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A COMPARISON OF MEASURES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EFFECTIVENESS IN SATISFYING STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC GOALS

by

Judy B. Flake

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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Approved by



Dissertation Advisor

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APPROVAL PAGE

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The purpose of this study was to examine the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals. This study identified criteria which contribute to the students' and to the accrediting agency's perceptions of community colleges' effectiveness. The students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness were compared to the perception of the accrediting agency and to the institutions' retention rates.

The perception of effectiveness did vary depending upon the indicator used. A comparison was made among the mean scores of the students' perception of the community college's effectiveness, evaluators' perception based upon the community college's self-study report prepared for the accrediting agency, and evaluators' perception of effectiveness based upon the retention rate. The students' perception of the community colleges' effectiveness was more positive than the evaluators' perception of the community colleges' effectiveness based upon the accrediting agency self-study. The evaluators' perception based upon the self-study was more positive than that of the evaluators' perception of the community colleges' effectiveness based upon reported retention rates.

The students' perception of effectiveness was more affected by those factors which directly related to their academic studies. Faculty were perceived to contribute more to helping the students meet their academic goals than was the administration. Students in different age groups and degree programs have different criteria in evaluating institutional effectiveness. The most highly ranked criteria by all were faculty qualification, faculty accessibility, library services, and academic advising services.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Overview

The community college is an institution established to serve the lifelong educational needs of its surrounding area residents. The 1947 Truman Commission on Higher Education identified the community college's role as "providing proper education for all people of the community without regard to race, sex, religion, color, geographical location, or financial status," (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1948). Roesler (1988) indicated that excellence in all programs and services should be expected, as well as demonstrated, by the community college. The prime indicator of excellence should be student success. Institutional effectiveness has recently become a major issue in community colleges (Alfred, Kreider, and McClenney, 1994). Previous studies have identified community college students as a diverse demographic group; their need for academic preparation is equally varied (Rounds, 1984). In the Fall of 1988 an increasing number of young, traditional, full-time students were reported to be choosing community colleges, technical colleges, and junior colleges for their

first-time college experience. In addition, the community college enrolls a greater percentage of older students than any other higher education institution. More than 50 percent of community college students are older than the traditional four-year college student (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1989). Further, DiCroce (1989) found that community colleges educate 4.9 million people each year, 43 percent of the total population attending higher education.

Historical Perspective

Just as student demographics are varied, so are the academic objectives of the community college student. The Commission on the Future of the Community College (1988) reported five main categories as primary reasons students attend community colleges:

- ▶ to prepare for transfer to a four-year college or university - 36 percent.
- ▶ to acquire skills needed for a new occupation - 34 percent.
- ▶ to acquire skills needed for current operation skills - 16 percent.
- ▶ to fulfill personal interests - 15 percent.

- ▶ to improve basic English, reading or math skills - 4 percent.

It should be noted that some students indicated two or more reasons for their attendance, thus the total percentage exceeds 100.

As community colleges struggle to maintain enrollment and funding levels, student retention has been equated with success and attrition with failure. These perceptions pose hazards for the system (Pantages and Creedon, 1978; Noel, 1978). Parnell (1984) indicated that the American society has narrowly defined educational excellence to be a baccalaureate education. This is a problem since a vast number of Americans never earn a baccalaureate degree. Tichener (1986) indicated that students leaving college prior to graduation may be perceived by the institution as a retention problem. To others, outside the institution, this may be perceived as evidence of lack of positive student outcome. Thus, such institutions would not be considered deserving of the same public support as those institutions which produce "graduates." Students have become scarce. They are valuable resources for all colleges and universities. Their decision concerning whether or not to attend a particular institution is critical (Cope, 1981).

The community college has been rooted in assessment for over 25 years. Simmons (1988) stated that efficiency reforms are not new.

Other movements, particularly in the last 25 years, have either been developed fully or have been adopted and pursued fervently by the community college. Whether one examines the systems approach, behavioral objectives, cognitive style mapping, mastery learning, management by objectives (MBO), or strategic planning, the common thread for the community college sector has been its responsiveness and often proactive stance-to change and innovation. More importantly, the adoption of these strategies was more often than not a serious effort to assess institutional effectiveness, to improve program performance, and to enhance instructional modalities and student outcomes.

Assessment, Students, and Community Colleges

A report on the community colleges of Virginia recommended that community colleges assess how well the community colleges are helping students achieve their goals (Montemayor, Joaquin, and Reed, 1986). Montemayor stated that 64 percent of the community college students in his study rated the community college overall in a very satisfied/satisfied range.

Cohen and Brawer (1987) indicated that community colleges' "institutional realities" should differ from that of the liberal arts in the university. The community college should promote "social cohesion, or economic

development", should be "useful in the workplace", should "contribute to the well-being of the community", and should "teach people to be enlightened citizens." DiCroce (1989) indicated that community colleges must know more about their overall retention of students, including such data as student values, orientation, expectations and goals.

State government is the primary resource for funding community colleges, technical colleges, and junior colleges. A review of the financial history of the community college revealed that federal funding continues to shrink. In addition, local government contributions vary on a state by state basis with tuition revenues ranging from less than 10 percent in some states to 40 percent in others (AACJC, 1989).

There is a lack of a uniform system of accreditation of educational institutions in the United States. There exists six independent regional accrediting agencies which each accredit all educational institutions spanning the spectrum from pre-school through post-graduate. These agencies have evolved formal and informal geographic boundaries. Membership is voluntary; however, institutional funding in many cases is tied to the institution being accredited by the accrediting agency for that region. Thus, regional accreditation serves a useful and vital function for educational institutions. It is time for accrediting

agencies to rigorously define general learning standards for two-year schools and to evaluate two-year programs on the "basis of measurable student outcomes, effectiveness with different populations, and ability to meet changing public needs" (Palinchak, 1993).

The current period is one in which accountability and higher performance standards for the community college are essential in order for state governments to recognize the community colleges' need for increased state funding. Community colleges must have well defined goals. In addition, they must develop criteria and standards to evaluate their "effectiveness" (MDC, 1989). DiCroce (1989) indicated institutions must define "value-added" and be able to document the success of their students and their accomplishments. They must track the progress of their students whether they continue on to a four-year institution and earn a baccalaureate degree or whether they enter the work world for a career.

The 1989 session of the North Carolina General Assembly adopted a provision (S.L.1989; C. 752; S. 80) which mandated that:

"The State Board of Community Colleges shall develop a 'Critical Success Factors' list to define statewide measures of accountability for all community colleges. Each college shall develop an institutional effectiveness plan, tailored to the specific mission of the college. This plan shall be consistent with the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools criteria and provide for collection of data as required by the 'Critical Success Factors' list.

The thinking of the General Assembly was that appropriate measures for these critical success factors (CSFs) would insure that the community colleges would examine their performance. The CSFs are to be both a planning and an evaluation/accountability tool. (North Carolina Department of Community Colleges Planning & Research Section, 1994).

The State of North Carolina, with the establishment of the Commission on the Future of the North Carolina Community College System, has taken steps to assure higher standards for North Carolina Community Colleges. The Commission's first recommendation is to provide every community college student access to quality teaching and academic support services. Specifically, the system is to create a mechanism to "assess individual student needs, develop academic and career plans for them, and provide counseling to help them meet and expand their goals" (MDC, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

The community colleges' philosophical roots, established with its origins in 1901, have been grounded in the concept of "democracy's college", the "opportunity college" and the two-year "people's college." These

colleges are experiencing an identity crisis with their expanded role of being "all things to all people." Criticism for low retention rates and poor effectiveness are contributing factors in the evaluation of the community colleges' current direction and appropriateness. The problem for this study was to determine whether current criteria for appraising the institutions' effectiveness such as the institutions' retention rates and the accrediting agency's reports are appropriately portraying the institutions' effectiveness relative to the institutions' effectiveness as perceived by the students they serve.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals. Specifically, this study identified criteria which contribute to the students' and to the accrediting agency's perceptions of community colleges' effectiveness. The students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying their academic goals was compared to the perception of the accrediting agency and the institutions' retention rates (as reported in the 1994 Critical Success Factors report) to determine if the

retention rates reflect student goal achievement. In addition, the study determined whether students in different age groups and degree programs have different criteria in evaluating institutional effectiveness.

Research Questions

1. How do students perceive the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
 - a. How do traditional age (under 21 years) students as a group perceive the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
 - b. How do non-traditional (21 years and older) age students as a group perceive the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
 - c. How do technical degree students as a group perceive the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
 - d. How do vocational certificate students as a group perceive the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
2. Are there significant differences between groups of students as defined by age and degree programs in their

- perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
- a. Are there significant differences between traditional age (under 21 years) students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and that of the perceptions of non-traditional age (21 years and older) students?
 - b. Are there significant differences between technical degree students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and that of the perceptions of vocational certificate students?
3. What criteria are used by the students in determining the effectiveness of the community college in satisfying students' academic goals?
- a. What criteria are used by traditional age students in determining the effectiveness of community colleges in satisfying students' academic goals?
 - b. What criteria are used by non-traditional age students in determining the effectiveness of community colleges in satisfying students' academic goals?
 - c. What criteria are used by technical degree students in determining the effectiveness of

community colleges in satisfying students' academic goals?

- d. What criteria are used by vocational certificate students in determining the effectiveness of community colleges in satisfying students' academic goals?
4. How does the accrediting agency perceive the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals?
5. What criteria are used by the accrediting agency in determining the effectiveness of community colleges in satisfying students' academic goals?
6. What is the perception of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals based upon their reported retention rates?
7. How do the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals of the students compare?
8. Do differences exist between the students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and the general perception of institutional effectiveness as perceived from the reported retention rates?

9. Do differences exist between the accrediting agency's perception of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and the effectiveness as derived from the reported retention rates?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. No significant differences exist between traditional age (under 21 years) students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and that of the perceptions of non-traditional age (21 years and older) students.
2. No significant differences exist between technical degree students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and that of the perceptions of vocational certificate students.
3. The students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals of the students do not differ. This hypothesis was not tested for a statistically

significant difference because the means are from different measures of effectiveness.

4. No differences exist between the students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and the higher education scholars' perception of institutional effectiveness as perceived from the reported retention rate. This hypothesis was not tested for a statistically significant difference because the means are from different measures of effectiveness.
5. No differences exist between the accrediting agency's perception of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and the higher education scholars' perception of institutional effectiveness as perceived from the reported retention rates. This hypothesis was not tested for a statistically significant difference because the means are from different measures of effectiveness.

Definition of Terms

The researcher used the following definitions of terms in this study:

Academic goals - Those objectives which students have established as the desired outcome of their educational experience.

Effectiveness - The institution's success in minimally satisfying its stated goals.

Evaluation - Evaluation "designates a summing-up process in which value judgments play a large part, as in grading and promoting students" (Hopkins, Stanley, and Hopkins, 1990). It is an "effort to appraise the quality of educational phenomena" (Popham, 1993).

Indicators - "Something that points out, gives an indication of, or expresses briefly or generally," indicators should be identified as caution lights, not outcomes or accurate measures (Renkiewicz, Lewis, and Hamre, 1988).

Measurement - The "development, administration, and scoring of assessment procedures" (Hopkins, Stanley, and Hopkins, 1990). In education, measurement is the "act of determining the degree to which an individual possesses a certain attribute (Popham, 1993).

Retention Rate - The concept used to identify the percentage of students who continue in a program of study until the completion of a degree or certificate at the same institution.

Technical degree student - A student whose primary reason for attending a community college is to obtain a two-year associate degree.

Vocational certificate student - A student whose primary reason for attending a community college is to obtain a one-year vocational certificate.

Delimitations

This study was limited to a representative cluster sample of four community colleges which are members of the North Carolina Community College system. In addition, the study was limited to those individuals in vocational or technical programs who quit attending or who have graduated from the community college within the past year.

Significance of the Study

The Commission on the Future of the North Carolina Community College System (MDC, 1989) reported that economic and demographic factors facing the state will present challenges for building and maintaining a "state-of-the-art workforce." This commission identified the community college as the resource with the flexibility to best meet these challenges.

This study is important because it examined students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic needs. In addition, it provides a basis to better understand the uniqueness of the institution and its students. This study compares students' academic goals with retention rates to enhance our knowledge of the retention problem. The study determines whether or not the accrediting agency's perception of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals differs from the students' perceptions and how the two compare to the institutions' retention rates.

DeVoll (1987) has reported the costliness of declining college retention rates. Retention rates have become one variable for public criticism as well as documentation for limiting the community colleges' financial resources (DeVoll, 1987). Other researchers (Doan, Friedman, and Teklu, 1986; Wright, 1984) have questioned the appropriateness of the current retention measure as an

assessment of the effectiveness of the community college. This study provides information specifically addressing students' academic goals which will be compared to retention rates for analysis of the retention rate as an appropriate measure of institutional effectiveness.

In addition, this study was significant in that the analysis and synthesis of the data gathered provide a framework for recommending modifications of current measures of institutional effectiveness. The framework is based upon the criteria used by students and the accrediting agency in perceiving institutional effectiveness.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

This study examined the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals. Past research established the foundation for the need and understanding for cultivation of this study. The researcher reviewed the literature and identified areas for review. This review concentrated on the following major areas: the community college as an institution of higher education, characteristics of the community college student, student retention in the community college, and the accreditation process. The literature in these areas that establish relationships among the students, the community college, and the accrediting agencies are reviewed.

Community Colleges

The American community college originated in the West during the early twentieth century. Social factors such as the need for training industrial workers, longer

adolescence, and the emphasis on social equity all played significant roles in the rise of the community college. In the 1950's and 1960's, community colleges were often established in communities where no public colleges existed. The percentage of high school graduates who began college increased as much as 50 percent in these areas. By 1972, community colleges were located so that 90-95 percent of each states' population lived within a 25-mile radius of an institution (Cohen and Brawer, 1982). Today, the community college educates 4.9 million people a year or 43 percent of the persons who pursue higher education (DiCroce, 1989).

DiCroce (1989) traced the philosophy of the community college to the establishment of the common schools in 1837, the land grant colleges in 1862, and the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862. The community college has been described as the "democracy's college," "opportunity college," and the two-year "people's college." This is a result of the institution's mission to meet the various needs of the community that it serves.

The community college has attracted students who could not afford the traditional higher education institutions; who could not attend on a full-time basis; who have had their education interrupted; who needed job training; who were unable to attend classes on campus and had increased leisure time. The variety of students attending community

colleges has affected the institutions' curriculum (Cohen and Brawer, 1982). There are more evening classes and courses directed toward specific skills.

The community college was not originally viewed as part of higher education. The community college was the result of school districts' desire to expand their influence and persons such as the University of Chicago's president, William Rainey Harper, who wanted to move the university's general education to a separate institution so that the university's upper division could be strengthened. The private colleges and state universities were considered to be higher education, while public junior colleges were operated as state agencies or part of a local school district. As a result of state governments' failure to take steps for the establishment of standards for admission, grading, promotion, and graduation, accreditation agencies were developed to establish standards and to meet the other needs of these institutions (Bender, 1983).

The creation of community colleges is often the result of politicians' making political decisions. Legislative allocations of funds to community colleges continue to depend upon the colleges' close alignment with governmental sponsors and upon funding agencies' views. Some regional accrediting commissions suggest that there is be more political interference in the management, governance, and

operations of community colleges than of other education institutions (Welker and Morgan, 1991).

Community College Students

Community college students are individuals who are usually older, in need of financial aid, can attend only part-time, and in many cases have lower academic levels in high school (Cohen and Brawer, 1982). A predicted trend for the 1990's is that a higher proportion of community college students will be 30 or older. The average age of students in credit classes at public community colleges is 28. Fifty percent of community college students are older than the traditional college-age cohort. In addition, the number of women attending community colleges has grown to account for approximately 53 percent of 1988 fall enrollees (AACJC, 1989).

Community colleges have made efforts to reach part-time students by making it easy for them to attend. Weekend college, off-campus classes, in-workplace classes, and senior citizens' institutions have all been deliberate efforts of the institution to reach the diverse population it serves (Cohen and Brawer, 1982).

A large percentage of minorities attend community colleges. The Center for Educational Statistics, (1988)

reported that while community colleges enroll 36 percent of the nation's white college students, the institutions enroll 57 percent of the Native American college students, 55 percent of Hispanic college students, 43 percent of all black college students and 41 percent of all Asian college students. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching reported that community college students' two primary reasons for attending community colleges are to prepare for transfer to a four-year college or university and to acquire skills needed for a new occupation (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988).

Garcia and Pacheco (1992) studied the link between outcomes and mission and goal statements at Santa Fe Community College (New Mexico). They defined community college's mission with regards to students' satisfaction with their college experience as consisting of student services (advising, counseling, testing, financial aid, career planning, and human development), a transfer program, a technical/occupational program, and developmental education programs. They also reported that part of Santa Fe Community College's Student Outcomes Model included the students' assessment of the learning experience.

Retention of Community College Students

Retention of students was not a concern in colleges and in universities in this nation as long as there was a surplus of high school students and limited space in selective colleges and universities. As the college-going students became more diverse and open admission policies grew in popularity, the issue of retaining students in post-secondary institutions became predominant. Institutional planning became a perplexing problem with students transferring, dropping out, stopping out, and the number of high school graduates dwindling. The significance of this problem is intensified as institutions are facing statewide definitions of their effectiveness as they are "rated" on indicators such as retention rates, program completions, graduation rates, credit completion rates, and licensures (DeVoll, 1987).

The National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of the High School Class of 1972 and the Postsecondary Education Transcript Study (PETS) has forced a reexamination of community colleges' notions of drop-out and transfer rates. These studies found that one out of five individuals who attend two-year colleges will receive an Associate's Degree from a two-year college. Of those students who attend two-year vocational and technical schools, one out of every

three eventually receives either an Associate's Degree or certificate/license. One out of five individuals who attends two-year colleges will attend a four-year college whether or not he/she receives a degree at either institution. One-fourth of the students who attend two-year institutions earn less than one-semester's worth of credit. They are referred to as "occasional students" (Adelman, 1988).

Adelman (1988) stated that the American system of higher education has the power to "recapture" individuals in educational pursuits, and that credentials are not always the best measure of attainment for these students. Montemayor, Hannon, and Reed (1986) found that 48 percent of their former students had goals related to preparation for job; 22 percent had as their objective college transfer; and 31 percent had personal interest as their goal for college attendance. Interestingly, 57 percent of the students reported that they had no intention of completing a two-year associate degree or certificate degree as their educational goal.

At Sierra College, Brophy (1986) found that 25 percent of the dropouts considered leaving college prior to their enrollment. This study reported that many studies of attrition do not accurately reflect the circumstance surrounding the problem. The findings indicated that full-

time students intending to transfer to a four-year college or to achieve an Associate's Degree are not the students prone to drop-out. Rather, Brophy stated that the group could best be identified as "casual" students taking one course and that course was for avocational or recreational reasons. His findings indicated that community college attrition studies should eliminate the data on those individuals who are "casual students" and have no intention of pursuing degrees or certificates. He stated that such data should not be the basis of "hysteria" about dropout statistics.

The Commission on the Future of the North Carolina Community College System presented a student-centered position for North Carolina Community Colleges. The Commission's first recommendation is to provide every community college student access to quality teaching and academic support services. Specifically, the system is to create a mechanism to "assess individual student needs, develop academic and career plans for them, and provide counseling to help them meet and expand their goals" (Commission of Community Colleges, 1989).

Accrediting Agencies

Nongovernmental, voluntary accrediting agencies are quasi-public organizations. This role came about as a result of the federal government's use of accreditation in questions concerning eligibility for federal funds (McIntyre, Swenson, and Tillery, 1982; Breneman and Nelson, 1981). These groups serve a social purpose. These organizations justify their existence by being sources that assure educational quality and protect the public. The concept of accreditation is only about ninety years old. Accreditation grew, reflecting the characteristics of the society: "idealistic, self-motivated, reform-minded, desiring individual improvement, believing in both initiative and voluntary collective action, and distrust of government." These characteristics remain descriptive of accrediting organizations. During the past twenty-five years, accreditation has become of significant importance and has drawn national attention. This is a result of concern for educational quality and for the financial burden these programs present on the economy (Young, Chambers, Kells, and Associates, 1983).

Early efforts of accrediting agencies began with problems of definition and articulation between high schools and higher education institutions. Quantitative terms were

used to measure minimum standards. Accrediting agencies have progressed from attempting to make institutions identical to an agency that provides a system of self-evaluation that encourages and assists institutions with the improvement of the quality of education.

Young, Chambers and Kells (1983) reported that while students are supposed to be the focus of education, accreditation has not always kept this group's interest at the forefront. Though increased efforts have been made, students are infrequently involved with accreditation. The predominant user of accreditation has been the federal government for eligibility of federal money.

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) has been one of the most visible agencies representing the nation's community colleges and has served as an important information resource for community college policy makers. In the fall of 1987 AACJC and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement formed a panel to address three critical issues:

- ▶ Accountability--reporting information to external constituencies such as parents, legislators, alumni, employers, and the general public;
- ▶ Planning--providing an information base for management decision-making; and

- ▶ Improvement--using information as the basis for faculty development, curriculum change, and the development of student support services.

This panel maintained that the most pressing information need was for data on student flow and outcomes. They recommended that research focus on indicators of student attributes, student academic progress toward his or her goals and outcomes at the end of and following the student's tenure with the college. The challenge was whether AACJC or any other national agency could include "assuring that information on student attributes is collected accurately according to consistent definitions and then related to student progress and outcomes" (Palmer, 1988).

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools now focuses on institutional results and learning outcomes. This agency compares an institution's performance to the institution's mission or purpose to evaluate quality. Furthermore, the agency's concept of institutional effectiveness focuses on how well the specific needs of the area the institution serves are met (Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness, The Commission on Colleges and Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1987).

No single model or set of standards exist for all two-year college accreditation. The accreditation standards and

models vary among the six regional geographic accreditation agencies that cover the United States and its territories. Marchese (1992) declared that regional accreditation is deeply rooted in the higher education history of the U. S. Further, it is a largely U. S. invention, devised by educators for educators derived from the educators' perceived need to preserve the history, tradition, and quality of four-year colleges and universities. Despite the many changes during this century that have occurred in higher education, accreditation and educational institutions remain interlocked in ways that some call symbiotic and others self-serving.

Palinchak (1993) added that the accrediting agencies were formed before state governments decided to seriously deal with the education of the masses in a classless society. The U. S. Constitution left the form, leadership, and direction of education to the states, and the Constitutional separation of church and state prevented the churches from being a unifying factor in education. The accrediting agencies were formed by the most influential four-year colleges and universities in each region in an effort for self-preservation and maintenance of the status quo.

Palinchak then argues that while regional accreditation is voluntary, institutional accreditation is almost a

necessity since most funding sources (federal and state agencies, charitable foundations, and charitable trusts) make regional accreditation a requirement for receipt of funds. Therefore, accreditation is no longer intended to preserve the integrity and reputation of elite colleges and preparatory schools. The problem facing educators is what the modern role of accreditation is. Must it preserve the status quo or should it be a change agent? He argues for the change agent role.

The strength of two-year colleges does not lie in blind emulation of their four-year counterparts. While sharing critical elements with baccalaureate granting institutions, two-year colleges are distinguished by their ability to accommodate nontraditional students with a range of academic and work-oriented problems that require effective teaching, different delivery modes, measurable learning, and active rejection of social, cultural, ethnic, and gender stereotypes. . . it may be time for accreditation associations to review two-year colleges in terms of their abilities to articulate unique missions, serve different populations, and deliver innovative programs.

Institutional Effectiveness

The interest in measuring success in higher education has been largely generated by scarce resources. The need to make decisions between funding alternatives has produced many proposals to measure community colleges' outcomes and their success. The level of success is dependent upon

different constituents: politicians, legislators, administrators, and students (Renkiewicz, Lewis, and Hamre, 1988).

The community college leaders have shifted their focus in recent years from establishment and growth to quality and the utilization of resources. According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, "the assessment of organizational effectiveness essentially involves a systematic, explicit, and documented comparison of organizational performance to organizational purpose." Ewell, (1988) stated that a college that is serious about assessment must examine the institution's mission and determine which educational outcomes fit the mission.

Pritchard (1989) differentiated between institutional effectiveness and student achievement. Institutional effectiveness is the measurement of organizational purpose and performance. The community college's organizational purpose can be defined as providing access to education, addressing student achievement, addressing student development, or addressing student social needs. The concept of student achievement can be measured by the completion of student goals, academic success, successful transfer to four-year institutions, and successful employment. Traditionally, the evaluation employed by assessing organizations has been the measurement of

performance with the intent to improve processes and procedures. The assessment of an organization's impact on its constituency requires broader evaluations.

The Western Association of Colleges and Schools (WACS) suggested two major types of assessment activities: those that address student learning and those that address institutional and policy issues. Alfred and Kreider (1991) also used the two-tiered approach to develop a model from a different perspective. His two dimensions were based upon the location of the sources of the data for the assessment. He called one source internal variables ("inside-out" indices) and the other external variables ("outside-in" indices). Seybert (1990) integrated the WACS model of types of assessment activities and Alfred's model of locations of data sources. He devised a matrix model called the "Effectiveness Assessment Matrix," (see Figure 1) one axis represents locations of sources of assessment data (internal or inside-out and external or outside-in) and the other axis represents the major group which the data assessed.

Welker and Morgan (1991) indicated that some reports call for more accountability of community colleges, while others, compare the differences between efficiency and effectiveness in relation to educational activities. Effectiveness measures are often confused with measures of efficiency. Students enrolled in programs, number of

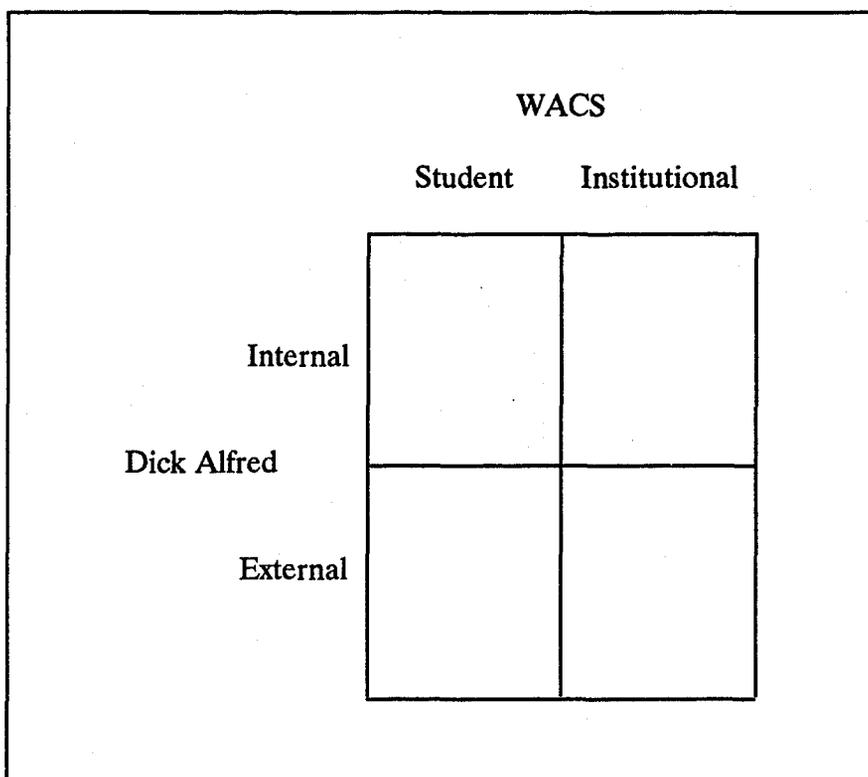


Figure 1. Institutional Effectiveness Matrix

students graduating, cost per student per session, and square feet of facilities are efficiency measures. These measures are "accountability" statistics used to report how well resources have been expended on educational activities but they are not measures of effectiveness. These authors state that a distinction must be made between institutional performance measures, management performance measures, and student performance measures, all of which are accountability statistics, and not institutional effectiveness measures. An action, a deed, or things done,

or the exhibition of skill or capacity are indicators of performance. The result or consequence of the action, deed, or thing done is effectiveness. Welker and Morgan further indicated that effectiveness is rooted in the curriculum of institutions and should be examined in the context of the society they serve.

Grossman and Duncan (1988) developed a model for measuring a college's performance in terms of external demand and its own stated mission. The model of institutional effectiveness begins with the mission statement from which goals are defined. Indicators of measurable outcomes are derived for each goal and data are collected for each outcome (See Figure 2). The model identified six concerns faced by all colleges:

1. access and equity;
2. employment preparation and placement
3. college/university transfer;
4. economic development;
5. college/community partnerships;
6. cultural and cross-cultural development.

Thirty-eight indicators of quality which provide the foundation for assessment of the institution were related to these six concerns.

The Community College Roundtable (CCR), a group of ten two-year college practitioners, identified and defined some

measures of community colleges' effectiveness in its 1992 report. They developed a three-tiered model of indicators which measure community college effectiveness. Internal and external dimensions similar to Grossman's and Duncan's model were combined with student progress in the CCR's model. They developed 13 core indicators and classified them according to the three tiers. Figure 3 depicts the three tiers and associated core indicators.

The curriculum is of paramount importance to any interpretation of the effectiveness of an institution. Community colleges cannot be managed, organized, and evaluated into effectiveness by ignoring essential activities of these institutions. There is little research concerning the impact and contribution to effectiveness of staffing, clientele, curriculum and finance. Welker and Morgan suggest that making a distinction between a management performance model and developing a model of effectiveness based on a curriculum, may provide the basis for research on the effectiveness of the community college (Welker and Morgan, 1991).

Leaders of community colleges are asked to provide evidence of institutional effectiveness. Savage (1988) indicated that traditional information may be used to assess outcome may underestimate the effectiveness of community colleges. Furthermore, indicators such as "degrees awarded"

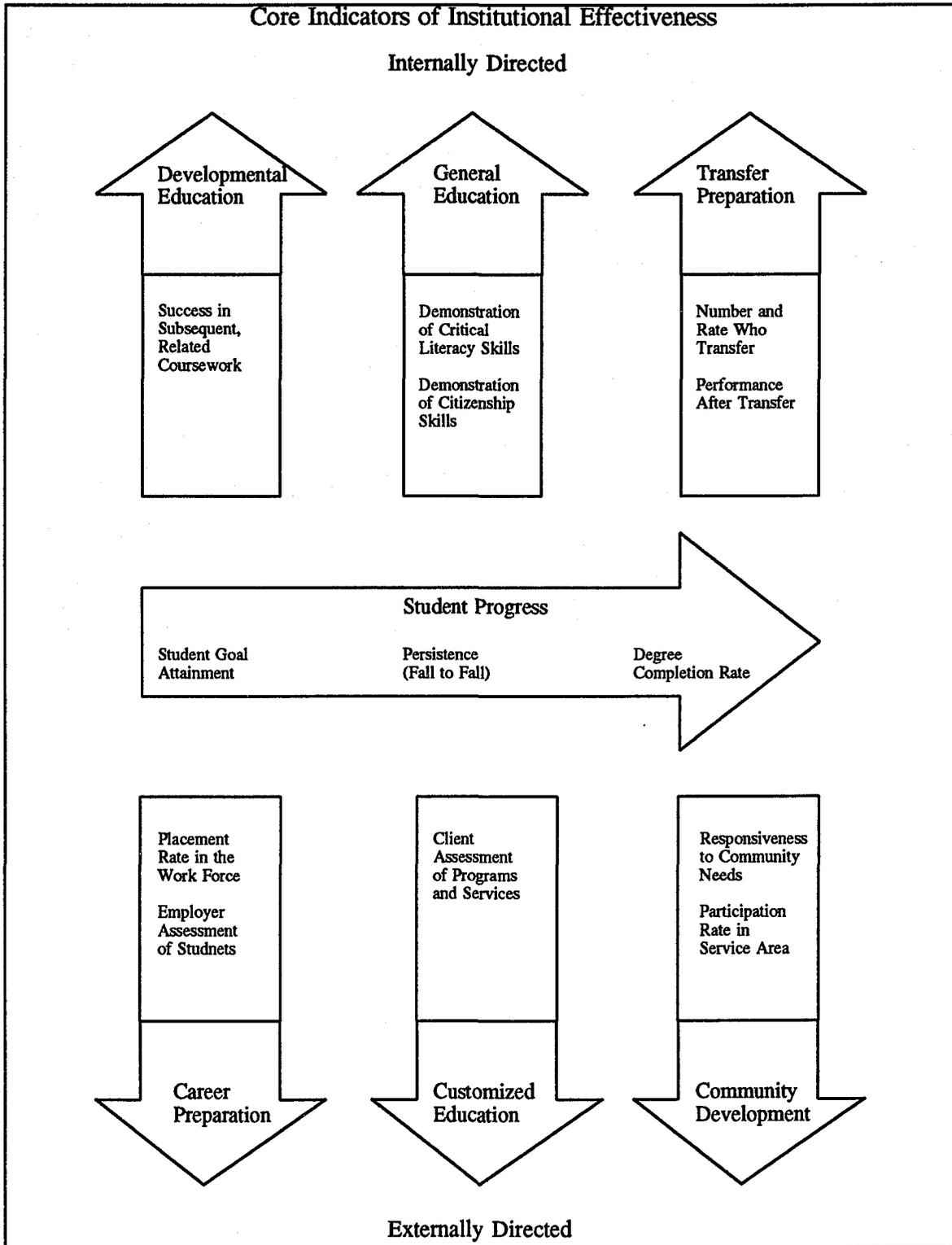


Figure 3. CCR's model of measuring institutional effectiveness

are biased toward four-year institutions whose administrators assume that enrolled students matriculate into degree programs. Community college students most often intend to fulfill vocational or transfer-related goals without earning a certificate or Associate's Degree. The "High School and Beyond Study" of the Center for Education Statistics (1988) found that high school students entering community colleges had lower Postsecondary aspirations than those students who enrolled in four-year institutions (Savage, 1988).

The 1989 session of the North Carolina General Assembly adopted a provision (S.L.1989; C. 752; S. 80) which mandated that:

"The State Board of Community Colleges shall develop a 'Critical Success Factors' list to define statewide measures of accountability for all community colleges. Each college shall develop an institutional effectiveness plan, tailored to the specific mission of the college. This plan shall be consistent with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' criteria and provide for collection of data as required by the 'Critical Success Factors' list."

The General Assembly intended that appropriate measures for the critical success factors (CSFs) would insure that the colleges would examine their performance. The CSFs are to be both planning and evaluation/accountability tools (North

Carolina Department of Community Colleges Planning & Research Section, 1994).

Simmons (1988) points out the deep roots of efficiency reforms.

Other movements, particularly in the last 25 years, have either been developed fully or have been adopted and pursued fervently by the community college. Whether one examines the systems approach, behavioral objectives, cognitive style mapping, mastery learning, management by objectives (MBO), or strategic planning, the common thread for the community college sector has been in its responsiveness and often proactive stance--to change and innovation. More importantly, the adoption of these strategies was more often than not a serious effort to assess institutional effectiveness, to improve program performance, and to enhance modalities and student outcomes (p. 3).

Simmons (1988) indicated that the community college sector had embraced assessment during a time when the definitions of words such as "excellence," "quality," and "effectiveness" were still being debated at all levels of higher education. He indicated that much of what was being done by community colleges in assessing institutional effectiveness and student outcomes was consistent with and complementary to accreditation's overall goal of promoting educational quality and excellence.

Colleges that view assessment simply as a necessary but minimum compliance requirement have little chance of qualitative improvement. Some individuals persist in the

notion that institutional effectiveness defined by accreditation standards means meeting minimum standards; however, most regional accreditors have adopted criteria precisely to move beyond minimum standards. Simmons believes that increased emphasis on educational outcomes is the most important accrediting change in the last decade (Simmons, 1993).

Community colleges have moved their institutional research functions from that of the collection, organization, and reporting of daily activities to fulfill compliance reporting requirements to organizing data from different reports in new, creative ways to provide insights into evaluating the community colleges' strengths and weaknesses. These insights are indicators of institutional effectiveness (Palmer, 1990). Renkiewicz, Lewis, and Hannon (1988) defined an indicator "as something that points out, gives an indication of, or expresses briefly or generally." They stated that an indicator is used as a warning flag or guidepost of impending problems and not a precise measure. Such indicators as graduation rates, credit hours completed as a percentage of credit hours attempted, or the results of student follow-up surveys, if collected year after year, may point to trends that require further study.

The Maryland State Board for Community Colleges provides year-by-year trend data on five indicators:

- ▶ percent of vocational program graduates who find full-time employment in fields related to their program of study;
- ▶ percent of students who meet their transfer goal (that is, the transfer rates of graduates who enrolled with the intention of transferring);
- ▶ percent of these transfer students (those who have transferred to senior institutions in Maryland) who rate their preparation for transfer as "good" or "very good;"
- ▶ percent of employers who rate the training received by graduates as "good" or "very good" and
- ▶ percent of nursing graduates who pass their licensure examination on the first try.

The State of Maryland feels that the most important measures of institutional quality must be identified and prioritized. In their situation, these priorities focus on student success. The indicators used in their performance profile were defined to reflect this focus. Given the community colleges' multiple missions and many fiscal, administrative, and educational effectiveness measures that could be used, each community college or community college system should define a manageable set of indicators that can be the focus of institutional research.

Moore (1986) stated that this is a concern of building a consensus:

Because effectiveness is multidimensional and educational outcomes are multiple and diverse, it must be obvious that there can be no single criterion for institutional effectiveness. Rather, the challenge is to achieve consensus regarding appropriate clusters of criteria that are specific and observable and that also make sense to faculty members, administrators, students, policy makers, and the general public.

Expectations and outcomes are varied, pervasive and open to question in the case of community colleges and their students. Measures of success typically applied to senior colleges, such as degrees awarded, are not sufficient for community colleges. Since one-third of community college students seek skills that will enable them to gain immediate employment, 15% seek retraining or relicensure, and 15% take courses only for personal enrichment, different measures are required that will measure the institution's effect on these various groups. The only way to determine the reasons students attend community college is to directly ask them. Once their goals are determined, an effort must be made to determine whether the students' goals are being achieved (Brawer, 1988).

Summary of the Literature Review

The American community college arose as a response to the need of the nation for better educated citizens in a growing industrialized society. It is a consequence of the democratization of American education. Higher education in America addresses itself to the totality of life. The community college is almost uniquely an American institution. It has helped to provide the diversity, the equality of educational opportunity, and the vocational focus that has been demanded by the American democratic society.

Community colleges serve the most diverse group of students of any higher educational institution. Students' ages range from the teens to the nineties; educational achievements range from illiterate to college graduates and beyond; financial status ranges from poverty to wealth; and academic goals range from casual interest to college transfer to vocational certification.

Community college student retention has become a major issue. Many critics state that the standard measure of retention used in higher education, i.e. percentage of entering students completing degrees, is an inappropriate measure for the community college. Many community college

students do not enter the institution with plans for degree or certificate completion.

Governmental involvement in financing education has grown in the past century. Concerns of legislators for the distribution of limited funds to institutions have increased the need for institutions to document their effectiveness. Past research has revealed several indicators of institutional effectiveness: retention rates, well-formulated mission statements, faculty qualifications, and financial stability. The satisfaction of the student with the organization has had limited impact in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness.

Academic accreditation agencies were the result of institutions' need for assistance with the evaluation process. Voluntary nongovernmental bodies have evolved as a result of the lack of centralized governmental standards. As society's standards for institutions have changed to reflect a more qualitative measure rather than quantitative, the accrediting agencies have rethought their methods of evaluation. Accrediting agencies now evaluate institutions as individual organizations based upon their ability to provide quality instruction and to improve the quality of instruction available to students. There is a lack of studies that evaluate students' role in and concern for students in the accreditation process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study examined the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals. Criteria used by students' and the accrediting agency's in formulating their perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness were identified. Institutions' retention rates were compared with students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying their academic goals.

The work is a descriptive study. The findings were used to determine the relationship between students' perceptions and the accrediting agency's perception of institutional effectiveness in meeting student academic goals.

Institutions

The North Carolina Community College System consists of 58 institutions. Of the 58 institutions, 20 institutions

have completed accreditation under the most current guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. From the 20 institutions having recently completed accreditation, a cluster sample of four institutions was selected to participate in this study. Two were selected from predominately urban areas and two from predominately rural areas. Selection of the institutions was determined by the institutions' willingness to participate, availability of student data, and the curriculum programs offered by the institutions (i.e., vocational and technical programs).

Subjects

The subjects of this study are former students of the community colleges who have quit or who have graduated from the institutions during the past academic year. These individuals were enrolled in the colleges' vocational and technical programs while attending the community colleges.

Instrument

This study includes the use of a survey instrument. This instrument was constructed by the researcher. The instrument measures the student's perception of the

institution's effectiveness in meeting the student's academic goals. It includes a section of student demographic information: program of study, age, and original goal. Next, are two sections to measure the student's perception of the institution's effectiveness in meeting his or her educational goals. A list of criteria was generated from a review of the literature concerning community colleges and an analysis of the criteria for accreditation as outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Two major groups which past literature identified as being important to student success are the faculty and the administrative/support personnel. In the first of the criteria sections, three questions allowed the students to rate how well the faculty as a group, the administrators and support staff as a group, and the community college as a whole had helped them achieve their academic goals. The students had a choice of four answers. The four-point scale did not allow for a neutral response and forced the students to choose either a positive or negative response. The next section listed several criteria identified in the literature as important in aiding community college students to achieve success. A 5-point Likert Scale was used by students to rate the importance of each criterion as a measure of their perception of institutional effectiveness. In addition, the survey

includes an open-ended question which provided the opportunity for students to indicate other criteria they used as a measure of what is essential for the institution to be rated as effective in meeting the students' academic goal.

A pilot test of the questionnaire was performed to establish the reliability and validity of the instrument. The subjects of the pilot test of the instrument were former students not included in the cluster sample. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The validity of the instrument was established by comparing the results of the instrument with the results of the researcher's personal interviews of the pilot test group.

Selection of Participating Institutions

The researcher contacted the President of the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges and presented him with a brief description of this research and asked him if he would endorse the study and, if so, to provide the researcher a letter urging the presidents of the selected community colleges of the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges to allow the researcher to use his/her community college in the study. The President reviewed this

study's proposal, agreed to endorse the study, and prepared a letter (Appendix A) urging the presidents of North Carolina's community colleges to cooperate with the researcher in this study.

The researcher identified six community colleges of the North Carolina Department of Community College as potential participants. The six community colleges were selected upon the basis of 1) having completed the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation process within the past three years, 2) either having their main campus in a predominantly urban county or in a predominantly rural county (three were predominantly urban and three predominantly rural), and 3) being a comprehensive community college identified by having vocational certificate (one year), technical degree (two year), and college transfer programs.

Institutional Reports

A letter (Appendix B) was sent to the presidents of the six selected community colleges. The letter informed the presidents of the researcher's proposed study and of the demands that the study required of participating institutions. The letter apprised the presidents that the researcher would be contacting them by telephone to discuss

the study and request the president's permission for her/his institution to participate in the study. Of the six, four presidents consented for their institutions to participate in the study. Two of the participating community colleges are located in predominantly urban counties and two in predominantly rural counties.

Each institution provided the researcher with the names of individuals from which the researcher was to obtain a copy of the institution's SACS report and a list of names and addresses of students enrolled in the spring term of 1994 but not enrolled in the fall term of 1994.

The researcher contacted the Planning and Research Section of the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges and requested a copy of the publication *1994 Critical Success Factors For the North Carolina Community College System*. This publication includes retention rates for the institutions. The retention rates were determined by using the percentage of students who were enrolled in the fall quarter of 1992 and who were also enrolled in the winter and/or spring quarters of 1992-93. These are the most current statistics available for the community colleges.

Survey Administration

Fifty students were randomly selected from each of the four community colleges' list of students enrolled in the spring quarter of 1994 and not subsequently enrolled in the fall quarter of 1994. This constituted the study's sample. A package containing a cover letter (Appendix C), the survey instrument (Appendix D), and a stamped self-addressed envelope was mailed during November, 1994 to the subjects. One week following the initial mailing, follow-up packages containing a follow-up letter (Appendix E), a survey instrument, and a self-addressed stamped envelope were sent to subjects not responding to the initial survey request.

As an incentive for subjects to complete and return the survey instrument, the cover letter contained the information that of the surveys returned by the specified date (one week following the mailing), three would be randomly selected. The subjects submitting the selected instruments would be rewarded with \$50.00 each. The follow-up letter allowed the subjects not responding to the initial request an additional week to respond in order to be eligible for the incentive prize drawing. The survey instruments did not have the name or other personal identification data included upon it. They were, however, coded on the back with a non-personalized code which

identified the institution and, via a coded list, the respondent. This code allowed the researcher to track the respondents/non-respondents for follow-up contact and to select the three individuals winning the cash incentives.

During the first week after the initial mailing, 93 completed surveys were received. Four packages were returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable as addressed. The follow-up mailing was sent to the 103 non-responding subjects. (This excluded the four packages returned by the Postal Service with unknown current addresses.) An additional 41 survey instruments were received within a ten-day period following the date of the second mailing. The total of 134 completed survey instruments returned to the researcher was used for analytical purposes. Three weeks following the date of the initial mailing to the subjects three of the returned survey instruments were randomly selected. This was accomplished by placing all returned survey instruments in a large box and having a child (too young to read) select three of the instruments from the box. All of the instruments were printed on the same size and color paper; the only identifying feature was the cryptic code on the back. The researcher mailed a personal check in the amount of \$50.00 to the individuals who submitted the randomly selected instruments. A list of the winning individuals' names and

addresses was sent to the respondents who requested this information and to the Chair of the researcher's Doctoral Committee.

Analysis

Individual responses on the students' surveys were analyzed to determine which criteria were perceived by the vocational and technical students as most important to the institution's effectiveness. The mean score for each criterion was calculated. For each criterion, t-tests were calculated to determine if significant differences exist between the groups.

Individual responses on the students' surveys were analyzed to determine which criteria were perceived by the two age groups (traditional and non-traditional) as most important to the institution's effectiveness. The mean score for each criterion was calculated. For each criterion, t-tests were calculated to determine if significant differences exist between the groups.

In addition, the student survey provided open-ended questions to allow the identification of criteria which students perceived as important to the measurement of the institution's effectiveness in meeting their career goals.

Cluster analyses were performed to determine groups of additional criteria which students' perceived as important.

The four institutions' self-study reports prepared for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation process were reviewed to determine the accrediting agency's perception of each institution's effectiveness. Three higher education scholars (who have either a graduate degree in higher education curriculum, administration, or who have significant experience as faculty or as an administrator in the community colleges) independently reviewed each report and made his/her own subjective evaluation of the accrediting agency's perception. The three evaluators were given the self-study reports and asked to mark a 5-point Likert scale reflecting the reviewers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the institution based upon the contents of the reports. The mean of the three scores was used as an indication of the agency's perception. In addition, the reviewers scanned the reports to determine which criteria used by each school the reviewers considered to measure institutional effectiveness in meeting student academic goals. For each of these criteria the reviewers were asked to indicate if the self-study report explicitly listed the criteria as a measure of student satisfaction or if the reviewers considered the criteria to be an implied measure of student satisfaction.

The three evaluators were given the retention rates published by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges. The list of rates included retention rates for each of the 58 member institutions, the average retention rate of the North Carolina Community College System as a whole, average rates for all institutions broken into size categories determined by number of full-time equivalent students (FTE) enrolled (1,000 to 1,999 FTE, 2,000 to 2,999 FTE, 3,000 to 4,999 FTE, and more than 5,000 FTE. The reviewers were asked to mark a 5-point Likert scale reflecting their perceptions of how the retention rate indicated the effectiveness of each of the institutions. The mean of the three scores was used as an indication of the perception of institutional effectiveness. The evaluation sheets used by the evaluators are in Appendix F. Appendix G contains the Retention Rate Report published by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges.

The mean score of the students' perception of how well the community college helped meet their academic goal and the mean score of the three independent educators' reviews of the accrediting agency's perception of the institution's effectiveness based upon the SACS report were compared.

The mean score of the students' perception of how well the community college helped meet their academic goal and the mean score of the three independent reviewers'

perceptions of the institution's effectiveness based upon the retention rate were compared.

The mean score of the three educators' independent reviews of the accrediting agency's perception of the institution's effectiveness based upon the SACS report and the mean score of the three independent reviewers' perception of the institution's effectiveness based upon the retention rate were compared.

The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS utilizing the resources available at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Center for Academic and Research Computing. Qualitative analysis of the accrediting agency's report was completed by three higher education reviewers.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Overview

The community college is an institution established to serve the lifelong educational needs of its surrounding area residents. Roesler (1988) indicated that excellence in all programs and services should be expected as well as demonstrated by the community college. Institutional effectiveness has become a major issue for community colleges. This study examined the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals. Criteria used by both these groups in the formulation of their perceptions of effectiveness were identified. Institutions' retention rates were compared with students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying their academic goals. The work was a descriptive study. The findings were used to determine the relationship between students' perceptions and the accrediting agency's perception of institutional effectiveness in meeting student academic goals.

Pilot Test

Ten former community college students, not members of the study's sample, were selected to participate in the pilot administration of the student survey instrument. Instructions were verbally given to the pilot subjects. The ten-pilot subjects were informed that they were to be given another survey one week later and they agreed to make themselves available for a follow-up interview. They were not told that the second survey instrument would be a duplicate of the first. This avoided the pilot subjects' attempting to memorize their responses to the first survey. The subjects were informed that while their name was not on the survey instrument, the instrument was coded in such a way that the responses on the first and second surveys could be combined for analysis. They were given the survey and observed while they completed the survey. Subjects were observed to provide opportunity to answer any question which might not have been clearly defined. This allowed the researcher an additional opportunity to evaluate the survey for clarity of questions and directions.

One week after the initial administration, they were again given the survey instrument. After the second administration, they were interviewed by the researcher. The purpose of the interview was to ascertain the subjects'

reactions to the survey instrument, to determine if the responses to the demographic questions (Questions 1 and 2) were accurate, and to assess the validity of the other questions. As a result of the interviews, the appearance of the survey instrument was slightly altered (a different font, larger boxes for the responses). The wording of the instrument was not changed. A comparison of the written responses and the verbal interview results verified that the written responses did reflect the age, program of study, and opinion of the pilot subjects.

In addition to the personal interview, the responses from the questionnaires were entered in a computerized data file. Table 1 depicts the numerical translation of the responses. Table 2 shows the results of correlation analysis accomplished by using the paired t test analysis of SPSS upon each of the responses from each individual's first and second surveys. The responses from the first administration and the second administration were significantly correlated; indeed, only eight of the sixteen questions had different responses, each of those eight had only one respondent answering differently between the two surveys, and only differing by one unit. Since all probabilities are less than 0.01 that the first administration and the second administration of the pilot

TABLE 1

NUMERICAL TRANSLATION OF THE SURVEY
RESPONSES WHEN KEYED INTO THE DATA FILE

QUESTION 1	21 or older keyed as 1 less than 21 keyed as 2
QUESTION 2	two-year Associate degree keyed as 1 one-year Vocational Certificate keyed as 2
QUESTIONS 3-5	very well keyed as 4 well keyed as 3 somewhat well keyed as 2 not at all well keyed as 1
QUESTION 6	not at all important keyed as 1 somewhat important keyed as 2 important keyed as 3 very important keyed as 4 extremely important keyed as 5

TABLE 2
CORRELATION BETWEEN EACH QUESTION
FROM FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY
TO THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY

(n=10)

VARIABLE	MEAN	STD. DEV.	CORR.	2-TAIL PROBABILITY
AGE 1	1.300	0.483		
AGE 2	1.300	0.483	1.000	0.000
PROGRAM 1	1.000	0.000		
PROGRAM 2	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
INSTRUCTOR 1	1.600	0.843		
INSTRUCTOR 2	1.600	0.843	1.000	0.000
ADMIN/STAFF 1	2.000	0.943		
ADMIN/STAFF 2	2.100	0.876	0.942	0.000
OVERALL 1	1.500	0.850		
OVERALL 2	1.500	0.850	1.000	0.000
ADVISING 1	3.800	1.476		
ADVISING 2	3.800	1.476	1.000	0.000
CLASS SIZE 1	3.400	0.966		
CLASS SIZE 2	3.500	0.850	0.947	0.000
COUNSELING 1	2.600	1.174		
COUNSELING 2	2.500	1.269	0.970	0.000

TABLE 2 (continued)

(n=10)

VARIABLE	MEAN	STD. DEV.	CORR.	2-TAIL PROBABILITY
FAC. ACCESS 1	3.600	1.174		
FAC. ACCESS 2	3.500	1.179	0.884	0.001
FAC. QUAL. 1	3.600	1.265		
FAC. QUAL. 2	3.600	1.265	1.000	0.000
FIN. AID 1	2.500	1.780		
FIN. AID 2	2.500	1.780	1.000	0.000
JOB PLACE. 1	2.200	1.033		
JOB PLACE. 2	2.300	0.949	0.953	0.000
LEARN. LAB 1	3.700	1.252		
LEARN. LAB 2	3.700	1.252	1.000	0.000
LIB. SVCS. 1	3.200	1.317		
LIB. SVCS. 2	3.200	1.317	1.000	0.000
STUD. ACT. 1	2.200	1.033		
STUD. ACT. 2	2.100	1.101	0.958	0.000
TUTOR. SVC. 1	2.200	1.619		
TUTOR. SVC. 1	2.200	1.619	1.000	0.000

test came from different populations, this indicates that the survey questions are reliable.

Returns

The questionnaire was mailed to the 200 subjects of the study's sample. Ninety-seven questionnaires were returned from the original mailing. Of these, 93 (46.5%) were completed and returned by the subjects and four were returned as undeliverable by the U. S. Postal Service. One week later a second survey packet was mailed to the 103 non-respondents of the original mailing. Forty-one (39.8%) questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondents from the follow-up mailing and an additional two were returned as undeliverable by the U. S. Postal Service. In total, 134 of the subjects responded. This provided a 67% response rate. Of the 134 completed responses, four were discarded because of incomplete responses (3) and ambiguous responses (1). Thus of the 134 responses, 130 were usable for analysis, providing a usable response rate of 65%.

Questions 3 through 5 of the survey, how well did the faculty, administrators and other staff, and the community college overall help the student meet the student's academic goals were repetitive but different questions designed to

help measure the reliability of the survey instrument. Cronbach's α , a statistical measure which gives the maximum likelihood estimate of the reliability coefficient, was calculated for the responses to these questions. A Cronbach's α of 1.00 indicates a perfectly reliable instrument; one of 0.00 indicates a perfectly unreliable instrument. The Cronbach's α for questions 3, 4, and 5 was calculated to be 0.8515.

Table 3 gives a breakdown of the demographics of the 130 subjects submitting usable responses. From the 134 returned questionnaires, three were randomly selected. The random selection was accomplished by placing all of the surveys into a box and having a non-reading child pick three of the surveys from the box. The subjects who completed those three surveys were each mailed a check for \$50.00 as promised in the cover letter. A list of the winners was mailed to those requesting the list of winners.

Perception of Effectiveness

Table 4 depicts the summary of the student's opinions of how well the community college aided the students in meeting their academic needs. Table 5 depicts the mean perception of the students concerning how well the community college met the students' academic goals for the

TABLE 3
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

	UNDER 21	21 AND OVER	ASSOC. DEGREE	VOCAT. CERT.	TOTAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE A	5	30	25	10	35
COMMUNITY COLLEGE B	1	19	11	9	20
COMMUNITY COLLEGE C	10	32	32	10	42
COMMUNITY COLLEGE D	9	24	10	23	33
TOTAL	25	105	78	52	130

TABLE 4
 SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HOW
 WELL THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE HELPED
 THE STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR
 ACADEMIC GOALS

	N	MEAN	STD. DEV.
COMMUNITY COLLEGE A			
UNDER 21	5	3.000	0.707
21 AND OVER	30	3.167	0.747
TECHNICAL DEGREE	25	3.120	0.781
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	10	3.200	0.632
ALL SUBJECTS	35	3.143	0.733
COMMUNITY COLLEGE B			
UNDER 21	1	3.000	-----
21 AND OVER	19	2.842	0.898
TECHNICAL DEGREE	11	2.727	0.905
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	9	3.000	0.866
ALL SUBJECTS	20	2.850	0.875
COMMUNITY COLLEGE C			
UNDER 21	10	3.200	0.919
21 AND OVER	32	3.438	0.716
TECHNICAL DEGREE	32	3.344	0.787
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	10	3.500	0.707
ALL SUBJECTS	42	3.381	0.764
COMMUNITY COLLEGE D			
UNDER 21	9	3.222	0.833
21 AND OVER	24	3.375	0.647
TECHNICAL DEGREE	23	3.261	0.689
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	10	3.500	0.707
ALL SUBJECTS	33	3.333	0.692
ALL FOUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES			
UNDER 21	25	3.160	0.800
21 AND OVER	105	3.238	0.766
TECHNICAL DEGREE	91	3.187	0.788
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	39	3.308	0.731
ALL SUBJECTS	130	3.223	0.770

TABLE 5

t TESTS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HOW WELL THE
COMMUNITY COLLEGES MET THE
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS

	N	MEAN	S. DEV	t	PROB.
TRADITIONAL	25	3.160	0.800		
				0.45	0.650
NON-TRADITIONAL	105	3.238	0.766		

classifications of traditional students (under 21) and non-traditional students (21 and over) and the t tests between the perceptions of the traditional and non-traditional students. There was no significant difference between traditional students and non-traditional students in their perception of how well the community college helped to meet their academic goals.

Table 6 depicts the mean perception of the students concerning how well the community college met the students' academic goals for the classifications of students in a two-year technical degree program and a one-year vocational certificate program and the t tests between the opinions of the technical degree and vocational certificate students. There was no significant difference between two-year technical degree students and one-year vocational certificate students in their perception of how well the community college helped to meet their academic goals.

Criteria

The criteria used by students in determining the community colleges' effectiveness in meeting the students' academic goals included: advising services, class size, counseling services, faculty accessibility, faculty qualifications, financial aid, job placement

TABLE 6

t TESTS BETWEEN TECHNICAL DEGREE AND VOCATIONAL
CERTIFICATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HOW WELL
THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES MET THE
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS

	N	MEAN	S. DEV	t	PROB.
TECHNICAL DEGREE	91	3.187	0.788		
				-0.82	0.414
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	39	3.308	0.731		

services, learning laboratory services, library services, student activities, and tutorial services for all students. Their order of importance is contained in Table 7. Table 8 ranks these criteria for students in each institution. Their ranking for each age group is depicted in Table 9, and their ranking for each program of study is given in Table 10. Not surprisingly, faculty qualification, faculty accessibility, library services, academic advising services, learning lab services, and class size, the factors in the list most associated with academic activities, were ranked in the top six criteria in practically all divisions of the subjects.

Table 11 summarizes the means and standard deviations of the variables measuring how well the faculty aided the students in meeting the students' academic goals, how well the administrators/staff aided the students in meeting the students' academic goals, and how well the community college overall aided the students in meeting the students' academic goals. The results of t test analyses among the variables: how well the faculty helped the students attain their academic goals, how well the administrators and staff helped the students attain their academic goals, and how well the community college overall helped the students attain their academic goals are shown in Table 12. The measure of how well the faculty aided the students in meeting their

TABLE 7

CRITERIA USED BY STUDENTS IN DETERMINING THE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S EFFECTIVENESS IN
MEETING THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS

	MEAN	STD. DEV.
FACULTY QUALIFICATION	3.815	1.105
FACULTY ACCESSIBILITY	3.523	0.974
LIBRARY SERVICES	3.477	1.101
ADVISING SERVICES	3.438	1.201
LEARNING LABORATORY SERVICES	3.285	1.156
CLASS SIZE	3.185	1.033
COUNSELING SERVICES	3.031	1.187
FINANCIAL AID	2.708	1.562
JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES	2.569	1.419
STUDENT SERVICES	2.531	1.410
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	2.131	1.137

TABLE 8

MEANS AND RANKS OF THE CRITERIA USED BY STUDENTS IN
 DETERMINING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S EFFECTIVENESS
 IN MEETING THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS
 BY INSTITUTION

	CC A		CC B		CC C		CC D	
FACULTY QUALIFICATION	3.714	(1)	3.700	(1)	3.905	(1)	3.879	(2)
FACULTY ACCESSIBILITY	3.486	(3)	3.250	(3)	3.571	(3)	3.667	(3)
LIBRARY SERVICES	3.343	(4)	3.150	(5)	3.643	(2)	3.606	(4)
ADVISING SERVICES	3.171	(6)	3.000	(6)	3.476	(4)	3.939	(1)
LEARNING LAB SERVICES	3.543	(2)	3.200	(4)	3.262	(5)	3.091	(6)
CLASS SIZE	3.200	(5)	3.300	(2)	3.238	(6)	3.030	(7)
COUNSELING SERVICES	2.771	(7)	2.900	(7)	3.238	(6)	3.121	(5)
FINANCIAL AID	2.714	(8)	2.100	(9)	2.905	(8)	2.818	(8)
JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES	2.400	(10)	2.450	(8)	2.714	10)	2.636	(9)
STUDENT SERVICES	2.486	(9)	2.050	(10)	2.738	(9)	2.606	(10)
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	1.943	(11)	1.850	(11)	2.524	(11)	2.000	(11)

TABLE 9

MEANS AND RANKS OF THE CRITERIA USED BY STUDENTS IN
 DETERMINING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S EFFECTIVENESS
 IN MEETING THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS
 BY AGE GROUP

	UNDER 21	21 AND OVER
FACULTY QUALIFICATION	3.720 (2)	3.838 (1)
FACULTY ACCESSIBILITY	3.320 (4)	3.571 (2)
LIBRARY SERVICES	3.720 (2)	3.419 (4)
ADVISING SERVICES	3.280 (6)	3.476 (3)
LEARNING LAB SERVICES	3.760 (1)	3.171 (5)
CLASS SIZE	3.320 (4)	3.152 (6)
COUNSELING SERVICES	3.240 (7)	2.981 (7)
FINANCIAL AID	2.680 (8)	2.714 (8)
JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES	2.680 (8)	2.543 (9)
STUDENT SERVICES	2.640 (10)	2.505 (10)
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	2.640 (10)	2.010 (11)

TABLE 10

MEANS AND RANKS OF THE CRITERIA USED BY STUDENTS IN
 DETERMINING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S EFFECTIVENESS
 IN MEETING THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS
 BY PROGRAM OF STUDY

	TWO-YEAR TECH. DEGREE	ONE-YEAR VOCAT. CERT.
FACULTY QUALIFICATION	3.934 (1)	3.538 (1)
FACULTY ACCESSIBILITY	3.659 (2)	3.205 (6)
LIBRARY SERVICES	3.549 (3)	3.308 (3)
ADVISING SERVICES	3.505 (4)	3.282 (4)
LEARNING LAB SERVICES	3.253 (5)	3.359 (2)
CLASS SIZE	3.154 (6)	3.256 (5)
COUNSELING SERVICES	3.033 (7)	3.026 (7)
FINANCIAL AID	2.934 (8)	2.179 (10)
JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES	2.659 (9)	2.359 (9)
STUDENT SERVICES	2.516 (10)	2.564 (8)
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	2.143 (11)	2.103 (11)

TABLE 11

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE MEASURES OF
HOW WELL THE FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS/STAFF AND
THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OVERALL AIDED
STUDENTS IN MEETING THEIR
ACADEMIC GOALS

(N = 130)

	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
FACULTY	3.262	0.793
ADMINISTRATORS/STAFF	2.954	0.861
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	3.223	0.770

TABLE 12

t TESTS AMONG THE MEASURES OF HOW WELL
THE FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS/STAFF AND
THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OVERALL AIDED
STUDENTS IN MEETING THEIR
ACADEMIC GOALS

	N	MEAN	S. DEV	t	PROB.
FACULTY	130	3.262	0.793	4.52	**
ADMINISTRATORS	130	2.954	0.861		
FACULTY	130	3.262	0.793	0.73	0.468
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	130	3.223	0.770		
ADMINISTRATORS	130	3.262	0.793	-4.95	**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	130	3.223	0.770		

** probability < 0.01

academic goals significantly differ from the measure of how well the administrators and staff aided the students in meeting their academic goals but do not significantly differ from the measure of how well the community college overall aided the students in meeting their academic goals. The measure of how well the administrators and staff helped the students meet their academic goals do not significantly differ from the measure of how well the community college overall helped the students meet their academic goals.

Accrediting Agency's Perception of Effectiveness

In order to determine the accrediting agency's perception of effectiveness, each institution's self-study report for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) was reviewed by three higher education scholars. The summary of the independent evaluators' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness based upon their review of the self-study reports generated by the community colleges is shown in Table 13. The scale used is the same as the scale used to code the student responses to Questions 3 through 5 in the student survey, which forced a positive or negative response and did not allow a neutral response. The average measure of community college effectiveness based upon the self-study report was 2.833. Table 14 lists some

TABLE 13

SUMMARY OF EVALUATORS' PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY
COLLEGES' EFFECTIVENESS BASED UPON REVIEW
OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT GENERATED
FOR THE ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EVALUATOR	CC A	CC B	CC C	CC D	
1	3	3	3	4	
2	3	3	3	2	
3	3	2	2	3	
AVERAGE	3.000	2.667	2.667	3.000	2.833

TABLE 14
INDICATORS OF HOW WELL THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES
SATISFIED STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GOALS
FOUND IN THE SELF-STUDY REPORTS

EXPLICIT MEASURES

Student opinion survey

IMPLICIT MEASURES

Survey of students, evaluating the
effectiveness of financial
services, job placement, and
activities offered

Survey by program area to determine new
courses needed

Follow up survey of graduates about
employment

Transfer rate of students in college
transfer program

Retention rate

Licensure passing rates

of the explicit and implicit measures the evaluators found in the various self-study reports.

Retention Rate

The summary of the independent evaluators' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness based upon their review of the reported retention rates is shown in Table 15. The scale used is the same as the scale used to code the student responses to Questions 4 and 5 in the student survey, a four-point scale which forced either a positive or negative response and did not allow a negative response. The average measure of community college effectiveness based upon the self-study report was 2.667.

Table 16 gives the comparison of the three measures of community college effectiveness computed by this study, students' perception of community colleges' effectiveness in meeting the students' academic needs, evaluators' perception of community college effectiveness based upon the evaluators' review of the self-study report prepared as part of the accreditation process, and evaluators' perception of community college effectiveness based upon the reported retention rates of the community colleges. For each of the four community colleges, the effectiveness measure by the students produced the largest ratings when compared to those

TABLE 15
SUMMARY OF EVALUATORS' PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY
COLLEGES' EFFECTIVENESS BASED UPON REPORTED
RETENTION RATES

EVALUATOR	CC A	CC B	CC C	CC D	
1	3	3	3	4	
2	2	2	2	3	
3	2	2	3	3	
AVERAGE	2.333	2.333	2.667	3.333	2.667

TABLE 16
COMPARISON OF MEASURES OF COMMUNITY
COLLEGE EFFECTIVENESS

	STUDENT PERCEPTION	EVALUATOR PERCEPTION SELF-STUDY REPORT	EVALUATOR PERCEPTION RETENTION RATES
COMMUNITY COLLEGE			
A	3.143	3.000	2.333
B	2.850	2.667	2.333
C	3.381	2.667	2.667
D	3.333	3.000	3.333
COMBINED	3.223	2.833	2.667

of the evaluators. The effectiveness measure by the evaluators based upon the self-study report exceeded the effectiveness measure based upon retention rates for two of the community colleges, they were the same for one of the community colleges, and they were lower for one of the community colleges.

Summary

Five hypotheses were tested using the results of this study. These hypotheses and results are as follows.

1. No significant differences exist between traditional age (under 21 years) students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and that of the perceptions of non-traditional age (21 years and older) students. This hypothesis is accepted.
2. No significant differences exist between technical degree students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and that of the perceptions of vocational certificate students. This hypothesis is accepted.
3. The students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying

students' academic goals of the students do not differ. This hypothesis is rejected.

4. No differences exist between the students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and the higher education scholars' perception of institutional effectiveness as perceived from the reported retention rate. This hypothesis is rejected.
5. No differences exist between the accrediting agency's perception of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals and the higher education scholars' perception of institutional effectiveness as perceived from the reported retention rates. This hypothesis is rejected.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview

Meeting the lifelong educational needs of its surrounding community was the intent for the establishment of community colleges. Community colleges struggle to maintain enrollment and funding levels, student retention has been equated with success and attrition with failure (Pantage and Creedon, 1978; Noel, 1978). Educational excellence has been narrowly defined by American society as a baccalaureate education. This is a problem since a vast number of Americans never earn a baccalaureate degree (Parnell, 1985). Tichener (1986) indicated that students leaving the college prior to graduation may be perceived by institutions as a retention problem. To others, it may be evidence of lack of positive student outcome. Such institutions would not be considered as deserving of the same public support as those institutions which produce "graduates" (Cope, 1981). This study examined the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals.

Conclusions

The measurement of community college effectiveness is a major issue today. Because of the diverse student population and the wide ranging educational mission of the community colleges, the measurement of effectiveness is difficult. Currently there does not exist a universally accepted model for measuring community college effectiveness. Several indicators have been proposed for the measurement of effectiveness. An indicator is not a composite measure but evidence used in a larger process of proving community college effectiveness.

One indicator is the accreditation of the community college by an independent accrediting agency. There exists six major accrediting agencies within the United States. These agencies are divided by region and they review and accredit all types of educational institutions within their geographic region. The accrediting agencies generally state that they do not audit the effectiveness of an institution, merely evaluate the policies, procedures, and personnel of the institution. However, in reality, many federal and state agencies, non-profit funding agencies, and the public view the accreditation of an institution as implying quality and effectiveness. The institutions even advertise the accreditation as if it was a seal of approval.

Other indicators of effectiveness have been borrowed from four-year colleges and universities. These are generally a mix of student outcomes or student success measures. These measures include retention rates, graduation rates, passing rates of standardized professional examinations (medical, legal, nursing, CPA, etc.), and average student grades. Of these the retention rate is frequently mentioned in the literature as a "good" indicator of institutional effectiveness and is one used for many years by four-year colleges and universities.

Given the diversity of the community college student and the different mission of the community college from the four-year institution, this study compared the accreditation process's determination (or lack of determination) of effectiveness, a traditional measure of institutional effectiveness, and a student-centered measure of community college effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to examine the students' and the accrediting agency's perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying students' academic goals. Specifically, this study identified criteria which contribute to the students' and to the accrediting agency's perceptions of community colleges' effectiveness. The students' perceptions of the community colleges' effectiveness in satisfying their academic goals was compared to the perception of the

accrediting agency and the institutions' retention rates (as reported in the 1994 Critical Success Factors report) to determine if the retention rates reflect student goal achievement. In addition, the study determined whether students in different age groups and degree programs have different criteria in evaluating institutional effectiveness.

The students generally perceived the community college as being very effective in meeting the students' academic goals. Evaluators using the community college's self-study report found the community college to be effective. Using the retention rate, evaluators found the community college to be less than effective. The perception of effectiveness did vary depending upon the indicator used. If we accept the community college to be the community's college and its primary mission is to meet the educational needs of the community, then the community college must exhibit flexibility. A student-centered measure of community college effectiveness is consistent with a "drop-in, drop-out" student body of diverse goals. The student-centered measure indicated that the community colleges in this study were very effective.

The students' perception of effectiveness was more affected by those factors which directly related to their academic studies: faculty qualification, faculty

accessibility, library services, and academic advising services. Faculty were perceived to contribute more to helping the students meet their academic goals than was the administration. One reason for this is that the administration is more concerned with satisfying the accrediting agency's criteria, meeting goals based upon criteria originally developed for four-year colleges, and establishing policies and standards based upon the four-year institutions' models of effectiveness than with trying to develop models based upon the significantly different environment of the community colleges.

Implications

The conclusions indicate that the community college students' perception of institutional effectiveness differs from, and is more favorable, than the perception of accrediting agencies and others who use student outcomes and student success measures as indicators of community college effectiveness. In its list of critical success factors, the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges (NCDCC) does not list a single student generated factor. The NCDCC lists only student outcomes and success factors as critical factors of the community colleges. Student intent when enrolled is listed as a factor to be used in calculating

retention; however, the community colleges did such a poor job of collecting and reporting the data that student intent was not factored into the retention measure (North Carolina Department of Community Colleges Planning & Research Section, 1994). Models for measuring community college effectiveness should include student input and indicators of student satisfaction.

Palinchak (1993) argues that while regional accreditation is voluntary, institutional accreditation is almost a necessity. Therefore, the modern role of accreditation should be that of a change agent. He argues that the change agent role is necessary because the two-year colleges should not blindly emulate their four-year counterparts. Community colleges are distinguished by their ability to accommodate nontraditional students with a range of academic and work-oriented problems that require effective teaching, different delivery modes, measurable learning, and active rejection of social, cultural, ethnic, and gender stereotypes. He concludes that it may be time for accreditation associations to review two-year colleges in terms of their ability to articulate unique missions, serve different populations, and deliver innovative programs. Clearly this study supports this concept.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

It is tempting to generalize the findings of research studies to populations larger than those from which the studies' samples were drawn. This study used a small population -- only four community colleges in one Southeastern state. The results only apply to those four community colleges. However, it may be possible to generalize the results to the other community colleges in North Carolina and similar community colleges elsewhere in the United States. Those attempting the generalization must be aware of the limitations and pitfalls of the generalization of the results of any study to a larger population and must evaluate the underlying assumptions of similarity between the populations. Further study needs to be completed to determine whether these results are applicable to a more general population.

There is a major assumption underlying this study. The assumption is that it is possible to develop a community college effectiveness model which uses the student in all of her/his diverse intents, goals, and needs as the central element. The effectiveness model would have to incorporate flexibility as a major component. More empirical studies need to be completed to form a quantitative base for this

new model, and theoretical studies need to be completed to develop the student goals centered model.

Summary

Among community college students, faculty aids the student more in meeting their academic goals than do administrators. Students have a more positive perception of the community college's effectiveness than is reflected in the accreditation process and published retention rate. The student perceives that faculty qualification, faculty accessibility, library services, and academic advising are the most important factors in helping the students achieve academic goals.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES



NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

THE CASWELL BUILDING 200 W. JONES STREET
RALEIGH, NC 27603-1337

ROBERT W. SCOTT
PRESIDENT

919-733-7051

Mrs. Judy B. Flake
Route #2, Box 467
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

Dear Mrs. Flake:

It was a pleasure to learn about your doctoral project which will focus on student perception of community colleges' effectiveness. I understand you will be surveying a random sample of vocational and technical students from four North Carolina community colleges.

Research indicates that there is concern about community colleges' effectiveness in meeting student needs as well as student retention. This information plays an important role not only with accreditation but also with funding issues. I believe your findings may prove helpful to community colleges in North Carolina as well as legislators dealing with funding. Therefore, I am pleased to endorse your study and wish you every success in your effort.

I hope you will share your findings with me and community college administrators. I believe community college administrators will be interested in the results of the study and will want to access the information you collect in the project. If I or my staff can be of assistance to you, I encourage you to contact me. Best wishes as you proceed with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Scott".

Robert W. Scott

RWS/bw

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

Judy B. Flake
Route 2 Box 467
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

July 25, 1994

FIELD(NAME), President
FIELD(COMMUNITY COLLEGE)
FIELD(ADDRESS)

Dear FIELD(SALUTATION):

I am a doctoral student in Higher Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For my dissertation I am studying the students' perception of community colleges' effectiveness in meeting the students' academic goals versus the measures of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. I will be reviewing the self-study report that the community college submitted for SACS accreditation and surveying former students of the community college.

I wish to use your institution as part of the study. I will need a copy of your institution's most recent SACS self-study and the names and addresses of students who were enrolled Spring term of 1994 but not enrolled in the Fall '94 term. I will pay any copying costs of the report and any expenses incurred in producing the mailing list.

Dr. Robert Scott has endorsed this study and it has been approved by my dissertation committee and the Human Subjects Committee of UNCG.

Your assistance will be appreciated. I will call you on August 5 to discuss your institution's participation.

Sincerely,

Judy B. Flake

APPENDIX C
ORIGINAL COVER LETTER

Judy Flake
Route 2 Box 467
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

November 18, 1994

FIELD(ADDRESS)

Dear **FIELD(first)**:

Would you like to win \$50.00?

I am doing a research project and you have been chosen to participate. In order to encourage you to complete and return the survey, I will award \$50.00 to three individuals. The winning individuals will be selected by a random drawing of completed surveys returned before November 26, 1994.

Enclosed is the short survey. The survey is part of a project to determine student satisfaction with the Community College System. Please complete the survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped envelope before November 26 in order to be eligible for the \$50 cash drawing.

The project has been approved by the Institutional Research Department at the University of North Carolina - Greensboro and presents no risk to you. Your name will not be used in the research results and does not appear on the survey form. The survey form has a code on the back in order to identify the surveys winning the cash prizes. This code will in no way be associated with survey data and the survey forms will be destroyed after the research project has been completed.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you wish a list of the names and addresses of the winning individuals, please check the box on the survey form.

Sincerely,

Judy Flake

APPENDIX D
STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

APPENDIX E
FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Judy Flake
Route 2 Box 467
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

November 18, 1994

FIELD(ADDRESS)

Dear FIELD(first):

Last chance for you to win \$50.00.

Last week I sent you a letter informing you that I am doing a research project, that you have been chosen to participate, and that I will award \$50.00 to three individuals. You did not return your survey. I will give you a final chance to win one of the \$50.00 prizes. If you return your completed survey before November 26, 1994, your name will be included in the drawing for the three prizes.

Enclosed is the short survey. The survey is part of a project to determine student satisfaction with the Community College System. Please complete the survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped envelope before November 26 in order to be eligible for the \$50 cash drawing.

The project has been approved by the Institutional Research Department at the University of North Carolina - Greensboro and presents no risk to you. Your name will not be used in the research results and does not appear on the survey form. The survey form has a code on the back in order to identify the surveys winning the cash prizes. This code will in no way be associated with survey data and the survey forms will be destroyed after the research project has been completed.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you wish a list of the names and addresses of the winning individuals, please check the box on the survey form.

Sincerely,

Judy Flake

APPENDIX F
REVIEWER'S EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Community College A

This community college has recently petitioned the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for accreditation/reaccreditation of its programs. You have been given the self-study report generated by the community college as part of the accreditation process. Based only upon the contents of this report, please complete the following questions. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

1. Based upon the contents of the self-study report, how effective is the community college?

Extremely effective
 Very effective
 Somewhat effective
 Not at all effective

2. Did you find, within the self-study report, any evidence that the community college *explicitly* attempted to measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

Yes No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

3. Did you find, within the self-study report, any measures which you consider to *implicitly* measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

[] Yes [] No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

You have been given the retention results compiled by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges for the academic year 1992-93. The report defines retention as the "percent of curriculum students who enroll in fall quarter and subsequently enroll in either winter or spring quarter." Based only upon the retention rate as reported for this community college and the retention rates reported for the other community colleges, please answer the following question. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

Size of this community college: 3,000-4,999 FTE

Retention rate of this community college: 78.2%

4. Based upon the contents of the retention report, how effective is the community college?

[] Extremely effective
 [] Very effective
 [] Somewhat effective
 [] Not at all effective

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Community College B

This community college has recently petitioned the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for accreditation/reaccreditation of its programs. You have been given the self-study report generated by the community college as part of the accreditation process. Based only upon the contents of this report, please complete the following questions. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

1. Based upon the contents of the self-study report, how effective is the community college?

- Extremely effective
 Very effective
 Somewhat effective
 Not at all effective

2. Did you find, within the self-study report, any evidence that the community college explicitly attempted to measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

- Yes No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

3. Did you find, within the self-study report, any measures which you consider to *implicitly* measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

[] Yes [] No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

You have been given the retention results compiled by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges for the academic year 1992-93. The report defines retention as the "percent of curriculum students who enroll in fall quarter and subsequently enroll in either winter or spring quarter." Based *only* upon the retention rate as reported for this community college and the retention rates reported for the other community colleges, please answer the following question. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

Size of this community college: > 4,999 FTE

Retention rate of this community college: 77.0%

4. Based upon the contents of the retention report, how effective is the community college?

[] Extremely effective
 [] Very effective
 [] Somewhat effective
 [] Not at all effective

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Community College C

This community college has recently petitioned the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for accreditation/reaccreditation of its programs. You have been given the self-study report generated by the community college as part of the accreditation process. Based *only* upon the contents of this report, please complete the following questions. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

1. Based upon the contents of the self-study report, how effective is the community college?

- Extremely effective
 Very effective
 Somewhat effective
 Not at all effective

2. Did you find, within the self-study report, any evidence that the community college *explicitly* attempted to measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

- Yes No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

3. Did you find, within the self-study report, any measures which you consider to *implicitly* measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

[] Yes [] No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

You have been given the retention results compiled by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges for the academic year 1992-93. The report defines retention as the "percent of curriculum students who enroll in fall quarter and subsequently enroll in either winter or spring quarter." Based only upon the retention rate as reported for this community college and the retention rates reported for the other community colleges, please answer the following question. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

Size of this community college: 2,000-2,999 FTE

Retention rate of this community college: 78.5%

4. Based upon the contents of the retention report, how effective is the community college?

[] Extremely effective
 [] Very effective
 [] Somewhat effective
 [] Not at all effective

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Community College D

This community college has recently petitioned the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for accreditation/reaccreditation of its programs. You have been given the self-study report generated by the community college as part of the accreditation process. Based only upon the contents of this report, please complete the following questions. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

1. Based upon the contents of the self-study report, how effective is the community college?

Extremely effective
 Very effective
 Somewhat effective
 Not at all effective

2. Did you find, within the self-study report, any evidence that the community college *explicitly* attempted to measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

Yes No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

3. Did you find, within the self-study report, any measures which you consider to *implicitly* measure the community college's effectiveness in meeting the academic goals of the students?

[] Yes [] No

If yes, please list the methods/criteria/studies you found.

You have been given the retention results compiled by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges for the academic year 1992-93. The report defines retention as the "percent of curriculum students who enroll in fall quarter and subsequently enroll in either winter or spring quarter." Based *only* upon the retention rate as reported for this community college and the retention rates reported for the other community colleges, please answer the following question. Be as objective as possible. Please try to block out any previous impressions you have of this community college. Use only the information contained within the report to form your opinion.

Size of this community college: 1,000-1,999 FTE

Retention rate of this community college: 80.2%

4. Based upon the contents of the retention report, how effective is the community college?

[] Extremely effective
 [] Very effective
 [] Somewhat effective
 [] Not at all effective