

STUDY OF MORTALITY OF THE ENTERING FRESHMAN CLASS,  
FALL OF 1946 THROUGH TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS

by

ELLIS LEE STACKFLETH

B. S., Kansas State College  
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1949

---

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education and Psychology

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1950

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	1
Need for the Study.....	1
Related Studies.....	2
Limitations of the Study.....	5
Assumptions of the Study.....	5
METHODS.....	5
FINDINGS.....	8
Test Data.....	8
Questionnaire.....	14
Reasons Given for Leaving School.....	14
Related Data.....	21
DISCUSSION.....	25
Comparison of Answers of Upper and Lower 30 Percent on ACE Total.....	25
Answers Checked by Women Who Returned Questionnaire....	27
CONCLUSIONS.....	28
OTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTED BY THIS STUDY.....	30
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	33
APPENDIX.....	35

## INTRODUCTION

Mortality<sup>1</sup> is a symptom that the college is not fulfilling the needs of the student. A high rate means that many students are leaving the institution without adequate training in citizenship or vocational competence.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the reasons why 1,014 students dropped out of college.

### Need for the Study

Perusal of the Counseling Bureau records early in 1949 showed 46.81 percent of the entering Freshman class of 1946 were no longer in college. This compares with 45.12 percent found by McNeely<sup>2</sup> in his study of student mortality.

Such being the case, there must be reasons for such drop-outs. The following questions lend themselves to a study of this problem. To what extent is college aptitude a factor in elimination? Is the elimination of students a public relations problem? What percentage of the students used counseling while in college? How many actually were eliminated? What did they give as reasons for leaving college? To what extent did test

---

<sup>1</sup>Mortality in this paper refers to the withdrawal of students from college.

<sup>2</sup>Bird, Charles and Dorothy M., Learning More by Effective Study, p. 240.

scores predict failure? How many of the students wanted to come to college? Was housing a definite factor?

No comprehensive study of these things was available for Kansas State College. All of the questions suggested above and a great many more appear each year to staff planners who must know the answers or be forced to interpolate from the findings of other schools.

#### Related Studies

Student Mortality. Gray, 1927, in a Master's thesis entitled "The Elimination of College Students from the Various Levels of Intelligence and Scholarship" stated that of the Freshmen class of 1922, Kansas State College, 30 percent had dropped at the end of the first year, a total of 52 percent had dropped by the end of the second year, 62 percent by the end of the third year, 70 percent had withdrawn by the end of 10 semesters. Of the remaining 30 percent, 20.16 percent had graduated by 1926; the rest were still in school. Rate of elimination is more directly related to first semester scholarship, this study states. By the end of five years, 24.48 percent graduated.

E. C. Cummings, Dean of DePauw University, found in a study of withdrawals, that approximately 50 percent of the students do not graduate from the school in which they begin.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Cummings, E. C., "Causes of Student Withdrawals at DePauw University", Sch. & Soc., 70, Sept. 3, 1949, p. 152.



Of the 247 cases which went through his exit interview procedures, the highest number, 30, were leaving because of poor scholarship. Next was change in curricular interest which accounted for 29 withdrawals. Finances, desire to be nearer home and marriage followed closely among the reasons. These accounted for the majority of the responses. The combination of desire to change schools and dissatisfaction was usually formed because of other reasons.

B. Quarles, Dean of Instruction, Dillard University, found in his study<sup>1</sup> that the average school loses about 50 percent of its freshmen, 10 percent to other schools. He suggested that tests might more readily be used than unit requirements as a criterion for admission to college. Quarles believes that studies of student mortality can help ferret out institutional weaknesses in admissions, orientation, advisory systems, health services, financial aid programs, and effectiveness of classroom instruction.

MacIntosh<sup>2</sup> found, in a study of 276 schools, that the percentage of withdrawals was inversely related to the selectivity of admission standards in colleges. In coeducational institutions of 1,000 students or more, 61.1 percent of the students failed to graduate. Primary reason was academic failure, with

---

<sup>1</sup>Quarles, B., "Student Separations from College", Ass'n. Am. Coll. Bull., 35:404-9, Oct., 1949.

<sup>2</sup>MacIntosh, A., Behind the Academic Curtain.

inadequate finances, and transfer ranking next.

Questionnaires. Aaronson,<sup>1</sup> states, "Most veterans are not receiving enough money to remain in school without great hardship!"

With regard to use of questionnaires, Reuss<sup>2</sup> in "Factors Involved in Questionnaire to College Students Who had left School for Reasons Other than Graduation" writes "--higher intelligence scores and scholarship, loyalty ties to the questionnaire sponsor, and rural background were associated with a positive tendency to respond."

Lazarsfield<sup>3</sup> received 15 percent returns from his questionnaire, while Kelley received 76 percent returns from his. Symonds states that he had best results with a single sheet type questionnaire. Gerberich and Mason found no significant difference in honesty of answers between signed and unsigned questionnaires when testing a Biological Science group of 1,416 students against another of 1,460 students.

---

<sup>1</sup>Aaronson, B. S., "Lack of Money and the Veteran's Withdrawal from School", Sch. & Soc., 69, Jan. 8, 1949, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Reuss, C. F., "Factors Involved in Questionnaire to College Students who had left School for Reasons Other than Graduation", Amer. Soc. Rev., Vol. 8, 1943, p. 433-438.

<sup>3</sup>Lazarsfield, P. F., "The Use of Mail Questionnaires to Ascertain the Relative Popularity of Network Stations in Family Listening Surveys", J. Appl. Psy., XXIV, 1940, p. 802-816.

### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the 2,166 members of the freshman class entering in the fall semester of 1946. All persons who dropped out within five semesters are considered in some of the data. The balance of the data is limited to the 413 questionnaires which were returned from this group.

### Assumptions of the Study

It was assumed that sufficient percentages of students drop out to deserve study and administrative attention. It was further assumed that of those who dropped out, a sufficient number would be enough interested in themselves, their former school, and their fellow man to answer and return a questionnaire.

Of those who did return the questionnaire, it was assumed that since there were no identifying markings requested, answers would tend to be objective.

It was assumed that subjects would to some extent choose the more acceptable reasons for withdrawing from school.

### METHODS

Of the 2,166 freshmen enrolling in the fall semester, 1946, 1,014 did not enroll in February, 1949.

Data for the study were gathered by sending a questionnaire by mail to these 1,014 students. If, for any reason, the student did not fill out the Faculty Council card, he was considered not

enrolled for that semester and was mailed a questionnaire.

It was necessary to formulate a questionnaire which would elicit the necessary responses from the students. The questionnaire was made as nearly objective as possible, easy to answer and return, and had a space for comments to take care of reasons other than those included on the questionnaire.

Items were compiled by asking graduate students, instructors, and members of the Counseling Bureau staff their opinion as to why students might leave school. After a number of conferences with students and faculty, a sample questionnaire was made up and circulated among the Counseling Bureau staff and members of the Department of Psychology.<sup>1</sup> All suggestions were considered and a final draft of the questionnaire was made (Appendix I).

The questionnaire was mimeographed and mailed. Each hand addressed envelope contained a questionnaire and a return addressed stamped envelope.

The return envelopes were carefully coded under the stamp, in order that the drop out would feel that his answer was anonymous. This coding was done in order that the answers might be identified and compared with Registrar's records on probation and dismissal, as well as to note possible attitudes and aptitudes from case records.

---

<sup>1</sup>Romine, Stephen, "Criteria for a Better Questionnaire", Journal of Educational Research, Volume 42, Sept., 1948, pp. 69-71.

When a questionnaire was received, the stamp was removed, the envelope opened and the code number entered immediately on the questionnaire. A work book was set up with a drop out name and code number assigned to each line. Answers were recorded in this book. These answers, along with test scores of the ACE were recorded on punch cards from which the tabulations and cross tabulations were made.

Of the 1,014 mailed, 16 were not deliverable due to changes of addresses not listed in the school records. Comments on some returns indicate that a number of the questionnaires were not forwarded by parents or guardians.

Of the remaining 998, 412 were returned, a percentage of 41.4. Post cards were sent to those not answering.<sup>1</sup> This destroyed the anonymity of their return, however, 40 additional answers were received, an increase of approximately 4 percent.

Of the 452 returns, 16 were by students claiming to be enrolled at that time. Of these, 6 were married and attending under another name than that under which they had matriculated, and 1 had been adopted. The remaining 9 had enrolled by other than normal procedures, failing to record cards. Two of the 452 were deceased, 3 had graduated. The 413 valid questionnaires remaining constitute the population of this study.

---

<sup>1</sup>Sletto, R. F., "Protesting of Questionnaires", American Sociological Review, 1940, pp. 193-200.



Registrar's records were checked for the five semesters covered in the study in order to determine how many of the 998 had dropped out of their own volition and how many had been placed on Probation and Dismissal status.

## FINDINGS

### Test Data

Of the 998 students who dropped out in the five semesters studied, test scores (ACE total) were available for 977. These were distributed as follows: 1st decile, 131; 2nd decile, 113; 3rd decile, 107; 4th decile, 118; 5th decile, 81; 6th decile, 99; 7th decile, 83; 8th decile, 98; 9th decile, 77; 10th decile, 71 (Fig. 1).

Two Hundred Sixty Eight had been on Probation or Dismissal lists at some time during their college careers. Dismissal lists at the end of the first semester's work carried names of 40 of the drop outs. Probation lists showed 65 at the end of the same period. Dismissals included 146 of the 998 at some time in the first five semesters, while 122 were on probation during the same period. Sixteen of the students appeared on dismissal lists more than once. One had a total of two Dismissals and two Probations.

Returns were made by 36.8 percent of those in the 1st decile; 35.4 percent of those in the 2nd decile; 39.2 percent in the 3rd decile; 37.3 percent in the 4th decile; 44.5

percent in the 5th decile; 35.4 percent in the 6th decile; 45.8 percent in the 7th decile; 39.8 percent in the 8th decile; 41.6 percent in the 9th decile; 50.8 percent in the 10th decile (Fig. 1).

According to test records on the ACE Psychological Examination Total 49 of the 413 answering ranked in the 1st decile when compared with the total class, 40 in the 2nd decile, 42 in the 3rd, 44 in the 4th, 36 in the 5th, 35 in the 6th, 38 in the 7th, 39 in the 8th, 32 in the 9th, and 36 in the 10th (Fig. 2).

Probation records combined with test records show that of the 57 on probation at some time during their stay in college, 10 ranked in the 1st decile, 8 in the 2nd, 3 in the 3rd, 8 in the 4th, 5 in the 5th, 5 in the 6th, 7 in the 7th, 4 in the 8th, 2 in the 9th, 2 in the 10th. For 3 there were no test scores.

Dismissals showed 10 in the 1st decile of the ACE total, all 10 were also in the 1st decile of the ACE "L" section. Seven ranked in the 2nd decile, 4 in the 3rd, 3 in the 4th, 4 in the 5th, 3 in the 6th, 3 in the 7th, 4 in the 8th, 2 in the 9th for a total of 40. There were no dismissals from the 10th decile among those who returned the questionnaires. Of the 40 dismissed, 12 had been on probation while in college (Fig. 3).

There was no significant difference on the test scores (ACE Total) between those who withdrew and those students who



returned questionnaires, (Table 1).

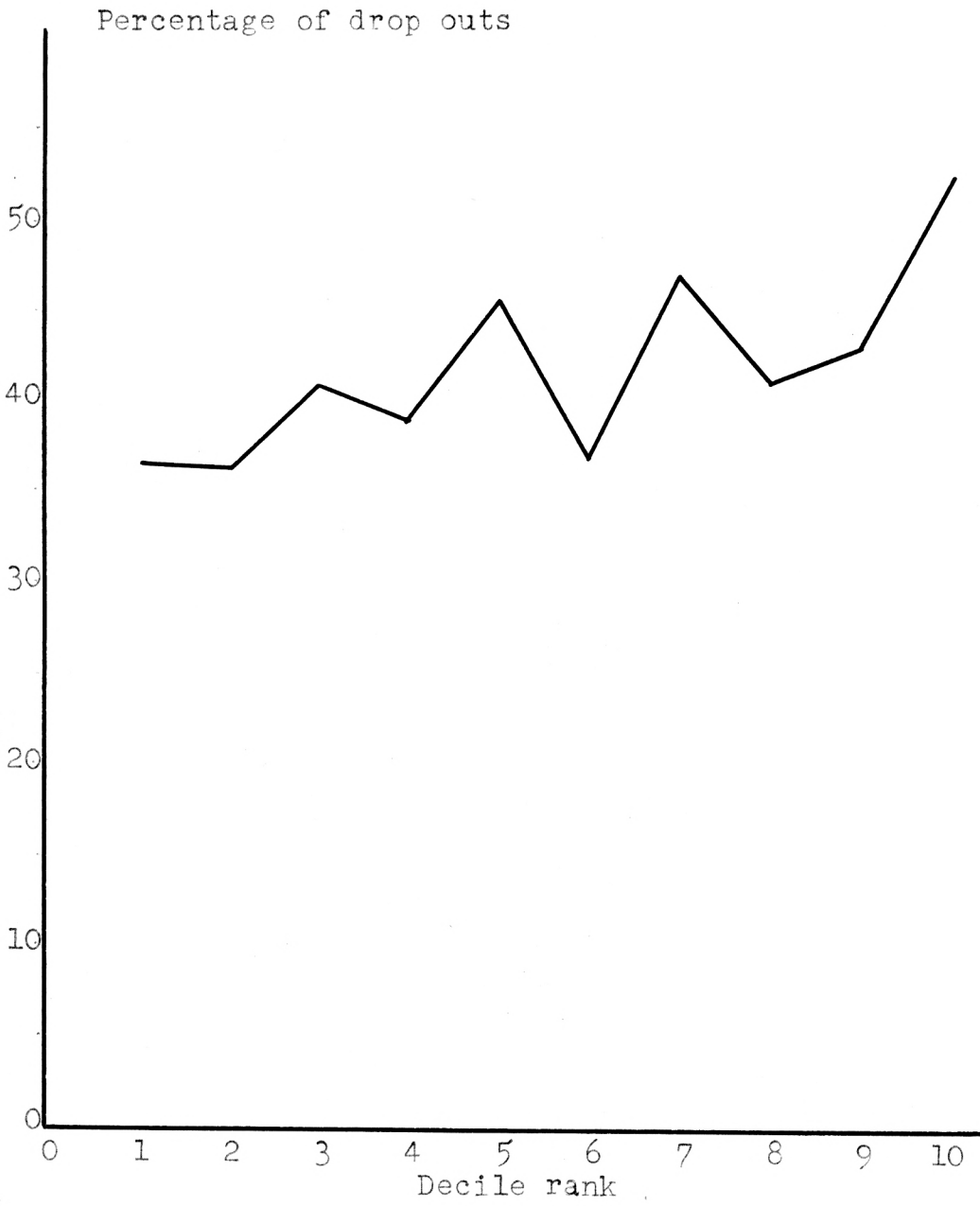


Fig. 1. Percentage of returns from each decile.

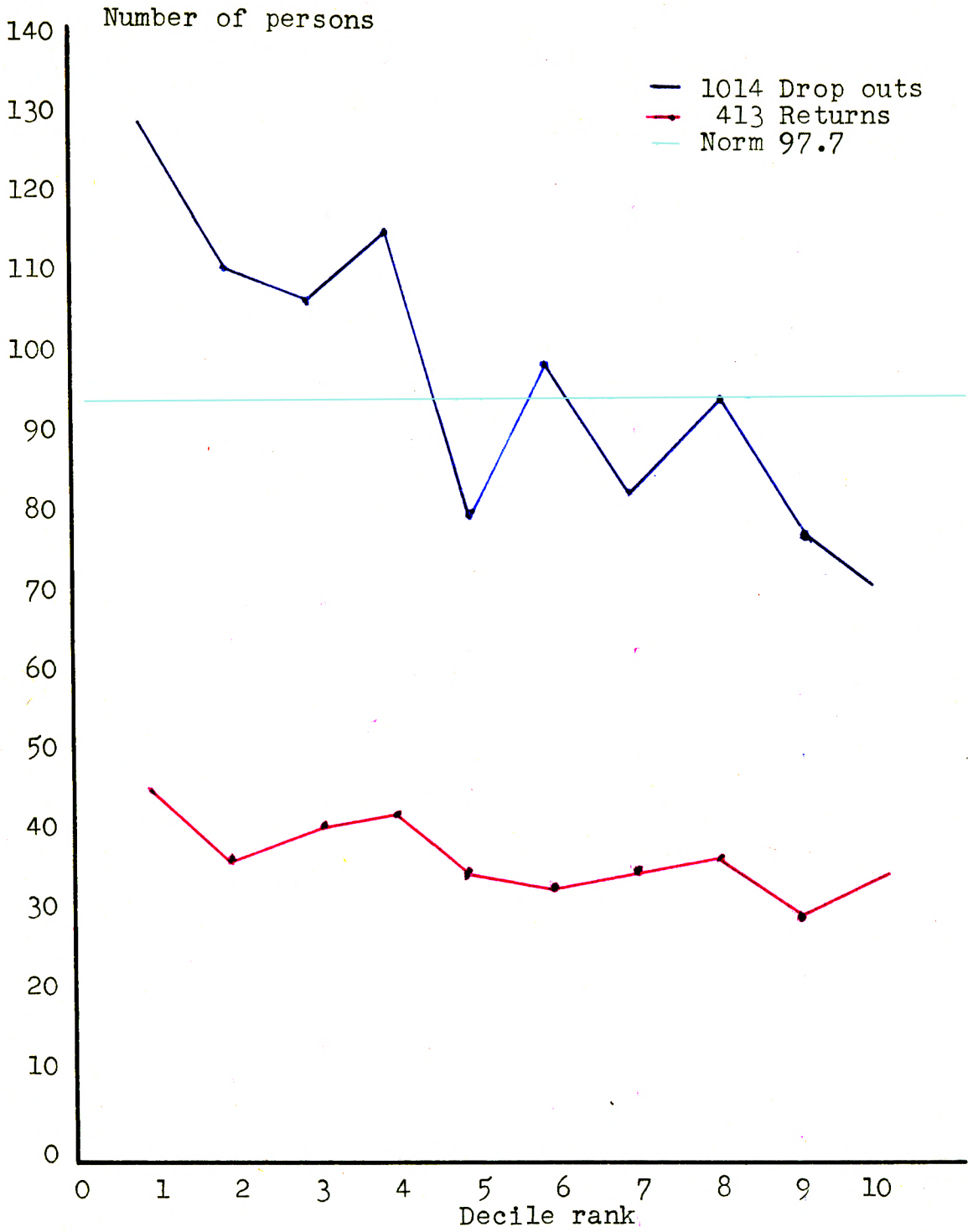


Fig. 2. Number of students ranking in each decile group of ACE total.

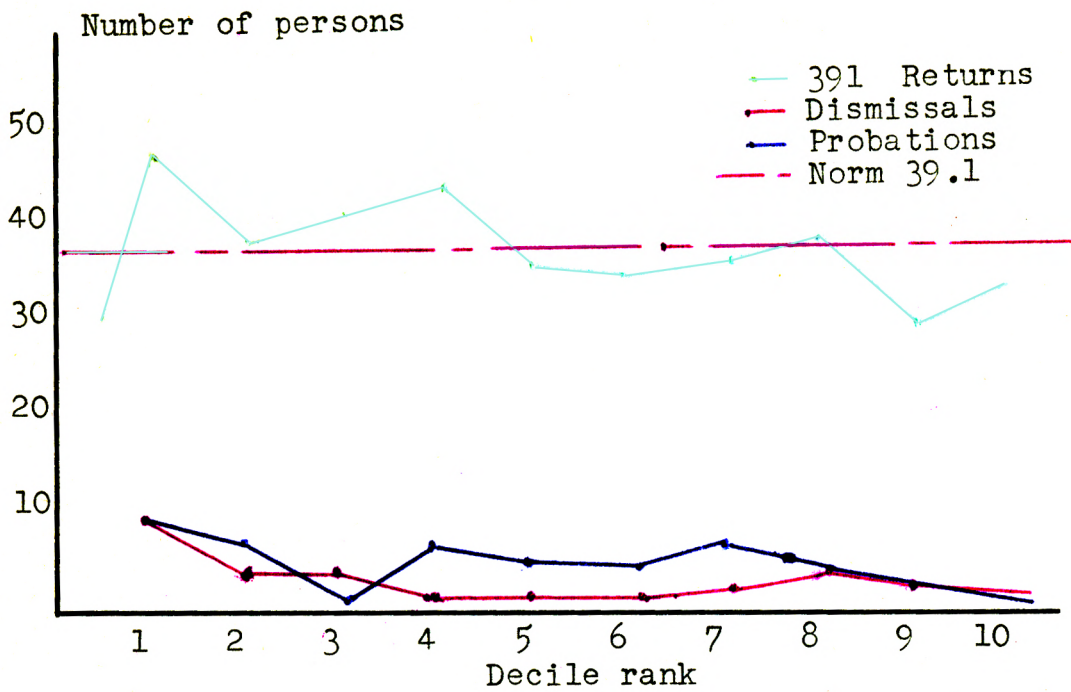


Fig. 3. Decile ranks of 391 returns with probations and dismissals.

Table 1. Comparison of ACE test scores by inter decile groups of those students who withdrew with those who returned questionnaires.

Rank	Percent of total dropping out	Percent of answering group	Crit ratio
0-9%ile	13.41	12.03	.70
10-19%ile	11.33	9.69	.91
20-29%ile	10.73	10.17	.31
30-39%ile	11.84	10.65	.65
40-49%ile	8.12	8.72	.36
50-59%ile	9.93	8.47	.87
60-69%ile	8.32	9.20	.53
70-79%ile	8.03	9.44	.84
80-89%ile	9.93	7.49	1.56
90-99%ile	7.12	8.72	.99

### Questionnaire

Results obtained from the returned questionnaires are detailed in the following paragraphs and in Table 2. The question is given along with the number of people answering it. The answers are broken down into additional qualifying statements so that where a number of answers have been checked, there is cross reference. In these groups, where necessary for better explanation, test data have been included, as well as other information.

### Reasons Given for Leaving School

To Accept a Job. This question was checked on 126 of the returns. Of these, 19 had been on probation and 11 dismissed. Twenty-four gave the additional reason of wanting to marry. Forty-eight said their finances were inadequate, 28 stated that courses were not giving what was wanted, 20 said morale was low,

13 admitted low grades, 18 said they were tired of school. Thirty-one gave general dissatisfaction as a reason for accepting a job, but all of these had given other answers above categorized.

Table 2. Data secured from the questionnaire.

Reasons given for leaving Kansas State:	Answers	
	Number	Percent
1. To accept a job	126	30.50
2. Because student's finances were not adequate	113	27.36
3. To transfer to another college	102	24.69
4. Because courses were not giving what student wanted	90	21.79
5. In order to marry	79	19.13
6. Because of general dissatisfaction	66	15.98
7. Because morale was low	49	11.86
8. Because the courses were not interesting	42	10.17
9. Because of poor instruction	41	9.93
10. Because of poor housing conditions	38	9.20
11. Because of low grades	37	8.96
12. Because the school or faculty was not interested in student as a person	35	8.47
12. Because student could not decide which curriculum to take	35	8.47
13. Because student felt too nervous	33	7.99
13. Because student was just plain tired of school	33	7.99
14. Because of lack of opportunity to develop socially	26	6.30
15. Because there was no pressure on student to continue school	23	5.57
15. Because of poor study facilities	23	5.57
16. Because of insufficient time for study	22	5.33
17. Because of poor personal health	20	4.84
18. Because of family problems	18	4.36
18. Because the work was too hard	18	4.36
19. Because of poor assignment	18	3.73
20. Because of a lack of extra-curricular activities	15	3.63
21. Because of illness at home	14	3.39
22. Because student was not reinstated	12	2.9
23. Because of visual difficulty	3	.73
23. Because courses were too easy	3	.73

Because Student Finances were not Adequate.<sup>1</sup> One hundred thirteen gave this as one of the reasons for dropping out of school. Twenty-four added that the courses were not giving what was wanted, 14 gave insufficient time for study as another factor, 18 said their morale was low and 13 said they did not have the opportunity to develop socially.

Transfer to Another College. Persons stating transfer to another college numbered 102. Of these, 44 ranked in the 7th decile or above on the ACE, 23 in the 8th or above, 21 in the 9th or above, while 14 were in the 10th decile. Four of these students gave an additional answer of wishing to accept a job, 5 stated they wished to marry, while 1 answered both. Twelve gave poor housing as a reason for their transfer, and 19 stated that inadequate finances were a factor. Five gave both of these as reasons. Two said the work was too hard. Both had been on probation while 1 had been dismissed. Eight said the courses were not interesting, 3 of these added that the courses were not giving what was wanted. Of those transferring to another college, and stating the courses were not interesting, 4 added that their morale was low. Nine of the transfers did so because of poor instruction. Thirty-three gave as a reason for their transfer that the courses were not giving what they wanted. Twelve left because of general dis-

---

<sup>1</sup>McNeely found this the second most important reason for withdrawal, Bird & Bird, Learning More by Effective Study, p. 241.



satisfaction. Forty-two of the transfers expect to return to school. All but 16 of the 102 wanted to come here in the beginning, 33 had sought help from a counselor or faculty adviser before leaving school.

Courses Were not Giving What Student Wanted. Ninety of the returns had been checked for this question. Of these, 34 expressed general dissatisfaction, 17 blamed low morale, and 15 felt the school or faculty was not interested in them as a person.

In Order to Marry. Seventy-nine students gave this answer. Of these, 11 added that their finances were inadequate, 15 said the courses were not giving what was wanted, 10 expected to return to school. Of the students answering this question, 20 were in the 7th decile or above, 9 in the 9th, and 7 in the 10th.

General Dissatisfaction. Of the 66 answering this question, 10 had been dismissed, 35 felt the courses were not giving what was wanted, 25 stated the courses were not interesting, 25 had low morale.

Because Student Morale Was Low. Forty-nine answered this question affirmatively. Of these, 2 had been dismissed, 7 placed on probation. Twenty-five expressed general dissatisfaction, 17 said they felt too nervous.

Because the Courses were not Interesting. Of the 413, 42 answered this question affirmatively, 23 added that there was

general dissatisfaction, 14 said there was poor instruction, 5 could not decide what curriculum to take, 28 felt that the courses were not giving what was wanted, 12 stated that poor assignment was a factor. Of these 42, 11 had been on probation lists, and 8 had been dismissed while in college.

Because of Poor Instruction. Forty-one drop outs checked this reason. Of these, 16 felt the school or faculty was not interested in them as a person, 17 were generally dissatisfied, 15 felt they were not getting what they wanted from the courses, 10 blamed poor assignment, 8 poor study facilities. Eleven of these 41 had been on probation and 11 had been dismissed, 7 had been on both lists.

Because of Poor Housing Conditions. Thirty-eight checked this question. Each had, however, checked other reasons for leaving. Nineteen said inadequate finances, 16 said the courses were not giving what was wanted, 7 had been on probation. Of the 38, 3 had lived in a dormitory, 7 in barracks, 18 in private homes, 6 in a rooming house, 3 in trailers.

Because of Low Grades. In 37 of the returns, this was the answer. Of these, 12 had been on probation, 16 had been dismissed. Nine of these students ranked in the 1st decile on the ACE.

Because Student Could Not Decide Which Curriculum to Take. Thirty-five of the students checked this question. Of these, 13 had conferred with counselors or faculty advisers before leaving the college. Of those remaining, 8 said they would

stay in school again if they had it to do over and that they felt counseling all along the way would have helped them to stay in school. Fifteen said the courses were not giving them what they wanted.

Because the School or Faculty was not Interested in Student as a Person. Thirty-five of the 413 returns listed this as a reason for leaving college.

Because Student Felt Too Nervous. Of the 33 checking this reason, 17 had low morale, 8 felt no pressure to continue school.

Because Student was Just Plain Tired of School. Of the 33 who checked this answer, 15 also expressed general dissatisfaction, 10 said they felt too nervous, 10 said there was no pressure on them to continue in school.

Because of Lack of Opportunity to Develop Socially. Twenty-six of the drop outs felt they had not had enough opportunity to develop socially.

Because of Poor Study Facilities. Twenty-three of the questionnaires were marked for this reason. Of these, 14 added that the courses were not giving what was desired, 11 blamed poor housing conditions, 9 said the courses were not interesting. Six of the 23 had been on probation, 4 had been dismissed. Fifteen of the students had sought help from the faculty advisers or Counseling Bureau before leaving school. The remaining 8 felt that counseling all along the way would have helped them remain in college.

Because There was no Pressure on Student to Continue School. Of the 413 returns, 23 marked this reason for leaving the college.

Because of Insufficient Time for Study. Twenty-two felt they had had insufficient time for study. Of these, 7 added that study facilities were poor, 14 felt that inadequate finances helped to cause this.

Because of Poor Personal Health. Twenty of the returns carried this answer. Of these, 9 said their morale was low and 7 added that they felt too nervous.

Because the Work was Too Hard. Eighteen gave this reason. Eight of these had been on probation while in school, 7 had been dismissed, 5 said the work was not interesting, 4 said there was poor instruction, 7 stated that the courses were not giving what was wanted, 5 said they had insufficient time for study, 4 said study facilities were poor, 6 felt the faculty or school was not interested in them as persons.

Because of Family Problems. Eighteen students answered this question affirmatively. Of these, 6 added that there was illness at home.

Because of Poor Assignment. Eighteen of the returns had this answer checked. Of these, 10 added that poor instruction was a factor. Eleven felt that the courses were not giving what was wanted.

Because of a Lack of Extra-Curricular Activities. Fifteen of the former students stated that this was a factor in their decision to leave the college.

Because of Illness at Home. Fourteen of the drop outs gave this reason, 4 added that finances were inadequate.

Because Student was not Reinstated. Twelve students marked this as a reason for leaving. Eight marked the question "Because of Low Grades".

Because Courses were too Easy. Three of the drop outs checked this answer.

Because of Visual Difficulty. Three gave this as a factor in their leaving.

#### Related Data

Do You Expect to Return to School? Of the 413, 127 stated they expect to return to school, a percentage of 30.75.

Did You Expect to Return to Kansas State when you Left? A total of 151, or 36.56 percent, answered this question affirmatively.

Did you want to Attend KSC in the First Place? Of the 413, 373, or 90.31 percent, said they did want to attend Kansas State in the first place.

Would you Stay in School if you had it to do Over? One hundred-eighteen answered this question affirmatively, a percentage of 28.57.



Would Counseling all Along the way have Helped you Stay in School? Seventy-one of the drop outs, 17.19 percent, felt that counseling would have helped them to stay in school.

Did you Seek Help from any Faculty Adviser or the Counseling Bureau Before Leaving School? One hundred-eleven, or 26.88 percent, of the returns had this answer checked.

Housing. Thirty-eight of the students returning questionnaires had lived in dormitories, 17 in barracks, 181 in private homes, 50 in fraternity and sorority houses, 55 in rooming houses, 7 in trailers, 4 in college housing for married students, 61 failed to check housing (Fig. 4).

Table 3. Questionnaire results comparing the three upper and the three lower decile of ACE on items checked.

Reasons given for leaving Kansas State:	Results		
	Upper group, percent:	Lower group, percent:	Crit- ical ratio
To accept a job	25.23	36.64	1.902
Because finances were inadequate	27.10	26.72	.066
To transfer to another college	28.04	18.32	1.749
Because courses were not giving what student wanted	19.63	17.56	.403
In order to marry	20.56	19.08	.285
Because of general dissatisfaction	13.08	14.50	.326
Because morale was low	9.35	14.50	1.223
Because the courses were not in- teresting	8.41	9.16	.202
Because of poor instruction	7.48	10.69	.865
Because of poor housing conditions	8.41	9.92	.397
Because of low grades	2.80	14.50	3.343
Because the school or faculty was not interested in student as a person	7.48	9.92	.396
Because student could not decide which curriculum to take	5.61	9.92	1.253
Because student felt too nervous	4.67	11.45	1.551

Table 3 (concl.).

Reasons given for leaving Kansas State:	Results		
	Upper group, percent:	Lower group, percent:	Crit- ical ratio
Because student was just plain tired of school	8.41	8.40	.003
Because of lack of opportunity to develop socially	4.67	6.87	.731
Because there was no pressure on student to continue school	5.61	9.92	1.253
Because of insufficient time for study	4.67	5.34	.075
Because the work was too hard	1.87	6.11	1.703
Because of poor personal health	6.54	3.82	.932
Because of family problems	2.80	3.82	.442
Because of poor assignment	4.67	5.34	.075
Because of lack of extracurricular activities	1.87	5.34	.463
Because of illness at home	3.74	3.05	.290
Because student was not reinstated	0.00	5.34	2.738
Because of visual difficulties	0.00	1.53	1.443
Because the courses were too easy	1.87	0.00	1.386
Because of poor study facilities	4.67	3.05	.638
Do you expect to return to school?	34.58	17.56	9.403
Did you expect to return to KSC when you left?	37.38	29.00	8.053
Did you want to attend KSC in the first place?	8.32	87.02	14.8
Would you stay in school if you had it to do over?	18.76	36.64	3.193
Would counselling all along the way have helped you to remain in school?	10.28	20.61	7.075
Did you seek help from any faculty adviser or the coun- seling bureau before leaving school?	26.17	27.48	.226
Comments	70.09	55.73	2.593



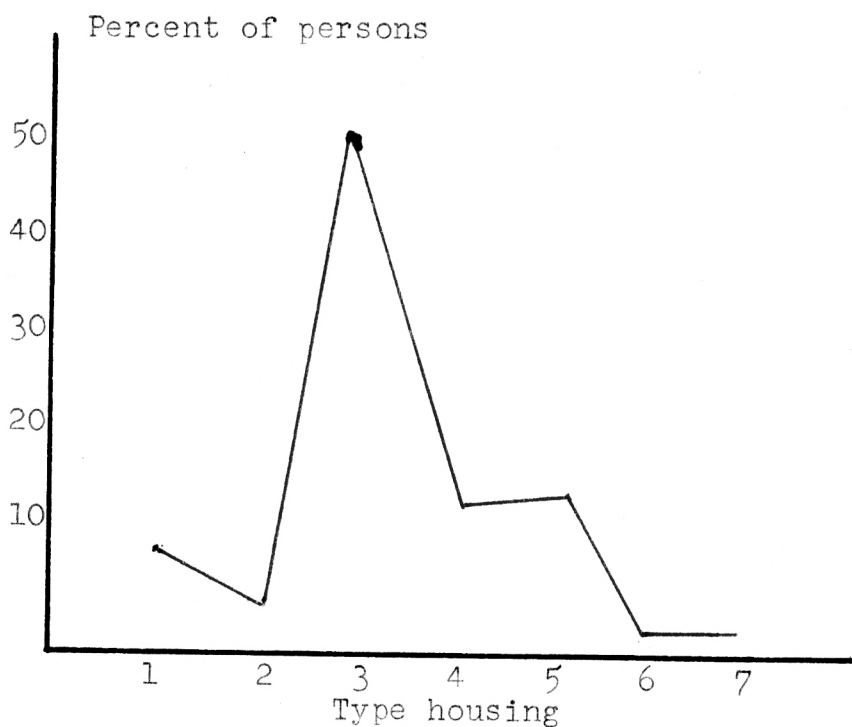


Fig. 4. . Distribution of housing for those returning questionnaire.

- Key:
- 1 - Dormitory
  - 2 - Barracks
  - 3 - Private home
  - 4 - Fraternity or sorority house
  - 5 - Rooming house
  - 6 - Trailer
  - 7 - College housing for married students

## DISCUSSION

Comparison of Answers of Upper and Lower  
30 Percent on ACE Total

The following difference was significant at the 1 percent level of confidence.

Because of Low Grades. The percentage of persons answering this question is only slightly lower than the percentage of those returning the questionnaire who had been dismissed. The significant difference was in favor of the lower group.

The following differences were significant at the 10 percent level of confidence.

Transfer to Another College. The difference between the upper and lower groups in answer to this question was in favor of the upper group as might be expected. The author feels that this group was rather heavily weighted with students who came here for pre-medical and other technical training for which the college does not offer advanced work. In addition, Reuss<sup>1</sup> found that higher intelligence groups were more likely to return questionnaires, a factor which may enter here.

To Accept a Job. Nearly 1/3 of all the students answering checked this question, however, there is a difference at the 5.68 percent level of confidence in favor of the lower group when compared with the upper 30 percent on ACE (Table III).

---

<sup>1</sup>Reuss, C. F., "Factors Involved in Questionnaires to College Students Who had Left School for Reasons Other than Graduation", Am. Soc. Rev., 8:433-8, 1943.

It is a more or less socially acceptable reason for leaving school, particularly when jobs were plentiful and wages high. Rationalization is much easier with the offer of a substantial salary. This answer seems closely related to several of the other answers.

Because Student's Finances were not Adequate. The fact that there was no significant difference between the upper and lower groups in checking this answer seems to indicate that this is a rather serious problem to the college student. Since a number (14) of the withdrawals gave the additional reason that there was insufficient time for study, it appears that work is not always the solution to the financial problem.

Because the Courses were not Giving what was Wanted. There is no significant difference in the number of replies which checked this answer in favor of the higher group. One might give this careful consideration, however, by analysis of the courses being offered. Perhaps this is a valid criticism worthy of faculty consideration, particularly when more than 1/5 of all the questionnaires had this answer checked.

In Order to Marry. The difference between the upper and lower group is not statistically significant. Account must be taken of the women who make up this group. Some took a job in order to help husband through school, a few will return when there is an opportunity.

General Dissatisfaction. There was no significant difference between the lower and upper groups in answers to this

question. The lower group had the largest percentage of this reason. It is reasonable to expect that this might be an easy answer for a person who had poor aptitude, low grades, or who had been dismissed.

Because Student's Morale was Low. The lower group had a higher percentage of this answer. This group tied in closely with the group which checked nervousness and general dissatisfaction. Dismissals were not so high in this group as in the previous group.

Because the Courses were not Interesting. There was no significant difference between upper and lower groups on this item although the lower group had the higher percentage of replies.

Because of Poor Instruction. The lower groups had higher percentage of its answers checked than did the upper group. The difference was not statistically significant. This is likely to be a "sour grapes" answer.

Poor Housing Conditions. There was no significant difference between the upper and lower group in answers to this question.

#### Answers Checked by Women Who Returned Questionnaire

Of the 413 questionnaires returned, 23 percent were filled by women. Of the entering freshmen, 16.3 percent were women, and of the drop outs, 19.82 percent were women. In the 5 semesters studied, 56.94 percent of the women dropped out while

36.46 percent of the men left school.<sup>1</sup> Primary reason checked by women was that they wished to marry. This answer was checked on 45.26 percent of their papers. Next reason was to accept a job. This was checked by 23.16 percent of the women returning the questionnaire. Third reason marked was inadequate finances. This was checked on 16.84 percent of the returns. Fourth reason was inability to decide which curriculum to take. This was checked by 12.63 percent of the women. Next was transfer to another college checked by 11.58 percent of returning women.

Highest percentage of women, 28.42 percent had lived in private homes, next was sororities with 23.16 percent and dormitories with 21 percent. Rooming houses had cared for 13.68 percent. The remaining 3 percent had lived in trailers and college housing for married students.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Drop outs occur among students of varying abilities, however, nearly twice as many students from the lower 10 percent of the class dropped out during the 5 semesters studied when compared to the upper 10 percent.

There was no significant difference, at any level, between those who withdrew and those who returned the questionnaire.

Most frequent reasons checked for leaving school were, to accept a job, inadequate finances, transfer to another school.

---

<sup>1</sup>McNeeley found that 35.6 percent of men dropped. "Students Leaving College Before Graduating", U.S. Office of Ed. Bul. 11:1-112, 1937.

Of the 998 drop outs, 26.85 percent had been on probation at some time during the period they were in school.

More of the drop outs who returned questionnaires had lived in private homes than all other types of housing.

One-fourth of those answering who were on probation or dismissal were in the lower 10 percent of the ACE, over one-half were in the lower 40 percent.

Women were more likely to return this questionnaire than men.

Of the 998 who dropped out of school in the semesters studied, 148 were in the top 20 percent in scholastic aptitude as measured by the ACE Psychological Examination. Of these, 6 had been on probation or dismissed. A great many factors enter into the withdrawal of high level students, but finances and curricular dissatisfactions come high on the list. This suggests that at least as much time should be spent in helping the high ability student into the proper choice of curriculum and other problems as with the low level student. High ability students are less likely to get into trouble scholastically in spite of the fact that they may be in the wrong curriculum.

Nearly all of the 148 mentioned could have successfully completed college training had there been proper motivation, selection of curriculum and financial aid where needed.

Kansas State College should have a strong program for student scholarships for high ability students, something which is now lacking. All students should have at least one



interview with a trained vocational counselor during the freshman year in which careful consideration would be given to the appropriateness of the student's selection of vocational objective.

A system of exit interviews should be set up whereby the student can discuss his reasons for leaving the college before he leaves. If possible a visit to the faculty assigner should be required before the student leaves school at the end of the semester. This will give the school an opportunity to learn if the student expects to return the following semester, and enable the student to get vocational advice or to be directed to a counselor who can give such advice if the student plans to drop out. A pre-enrollment system would help to identify those who do not plan to return and offer the student any advantages that might accrue from exit interviewing.

#### OTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTED BY THIS STUDY

A validity study of Freshman test score as predictors of college success in each of the schools would be valuable in aiding with choice of curriculum. A study of the factors causing a student to withdraw for a semester and then return, along with a comparison of college grades before and after this period should give useful information on motivation, and finances. Comparison of grades of those who dropped out of school at any definite period with those of their classmates who remained would enable us to ascertain if the findings of



Cummings' pertain to Kansas State College.

A study of drop outs ranking in the 8th decile or above to determine whether they were properly placed as to curriculum, and whether or not they had personality difficulties would give much valuable information as to proper enrollment procedures for upper level students.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank Dean M. D. Woolf for assistance throughout this project, Paul Torrance, and other members of the Counseling Bureau Staff for their kind assistance, and for making available test records used in this study. Appreciation is expressed to Mr. R. C. Maloney for the use of the Registrar's records on Suspensions, and finally to my wife, Gloria, who spent many hours helping with the clerical work involved in this project.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aaronson, B. S., "Lack of Money and the Veteran's Withdrawal from School." School and Society, 69:28-31, January 8, 1949.
- Bird, Charles and Dorothy M., Learning More by Effective Study. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1945.
- Coffey, W. Jr., "Mortality and Academic Careers of Two Groups of College Students at University of Minnesota." School and Society, 52:269-70, September 28, 1940.
- Cummings, E. C., "Causes of Student Withdrawals at DePauw University". School and Society, 70:152-3, September 3, 1949.
- Gerberich, J. B. and J. M. Mason, "Signed vs Unsigned Questionnaires". Journal of Educational Research, 122-126, October, 1948.
- Goff, A., "They Dropped Out of School." Education, 70:330-2, January, 1950.
- Gray, Clara Bell, The Elimination of College Students from the Various Levels of Intelligence and Scholarship. Thesis, Department of Education and Psychology, Kansas State College.
- Hewer, V. H. and E. A. Keating, "Do Firms Hire Dropouts as Salesmen?" Occupations, 28:32-4, October, 1949.
- Lazarsfield, P. F., "The Use of Mail Questionnaires to Ascertain the Relative Popularity for Network Stations in Family Listening Surveys." Journal of Applied Psychology, XXIV:802-16, 1940.
- Love, R. A., "Call for Action; Shocking Mortality Rate of Evening Session Undergraduates." School and Society, 70:227-31, October 8, 1948.
- MacIntosh, A., Behind the Academic Curtain. Harper and Bros., 1948.
- Learned, W. S. and C. R. Langmuir, Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. New York: Carnegie Foundation, 35-58, 1938.
- McNeely, J. H., "College Student Mortality". U. S. Office of Education Bulletin, 11:1-112, 1937. School Life 24:115, January, 1939.

- McNeely, J. H., "Students Leaving College Before Graduation." School Life, 23:258-9, March, 1938.
- Mitchell, F. T., "Why Freshmen Leave College". Journal of Higher Education, 13:95-100, February, 1942.
- Quarles, B., "Student Separations from College." Association of American Colleges Bulletin, 35:404-9.
- Reuss, C. F., "Factors Involved in Questionnaires to College Students who had left School for Reasons Other than Graduation." American Sociological Review, 8:433-8, 1943.
- Romine, Stephen S., "Criteria for a Better Questionnaire." Journal of Educational Research, 42:69-71, September, 1948.
- Schwebel, M., "Guidance for the Withdrawing College Student". Occupations, 25:381-2.
- Sletto, R. F., "Pretesting of Questionnaires." American Sociological Review, 193-200, 1940.
- Stalnaker, E. M., "A Four Year Study of the Freshman Class of 1935 at the West Virginia University." Journal of Educational Research, 39:81-101, October, 1945.
- Weintraubn, R. G. and R. E. Salley, "Graduation Prospects of an Entering Freshman." Journal of Educational Research, 39: 116-26, October, 1945.
- "Flunked Out". Time, 52:76-7, September 20, 1948.
- "Why Students Flunk Out." Newsweek, 32:82, Vol. 1, September 27, 1948.

APPENDIX

We are making a study of why students drop out of school at Kansas State. Your answers to the following questions will give us the kind of information we need to deal effectively with the various conditions affecting drop outs. Draw a circle around the answer that best expresses your thinking. Example: (Yes) No. Will you please answer the questions now, and return to us promptly?

Thank you.

*Maurice D. Woolf*  
Maurice D. Woolf  
Dean of Students

(check one)

I was living in: a dormitory  
a barracks  
a private home  
a fraternity or a sorority house  
a rooming house  
a trailer  
college housing for married students.

I left Kansas State

---

Yes	No	To transfer to another college.
Yes	No	To accept a job.
Yes	No	In order to marry.
Yes	No	Because of family problems.
Yes	No	Because of poor personal health.
Yes	No	Because of illness at home.
Yes	No	Because of poor housing conditions.
Yes	No	Because my finances were not adequate.
Yes	No	Because the work was too hard.
Yes	No	Because the courses were not interesting.
Yes	No	Because of poor instruction.
Yes	No	Because I couldn't decide which curriculum to take.
Yes	No	Because courses were not giving me what I wanted.
Yes	No	Because of poor assignment.
Yes	No	Because of insufficient time for study.
Yes	No	Because of poor study facilities.
Yes	No	Because of visual difficulty.
Yes	No	Because my morale was low.
Yes	No	Because I was not reinstated.
Yes	No	Because of low grades.
Yes	No	Because my courses were too easy.
Yes	No	Because of a lack of extra-curricular activities.
Yes	No	Because I was just plain tired of school.
Yes	No	Because of lack of opportunity to develop socially.
Yes	No	Because the school or faculty was not interested in me as a person.
Yes	No	Because of general dissatisfaction.
Yes	No	Because I felt too nervous.
Yes	No	Because there was no pressure on me to continue school.

---

Yes No Do you expect to return to school?

Yes No Did you expect to return to KSC when you left?

Yes No Did you want to attend KSC in the first place?

Yes No Would you stay in school if you had it to do over?

Yes No Would counseling all along the way have helped you stay in school?

Yes No Did you seek help from any faculty adviser, or the Counseling Bureau before leaving school?

Comments or other reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

---

(if additional space is needed, use other side)