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Long Term Goals and Program Choices of New Students Entering Yavapai College - Verde Valley Campus

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**Long Term Goals and Program Choices of New Students
Entering Yavapai College – Verde Valley Campus**

**A Research Paper Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies of
Old Dominion University**

**By
Alexandra Helm-Correa
December 2002**

SIGNATURE PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Alexandra Helm-Correa under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in Occupational and Technical Education 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. The paper was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies with an emphasis in Business and Industry Training.

APPROVED BY:

Dr. John M. Ritz, Advisor and Graduate Program Director

Date

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Alexandra Helm-Correa

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus is the second campus of Yavapai College, a community college located in Yavapai County of Arizona. The Verde Valley Campus, located in Clarkdale, Arizona, also has a satellite center located in Sedona, Arizona, called the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology. Yavapai College, founded in 1969, provides academic degree, vocational degree and certification programs, regularly reviews its selection of offerings to students and adds and eliminates programs it deems relevant to current workplace needs.

Recently, the Federal government approved \$1.1 million dollars toward the building of a Northern Arizona Regional Skill Center (NARSC) to be located on the Verde Valley Campus. Since the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) assisted with the procurement of the grant, this skill center will not only serve Yavapai County, but also three additional counties (Apache, Coconino and Navajo) where the current population has limited access to services through the established community colleges or is underserved due to their rural location. The Northern Arizona Regional Skill Center is currently operating in leased space in Cottonwood, Arizona, as the building will not be completed until 2004. This grant has brought about the need to examine the college’s academic and vocational degree and certification programs since the college has begun serving a wider range of the Yavapai County population through this new skill center.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to determine reasons new students chose to attend Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in the spring semester 2002, their long-term goals; and of those new students to determine how many were traditional or nontraditional and their academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certification program choices. This was done in order to assist in recruitment activities and the future development of academic and vocational program offerings.

RESEARCH GOALS

The goals of this study were to answer the following questions:

1. What were the reasons new students entered Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002?
2. What were the primary reasons new students took courses in Spring 2002; and what were their long-term goals at Yavapai College?
3. What were the academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certification program choices for new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002?
4. What was the composition of new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in terms of whether they were primarily traditional or nontraditional students?
5. What relationship existed between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree, vocational degree or certification choices?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The mission of Yavapai College is “to provide high quality, convenient and cost-effective learning opportunities for the diverse population of Yavapai County” (Yavapai College, 2001). In updating its strategic plan for 2002 through 2007, the college recognizes the need to support the curriculum of NARSC, while continuing to provide

quality academic education for its population. One of the proposed strategic initiatives states: Assess county/regional needs and concerns on a consistent basis and focus college resources to address these issues and opportunities; Target college resources to address preparing the citizens of Yavapai County for effective participation in democratic processes and public policy decision-making that respects diversity of constituent groups, uses relevant data, and reflects long-term good for the region; Assist employers and county citizens in anticipating workforce and economic change opportunities and in preparing citizens for emerging opportunities” (Yavapai College, 2002). As the college continues to expand its influence in Yavapai County and beyond, the academic and vocational choices available to students continue to require on-going critical analysis, selection and evaluation.

It should be noted that data regarding a special population defined as single parents and displaced homemaker were gathered on the Verde Valley Campus from fiscal year 1997 through fiscal year 1999 during the two-year award period of a state funded grant. When the grant was discontinued during fiscal year 1999-2000, the student services department funded the full-time position and expanded the responsibilities to support all re-entry students in terms of three primary areas: outreach, counseling and placement; education and skills training; and program management. After the discontinuation of the grant, data regarding this particular population or the more expanded re-entry population this position now serves have not been collected.

This research project, which is the first of its kind conducted by Yavapai College, will help the administration, student services and the office of instruction in better understanding why students attend the college. It will also show where students’ program

interest lie and whether the college is currently providing programs directly related to those interests. It may also indicate other program areas that the college should develop to better serve the population.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to one geographic location of Yavapai College and included only one student population, new students enrolled in classes on the Verde Valley Campus and its associated site, the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology, during spring semester 2002. Additionally, new students were identified as either traditional or nontraditional and as seeking an academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate through self-identification.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study assumed surveyed students lived in the northern area of Arizona and registered for the first time in the spring semester of 2002 for at least one class (credit or enrichment) at either the Verde Valley Campus or the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology. The study excluded those students who registered for non-credit classes. Traditional students were those who were between 18 and 24 years of age and taking classes toward a defined goal. A significantly higher number of nontraditional students than traditional students were pursuing academic degrees rather than vocational degrees or vocational certificates.

PROCEDURES

A survey attempting to ascertain data specifically related to answering the research questions defined earlier in the chapter was developed. This survey was sent via U.S. mail to all new students of Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus on record as of the 20th of February (45th day of the semester). Data were tabulated from all surveys returned by the deadline in aggregate format; findings were analyzed and interpreted; and conclusions were drawn. For yes/no questions, frequency of responses was calculated.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined to assist the reader:

1. **Academic Degree Programs** – programs academic in subject matter, which the student completes in order to obtain a degree in selected program areas. These programs usually take two years to complete, if attending full time. Students transferring to a four-year university or college will select an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Business, or Associate of General Studies degree plan. It is important to note not all programs are available on the Verde Valley Campus.
2. **Vocational Degree Programs** – programs vocational in subject matter, which the student completes in order to obtain an Associate of Applied Science degree in selected program areas which are accounting, architectural graphics, automotive technology, business, computing and information systems, construction management, digital filmmaking, early childhood education, emergency medical services, fire science, graphic design, gunsmithing, internet publishing, medical

transcription, office administration, paralegal, police certification, residential building technology and welding. These programs usually take two years to complete, if attending full time. Not all areas of study for an Associate of Applied Science degree are available on the Verde Valley Campus.

3. Vocational Certificate Programs – programs vocational in subject matter that the student completes in order to obtain a certificate in one of the following program areas: accounting, architectural graphics, automotive technology, business, computing and information systems, construction management, digital filmmaking, early childhood education, emergency medical services, fire science, graphic design, gunsmithing, internet publishing, medical transcription, office administration, paralegal, police certification, residential building technology or welding. These programs usually take less than two years to complete. Not all certificate programs are available on the Verde Valley Campus.
4. New students – Students who registered for the first time for at least one class, whether for credit or enrichment, and excluding those students who registered for true non-credit classes, and were held at the Verde Valley Campus or the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology in the spring semester of 2002 as of FTSE day, the 20th of February (the 45th day of the semester, including pre-session).
5. FTSE – An acronym for “full-time student equivalent”, which is the equivalent of one student enrolled in fifteen credits.
6. FTSE day – Commonly known as census day (the 45th day of the semester) when the official head count for a particular semester is recognized. This is the official number reported to the state of Arizona.

7. Enrichment – Students may take a class without the possibility of failing and without having an official grade assigned at the conclusion of the class. Classes taken for enrichment are assigned the letter grade of “E” and are not transferable to other educational institutions; however, these classes do generate FTSE.
8. Traditional students – students who are between the ages of 18 to 24 and taking credit classes toward a defined goal, i.e., an academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate.
9. Nontraditional students – students who are 25 and over and taking credit classes toward a defined goal, i.e., an academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate. This population would include re-entry students, reverse-entry students or both.
10. Re-entry students – students who did not go directly to college after graduating high school. These students can include reverse-entry students.
11. Reverse-entry students – Students who move from a four-year educational institution to two-year colleges either before or after having obtained a four-year degree.
12. NARSC – Northern Arizona Regional Skill Center of Yavapai College currently leasing space in Cottonwood, Arizona, which will ultimately be located on the Verde Valley Campus in Clarkdale, Arizona.

SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the problem, background and significance, limitations, assumptions and definitions of a study to determine the reasons new students attended

Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus, what the primary reasons were for taking courses, and their long term goals. The study examined the composition of new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in spring semester 2002 in terms of whether they were primarily traditional or nontraditional students; their academic degree, vocational degree or certification program choices as well as what relationship existed between academic degree, vocational degree or certification choices of traditional and nontraditional students during spring semester 2002.

Chapter II will review the literature regarding American college student trends, access to higher education for nontraditional students and related factors such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. The chapter will also discuss research regarding decision-making, vocational education perspectives, future trends in education degrees and local community labor needs. Chapter III will discuss the methods and procedures used in the study. Chapter IV will be a review of the findings. Chapter V will provide the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study in this area.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In conducting a review of the literature for this study, it is clear there are research areas not currently addressed. Although research is available and quite extensive concerning American college student trends, access to higher education for nontraditional students and minorities, the effects of gender, socio-economic status (SES), and race-ethnicity on postsecondary choices of U.S. students and other related topics, research dealing with traditional and nontraditional students and their academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate choices was not found.

Decision-Making

The literature regarding decision-making and using decision-making theory relating to vocational choice could be applied to this study. In his research regarding decision-making and vocational choice, Tiedeman (1961, 1963) indicates vocational choice should be made through a rational process rather than by chance. Another perspective discussed by LoCascio (1964) claims decision-making is based upon environmental factors. More recent research regarding decision-making and career choice conducted by Carla M. Dmell, Hal R. Arkes and Steven K. Jones (1999) examined whether using decision aids caused high school students to make decisions about college choice that lead to greater satisfaction with the decision. Although these works noted above were informative about the decision process, they focused on the factors that contribute to decision-making and the decision process itself, which are not variables considered within the scope of this study.

It is important to note although understanding the reasons why traditional and nontraditional students entered Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002 is a significant research goal, data concerning other groups and characteristics may also be important for the college to study. Only one specific variable, however, was considered in this research. This was to determine what were the academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate choices among traditional and nontraditional students. This study focuses on traditional and nontraditional students only as collective groups. It is not within the scope of this study to investigate specific characteristics within each group, i.e., gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status, to the extent reflected in the current research discussed in this chapter. In reviewing the literature, many other factors discussed in more detail in this chapter are not within the scope of the study, but which do merit examining in future studies, as other factors may have significance in students' decisions regarding attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus.

Women's Movement

Alexander Astin (1998), in his discussion concerning the national research commemorating the 30th anniversary of the annual freshman survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute, indicated there were important indicators for the changing of American society and, more specifically, for American college students. It is important to look at some of the major elements of this research pointing to a significant relationship between the college student population and career aspirations.

Astin (1998) indicates one of the most significant changes over the last thirty years (1966-1999) among the social, political and economic factors is the women's movement. This is reflected in data regarding their educational plans and career

aspirations and the attitudes of both sexes towards the role of women in society. One element that may affect the findings of this study is the significant increase of women pursuing advanced degrees. Astin states, "If one were to consider the implications of these trends for the future of the labor force, it seems probable the proportion of women in virtually all jobs requiring advance training beyond the baccalaureate will continue to increase in the foreseeable future" (p. 116). If, in fact, more women are seeking higher degrees, it would be interesting to look at the number of women entering Yavapai College and whether there is a higher percentage choosing academic degrees which are transferable to four-year universities. Then, it would follow that new women students, regardless of whether they are traditional or nontraditional students, would more often choose an academic path rather than a non-academic path, i.e., a vocational degree or vocational certificate program.

Astin also states, "...the increasing education aspirations of young women in this country are reflected not only in their greater interest in postgraduate degrees, but also in their increasing interest simply in attending college" (p. 116). Therefore, a future study could examine whether more women are choosing to attend college than men.

Nontraditional Students

Several recent studies examine access to higher education as well as support systems, psychological functioning, and academic performance of nontraditional females and minorities. Research conducted by Carney-Crompton and Tan (2002) discusses the fact that, although the number of students entering postsecondary institutions immediately following high school has been declining over the last ten years, there has been a substantial increase in the attendance of nontraditional students who are defined as

the mature, reentry, or adult learner over the age of 25. Of that population, their research shows the majority of the population is female. These researchers strongly believe the continued success of a postsecondary institution may well depend on its ability to understand and accommodate the unique dispositional, situational, and institutional needs of nontraditional female students. This study indicates a substantially higher percentage of nontraditional students overall. According to research conducted by Daphne Ntiri (2001), women have been surpassing men in college graduation rates since the early 1990's including the attainment of all levels of degrees – from the associate's degree up to the master's degree.

In examining career plans for college freshman, Astin (1998) concludes that between 1966 and 1999, every career showed convergence in the relative career interests of men and women. Astin attributes this convergence to the increased interest of women in the traditional “male” careers of medicine, law, and business, and the rapidly declining interest of women in careers in school teaching and the arts. Female interest in engineering, college teaching and research science is attributable to the decline in interest among the men. The decline in interest among women is the main reason for the increase of the choice of careers in the arts for men. Gender gaps, Astin concludes, still remain in the most sex-stereotypic careers: engineering, primary school teaching, allied health, business and nursing. “In short, these data on career changes suggest that one of the most dramatic effects of the women's movement has been to encourage more young women to forego careers in school teaching and the arts in favor of careers in medicine, law, business, and engineering” (p. 117). According to Astin, the patterns of career choices for college men and women are more alike today than they were in the 1960s.

However, other research conducted by Ntiri (2001), in examining access and opportunity to higher education for nontraditional students and minorities, concludes that although nontraditional women have surpassed male and younger populations in higher education enrollments, participation remains higher at the community college and college levels and in fields that are traditionally female, such as education, health and allied services, and the liberal arts. This is contradicted in their research where they discuss conclusions drawn from Rice and Meyer (1989) stating reentry women in the 1980s and 1990s are more likely to prepare for new careers as doctors, lawyers, accountants, or business managers. It is unclear whether their conclusion regarding occupational choice may stem from data drawn regarding minorities or, more specifically, minority women.

College Attendance, Degree and Career Choices

Research conducted by Jerry Trusty, Kok-mun Ng and Maximino Plata (2000) looked at the interactive effects of gender, SES, and race-ethnicity on choice of postsecondary educational majors as categorized by Holland's (1966, 1997) R-I-A-S-E-C model (R=realistic, I=investigative, A=artistic, S=social, E=enterprising, C=conventional). Although this study focused primarily on race-ethnicity interaction effects on choice of Holland type of postsecondary major, data regarding gender by Holland type of major should also be noted. Majors noted by Holland can be categorized according to personality type. Holland's typological theory (Holland, 1997) specifies a theoretical connection between vocational personalities and work environments that make it possible to use the same RIASEC classification system for both persons and jobs (Reardon, Vernick, and Reed, 2001). They found gender was a strong predictor of Holland type of major. The largest differences were between men and women in S, R, and C types. There were moderate differences in I-

type majors; A and E types were fairly balanced by gender with slightly more women in A majors and slightly more men than expected in E majors. Within genders and across Holland types, men were most likely to be in I, E, and S majors, respectively. Women were most likely to be in S, I, and E majors, respectively.

These data and Astin's research (1998) show a discrepancy among the different types of career choices, as careers in the arts were not noted in the study as being chosen more for men or for women. And, Astin's research reflects a higher percentage of women are entering careers in medicine, law and business, which fall into Holland's I and S types. Clearly more research should be conducted to determine which majors as they apply to Holland's model are being chosen by women and men to determine what other factors may contribute to these choices.

In another study, Jerry Trusty, Chester Robinson and Maximino Plata (2000) studied the effects of gender, SES, and four types of eighth grade academic performance on postsecondary educational choices (predominantly classified by Holland type). At late adolescence, gaps were found in the research in terms of investigating effects of these background variables and their interactions on the various types of educational programs high school graduates choose. However, research discussing gender-based occupational aspirations showed people generally forsake their interests first, their desired prestige/ability level second, and their gender-related choices last (Gottfredson, 1981). Gottfredson also reported female-traditional occupations were concentrated in the C Holland type, whereas male-traditional occupations were concentrated in the R, E, and I types. A and S types were balanced between the genders.

It appears changes in occupational aspirations have shifted from the time Gottfredson first reported on gender-based occupational aspirations and more recent research in which the C Holland type of occupational choice is clearly not among the three highest types of careers women selected. And, the R Holland type of careers, noted in Gottfredson's research, as being primarily male-traditional, is also not among the top three choices in recent research.

According to this research, SES has a strong influence on the amount of education adolescents expect to achieve after high school and on postsecondary educational attainment as well as effects on the occupations young adults choose. Occupational choice is also affected by how people view their social class. However, this data will not be discussed in length in this chapter, as the current study will not look at SES or academic achievement prior to entering college.

Astin (1998) points to a wide range of changes in students' interests, values, attitudes, and aspirations occurring from the late 1980's to the present. He found a clear pattern of concern exists with regard to the affordability of college for the incoming freshmen. Reasons for choosing a college were primarily made due to "low tuition" or "financial aid offers". "In short, these trends suggest the failure of federal aid to keep up with the rising cost of college has not only forced more needy students and parents to carry a greater share of the financial burden, but it has also contributed to a greater sense of concern about paying for college. More students have been caused to pick their college on the basis of costs and available financial aid than the quality of programs offered" (p. 130). Notably, a study by the Lumina Foundation (2001) indicates success for

nontraditional students is strongly linked to two of the same factors that help younger students: strong academic preparation and financial aid.

Interestingly, data from the exiting student survey at Yavapai College conducted during fall 2000 and spring 2001 supported much of the research regarding gender and choice of degree. Nearly half of all exiting students who responded planned to attend a four-year college. Based on the most frequently listed responses, the statistically exiting student was between 18 and 22 years of age, female, white and non-Hispanic and single, divorced, or separated. Most of the exiting students received the Associate of Arts degree followed by the nursing degree. Although only a third received financial aid, the fact that Yavapai College is one of the most affordable community colleges in Arizona could mean less needed to apply for financial aid.

The Yavapai College graduate follow-up study conducted in spring 2001, which surveyed graduates of fall 1999 through spring 2000, tended to also support research conclusions regarding the higher percentage of students who were planning to pursue at least a baccalaureate degree. More Yavapai College graduates cited their reason for attending was to prepare for transfer to a four-year college instead of for job-related reasons (42.6% vs. 41.0%) or for personal interest, self-enrichment or other reasons. The previous year's graduate follow-up study also reported that the majority of graduates had plans to get their baccalaureate degree within the next two to five years. These statistics tend to indicate that a majority of students attend Yavapai College to obtain an Associate degree in order to transfer to a four-year university for a baccalaureate.

In a study, *Emerging Variations in Postsecondary Attendance Patterns: An Investigation of Part-Time, Delayed and Nondegree Enrollment*, conducted by James C.

Hearn (1992), he notes the increasing undergraduate enrollment rate for women, the increase in numbers of students attending school part-time, the growing numbers of college-bound high school graduates choosing to postpone college entry, and the increase of those students choosing vocational and for-profit proprietary institutions. What is even more significant as it applies to this current study is his acknowledgement that although literature includes potential influences on college attendance such as socio-economic status, gender, race/ethnicity, family characteristics, prior academic achievement, academic liability, high school academic program as well as the student's level of education aspirations, plans or expectations, interpretations on enrollment effects suggested for educational aspirations should be made cautiously. He suggests the choice of part-time, delayed, or nondegree-seeking attendance is, at least in part, a behavioral expression of aspirations, plans, and expectations, rather than a result of them.

Ultimately, Hearn's implications for further research are based on the fact there are some unexpected differences in effects across the different nontraditional patterns and indicators for labor-market conditions, related economic conditions, job experience, and occupational expectations or aspirations should be examined.

A newer and yet to be studied factor which may have an effect on college attendance, degree and occupation choice is the events of September 11, 2001. It is still too much in America's present to be able to view rationally and investigate scientifically as to how this will affect the nation's educational structure and processes. However, eventually these events and the subsequent war on terrorism will need to be examined as they relate to factors surrounding education. In *USA Today* on November 6, 2001, a cover story tells of families across the nation drawing up college wish lists, which now not only

include colleges far away from home, but also of those educational institutions nearby. This is just one implication as to how those events will impact our nation's educational future.

There is another body of research discussing the future of vocational and academic education worth noting, for it delves into a discussion of what academic or vocational choices students may have to make in the future. And there is also research, which examines whether or not community colleges should provide baccalaureate degrees (Walker, 1999). A few of the advantages cited for traditional two-year colleges providing baccalaureate degrees are increased geographical, financial, and academic access to higher education, cost efficiencies, ready matriculation for students with associate degrees and the community colleges' commitment to economic and workforce development. Additionally, the close connection of the local community colleges to business and industries help make them more receptive and responsive to local workforce needs. If this option is ultimately added to the program choices students have in community colleges in the future, further studies will need to focus on how this new choice affects the success of students graduating from community colleges with a baccalaureate degree than one obtained from a four-year university or college.

Vocational Education

It should also be noted there are some in the educational field who believe vocational education is a failure. It places students based on class on a separate educational track, thus producing graduates capable of holding only middle-level routine jobs and whose career progression is fairly nonexistent (Pincus, 1980). Questions persist as to whether vocational education provides students with what it promises in terms of an

occupational career. Pincus suggests if enrollment continues to swell in vocational education programs, there may well be an over-supply of middle-level workers in a few years adding to the already oversupply of college-level workers.

Notably, statistics point to the current crisis in the ability of Americans to obtain high-status and high paying jobs. The U.S. Department of Labor statistics indicate at least one-third of all four-year college graduates through 2005 will not find employment matching their degree. And yet, many economists agree 70% of the good jobs in the future economy will not require a four-year college degree, but some form of training and education such as an associate degree or technical training (Gordon, 2000). The discussions surrounding workforce needs versus types of degrees or training required to fulfill these needs suggest choices for students to continue to be reengineered in an on-going attempt to realistically provide the education required to address actual workforce and career demands. Continuous research should be conducted to examine how these educational changes are meeting the current workforce challenges while providing employees with satisfying careers.

During the first four months of 2002, the McNeill Group conducted a labor market study in which 1000 employer organizations of the Verde Valley area in Northern Arizona were surveyed. This population could conceivably hire students from Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus. The study was funded by the Arizona Department of Commerce, the Cottonwood Foundation for Economic Development, Yavapai College (economic development, small business development center and the Northern Regional Skill Center) and the Valley Academy for Career and Technology Education (a school district in the Verde Valley). The purpose of the study was to determine the current

nature and demographic characteristics of the Verde Valley employer organizations, the current and future labor skills and managerial skill needs of these employers. (Phase One: Verde Valley Labor Market Situational Baseline, Final Report, The McNeill Group, Inc. 2002)

In the study employers were asked about the availability of skilled and professional employees. The results of the study indicated there was not a high availability of both skilled and professional employees.

One of the most notable conclusions in the labor market study as it pertains to this research study involved how to improve the familiarity and overall poor view employers had of local high schools and community colleges as training venues. The data showed employers were not familiar with local high school and community college programs; rated training at both high schools and community colleges relatively low; and were generally ambivalent or neutral about recommending their local high school or community college training to other employers. The McNeill Group recommended aggressive marketing efforts in order to improve the current ambivalent or unfavorable image of local high schools and community colleges as training venues.

The data regarding the opinions of Verde Valley employers of the local high schools and community colleges as training venues and the availability of skilled workers and professional employees may indicate their overall less than favorable view of hiring skilled or professional employees who are Yavapai College students or graduates. These views could potentially disadvantage students or graduates of the college in the hiring process.

SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the literature regarding American college student trends, access to higher education for nontraditional students and related factors such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. The chapter also touched on other research regarding decision-making, vocational education perspectives, future trends in education degrees and local community labor needs. The review uncovered much literature regarding these areas; however, research on traditional and nontraditional students and their academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate choices was not found.

Chapter III will describe the methods and procedures used to determine the composition of new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in spring semester 2002 in terms of whether they were primarily traditional or nontraditional students, their reasons for attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus, and their long term goals. These methods and procedures were also used to examine the primary reasons traditional and nontraditional students attended Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus; the academic degree, vocational degree or certification program choices for new students as well as what relationship existed between academic degree, vocational degree or certification choices of traditional and nontraditional students during spring semester 2002.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine the following: 1) What percentage of new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in the spring semester 2002 were traditional and nontraditional; 2) What were Spring Semester 2002 students’ reasons for attending and their long term goals; 3) What were students’ academic degree or vocational degree or vocational certification program choices; and 4) What relationship existed between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree or vocational degree or certification choices. Findings from the study will assist in recruitment activities and future development of academic and vocational program offerings.

POPULATION

In order to determine what academic degree or vocational degree or certification program choices students made, the entire population of all new students attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus during the spring 2002 semester was used in the study. Included in this population were both traditional and nontraditional students, both genders and all possible population factors such as socio-economic status and ethnicity. The population also represented students attending classes for credit as well as for enrichment. This was an appropriate time to collect data on new students since enrollment for Yavapai College for spring 2002 was at an all-time high with the Verde Valley Campus showing an increase in FTSE of 8.6 percent. This allowed for a larger

sample population to be surveyed. As of February 20, 2002 (the 45th day of the semester), the total population of new students enrolled at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus for the first time was 497. All new students were included in the population in order to elicit the most responses, thus allowing for more accurate findings.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The instrument was designed based upon the Likert scale and also included yes/no and open-ended questions. The descriptive survey was four pages in length and asked for responses to a variety of questions related to goals, program choice and reasons for attending Yavapai College. Information regarding demographics was requested including age, gender, general location of residence, marital status, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The approximate time necessary to complete the survey was fifteen minutes maximum. Each survey had an identifying number so that a follow-up letter could be sent to all non-respondents. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The survey instrument was mailed to all new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002 along with an introduction letter (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the survey and the significance of the data being collected. Participants mailed the completed survey directly to institutional research at Yavapai College in a self-addressed stamped envelope. However, to maximize the response rate, participants could instead bring the survey to the student services office on the Verde Valley Campus or the front desk at the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology along with

a card that was attached to the cover letter (Appendix C). This card, which asked for the participant's name, address and telephone number entered the participant in a drawing for one of three prizes. Two weeks after the initial letter was sent out, a reminder letter was mailed to all non-respondents to elicit further responses from the population (Appendix D). Surveys were returned to Institutional Research (IR) via U.S. mail or via intercampus mail, if the survey was hand-delivered to the campus or Sedona site.

The mailing and collection of data was completed with the assistance of IR. Student services supported the prize drawing by taking the entry cards. Several college departments contributed the prizes.

All responses from the survey in the study were reported in aggregate format. Each survey had an identifying number assigned to a survey participant. The research manager of IR at the college was the only individual who knew the names of the participants and their assigned numbers. No identifying information was on the survey. Identity information pertaining to survey participants and all surveys were destroyed once the analysis of the data was completed.

DATA ANALYSIS

Responses to yes/no questions were analyzed to determine frequency of responses. Open questions were grouped into categories of answers according to commonality of response. Findings were reported in aggregate format and presented in tables showing data regarding all demographic information as well as reasons for attending, long-term goals, numbers of traditional and nontraditional students and academic degree or vocational degree/certification choices.

SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methods and procedures used to answer the research questions regarding new students attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002, new students’ reasons for taking courses and their long term goals. Methods and procedures used also determined the composition of traditional and nontraditional students, their academic or vocational degree or certification program choices and what relationship existed between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree, vocational degree or certification choices. The yes/no and open questions included in the survey were formulated to answer the research questions. Frequencies of responses to yes/no questions were presented. In the next chapter, the findings from the completed surveys will be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine the following: 1) What were the reasons new students entered Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002; 2) Spring Semester 2002 students’ reasons for attending and their long term goals; 3) Students’ academic degree or vocational degree or vocational certification program choices; 4) Of the new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in the spring semester 2002 how many were traditional and nontraditional and what were their primary goals for attending college; and 5) What relationship existed between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree or vocational degree or certification choices.

Of the 497 surveys sent to new students attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus, 24 were returned as bad addresses. The adjusted population was 473. Of this number, 154 surveys were returned for a response rate of 33%.

Reasons New Students Entered Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus

This research goal correlated to Question 3 in the survey, which asked students for their reasons affecting their decision to attend Yavapai College in Spring 2002. Respondents were asked to check all choices that applied. Of the choices available, *location* accounted for 78.8% of the 151 valid responses; and *affordability* accounted for 55%. *Yavapai College programs* garnered 51%. All other choices listed received 12.6% or less: *friend(s)* 12.6%; *parent(s)* 3.3%, *social service agency referral* 2.0%, *high school counselor* 2.6%, *other* 6.6%.

Primary Reason New Students Took Courses in Spring 2002 and Their Long-Term Goals

When asked to specify the primary reason for taking courses, 58% of the respondents chose *personal interest*. 17.5% chose *acquiring skills for a new job* as their primary reason; and 13.6% chose to *improve skills for a present job*.

61% of the respondents had no current plans to obtain a degree or certificate but indicated they were just taking courses. 16.2% responded that their long-term goal was undetermined. 13.6% were planning to obtain an associate degree, whereas 7.8% were taking courses to obtain a certificate.

Table I illustrates a cross-tabulation of program of study and primary long-term goals at Yavapai College for traditional students as defined in the study. Respondents were asked in Question 2 what was their primary long-term goal at Yavapai College. There were four choices available: *certificate*, *associate degree*, *no degree - just courses* and *undetermined*.

Of the primary long-term goal choices, 61.5% of traditional students as defined in the study chose *associate degree*; 23.1% chose *just courses*; and 15.4% chose *certificate* as their primary long-term goal at Yavapai College.

Table II shows a cross-tabulation of program of study and primary long-term goals at Yavapai College for nontraditional students as defined in the study. Of the primary long-term goal choices (*certificate*, *associate degree*, *no degree-just course* or *undetermined*), the percentage of choices for the twenty-two respondents identified as nontraditional students were as follows: 40.9% selected *certificate*; 59.1% selected

associate degree and 0% of the traditional students selected *no degree-just courses* or undetermined.

TABLE I – Traditional Students – Primary Long-Term Goals

Program of Study	Primary Long-Term Goal			
	Certificate	Associate Degree	Just Courses	TOTAL
Art	n/a	1		1
Business			1	1
Computing and Information Systems		1		1
Digital Filmmaking	1	n/a		1
Other		1	1	2
Nursing		3		3
Psychology	1*	1		2
Undecided		1	1	2
TOTAL	2	8	3	13

* Invalid selection – Yavapai College does not offer a certificate degree in psychology.

TABLE II – Nontraditional Students – Primary Long-Term Goals

Program of Study	Primary Long-Term Goal			
	Certificate	Associate Degree	Just Courses	TOTAL
Accounting		1		1
Anthropology	n/a	1		1
Art	1			1
Biology-Zoology	n/a	1		1
Computing and Information Systems	3	4		4
Digital Filmmaking	1	n/a		1
Medical Transcription	2	n/a		2
Nursing		1		1
Other	1	2		2
Paralegal		1*		1
Physical Education	n/a	1		1
Psychology	n/a	1		1
Undecided	1			
TOTAL	9	13	0	22

* Invalid selection – Yavapai College does not offer an associate degree in paralegal.

Academic Degree, Vocational Degree or Vocational Certification Program Choices

Survey Question 4 asked to check a program of study if the respondent was seeking a certificate, degree and/or planning to transfer to a university. There were 38 program choices listed in Question 4 including the choice of *other* and *undecided*. If a respondent chose *other*, they were given space on the survey to indicate a program that was not specifically listed.

Of the 109 responses to Question 4, asking students to indicate a program of study, the top 8 choices were as follows: *Computing and Information Systems* (20%), *Undecided* (15.6%), *Other* (11.1%), *Nursing* (8.9%), *Art* (6.7%), *Business* (6.7%), and *Psychology* (6.7%). Choices indicated in the *other* category were hospital administration, music, emergency medical technician, advertisement layout, and architectural design. Of the programs, only one program, *emergency medical technician*, is currently available at Yavapai College; however, it is offered only on the Prescott Campus. Forty-five respondents (24.3%) did not answer this question.

The academic or vocational degree/certification choices for traditional students are shown in Table III. 8.4% were identified as traditional students as defined in the study. Of the 38 possible program choices, respondents chose six of the listed programs as well as *other* and *undecided*. Of the total program choices selected by traditional students as defined in the study, *nursing* was selected more times than any other program. The second highest choices were *other*, *psychology* and *undecided*; each of these choices having been selected an equal number of times. The other program choices (*art*, *business*, *computing and information systems*, and *digital filmmaking*) were selected by one respondent each.

TABLE III – Traditional Students – Program of Study

Program of Study	Frequency	Percent
Art	1	7.7
Business	1	7.7
Computing and Information Systems	1	7.7
Digital Filmmaking	1	7.7
Nursing	3	23.1
Other	2	15.4
Psychology	2	15.4
Undecided	2	15.4
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table IV showed the academic or vocational degree/certification choices for nontraditional students. Twenty-two students were identified as nontraditional students as defined in the study. Of the 38 program choices, nontraditional students chose eleven of the listed programs as well as *other* and *undecided*. As noted in the table for programs of study for traditional students, respondents chose *hospital administration, music, advertisement layout, architectural design, or emergency medical technician*.

Of the eleven programs selected by nontraditional students, 31.8% chose *computing and information systems*. 13.65% nontraditional students chose *other*. 9.1% nontraditional students chose *medical transcription*. All other program choices of *accounting, anthropology, art, biology-zoology, digital filmmaking, nursing, paralegal* and *other* received one choice each.

TABLE IV – Nontraditional Students - Programs of Study

Programs of Study	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Accounting	1	4.0	4.5
Anthropology	1	4.0	4.5
Art	1	4.0	4.5
Biology-Zoology	1	4.0	4.5
Computing and Information Systems	7	28.0	31.8
Digital Filmmaking	1	4.0	4.5
Medical Transcription	2	8.0	9.1
Nursing	1	4.0	4.5
Other	3	12.0	13.6
Paralegal	1	4.0	4.5
Physical Education	1	4.0	4.5
Psychology	1	4.0	4.5
Undecided	1	4.0	4.5
TOTAL	22	88.0%	100%

Composition of New Students Entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus

Thirteen respondents or 8.4% were identified as traditional students as defined in the study (see Table I); and 22 respondents or 16.2% were identified as nontraditional students (see Table II). All other respondents (75.4%) did not meet the criteria for being either traditional or nontraditional students, as these respondents self-identified as students who were not degree seeking, but taking courses only for personal interest. Therefore, the data for these respondents was not considered in this study.

In responding to Question 1, which asked what was the primary reason the student took courses in the spring semester 2002, a higher percentage of traditional students (30.8%) than nontraditional students (12%) responded they were taking courses in order to *transfer to a university*; whereas, a higher percentage of nontraditional students (56%) than traditional students (38.5%) responded they were taking courses *to acquire skills for a new job*. Both traditional and nontraditional students chose *to acquire skills for a new*

job more than any other reason for taking courses. All other possible choices (*personal interest, improve skills for present job, transfer to a university, and improve basic skills*) for both traditional and nontraditional students were 16% or below. Of the remaining choices, 4.5% of nontraditional students chose *improve basic skills*; and 0% of traditional students selected this choice.

In response to Question 2 concerning long-term goals, 61.5% of traditional students responded their long-term goal was to *obtain an associate degree*; whereas 53% of nontraditional students' long-term goal was to *obtain an associate degree*; 15.4% of traditional students responded their long-term goal was to *obtain a certificate* and 40% of nontraditional students responded their long-term goal was to *obtain a certificate*. 23.1% traditional students indicated they were taking courses for *transfer to a four-year university*, but were not seeking an associate degree; whereas, 8% nontraditional indicated they were taking courses for *transfer to a four-year university*, but they were not seeking an associate degree.

Relationship Between Traditional and Nontraditional Students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus

Table V showed a comparison of nontraditional and traditional students and their program of study. Of the thirteen programs chosen by traditional or nontraditional students, nontraditional students (3.18%) chose *computing and information systems* more often than any other program. However, 7.7% of traditional students chose this program. 13.6% of traditional students chose *nursing*, whereas 7.7% of traditional students chose this program. No other programs were chosen in significant numbers by either traditional or nontraditional students.

TABLE V - Program of Study (Traditional and Nontraditional Students)

Program of Study*	Traditional Percent	Nontraditional Percent
Accounting (AAS, C)	0.0	4.5
Anthropology (Transfer)	0.0	4.5
Program of Study*	Traditional Percent	Nontraditional Percent
Art (Transfer)	7.7	4.5
Biology-Zoology (Transfer)	0.0	4.5
Business (AAS, C, Transfer)	7.7	31.8
Computing and Info. Systems (AAS, (C), Transfer)	0.0	4.5
Digital Filmmaking (C)	7.7	9.1
Digital Media Arts (AAS, C)	0.0	4.5
Medical Transcription (C)	0.0	4.5
Nursing (AAS, Transfer)	23.1	13.6
Paralegal (AAS, C)	0.0	4.5
Physical Education (Transfer)	0.0	4.5
Psychology (Transfer)	15.4	4.5
Undecided	15.4	4.5
Other	15.4	4.5
TOTAL PERCENT	100.0	100.0

* *AAS indicates an Associate of Applied Science, C indicates a certificate program (vocational program), and Transfer indicates students may transfer to a four-year college or university and will select an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Business, or Associate of General Studies degree plans as appropriate to the area of study.*

SUMMARY

Chapter IV reported the findings of the research study based upon the responding population and research goals. Data regarding traditional and nontraditional students' program choices and long-term goals were reported. Additionally, cross-tabulation tables compared program choices and primary long-term goals of traditional students and nontraditional students. Another table compared all program choices for both groups of respondents. Chapter V will provide a summary, conclusions and recommendations based upon the reported findings of this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings in this study. Conclusions pertaining to the research goals and recommendations based upon the findings follow the summary.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine reasons new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in the spring semester 2002 chose to attend Yavapai College; which of those students were traditional or nontraditional students, their long term goals and their academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certification program choices. Analysis was conducted in order to assist in recruitment activities and the future development of academic and vocational program offerings.

The goals of the study were to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the reasons new students entered Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002?
2. What were the primary reasons new students took courses in Spring 2002; and what were their long-term goals at Yavapai College?
3. What were the academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certification program choices for new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002?
4. What was the composition of new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in terms of whether they were primarily traditional or nontraditional students?
5. What relationship existed between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree, vocational degree or certification choices?

The significance of the study was to help administration, student services, marketing and the office of instruction in better understanding why students attend Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus; and therefore, assist in recruiting students. It would also show where students’ program interest lie and whether the college is currently providing programs directly related to those interests. It may also indicate other program areas that the college should be developing to better serve the students and the community. Data from the returned surveys was compiled and analyzed. Findings were reported based upon the established research questions.

The limitations of the study included examining only new students enrolled in classes on the Verde Valley Campus and its associated site, the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology during spring semester 2002. Additionally, new students were identified as traditional or nontraditional and as seeking an academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certificate by their choice of answers.

The population was comprised of all new students attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus for the first time in the spring semester 2002. Included in this random population were both traditional and nontraditional students, both genders and all possible population factors such as socio-economic status and ethnicity. The population also represented students attending class for credit as well as for enrichment.

The instrument used to collect data was a descriptive survey designed upon a Likert scale, which also included yes/no and open questions. The survey asked for responses to a variety of questions related to goals, program choice and reasons for attending Yavapai College. Information regarding demographics was requested including

age, gender, general location of residence, marital status, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

The survey instrument was mailed to all new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002 along with an introduction letter explaining the purpose of the survey and the significance of the data being collected. Completed surveys were returned to the institutional research department (IR) at Yavapai College, Prescott Campus, or via U.S. mail in a self-addressed stamped envelope or via intercampus mail, if the survey was hand-delivered to the campus or Sedona site.

473 surveys were sent to new students attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus during Spring Semester 2002. 154 surveys were returned within the allotted timeframe for the study, a 33% response rate.

CONCLUSIONS

This section presents conclusions drawn from the findings in this study in relation to its research goals.

Research Goal #1: What were the reasons new students entered Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in Spring 2002?

78.8% of all new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus chose *location* as the primary reason for attending probably because it is conveniently located to their homes and/or work. The Verde Valley Campus is the only local community college serving students wishing to take freshman and sophomore college courses in the Verde Valley area (primarily serving Camp Verde, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Rimrock, Lake Montezuma, Cornville, and Sedona) of Yavapai County. Other public educational

institutions are Coconino Community College (approximately 77 miles from the Verde Valley) and Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Coconino County, (approximately 71 miles from the Verde Valley). Private colleges located in Prescott (Yavapai County) are approximately 37 miles from the Verde Valley. Further still are those community colleges and public universities located in Phoenix, which are at least 114 miles from the Verde Valley.

55% of new students chose *affordability* as their second choice for attending Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus. Yavapai College’s tuition is among the lowest in Arizona. Table VI shows community colleges throughout the state and their current tuition rate. Coconino Community College, nearest in distance to Yavapai College, also has a tuition rate of \$34 per credit hour; however, Coconino Community College is located in Flagstaff, 77 miles from the Verde Valley. While Coconino Community College matches Yavapai College in affordability, it is not as convenient a location.

51% of new students chose *programs* as a reason they attended Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in spring 2002. The choice of Yavapai College programs was higher with nontraditional students (56.0%) than traditional students (30.8%). Nontraditional students attend Yavapai College because wide choices of programs of study appeal to this group of students.

TABLE VI- Arizona Community Colleges and Tuition

	<u>FY2001-02</u>	<u>Increase from FY2001-02</u>	<u>Average per Credit Hr.</u>
<u>Urban Community</u>			
<u>Colleges:</u>			
Maricopa	\$1,290	\$60	\$43.00
Pima	\$949	\$39	\$31.63
<u>Rural Community</u>			
<u>Colleges:</u>			
Cochise	\$930	\$ 0	\$31.00
Coconino	\$1,020	\$30	\$34.00
Graham	\$764	\$16	\$25.47
Mohave	\$776	\$56	\$25.87
Navajo	\$672	(\$78)	\$22.40
Pinal	\$952	\$56	\$31.73
Yuma	\$990	\$30	\$33.00
Average excluding Yavapai	\$872	\$16	\$29.07
Median excluding Yavapai	\$930	\$30	\$31.00
Yavapai	\$930	\$ 0	\$31.00

Research Goal #2: What was the primary reason new students took courses in Spring 2002; and what were their long term goals at Yavapai College?

75.4% of new students were taking courses for personal interest with no long-terms goal. The remaining 24.6% were identified as degree seeking. More students are primarily taking courses for personal interest and have no plans to obtain a degree. These students are taking personal enrichment courses for both credit and non-credit. This may somewhat be related to the age of the new students and the college may want to conduct further research regarding this area. These results may also warrant further study

regarding the number of students in the workforce and views and awareness of students regarding the value to certificates and degrees.

Research Goal #3: What were the academic degree, vocational degree or vocational certification program choices for new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus?

Students' selections clustered around 13 programs, or approximately one-third of the possible 38 program choices offered. These programs choices were: accounting (3.7%), anthropology (3.7%), art (7.4%), biology-zoology (3.7%), business, computing and information systems (29.6%), digital filmmaking (3.7%), digital media arts (3.7%), medical transcription (7.4%), nursing (14.8%), paralegal (3.7%), physical education (3.7%) and psychology (11.1%). A larger population of new students may reflect different results with regard to program choices.

Research Goal #4: What was the composition of new students entering Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus in terms of whether they were primarily traditional or nontraditional; and what were their long term goals?

Of the total responses to the survey, 8.4% were traditional students (between the ages of 18 and 24 and taking credit classes toward a defined goal) and 16.2% were nontraditional (age 25 and over and taking credit classes toward a defined goal). 75.4% of new students responded they were taking courses for personal interest. No additional conclusions can be drawn since the majority of new students did not fit the defining characteristics of traditional or nontraditional.

A majority of the traditional students responded their long-term goal was to obtain an associate degree (61.5%). 15.4% noted their primary long-term goal was to obtain a certificate degree.

Well over half of both traditional and nontraditional student populations were planning to obtain an associate degree rather than a vocational certificate or just taking courses with no plans to obtain a degree. Both groups demonstrated a strong preference for obtaining an associate degree.

More nontraditional students than traditional students were planning to obtain a certificate, whereas no nontraditional students were just taking courses. Therefore, nontraditional students have a firm objective of obtaining a degree – either an associate degree or a vocational certificate. This indicates new students are aware of Yavapai College as an option in order to gain skills for employment as demonstrated by the fact they have a long-term goal of obtaining a degree.

There is a disconnection between the data in this study indicating nontraditional students are planning to obtain a degree and findings from the Verde Valley Labor Study regarding opinions on Yavapai College as a source for skill or workforce training. The labor study data indicate local employers do not hold the same opinion regarding Yavapai College as a training venue as do nontraditional students. And employers believe skilled workers are only somewhat available and professionals less available when this research shows nontraditional students are seeking to obtain at least a vocational degree. This indicates Yavapai College is not target marketing to employers regarding the college's expertise in training of the potential labor force.

Research Goal #5: What relationship existed between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree, vocational degree or certificate choices?

From this research, there appears to be little relationship between traditional and nontraditional students at Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus and their academic degree, vocational degree or certificate choices. In many program areas, the comparisons between programs of study and whether students were traditional or nontraditional were negligible. The small percent of respondents (24.6%) identified as traditional or nontraditional make trends or comparisons difficult to discern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based upon the reported data and the conclusions are presented below.

Recommendation 1: Yavapai College should continue to market its services based upon its advantages as indicated by the results of the study. Clearly location, affordability and YC programs ranked as the highest factors for a student in determining whether to attend Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus.

Recommendation 2: The Yavapai College student services department should continue to monitor students, particularly the traditional student population, who have not indicated a program choice. On-going program advising should be continued to ensure students are able to make a thoughtful, timely decision regarding their degree or

certificate choice as well as developing a constructive and meaningful plan for completion.

Recommendation 3: As computing and information systems, nursing and medical transcription are among the most popular programs for both traditional and nontraditional students, Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus should continue to develop programs which are relevant to local business needs. These popular programs should be maintained and the college should seek to provide adequate schedule choices to accommodate students, both traditional and nontraditional, who are working and may need to attend classes outside the normal eight-hour day.

Recommendation 4: As indicated in this study, 60% of traditional and nontraditional students are enrolled in programs of study that are transferable or have the option of being transferred to a four-year institution. Yavapai College should continue to ensure students are able to transfer all applicable credits to four-year colleges and universities statewide.

Recommendation 5: The purpose of certificate programs is to give students marketable skills for employment. The market labor study cited in this research indicated local employers are seeking skilled and professional workers. 28.5% of traditional or nontraditional students are currently in a certificate program. Therefore, the college should continue to identify and offer certificate programs specifically designed to enhance students' earning potential and future careers based upon community economic and business needs. Additional study may be warranted by the college regarding the awareness of students with regard to certificate programs and degrees in order to better plan the college's marketing efforts for certificate programs.

Recommendation 6: Since local employers believe skilled workers are only somewhat available in the local community for employment, Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus should develop an informational advertising campaign that target markets to local employers. This campaign should be created with the goal of educating employers as to the availability of Yavapai College students who are acquiring appropriate skill training for immediate employment.

Recommendation 7: Yavapai College–Verde Valley Campus may wish to further explore student interest in new program areas documented in this study: music, hospital administration, EMT, and advertising layout. At the same time, a needs assessment for any development of new programs indicated by strong student interest should be conducted to ensure the utility of the program relating to increasing workforce skills applicable to current local employer requirements.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that data be collected and analyzed regarding new students annually, to ascertain information regarding the same or similar research questions posed in this study. Although the college collects data on students expecting to graduate and those who graduated the previous year, it could be helpful to have new students provide personal feedback to Yavapai College in order to gain insight regarding decisions to attend, long-term goals, satisfaction with services and program choices. Having collected these data, Yavapai College then has a more immediate opportunity to make changes or adjustments for future new students as well as positively affecting current students' experiences.

Recommendation 9: Yavapai College should consider further analysis of the data through development of additional research questions, which would yield data regarding

why students chose a particular program of study in order to be able to analyze students' long-term goals.

Recommendation 10: Yavapai College should consider further analysis of the data through reconfiguring the defining characteristics of the population in this study; i.e., breakdown by age, gender, and household income. This additional analysis may yield specific data for the college in which to determine how to develop its future marketing and recruitment strategies.

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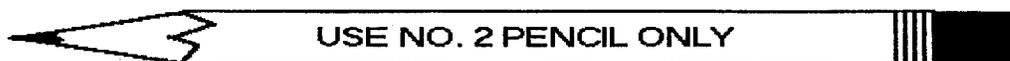
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APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Yavapai College - Verde Valley Campus Survey

Feedback from our students is essential in the college's effort to improve programs and services. Please complete this questionnaire thoughtfully and return it in the provided postage paid envelope. Or if you prefer, bring your survey in along with the prize drawing card to either the Student Service office at the Verde Valley campus or the front office of the Sedona Center for Arts and Technology. Please return your survey by July 1. **Please use a number two pencil and fill out each oval entirely.**



1. What is the primary reason you took courses this semester? (Please choose only one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 Personal interest | <input type="radio"/> 4 Improve skills for present job/career |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 Prepare for first job/career | <input type="radio"/> 5 Transfer to a university |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 Acquire skills for a new job/career | <input type="radio"/> 6 Improve basic skills in writing, reading or mathematics |

2. What is your primary long-term goal at Yavapai College? (Please choose only one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 Certificate | <input type="radio"/> 3 No degree, just courses |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 Associate degree | <input type="radio"/> 4 Undetermined |

3. What other reasons affected your decision to attend Yavapai College? (Mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Location | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Program offerings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Affordability | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Social service agency referral |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Friend(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 High school counselor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Parent(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Other, please _____ |

4. If you are seeking a certificate, degree and/or planning to transfer to a university, please check your program of study. If you are not seeking a certificate, degree or transfer, please skip to question 6. (Please choose only one)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Digital Video | <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Admin. of Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Early Childhood Educ. | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Mathematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Anthropology | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Education | <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Medical Transcription |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Art | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 English | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Nursing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Astronomy | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Environmental Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Office Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Biology/Zoology | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Fire Science | <input type="checkbox"/> 32 Paralegal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Business | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Geography | <input type="checkbox"/> 33 Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Geology/Earth Science | <input type="checkbox"/> 34 Physical Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Graphic Design | <input type="checkbox"/> 35 Police Cert./Law Enf. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Computing & Info. Sys. | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 History | <input type="checkbox"/> 36 Political Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Digital Filmmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> 37 Psychology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Digital Media Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Internet Publishing | <input type="checkbox"/> 38 Sociology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Undecided | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Other _____ | |

OVER

17. Are you planning on enrolling at Yavapai College, Verde Valley Campus or Sedona Center in summer 2002 or fall 2002?

Yes

No (if no, please explain why you chose not to re-enroll at Yavapai College)

18. Please provide any comments, feedback or suggestions you may have regarding Yavapai College:

19. Would you like to receive an executive summary from this study?

Yes

No

If Yes, please list the address you would like the executive summary sent to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Please address questions or comments to Alexandra Helm at 928.634.6511 or lexihc@sedona.net

APPENDIX B – INTRODUCTION LETTER

Spring 2002

601 Black Hills Drive • Clarkdale, Arizona 86324
(928) 634-7501 • FAX: (928) 634-6549

Dear Student:

My name is Alexandra and I am a Master's student at Old Dominion University, a partner with Yavapai College. I am conducting a research study in cooperation with Yavapai College and I am seeking your participation.

You have been identified as a new student enrolled in a spring 2002 class(es) with Yavapai College. I hope your first semester at the college was a wonderful experience for you! This survey has been sent to elicit your responses to questions as to why you chose Yavapai College and the program of study you are currently interested in. Even if you are simply taking class for enrichment (non-credit), your response is still very important to this study. If you are no longer planning to attend Yavapai College, your response is still needed for our research.

Your response will be kept confidential; only aggregate data from the survey is reported. The results of this survey will be made available to several executives at Yavapai College and can be sent to you upon request.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would take just a few moments to complete the survey and return it in the postage paid envelope provided along with this letter as soon as possible. If you wish, you may return the sealed envelope to either the Student Services office at the Verde Valley Campus or the front desk at the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology.

Should you wish to complete the card attached to the letter, your name will be placed in a drawing for one of three gifts to be given away at the end of June as a thank you for taking the time to complete and return the survey. Each of the winners will receive a certificate for one three-credit course of their choice at the Verde Valley Campus or Sedona Center for Arts & Technology (subject to availability). You may either mail the entry card separately or bring the card in along with your survey in the sealed envelope to either the Student Services office at the Verde Valley Campus or the front desk at the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology.

Your completed survey is very important to the college in order to identify trends in programs and courses that are important to citizens' career or leisure choices.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact me and I will be happy to answer your questions. You may contact me at 928-634-6511 or lexihc@sedona.net. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Helm
Encs.

APPENDIX C – DRAWING ENTRY CARD

This card entitles you to enter a drawing for a gift as a "thank you" for taking time out of your busy day to complete the survey! Please print clearly. Winner need not be present. The drawing will take place on Wednesday, July 10 at 12 Noon in the Student Services Office on the Verde Valley Campus.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Please mail this card separately to the Verde Valley Campus or you may bring this card along with your completed survey (in the sealed envelope) to Student Services in building A on the Verde Valley Campus or to the front desk at the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology.

Yavapai
COLLEGE

**601 Black Hills Drive
Clarkdale, AZ 86324**

**4215 Arts Village Drive
Sedona, AZ 86336**

APPENDIX D – FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Spring 2002

Dear Student:

Recently you were mailed a Yavapai College, Verde Valley, New Student Survey. Your response is very important to this study. We would greatly appreciate it if you would take just a few moments to complete the survey and return it in the postage paid envelope provided along with this letter. If you have already returned your survey, thank you! We apologize if your survey and our follow-up crossed in the mail.

Your response will be kept **confidential**; only aggregate data from the survey is reported. The results of this survey will be made available to several executives at Yavapai College and can be sent to you upon request.

Should you wish to complete the card attached to the letter, your name will be placed in a drawing for one of three gifts to be given away on July 17 as a thank you for taking the time to complete and return the survey. Each of the winners will receive a **certificate for one three-credit course of their choice at the Verde Valley Campus or Sedona Center for Arts & Technology** (subject to availability). You may either mail the entry card separately or bring the card in along with your survey in the sealed envelope to either the Student Services office at the Verde Valley Campus or the front desk at the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology.

Your completed survey is very important to the college. Your response will assist Yavapai College in identifying trends in programs and courses that are important to citizens' career or leisure choices.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact me and I will be happy to answer your questions. You may contact me at 928-634-6511 or lexihc@sedona.net. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Helm
Master Degree Student
Old Dominion University

Encs.