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ABSTRACT

In fall 1992, a survey was conducted of two subgroups of students who had enrolled for less than six credits in one of the seven community colleges in the Twin Cities metro area of Minnesota during fall quarter 1990, and who had not re-enrolled as of fall quarter 1992. The two subgroups surveyed included those classified as "completers" (completing at least 60% of their credits with a grade point average of at least 2.00), and those identified as "noncompleters" (not completing any courses). Students were surveyed on their goals, backgrounds, and reactions to the college experience. Usable responses were received from 62% of the 1,229 completers surveyed, and 77% of the 648 noncompleters. Study findings included the following: (1) updating job skills was the reason most frequently cited by both completers (36%) and noncompleters (31%) for attending college; (2) about one quarter of all respondents planned on transferring their credits to a four-year institution; (3) 87% of the respondents were employed, of whom 11% were also enrolled in a postsecondary institution; (4) completers were more likely than noncompleters to be employed and continuing their education; (5) completers were more likely to be employed in professional and marketing/sales jobs, while noncompleters were more likely to be in production or construction jobs; (6) two-thirds of noncompleters attributed their lack of completion to job conflicts or personal problems; and (7) over 90% of completers rated the quality of instruction as good or excellent. Data tables and the survey instrument are included. (PAA)

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GOALS, BACKGROUND, AND COLLEGE EVALUATIONS OF THE
QUARTER-TIME STUDENT WHO ENROLLS FOR ONE QUARTER ONLY
AT MINNESOTA'S TWIN CITY AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

METRO PILOT STUDY REPORT #4

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North Hennepin Community College
Minneapolis, Minnesota
March 1993

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**GOALS, BACKGROUND, AND COLLEGE EVALUATIONS OF THE QUARTER-TIME
STUDENT WHO ENROLLS FOR ONE QUARTER ONLY
AT MINNESOTA'S TWIN CITY AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

METRO PILOT STUDY REPORT # 4
March, 1993

Summary and Conclusions

This report will focus on students who enrolled for less than six credits at the seven Twin Cities Metro area colleges during fall quarter 1990 and had not re-enrolled as of fall quarter 1992. Two subgroups of those students were surveyed during fall 1992 concerning their goals, background, status, and evaluation of their college experiences. The first group - Completers - completed at least 60% of their credits with at least a 2.00 GPA. The second group - Non-completers - did not complete any credits.

Over half of the students had career related goals with the most frequent goal being updating job-related skills (35% of respondents). The second most common goal (30% of respondents) was personal development. Ten percent of students were exploring a new academic area and five percent used the "other" response to indicate they planned on using the credits in their four-year program or in preparation for a master's degree program. Completers were more likely to have updating job-related skills as a goal, while non-completers were more likely to be preparing for a new career.

Overall, 88% of the completers achieved their goals partially or completely. Those with short-term goals involving updating job-related skills, personal development, and transferring credits were most likely to have achieved their goals. Those with long-term goals of new or different career exploration were least likely to have achieved their goals.

One-fifth of the students had bachelor's degrees at the time they enrolled. Only about 35% of the respondents planned on transferring their credits to a four-year college and about one-fourth planned to earn a two-year degree. Twenty percent of the students planned on enrolling at the colleges in the future.

Overall, 87% of the respondents were employed, with 94% of them working 20 or more hours per week and 74% working 40 or more hours per week. Eleven percent of the group was both employed and in college, while an additional three percent was attending college only. Completers were somewhat more likely to be employed and continuing their education, but were less likely to be working over 40 hours per week.

Seventy percent of the respondents were in four job categories. Administrative/clerical jobs were most common (28%) followed by professional, managerial, and service occupations. Completers were more likely to come from professional and marketing/sales jobs, while Non-completers were more likely to be in production or construction jobs.

Two-thirds of the Non-completers attributed their lack of completion to job/studies conflicts or personal problems. Slightly less than one-third attributed their lack of completion to course/instructional factors.

Finally, Completers' ratings of the quality of instruction they received were very positive, with over 90% rating it good or excellent. Class size, variety of courses offered, and facilities were rated good or excellent by over 80% of the students. Counseling was rated by only 30% of the

students, due to their short time of enrollment, and 70% of the group that rated counseling rated it good or excellent.

Introduction

This report will focus on students who enrolled for less than six credits at the seven Twin Cities Metro area colleges during fall quarter 1990 and had not re-enrolled as of fall quarter 1992. That group of students were separated into three groups:

- A. *Completers - Students who completed at least 60% of the credits they registered for and had a GPA of 2.00 or better. In most cases those students completed all their credits. {N = 1229 (59%)}*
- B. *Non-completers - Students who did not complete any of the course(s) in which they enrolled. {N = 648 (31%)}*
- C. *Partial completers - Students who completed less than 60% of the credits they registered for or had a GPA of less than 2.00. {N = 196 (9%)}*

Students in the Completers and Non-completers groups were surveyed during fall quarter 1992 to obtain information about their goals, background, and reactions to their college experience. The surveys are included at the end of this report as Appendix A (Completers) and Appendix B (Non-completers).

Both Surveys included the following issues:

- A. *Main goal in attendance - career related, academic, or development.*
- B. *Initial plans for earning a degree or transferring credits.*
- C. *Plans for future enrollment.*
- D. *Academic background - having a Bachelor's degree.*
- E. *Current educational and employment status.*

In addition to the above questions, the Completers survey asked (a) whether the student had achieved their goal and (b) for them to evaluate five aspects of the college. The Non-completers survey asked the students why they did not complete their course(s) and gave them a list of nine options to check.

This report will first review the methodology used and response rates obtained from the two groups. Then, student goals, background, current employment and educational status will be reviewed, including comparisons between Completers and Non-completers. Finally, the responses of the two groups to unique questions will be reviewed. The report includes figures displaying the results of the surveys. Appendix E provides detailed numbers and percentage responses to the surveys. The table numbers in Appendix E correspond to the figure numbers in the report.

Method and Response Rates

The surveys were first mailed to the students with a cover letter (Appendix C) from the appropriate College President. Non-respondents were sent a "Cartoon" reminder (Appendix D) and a second copy of the survey three weeks later. The names of those who did not respond within three additional weeks were sent to a professional marketing research firm for phone follow-up. Students with new and bad addresses were followed through the two letters where addresses could be found, but only a few phone attempts were made due to the timing of the project. Table 1, next page, shows detailed results of the survey and phone calls. The total response rate was

56% for Completers and 73% for Non-completers. Taking into account bad addresses that could not be tracked increases the net response rates to 62% and 77% respectively. The Non-completers were more likely to respond to the phone follow-up than the mail surveys. That is not typical for our previous mail surveys and may be a result of the limited involvement and commitment this group of students had with the colleges.

Table 1
Response Rate Information for Quarter-Time
One Quarter, Fall 1990 Students

	Completers		Non-completers	
	N	%	N	%
Mail Response	548	45%	164	25%
Phone Response	352	29%	199	31%
Phone Refusals	19	2%	26	4%
No Reply	253	21%	198	31%
Deceased/End Search	57	5%	61	9%
Total	1229		648	
Total Response Rate	73%		56%	
Net Response Rate	77%		62%	

The percentage response for each group was weighted by the number in the total group to obtain the total percentage, because adding the two group's responses together to get a total would lead to an over-representation of the Completers in the total,

Student Goals

Figure 1, at right, shows the percentage of students in both groups choosing each main goal. The most frequent goal for both groups was updating job-related skills, chosen by 36% of the Completers and 31% of the Non-completers. The second most common goal for each group was personal development, with 30% of each group choosing this goal.

Students checking personal development at North Hennepin enrolled in a wide variety of course. The most common area was Business courses (30%) including

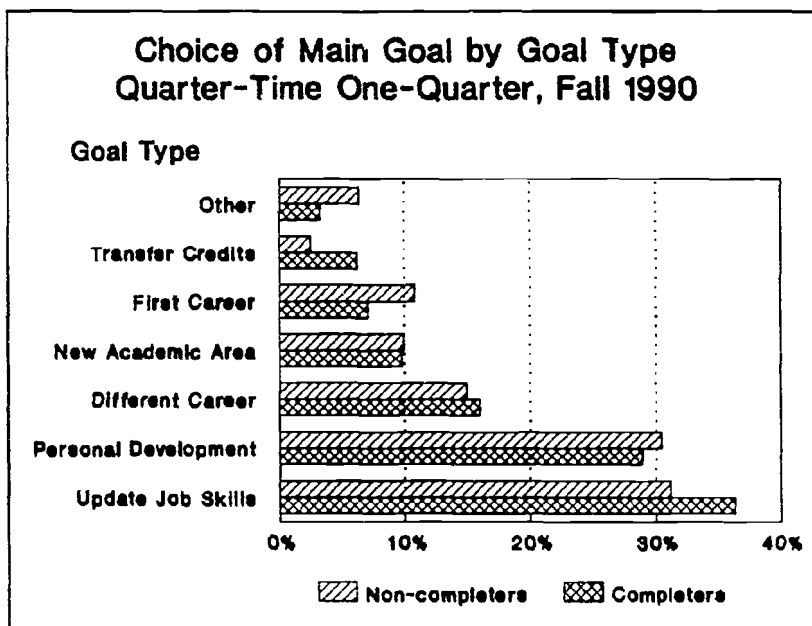


Figure 1

Accounting, Administrative Management and Public Works. Physical Education (21%) was the second most common area. Social Science (Sociology, Psychology, and Economics) and Humanities (English, History, and Philosophy) each accounted for 16% of enrollment. Art (11%) and Math-Science (6%) accounted for the remaining enrollments.

Preparing for a new career was the third most frequent goal, with 16% of the Completers choosing this goal and 15% of Non-completers. Preparing for a first career was the choice of 7% of the Completers and 11% of the Non-completers. Fifty nine percent of the Completers and 57% of the Non-completers had career-related goals. Approximately 10% of each group had the goal of exploring a new academic area.

Initial analysis indicated a relatively high number of "other" responses on the main goal question. The most common explanation given in the other category was the student planned to transfer the credits to fulfill requirements for a bachelor's degree or for application to a master's program. Those responses accounted for 5% of all students, 6% of the Completers, and 2% of the Non-completers. Finally, 4% of the students gave various responses in the other category.

The goals of the Completers and Non-completers were not dramatically different. Completers were more likely to be updating job-related skills. Non-completers were slightly more likely to be seeking preparation for their first career.

Goal Achievement by Completers

Eighty-eight percent of the Completers at least partially achieved their goal with 59% saying yes and an additional 29% saying they partially achieved their goal. Figure 2, at right, shows the number of students giving each response for the goal attainment question and the percentage of students saying they partially or completely achieved their goal. Over 90% of those whose goals were to update job-related skills, personal development, or transfer credits at least partially obtained their goals. Over 80% of those exploring a new academic area or having other goals at least partially achieved their goals. Those exploring a new career or a first career were least likely to have achieved their goals with about 70% at least partially achieving their goals. Those results seem reasonable as upgrading job-related skills, personal development, and completing transfer credits could more easily be finished in a single quarter than the more comprehensive goals of exploring a new career or a different career.

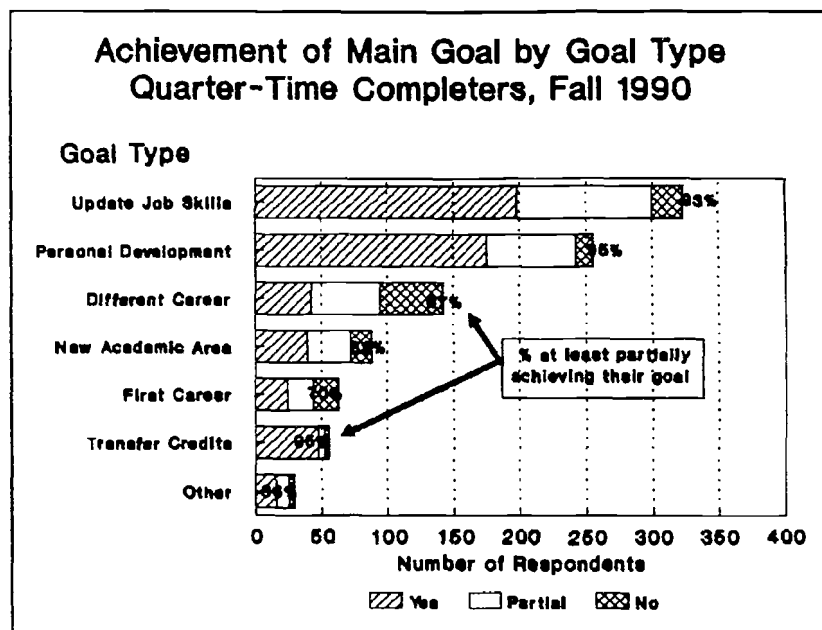


Figure 2

Degree and Transfer Intentions

Figure 3, at right, shows the responses of the two groups in terms of degree and transfer intentions. About half of each group did not have degree or transfer intentions (55% for Completers and 48% for Non-completers). About 4% of each group intended to both get a degree and transfer credits. Slightly less than a quarter of each group intended to transfer credits, while considerably more of the Non-completers (25%) planned on obtaining a Community College degree than did Completers (17%).

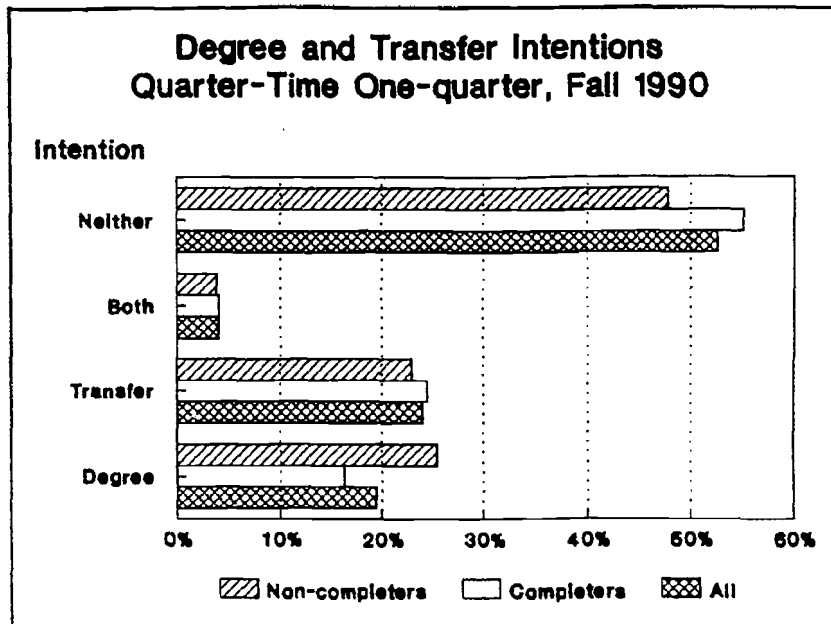


Figure 3

Previous Bachelor's Degree

Figure 4, at right, shows the percentage in each group that had a bachelor's degree prior to enrolling. Approximately one-fifth of the students had a bachelor's degree at the time of enrollment. The percentage of Completers with a previous bachelor's degree was almost twice that of the Non-completers (25% vs. 14%). That result might be expected as students with a previous bachelor's degree would have the skills needed to complete the courses.

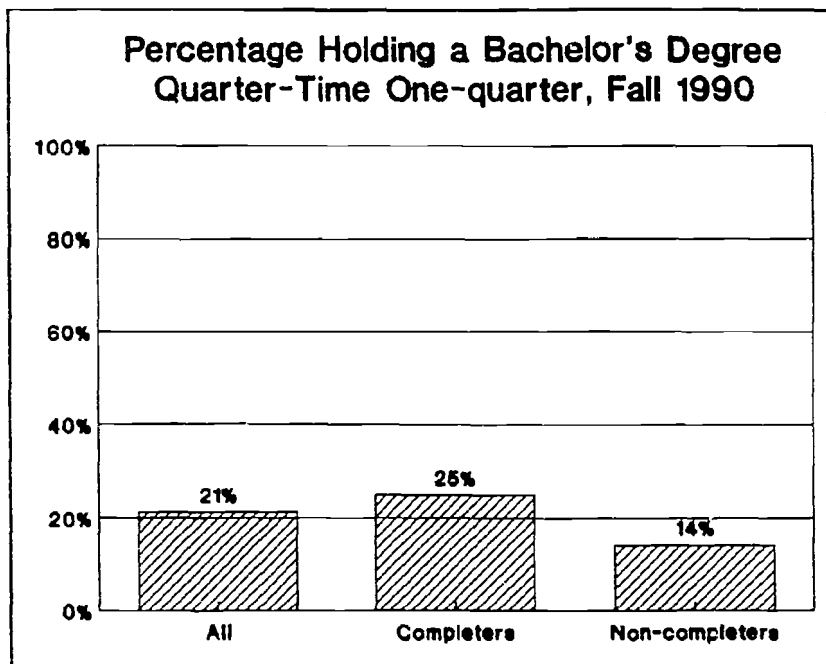


Figure 4

Future Enrollment Plans

Figure 5, at right, shows the future enrollment plans of the two groups. One-fifth of the respondents planned to enroll in the future, half said they might, and 30% said they would not. Completers were slightly more likely to definitely plan to enroll (21% to 19%) and to say maybe (50% to 48%). Non-completers were more likely to say they had no intention to enroll in the future (32% to 28%).

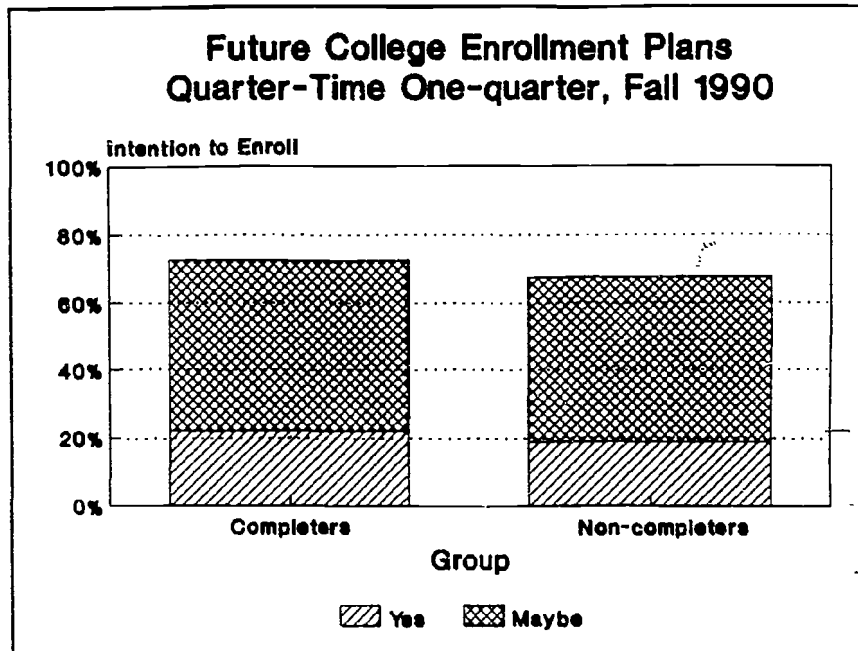


Figure 5

Current Employment Status

Figure 6, at right, shows the employment and educational status as of fall 1992 for both Completers and Non-Completers. Eighty seven percent of the respondents said they were employed. Ninety percent of the Completers reported employment, compared to 81% of the Non-completers.

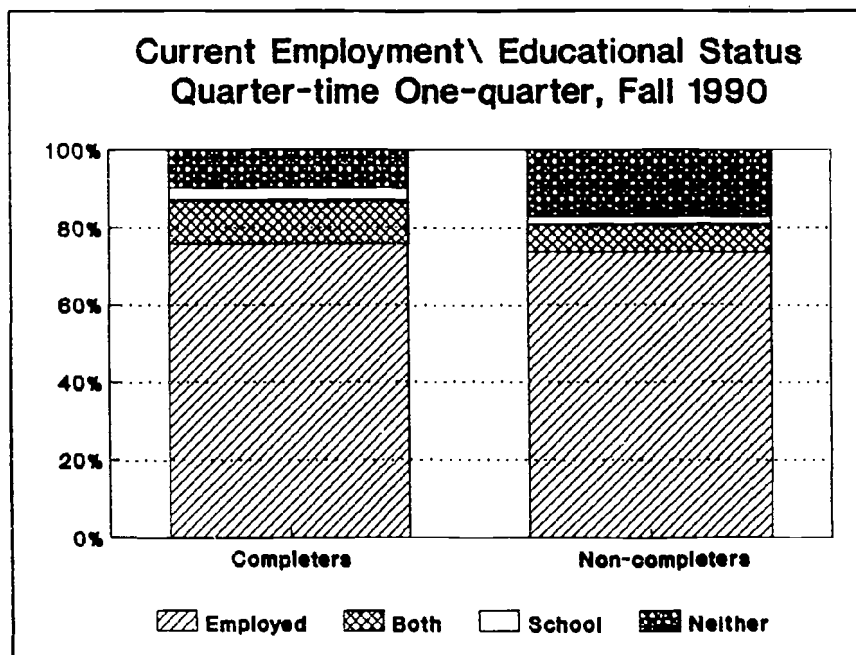


Figure 6

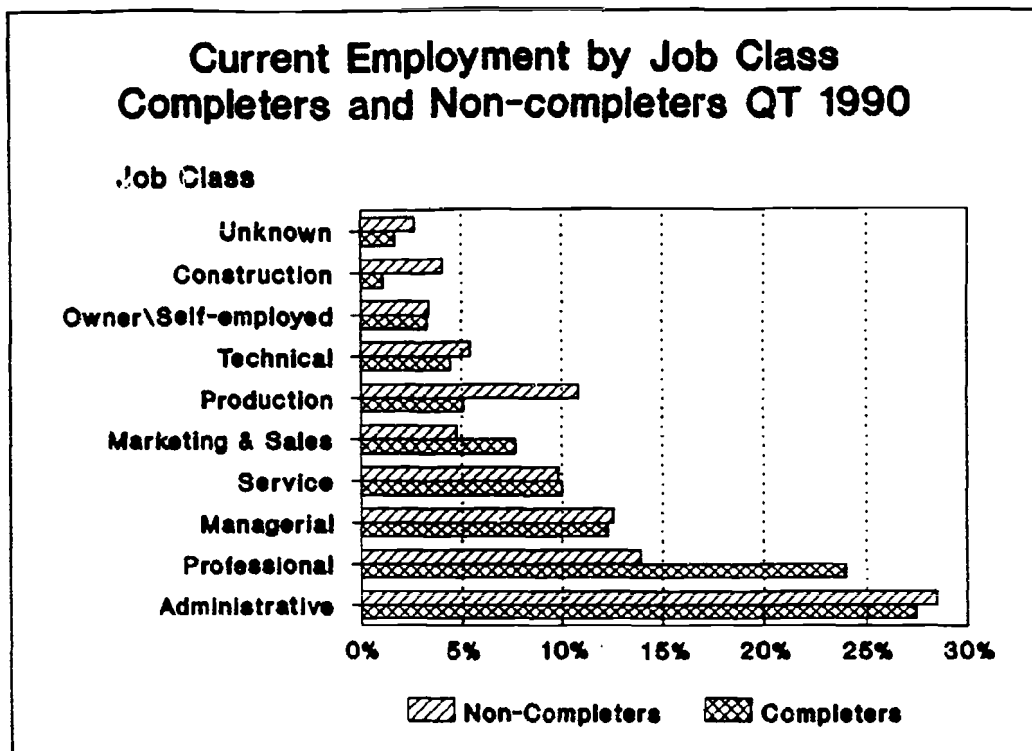


Figure 7

Figure 7, above, shows the percentage of respondents in each of the ten most common job classes given by the respondents arranged by the total percentage in the combined group. Over a quarter of each group was in administrative or clerical positions, with that being slightly more the case for those in the Non-completers group. The second largest group, at over one-fifth, was the professional category. Completers were almost twice as likely to be in the professional group as Non-completers (24% vs. 14%). The third largest group was in managerial occupations (12%). Non-completers were slightly more likely to fall into that group. One might speculate those in professional positions were more likely to have previous college experience and thus have better academic skills. Managers, depending on the specific management job, may also be more likely to have previous college experience, but that factor may be outweighed by the job commitments managers have. In fact, 89% of the managers in both groups were working 40 hours a week or more, considerably above the base rate of 74%.

The three other occupational groups with more than five percent responses were service occupations (10%), marketing and sales (7%), and production (7%). Those in marketing and sales were more common in the Completers group (8% vs. 5%). Production occupations were considerably more common in the Non-completers group (11%) than the Completers group (5%). The other occupational group with a higher percentage in the Non-completers group was the construction/extractive industries group (4% vs 1%).

Though the percentages of students in production and construction jobs were relatively small, their greater incidence in the Non-completers group might point to a problem: if those students desired to use the Community College as a way out of their current job, it appears they were not being well served. That group might need special counseling, skill training and support to succeed.

Figure 8, at right, shows the number of hours of employment for those who were employed. Of those employed, the Non-completers were more likely to work 40 or more hours per week (77% to 72%), with 11% of each group working 30-39 hours per week. Approximately 95% of the employed in each group was working more than 20 hours per week.

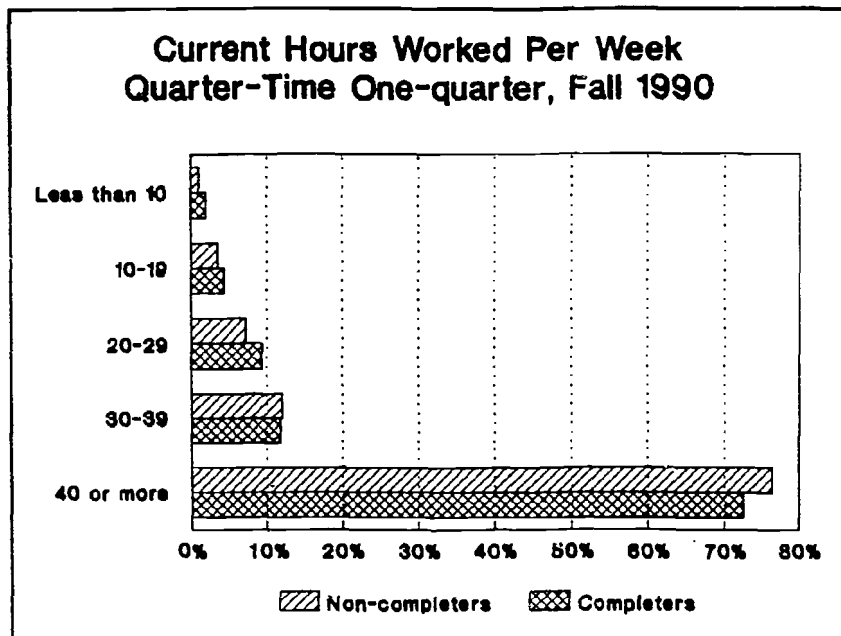


Figure 8

Current Educational Status

Fourteen percent of all of the students were currently enrolled in college (see Figure 5, page 6). The Completers were almost twice as likely as the Non-completers to be enrolled (17% vs. 9%). Figure 9, at right, shows the colleges students were enrolled in by major type. Completers were more likely to be enrolled in four-year colleges (60% vs. 41%). That was true for all four-year systems in Minnesota, but reverses for out-of-state four-year colleges, where Non-completers were more likely to be enrolled. Non-completers were more likely to be enrolled in two-year colleges (47% vs. 32%) and other institutions, primarily private vocational schools (12% vs 4%).

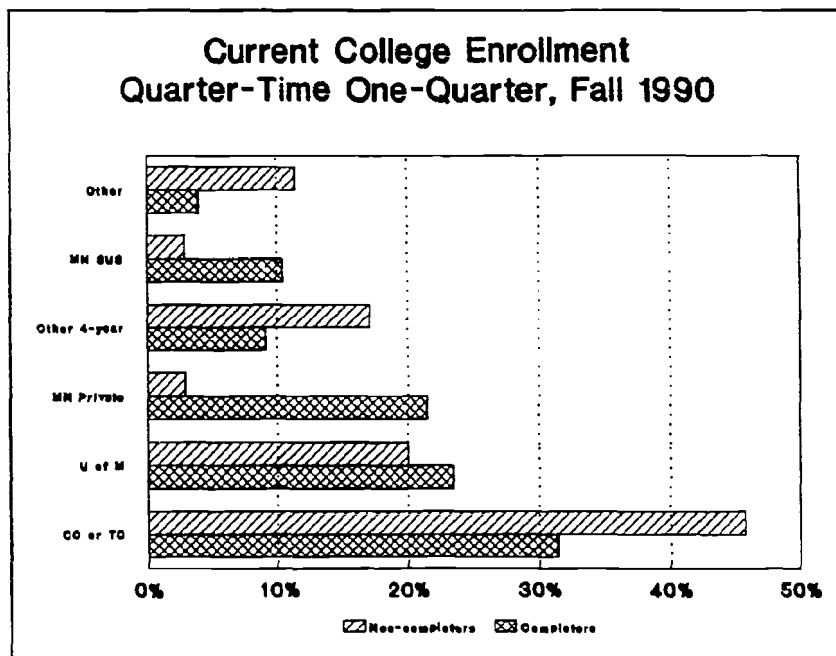


Figure 9

College Evaluations by Completers

Figure 10, at right, shows the Completers evaluation of five aspects of the college. Quality of instruction received the most favorable ratings, with 90% rating it good (51%) or excellent (39%). Variety of courses was also rated positively with 66% rating it good (66%) and 20% excellent. Class size and facilities also received good or excellent ratings by over 80% of the Completers. Counseling services received the lowest rating, with 70% of the respondents rating them good or excellent. Only 30% of the respondents evaluated counseling services. The low response rate and evaluations of counseling are probably related to the single quarter of enrollment.

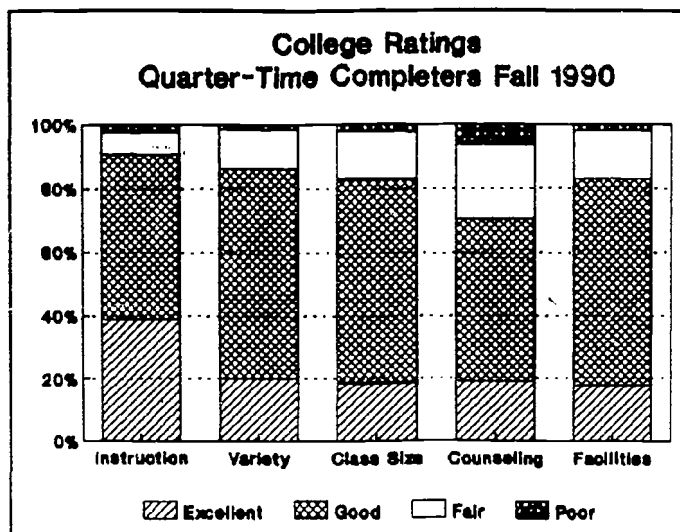


Figure 10

Why Non-completers Failed to Complete Courses

Figure 11 shows the percentage of Non-completers checking each reason listed for not completing their course. The most commonly cited reason (42%) was a conflict between job and studies. The second most common reason (26%) was personal problems. The colleges have little direct control over those issues, though they may be able to have some impact through financial aid and counseling services.

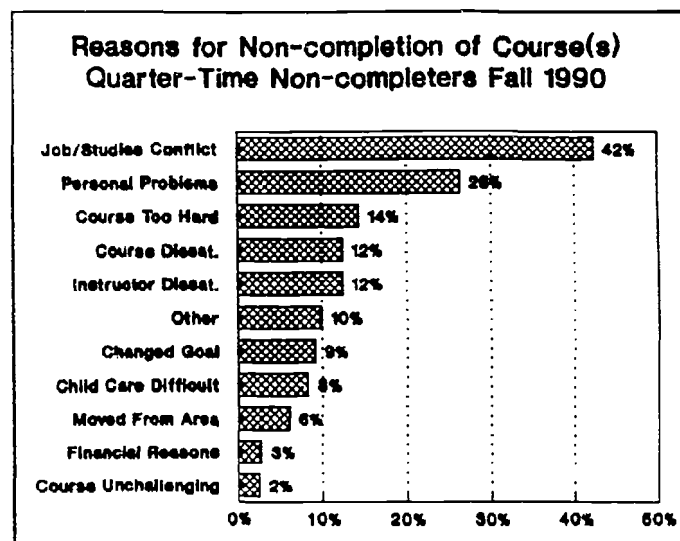


Figure 11

The next three reasons all clearly relate to student unhappiness with the course or instructor. Fourteen percent indicated they felt the course was too hard, 12% were dissatisfied with the instructor, and 12% were dissatisfied with the course. Three percent indicated they found the course unchallenging. As students could mark more than one item as a reason for not completing, the numbers cannot simply be added to give a total dissatisfaction with courses or instructors. If one looks at those students giving any one of these four responses, the total percentage of Non-completers indicating dissatisfaction with the course or instructor is 31%.

A relatively small percentage of students (from 6% to 9%) checked each of the following as reasons for not completing the course: changed goal, child care difficulties, and moved from the area.

APPENDIX A - COMPLETERS SURVEY

NORTH HENNEPIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY

Please respond to the questions listed below and mail the completed form back within 10 days.

A. Which one of these was your main goal in enrolling at North Hennepin in Fall, 1990?

- 1. explore a new academic area
- 2. update job-related skills
- 3. self-enrichment
- 4. prepare for my first career
- 5. prepare for a different career
- 6. other (please explain) _____

B. Did you achieve your goal in attending North Hennepin?

- 1. Yes 2. Partially 3. No

C. When you enrolled at North Hennepin did you plan to (check all that apply):

- 1. Earn a degree 2. Transfer credits to a 4-year college

D. Do you plan on enrolling at North Hennepin again in the future?

- 1. Yes 2. Maybe 3. No

E. Do you have a Bachelor's degree ?

- 1. Yes 2. No

F. If you are currently employed:

What is your job title? _____

How many hours a week do you work?

- 1. less than 10
- 2. 10-19
- 3. 20-29
- 4. 30-39
- 5. 40 or more

G. If you are currently enrolled at another college:

What is the name of the college? _____

What is your major? _____

How many credits are you currently taking? _____ credits

H. How would you rate the following areas at North Hennepin?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No opinion
1. Quality of Instruction:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Variety of courses offered:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Class size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Counseling services:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Classroom facilities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B - NON-COMPLETERS SURVEY

NORTH HENNEPIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY

Please respond to the questions listed below and mail the completed form back within 10 days.

A. Which one of these was your main goal in enrolling at North Hennepin in Fall, 1990?

- 1. explore a new academic area
- 2. update job-related skills
- 3. self-enrichment
- 4. prepare for my first career
- 5. prepare for a different career
- 6. other (please explain) _____

B. When you enrolled at North Hennepin did you plan to (check all that apply):

- 1. Earn a degree
- 2. Transfer credits to a 4-year college

C. Below are listed a number of reasons a student might have for not completing a course: Please check all that apply to you.

- 1. Changed goal
- 2. Difficulties with child care
- 3. Moved from the area
- 4. Dissatisfied with the course
- 5. Dissatisfied with the instructor
- 6. Course was not challenging enough
- 7. Course was too hard
- 8. Personal problems
- 9. Conflict between job and studies
- 10. other (please explain) _____

D. Do you plan on enrolling at North Hennepin again in the future?

- 1. Yes
- 2. Maybe
- 3. No

E. Do you have a Bachelor's degree ?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

F. If you are currently employed:

What is your job title? _____

How many hours a week do you work?

- 1. less than 10
- 2. 10-19
- 3. 20-29
- 4. 30-39
- 5. 40 or more

G. If you are currently enrolled at another college:

What is the name of the college? _____

What is your major? _____

How many credits are you currently taking? _____ credits

APPENDIX C - COVER LETTER

Dear North Hennepin Student:

Would you please take a few minutes to respond to the enclosed survey? We are sending this survey to you and other students from our Fall, 1990, quarter. We want to learn what you are doing in your career and education and how you evaluate your College experiences.

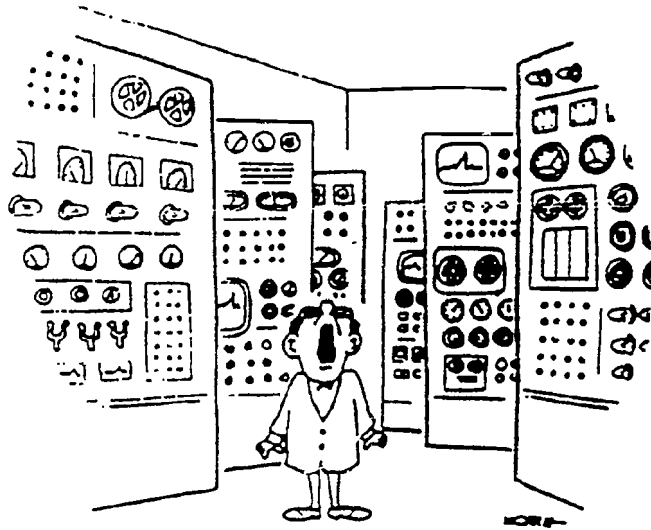
We will summarize the information from the survey and use it to assess what our students are doing, how the College is performing, and how the College's operations and services to its students could be improved.

The information you give us is vital to that task, and we appreciate your participation. The survey will take only a few minutes to complete and your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Please mail us your completed Student Survey in the enclosed postage-paid return envelope within 10 days. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Frederick W. Capshaw, Ph.D.
President



Help!!

The computer can't do it all. We need your response to the enclosed survey. We are sending you another survey because we are very anxious to hear from you.

APPENDIX E

Table 1
Main Goal in Attending

	Completers		Non-completers		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Other	30	3%	23	6%	48	5%
Transfer Credits	56	6%	9	2%	65	7%
First Career	64	7%	39	11%	103	11%
Explore Academic Area	88	10%	36	10%	124	14%
Different Career	144	16%	54	15%	198	22%
Self-enrichment	260	29%	110	30%	370	41%
Update Job-related Skills	327	36%	113	31%	440	49%
TOTAL	900		362		1262	

Table 2
Attainment for Students Completing Courses

	Yes	Partial	No	Total	Blank	Grand Total
	Other	15 51.7%	10 34.5%	4 13.8%	29	1 3.3%
Transfer Credits	47 85.5%	5 9.1%	3 5.5%	55	1 1.8%	56
First Career	24 38.1%	20 31.7%	19 30.2%	63	1 1.6%	64
Explore Academic Area	39 44.3%	33 37.5%	16 18.2%	88		88
Different Career	42 29.6%	53 37.3%	47 33.1%	142	2 1.4%	144
Self-enrichment	175 68.6%	67 26.3%	13 5.1%	255	5 1.9%	260
Update Job-related Skill	198 61.3%	102 31.6%	23 7.1%	323	4 1.2%	327

Table 3
Degree and Transfer Intentions

	Completers		Non-completers		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Neither	496	55%	173	48%	669	53%
Both	37	4%	14	4%	51	4%
Transfer	220	24%	83	23%	303	24%
Degree	147	16%	92	25%	239	19%
Total	900		362		1262	

APPENDIX E

Table 4
Percentage Holding a Bachelor's Degree

	Completers		Non-completers		All
	N	%	N	%	%
Yes	223	25%	51	14%	21%
No	672	75%	310	86%	79%
Total	895		361		
Blank	5	1%	1	0%	0%

Table 5
Do You Plan on Enrolling at The College again in the future?

	Completers		Non-completers		All
	N	%	N	%	%
Yes	196	22%	68	19%	21%
Maybe	449	50%	175	48%	50%
No	246	28%	118	33%	29%
Total	891		361		
Blank	9	1%	1	0%	1%

Table 6
Current Employment and Educational Status

	Completers		Non-completers		All
	N	%	N	%	%
Employed	691	77%	268	74%	76%
Employed/School	118	13%	27	7%	11%
School Only	33	4%	8	2%	3%
Neither	58	6%	59	16%	10%
Total	900		362		

Table 7
Current Hours Worked Per Week

	Completers		Non-completers		All
	N	%	N	%	%
Less than 10	16	2%	3	1%	2%
10-19	35	4%	10	3%	4%
20-29	76	9%	21	7%	9%
30-39	95	12%	35	12%	12%
40 or more	585	72%	224	76%	74%
Total	807		293		

APPENDIX E

Table 8
Current Employment by Job Classification

Employment Status	Completers		Non-completers		All
	N	%	N	%	%
Agriculture\Forestry\Fish	1	0%	0	0%	0%
Mechanics\Installers	3	0%	4	1%	1%
Armed Forces	5	1%	2	1%	1%
Transportation\Material	7	1%	4	1%	1%
Handlers\Laborers	8	1%	2	1%	1%
Unknown	14	2%	8	3%	2%
Construction\Extractive	9	1%	12	4%	2%
Owner\Self-employed	27	3%	10	3%	3%
Technicians\Related	36	4%	16	5%	5%
Production Occupations	41	5%	32	11%	7%
Marketing & Sales	62	8%	14	5%	7%
Service Occupations	81	10%	29	10%	10%
Managerial Occupations	99	12%	37	13%	12%
Professional Specialty	194	24%	41	14%	20%
Administrative (Clerical)	222	27%	84	28%	28%
Total	809		295		

Table 9
Current College Enrollment

	Completers		Non-completers		All
	N	%	N	%	%
Other	6	4%	4	11%	7%
MN SUS	16	10%	1	3%	8%
Other 4-year	14	9%	6	17%	12%
MN Private	33	22%	1	3%	15%
U of M	36	24%	7	20%	22%
CC or TC	48	31%	16	46%	36%
	153		35		

Table 10
Student Rating of Instruction and Services - Completers

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	No		Grand Total
						Opinion	Response	
Quality of Instruction	343	453	59	23	878	14	8	900
Variety of Classes	39%	52%	7%	3%	689	2%	1%	900
Class Size	138	455	85	11	689	189	22	900
Counseling	20%	66%	12%	2%	850	21%	2%	900
Facilities	157	548	125	20	850	38	12	900
	18%	64%	15%	2%	267	4%	1%	900
	51	137	62	17	267	587	46	900
	19%	51%	23%	6%	767	65%	5%	900
	135	501	116	15	767	111	22	900
	18%	65%	15%	2%		12%	2%	

APPENDIX E

Table 11
Reasons for Not Completing Course for Non-completers

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Course Unchallenging	9	2%
Financial Reasons	10	3%
Moved From Area	22	6%
Child Care Difficulties	30	8%
Changed Goal	33	9%
Other	36	10%
Instructor Dissatisfaction	45	12%
Course Dissatisfaction	45	12%
Course Too Hard	52	14%
Personal Problems	95	26%
Job/Studies Conflict	153	42%
Total Respondents	362	