situation is one of the cases in
which the status differential is perpetuated by students as well as by some
but not all faculty-staff-administration members.

A further indication of the existence of the differential status system
and the perpetuation of it through the patterns of interaction can be seen
in specific changes in students behavior towards me upon their discovering
that I am a member of the staff; this phenomenon provides before-and-after
comparisons. Students at Cypress are generally friendly and amenable to
talking to people they don't know if they perceive these people as students
like themselves. When students perceive me as another student, interactions
with them proceed as normal interaction between equals; for example, they
will initiate conversations, engage in joking behavior, and call me by my
first name. When, however, they learn that I am not a student, there is an
abrupt change in the quality of the interaction. From that point on, they
will usually wait for me to initiate interaction, the conversation takes on
a much more formal quality, and they will usually no longer address me by my

first name.[11] Thus abrupt change in interactional behavior clearly illustrates the differences in the way in which students interact with other students compared with how they interaction with faculty-staff-administration. Since the same interactant (myself) is involved in both the before- and after-phases, the differences in behavior cannot be attributed merely to differences in personality, but rather must be attributed to differential norms of interaction, where such norms again serve to uphold the differential status system. Furthermore, this seems to be an instance in which the student's behavior reinforces the status system, but one must remember that some faculty-staff-administration members also act in ways to support the system.

One should not make the mistake of assuming that this differential status system is necessarily good or bad. It does seem to serve certain functions for both faculty-staff-administration and students. First of all, the maintainence of social distance may be desirable from the student's point of view, since, in general, formalized secondary relationships are in some ways much more predictable than close primary relationships. For example, a teacher who is also a friend may make more demands on a student than a teacher whom the student knows only as a teacher.[12] From the teacher's point of view, the maintainence of some social distance is also desirable, since at some point the teacher must stop being a friend and start being a

[11]Rapport was usually rather difficult to re-establish, and in some cases was only re-established after reassurances to the student that I have no teaching, grading, or administrative power.

[12]I am in no way implying that teachers actually do this, but rather that some students to whom I have talked perceive this as a possibility.

person with the power to grade the student. Furthermore, with respect to maintainence of distance between students and administration members, students are probably more comfortable with such a distance, since they generally perceive administration members as being very powerful (see next chapter).

5. Student perceptions of administration

With the exception of a few student government leaders, students in general perceive the administration at Cypress as being extremely powerful in largely unknown, almost mysterious ways. That is, the student knows that his or her teacher has specific grading power: in contrast, administrative power is felt to be diffuse and probably greater than that of the teacher. The most senstive probing on my part was not able to obtain more specific characterizations of this perceived administrative power, probably because (1) very few students come into contact with administrators and therefore do not personally know them from interactional experience, and (2) students are not quite sure what administrators do and therefore are not sure how the administrators could influence a student's academic life. Furthermore, all administrators are perceived as having this power, with the President having the most.

Given that the students perceive administration as having this sort of power, then the students also perceive that their best course of action with respect to interacting with members of the administration may be to avoid interaction altogether or at least as much as possible. Students expressed this as maintaining a low profile, staying out of the administration's way, staying out of trouble, etc. These expressions suggest that students perceive the possible effects of administration on their careers as students as being largely negative: i.e., they seemed to be afraid of what the administration will do to them rather than being able to think in terms of what the administration can do for them. Again, the most delicate probing was unable to obtain more specific information on exactly what students think

might be done to them by the administration, and furthermore, I came across no cases in which a student had actually been "done in" by the administration (or who at least was willing to tell me about it). These perceptions of administration here as an agent of possible punishment may c^ from several sources: general beliefs of the students subculture, students' experiences with punitive high school administrators, or students' experiences at their places of work with management. In a few cases, students who had been in prolonged contact with administrators, as, for example, a student of a class taught by an administrator, did perceive that administrator as being less threatening, suggesting that part of the student image of administrators as powerful and punitive may come from lack of student-administration contact on a relatively informal basis; however, such contact may be hard to come by, since interaction is in the first place a negative experience for students by virtue of their belief systems.

6. Student perceptions of the House Plan

Student perceptions of the House Plan and of the Houses vary widely.
The purpose of this section of the Report is to indicate and describe these
varying perceptions, but not to indicate the relative proportions of
students holding these percepts; the latter can be obtained in future
survey research.[13] This section, then, will be a listing of the ways in
which students see the House Plan and the House. Please note that the order
in which list items appear does not indicate either relative importance or
relative frequency. Furthermore, the categories are not mutually exclusive;
a student may feel that the House serves several of the following functions.

(a) The House as meeting place. Some students perceive the House as a
geographical location in which the probability is quite high that they will
run into somebody they would not otherwise see. That is, of all the places
on campus, the House is perceived as one of the very few places in which
one can more or less count of running into friends, acquaintances, tes,
etc., without having prearranged a time to meet outside of class. For
single students this may be a particularly valuable function, especially if
there is no other place in their lives which serves this function.

(b) The House as center of activities. Some students perceive the House
as the locus of out-of-class activity,[14] whether or not these activities are

[13]This is a good instance of the necessity for multi-method research; note
that while participant observation research alone cannot indicate the proportions
of students, survey research alone could not have in the first place obtained
a list of student perceptions of the House and the House Plan.

[14]This function should be kept separate from the first, since students who use
the House as a meeting place may not necessarily participate in any of that
House's activities.

class-related or unrelated to classroom concerns. For example, one student

spends several hours a week in a House snack bar, engaged in activities

apparently unrelated to classwork: socializing, relaxing, talking, etc.

Furthermore, the perception of the House as the center of activities may

or may not have to do specifically with House-sponsored activities; some

students do not participate in any House-sponsored activities, but they

nonetheless perceive and use their House as sort of a "home away from home."

On the other, some students perceive the House specifically as the initiator

and sponsor of almost all campus activities.

(c) The House as the place where records are kept. Some students

perceive the house as serving as a location where their records are kept,

i.e., as sort of an arm of the Registrar's Office, and this is perceived

as a convenience. In some cases, it apparently makes the process of

registration appear to be less frightening and less complicated by virtue

of the fact that the records are localized. Students in general perceive

administrative and registration activities as involving endless amounts of

red tape; having their records right there in the House makes this process

appear somewhat less complicated and more accessible.

(d) The House as abstract concept. Some students perceive the House

Plan and the House as an abstract concept without concrete reality. They

either appear not to understand the purpose of the House Plan, or they

understand its purpose but do not think they need it. In any case, they

appear to think of the House as a building in which they have most of

their classes. This may be related to the fact that some students perceive

the college in the first place as merely a place to attend classes and

nothing more, and they find the attempts to make it something more either amusing or annoying.[15]

(e) The House as the location of the counselor. Some students perceive the House as the place where their counselor can be found. What this in turn means depends upon how they perceive the role of the counselor, and these perceptions range from feeling that the counselor's only function is to sign the schedule card to feeling that the counselor's role is to help them in all aspects of student life. Reported experiences with counselors range from "I only see him or her to get my card signed" to "I would have dropped out of school if he or she hadn't been right there in the House."

7. Afterword

This report has been an attempt to describe some but not all of the facets
of the student experience here at Cypress through the student's eyes. The
reader is again reminded that this report was specifically written to describe
the perceptions not of students who are outstanding in some way, e.g., as
student government leaders, but rather those of students who are "just
plain students." The reader is further reminded that insofar as this
Report deals with perceptions, some of the percepts may or may not be correct
or in agreement with the reader's values; therefore, the proper way to have
read this in order to have obtained a good understanding is through the
suspension of one's own value judgments.

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