

PREDICTORS OF COLLEGE CHOICE
FOR FIRST-TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS AT
AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATED WITH
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

DISSERTATION

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by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Ridglae whose unselfish love, support and understanding are my constant companions. Her vivacious personality and unconquerable spirit have inspired and reassured me for more than a quarter of a century. I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Bob and Frances Stephens, who sacrificed to provide me access to higher education years ago. Their modeling of Christian character and a healthy work habit have blessed me more than words can express. This dissertation is also dedicated to my Heavenly Father who provides me continual guidance and strength. His immeasurable power compensates for my vast limitations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

One challenge facing many private liberal arts colleges and universities during the decade of the 1990s is maintaining enrollment (Wiese & Townsend, 1991). Before the 1980s, rapid growth resulting from constantly increasing birth rates was experienced by American higher education (Hossler, Bean & Associates, 1990). This growth was further propelled by increased access to higher education for a broader segment of the American population due to steadily increasing federal financial student aid (Hossler et al.). According to the 1989-90 Fact Book on Higher Education (1989), federal student financial aid grew from \$ 190 million in 1964, to \$18.4 billion in 1988.

The number of 18-year-olds peaked at 4.3 million in 1979, but is expected to decline to 3.3 million by 1995 (Anderson, Carter, Malizio & San, 1989). When considering the 18 to 24-year-olds population as a whole, a total decrease of 22% from 1980 to 1995 is expected, representing 6.6 million fewer traditional college-age students (Anderson et al.).

The resulting enrollment declines forced many private and some public colleges and universities to draw from endowment funds to continue to cover sizeable operational deficits while increasing tuition and fees at a rate greater than inflation. Colleges and universities, both private and public, were accused of inefficiency and greed (Clotfelter & Rothschild, 1993). Federal and state governments facing tighter budgets were not able to increase student aid funding at the same rate as inflation and tuition were increasing (Hossler et al., 1990).

Marketing efforts based on the identification of factors that influence college selection have become commonplace in higher education (Trusheim, Crouse & Middaugh, 1990). Recent studies (Ash, 1987; Christian, 1991; Comegys, 1991; Greer, 1987; Hutchins, 1995; Rickman & Green, 1992; Sevier, 1993) have identified common factors that students consider in choosing a particular college. These factors include, academic reputation, specific academic programs, size, cost, financial aid, reputation for job placement, faculty reputation, social reputation, graduate school placement record, and athletics.

Flatt (1981) studied the factors that influenced students who chose to attend colleges associated with the Church of Christ. The factors identified were, in rank order, religious emphasis, social atmosphere, academic quality, college reputation, academic programs offered, location, financial aid, cost, facilities, and size. The study did not evaluate the factors of reputation for job placement or graduate school placement. There have been significant environmental changes (i.e. size of student pool, tight job market, increased competition for students) since Flatt's study (Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988).

The timing of the college choice decision has moved earlier in the student's high school education. According to Flatt's 1981 study, most of the respondents indicated that they chose their college after their senior year. A more recent study by Comegys (1991) found that the majority of students were making the choice by the beginning of their senior year.

Rationale for the Study

Almost all colleges and universities have come to

the realization that an effective market plan based on a favorable public image is an essential ingredient if enrollment is to be maintained (Hossler et al., 1990). In a time of retrenchment and tight fiscal limits, institutions of higher education must attract an acceptable number of students who possess the skills necessary to succeed in their individual environments. Students' educational goals and personal expectations should agree, to the extent possible, with the offerings and climate of the institution. The result should be a student whose needs are met and persists to graduation (Maguire & Lay, 1981).

Academia can no longer afford to view marketing as a questionable activity that should be confined to aggressive, high-pressure, profit-driven commercial enterprises (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). In addressing the marketing needs of higher education, Kotler & Fox (1985) stated:

Marketing is more than the use of selling, advertising and promotion to create or maintain demand. Marketing is the skill of planning and managing the institution's exchange relations with its various publics. Our definition is this:

Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving institutional objectives. Marketing involves the institution in studying the target market's needs, designing appropriate programs and services, and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate, and serve the market (p. 16).

According to Kellaris and Kellaris (1988), higher education administrators have become aware of the need to understand the student marketplace and are using strategic marketing to attract students who would match the institution's mission. Since the 1970s there has been increased focus on the factors that influence students to choose a particular college (Ash, 1987; Christian, 1991; Comegys, 1991; Flatt, 1981; Hutchins, 1995; Klenke, 1985; Rickman & Green, 1992; Sevier, 1993; Stahler, 1986).

The results of much of the research listed above have provided colleges and universities with data which have been used to develop market plans (Trusheim et

al., 1990). These plans are designed to more accurately represent the institution while emphasizing those factors that are viewed by prospective students as the most significant contributors to eventual college enrollment (Trusheim et al.). Not only would this produce a more compatible student to institution match, but limited recruitment dollars could be spent in a more productive way (Hutchins, 1995). The result would be a market segmentation that separates the student pool according to demographic data so that predetermined influencing factors can be emphasized to each individual segment (Trusheim et al.).

According to Kellaris and Kellaris (1988), one element that produces the need for additional research on factors influencing student college choice is a constantly changing environment. Such demographic variables as changes in prospective student age patterns, fluctuating economy, need for more specialized training to prepare one for the job market, impact of government funding for education, and society's perception of the value of higher education, all play a significant role in college choice decisions (Kellaris & Kellaris).

Private education, which is more dependent on enrollment and the tuition it produces, has a market that is unique to its role in higher education. The literature suggests that more research needs to be conducted involving private, church related institutions to assist in their development of institutional specific marketing strategies (Flatt, 1981; Hossler, Bateman & Clark, 1991; Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988; Weise & Townsend, 1991).

A specific need involves the American higher education institutions associated with the Churches of Christ which have only participated in one study of factors that influence college choice. This 1981 study of first year students at nine of these liberal arts institutions was conducted by Flatt as a doctoral dissertation. However, during the past thirteen years there have been significant changes in the environmental climate of higher education (Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988). These institutions must have accurate and timely research on which to build effective marketing strategies. The basis for this strategy should be the identification and rating of the factors that influenced these students to choose these

institutions and the effect of student demographic characteristics on the rating (Comegys, 1991).

Statement of Problem

The study rated the significance of selected factors that influence college choice for first-year students who chose to attend 1 of 10 American liberal art colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ (Appendix A). This study also evaluated the relationship of the rating of these factors with specific student demographic data and the timing of the college choice decision.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What is the rating according to degree of influence of selected college choice influence factors by first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ?

2. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ and the rating of the selected factors of college choice?

3. Are first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ making the college choice decision earlier than students did at the time of the Flatt study?

Definitions of Key Terms

College Choice: The perceived decision making process by which a student chooses a college (Christian, 1991).

Decision Timing: The chronological point when the student chose the college. For this study five high school related time-periods were selected: before the junior year, during the junior year, summer before the senior year, during the senior year, after high school graduation (Comegys, 1991). Respondents selected one of the above time-periods included in the survey.

Demographic Characteristics: This study evaluated the influence of gender (Christian, 1991), average grade in high school (Astin, Green, Korn, & Schalit, 1987), religious preference (Astin et al.; Flatt, 1981), family income (Astin et al.; Comegys, 1991), and parents' educational level (Comegys), on the rating of the selected factors of college choice. These

characteristics were identified by the survey responses of the participants.

Selected Factors Influencing College Choice:

Those items or perceptions which have a bearing upon the student's college choice. For this study, students were asked to evaluate on a Likert-type scale the degree to which each of the following sixteen factors influenced their decision to choose the college: relatives' wishes, teachers' advice, good academic reputation, good reputation for social activities, offered financial assistance, offered specific academic program or major, advice of guidance counselor, wanted to live near home, friends' influence, recruited by college, recruited by athletic department, graduates go to top graduate schools, graduates get good jobs, religious affiliation of the college, minister's influence, and campus facilities (Astin et al., 1987; Christian, 1991; Comegys, 1991; Flatt, 1981; Trusheim et al., 1990).

Significance of the Study

This study identified the most relevant factors that determine college choice and the timing of the

college choice decision for those students who chose to attend colleges or universities associated with Churches of Christ (Flatt, 1981). This study also identified the impact of student demographic characteristics on relevance attached to the factors of college choice and the timing of the college choice decision (Christian, 1991; Flatt). Using these findings, administrators can shape a market strategy that provides for market segmentation. Market segmentation provides an individual approach that emphasizes those factors that are viewed as most influential in determining college choice to whichever segment of the potential student market is approached (Trusheim et al., 1990). The result should be better allocation of student recruitment dollars to produce the most significant results. Considering the expense involved in recruiting students, each institution should be committed to bringing students to campus who will fit the uniqueness of the institution at the lowest possible cost (Hutchins, 1995).

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to those colleges and

universities associated with the Churches of Christ and therefore, may not reflect an accurate analysis of a broader segment of population.

2. The use of a self reporting questionnaire relies on the honesty and accuracy of the respondents. The responses could have been colored by respondent bias toward the instrument or the administration of the survey.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Background

The decisions to attend college and which college to attend are two of the most important decisions that a person will ever make. These two decisions may determine one's future social status, career, earning potential, marriage partner and philosophy of life (Kotler & Fox, 1985). Consequently, most students very seriously consider these decisions.

The college choice decision also has a measurable impact on institutions of higher education. When faced with a total decrease of 22 percent in the 18 to 24-years-old population from 1980 to 1995, many colleges' futures are in jeopardy (Anderson et al., 1989). The prospective college student recruitment marketplace has become an intense battleground of detailed market plans, slick recruitment materials, elaborate video productions, and articulate admissions representatives (Hossler et al., 1990). In order to succeed, colleges and universities must identify their specific student

market and understand what factors are influencing those potential students to choose a particular college (Hossler, 1991).

This chapter will investigate research on factors that influence the college choice decision, the impact of student demographic characteristics on these factors, and the timing of the college choice decision.

Institution specific qualities determine uniqueness and help to separate in the minds of students differences among colleges. However, historically students have placed greater importance on certain institution specific characteristics in making the college choice decision. The following studies show that the perception of the importance of college choice factors has changed during the last 20 years.

Previous Studies

During the 1970s studies to learn why students chose Northwestern University were conducted by Roger Campbell (1977). These studies identified academic flexibility, academic options, the availability of a specific field of study, academic reputation, and overall university reputation including social

atmosphere as the most influential characteristics in the college choice process for students choosing Northwestern. These early studies also identified differences in the degree of influence of these characteristics based on the geographic location of the student's home. For example, students from the Eastern part of the nation rated academic programs of an "unusual nature" as significant, while students from the Midwest leaned toward more typical academic programs (Campbell, 1977).

Over 2,500 applicants accepted at Boston College in Fall 1977 were surveyed to identify the factors which most influenced them to choose Boston College (Maguire and Lay, 1981). The seven most influential factors for the matriculants are listed in rank order in Table 1 (Maguire and Lay, p. 134).

The importance attached to these particular factors may be attributable to the unique qualities of Boston College. However, it is noteworthy that "Parental preference" was viewed as a major factor (Maguire and Lay, 1981).

An April, 1979 study of a sample of 186 Milwaukee high school students and their parents was conducted to

Table 1

Factors Influencing College Choice at Boston College

Rank	Factor
<u>(n=2,500)</u>	
1	Financial aid
2	Parents' preference
3	Specific academic programs
4	Size of school
5	Location of campus
6	Athletic facilities
7	Social activities

determine which group had the most influence in making the college choice decision and what college factors did each group consider most important (Murphy, 1981). According to the results of the survey 81.8% of the students indicated that they made the final decision, 17% said both them and their parents decided and 1.2% said that their parents made the final decision. The parents' response verified the decision power of the students, as 73.2% said the student made the final

decision, 25.4% stated it was a mutual decision and only 1.4% said that they were the deciders (Murphy, 1981, p. 146).

The participants also rated six factors of college choice from most important (1) to least important (5). The rank order with the median of the factors are included in Table 2 (Murphy, 1981, p. 146).

The College Entrance Examination Board and Carleton College conducted a survey in 1979 of high school seniors to identify college choice patterns (Litten, Sullivan, & Brodigan, 1983). The sample for the study was drawn from the Admissions Testing Program files of students who took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) as juniors in 1977-78. Seniors were selected from among those in the file who had a combined score of 100 or greater. This score would compare with a score of 1000 or higher on the verbal and mathematics portion of the SAT. Those selected were also from large metropolitan areas and they had indicated an interest in one of several liberal arts majors or they were undecided about their major.

Table 2

Factors Affecting Students' College Choice in Milwaukee

Factor	Median
	(<u>n</u> =186)
Academic reputation	1.31
Cost	2.50
Location of campus (urban/rural)	3.91
Distance from home	4.28
Size of campus	4.48
Parental opinion	4.65

Codable student surveys were received from 1,456 seniors (Litten et al.).

The respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale from not important to very important fifteen attributes of an institution according to impact on the college choice decision. The results of this survey are included in Table 3 and show that "Fields of study offered" was the most influential attribute followed by "Careers to which the college might lead" (Litten et al., 1983, p. 84). The "Teaching reputation of the

Table 3

Rating of Fifteen Institutional Attributes of
Carleton College

Rank	Attribute
1	Fields of study offered
2	Careers to which the college might lead
3	Teaching reputation of the faculty
4	Net cost (price - aid)
5	Price (tuition, fees, board & room)
6	Scholarly reputation of faculty
7	Acceptance rate to graduate/professional schools
8	Financial aid
9	Setting
10	Residential life and options
11	Social atmosphere
12	Appearance of campus
13	Library collection
14	Average entrance test scores
15	Rules and regulations for students

faculty," an academic reputation factor, was ranked third.

A 1981 study involving 400 college freshmen attending nine church affiliated colleges provided for the rating of 30 college choice factors on a four-point Likert-type scale (Flatt, 1981). The study also considered the timing of the college choice decision and the influence of certain student demographic data on the rating of the 30 college choice factors. The student demographic analysis included rank in high school class, size of the high school class, the geographic region the student is from, the size of the student's hometown, and the level of family income. This survey was administered by campus coordinators to a sample of the freshmen class at each participating institution. The respondents were asked to rate the factors that influenced their college decision on a five point scale with five being the highest rating. The results of the study of the overall rating of the factors that influence college choice are included in Table 4 according to rank order from the greatest to the least (Flatt, 1981, p. 65).

Table 4

Factors Influencing College Choice for Freshmen at
American Colleges Affiliated with the Church of Christ

Rank	Mean	Factors
(n=400)		
1	3.60	Religious emphasis of the college
2	3.43	Social atmosphere
3	3.34	Academic quality
4	3.33	College reputation
5	2.86	A particular academic program
6	2.84	Influence of college students
7	2.82	Location
8	2.79	Availability of financial aid
9	2.77	Cost
10	2.75	Influence of parents
11	2.68	Campus and physical facilities
12	2.68	Size
13	2.52	College publications
14	2.52	Assurance of admission
15	2.52	Proximity to home

(table continues)

(table 4 continued)

Rank	Mean	Factors
<hr/>		
(n=400)		
16	2.52	Liberal arts curriculum
17	2.38	Coeducational/noncoeducational
18	2.34	Influence of admissions officer
19	2.18	Influence of college alumni
20	2.12	Influence of college faculty
21	2.07	Presence of social clubs
22	2.06	Telephone calls from admissions office
23	1.98	Campus activity for high school students
24	1.97	Influence of minister
25	1.96	Early admissions
26	1.79	College athletic program
27	1.72	College career day at high school
28	1.62	Influence of high school friends
29	1.53	Race
30	1.46	Influence of high school counselor

The population for this study was church associated colleges which may account for ranking the "Religious emphasis of the college" first. "Academic quality" and "College reputation" were considered significant as suggested by their third and fourth ranking (Flatt, 1981). This parallels the findings of the previous studies which gave high rank to academic quality factors.

The study also found that 25.6% of those surveyed made the college choice decision after high school graduation, followed by 23.1% which indicated that they made their decision before the junior year of high school (Flatt, 1981, p. 66).

When the high school academic rank of the respondent was considered, those in the upper quarter perceived the academic quality of the college and parental influence to be more significant factors than those in the lower quarter (Flatt, 1981, p. 79). In addition, those respondents in the lower three-fourths of their high school class rated the athletic program of the college higher than those respondents in the top quarter (Flatt, p. 79).

The demographic of region of the country on the

college choice factors showed a significant difference involving the college's proximity to the student's home. Respondents from the Southeast rated this factor higher than those from the West Coast (Flatt, 1981, p. 95). The influence of the minister was significantly higher for students from the Mideast than for those from the Southwest (Flatt, p. 95). The hometown size of the respondents did not produce any significant differences between groups (Flatt, p. 100).

The family income demographic showed significant differences between the groups for the factors of financial aid and cost (Flatt, 1981, p. 105). The factor of financial aid was rated higher by respondents who reported family income below \$20,000 per year than for those who reported higher family incomes (Flatt, p. 105). Those who reported annual family income of \$30,000 or less rated the factor of cost higher than those who reported family income of over \$40,000 annually, (Flatt, p. 105).

A 1985 survey (Sevier, 1986) of 485 freshmen at 35 private liberal arts colleges verified that the "Academic reputation" of the institution was the primary factor in determining college choice. The

institutions selected for the study had undergraduate enrollments of 750 to 3,000, student bodies with a 950 or above average SAT score, and healthy financial endowments. The top 10 factors of the 33 surveyed are included in Table 5 in rank order based on the percentage of students who rated each factor as very influential (Sevier, 1986, p. 160).

Another 1985 study conducted by Klenke involved 300 high school seniors who were geographically randomly sampled using the inquiry pool of a liberal arts university located in a small midwestern city. The participants were asked to indicate whether they had applied or intended to apply to the university, as contrasted with those seniors who did not intend to apply. Table 6 shows the percentage of the 300 respondents who selected extremely important for each of the 13 factors influencing college choice and is broken down by applicants (n=204) and nonapplicants (n=96) (Klenke, 1985, p. 17-18).

In this study "Opportunity for job placement upon graduation" and "Opportunity for graduate school placement" have replaced "Academic reputation" as the most influential factors for both applicants and

Table 5

Factors Influencing College Choice for Freshmen at
Private Liberal Arts Colleges

Percent ranking	Factor
Very Influential	

(n=485)

71.2%	Academic reputation
61.9	Student/faculty ratio
60.9	Access to faculty
58.0	Visits to campus
57.6	Number of students
50.4	Appearance of campus
41.6	Availability of major
40.9	Location of college
40.9	Graduate job placement record
39.3	Correspondence from college
34.6	Financial aid
34.2	Advice of parents

nonapplicants. However, the nonapplicants rated "Costs" ahead of "Academic reputation," implying that

Table 6
Factors Influencing College Choice for 204 Applicants
and 96 Nonapplicants at a Liberal Arts University

Percent ranking		Factors
Extremely Important		
Apps.	Nonapps.	
(<u>n</u> =204)	(<u>n</u> =94)	
55.4%	55.7%	Opportunity for job placement upon graduation
42.3	38.6	Opportunity for graduate and professional school placement
40.8	35.7	Academic reputation
34.4	28.6	Close contact with faculty
32.9	28.6	Academic environment
26.3	21.4	Campus atmosphere
21.6	37.1	Costs (tuition & expenses)
16.5	7.1	Social life
14.6	7.1	Campus appearance
13.8	10.0	Student body composition
11.0	13.2	Perceived prestige of university

(table continues)

(table 6 continued)

7.1	2.9	Size
2.8	11.4	Geographic location

this factor could have been a barrier to their following through in the admission process (Klenke, 1985).

A random sample survey of 478 freshmen students at 35 competitive liberal arts colleges was the basis of a study conducted by Sevier (1986) during the fall of 1985. The study was designed to rate 33 influence items affecting the college choice decision on a five-point scale from very influential to not applicable. The top 10 choices in rank order, based on the percent of respondents who rated the item very influential are included in Table 7 (Sevier, 1986, p. 160).

The Sevier study identified three academic quality factors as the top choices "Academic reputation," "Student/faculty ratio," and "Access to faculty." It is also significant that approximately 41% of the respondents rated "Graduate job placement record" as very influential in their college choice decision. The

Table 7

Influence Items Rated by Students at 35 Competitive
Liberal Arts Colleges

	Percentage Rating		
Rank	Very Influential		Item
<hr/>			
	(n=478)		
1	71.2%		Academic reputation
2	61.9		Student/faculty ratio
3	60.9		Access to faculty
4	58.0		Visits to college
5	57.6		Number of students
6	50.4		Appearance of campus
7	41.6		Availability of major
8	40.9		Location of college
9	40.9		Graduate school & job placement record
10	39.3		Correspondence from college

"Net cost" factor was rated very influential by only 25.3% of the population surveyed which may verify that

students from higher socioeconomic families are the primary market for the more competitive liberal arts colleges (Sevier, 1986).

The Enrollment Management Consultants conducted a telephone survey of 1,626 prospective students who in the summer of 1986 had inquired or applied to one or more of 77 Christian liberal arts colleges. This population sample was randomly selected from the institutions who made up the Christian College Coalition. The respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale from extremely important (5) to not at all important (1) the degree of influence on the college choice decision of 24 college characteristics. The respondents were separated into "Matriculants," students who had applied and were accepted, and "Non-Matriculants," students who had just inquired about one or more of the coalition colleges. The mean and rank order for both groups are included in Table 8 (Enrollment Management Consultants, 1987, p. 11).

The non-matriculants top 10 choices include nine of the same characteristics that the matriculants rated in their top 10. Five are related to academic quality

Table 8

Importance of Characteristics of College Choice for
Matriculants and Non-Matriculants at 77 Christian
Liberal Arts Colleges

Matriculants		Non-matriculants		Characteristics
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	
1	4.52	1	4.38	Quality of faculty
2	4.48	9	3.77	Christian atmosphere
3	4.48	7	3.93	Spiritual growth
4	4.46	6	4.00	Christian fellowship
5	4.34	11	3.67	Internal faith/learning
6	4.24	2	4.28	Quality of major
7	4.15	4	4.10	Academic reputation
8	4.12	3	4.15	Employment opportunity
9	4.06	5	4.02	Academic facilities
10	3.94	9	3.77	Contact with faculty
11	3.81	13	3.63	Financial aid
12	3.67	15	3.46	School spirit

(table continues)

(table 8 continued)

Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	
13	3.63	8	3.81	Preparation for graduate school
14	3.62	14	3.52	Social activities
15	3.54	20	3.03	Church affiliation
16	3.53	12	3.66	Total cost
17	3.51	16	3.40	Small classes
18	3.31	17	3.24	Attractive campus
19	3.30	19	3.20	Diverse student body
20	3.28	18	3.21	Recreational facilities & athletics
21	3.12	22	2.92	Small student body
22	2.98	20	3.03	Geographic location
23	2.79	24	2.64	Varsity athletics
24	2.62	23	2.79	Close to home

issues in both lists "Quality of faculty," "Quality of major," "Academic reputation," "Academic facilities," and "Contact with faculty" and three are characteristics that are attributable to the uniqueness

of the Christian college environment "Christian atmosphere," "Spiritual growth," and "Christian faith" (Enrollment Management Consultants, 1987, p. 11).

A study was conducted by Ash (1987) in 1986 to rate the influence of 12 college choice factors according to a survey of 263 students who had enrolled in a large southeastern urban university. Ash also analyzed the relationship between the rating of the college choice factors with selected student demographic characteristics. The participants were asked to rate on a three-point scale from very important (3) to not important (1). The results of the survey by rank order according to mean are provided in Table 9 (Ash, 1987, p. 48).

This survey parallels the importance attached to academic quality issues by rating "Academic quality" first. It is also noteworthy that two placement factors "Graduates get good jobs" and "Graduates' reputation for graduate school admission" are rated second and fourth (Ash, 1987). This is a trend that will emerge in more recent studies as students become more foresighted concerning the practical benefit of a college education.

Table 9
College Choice Influence Items for Students at
Large Southeastern Urban University

Rank	Mean	Factor
<hr/>		
(n=263)		
1	2.68	Academic reputation
2	2.39	Graduates get good jobs
3	2.22	Low tuition
4	2.21	Graduates' reputation for graduate school admission
5	1.90	Social activity reputation
6	1.82	Special education programs
7	1.64	Relative wanted me to come here
8	1.60	Friend's suggestion
9	1.60	Advice of guidance counselor
10	1.58	Offered financial assistance
11	1.44	Teacher advised me
12	1.24	College representative recruited me

The Ash study (1987) did find a significant difference between the importance attached to "Academic

reputation" when considering the demographics of gender. Females rated "Academic reputation" higher than males, a mean of 2.35 as compared to 2.0. In addition, it is not surprising that the study found that students from families with incomes of "\$0 to \$19,999" rated the cost factor higher (mean of 2.10) than students from families with incomes of "\$40,000 - Above" (mean of 1.32) (Ash, pp. 67-76).

Ingersoll, an enrollment consultant, has done extensive studies on enrollment issues, including a 1986 nationwide survey (1988). Students were asked to rate on a low (1) to high (5) scale the importance attached to preselected characteristics of what they would consider to be the "ideal" college or university. The top 15 characteristics of the "ideal" college or university in rank order are included in Table 10 (Ingersoll, p. 263).

The Ingersoll study (1988) echoes the findings of similar research by the high placement of academic quality characteristics ("Good reputation" first and "High academic quality" third). It is significant to see the emphasis on job placement and career counseling with "Good job placement program" and "Good career

Table 10

Characteristics of the Ideal College or University

Rank	Score	Characteristic
1	4.68	Good reputation
2	4.63	Good housing
3	4.59	High academic quality
4	4.58	Good job placement program
5	4.58	Good career counseling
6	4.57	Attractive campus
7	4.50	Good financial aid program
8	4.49	Co-educational
9	4.43	Active student life program
10	4.42	Career-oriented
11	4.32	Extensive social opportunities
12	4.31	Socially involved
13	4.23	Extensive recreational activities
14	4.21	Responsive
15	4.16	Strong co-op work program

counseling" tied in the fourth slot. It is interesting to note the importance the respondents placed on "Good

housing" by placing it second on the characteristics of the "Ideal" college or university (Ingersoll, 1988, p. 263).

Greer (1987) studied parents and students, divided according to those who had chosen small less known colleges "invisible" and those who had chosen larger well known colleges "visible." Greer interviewed students in person and interviewed their parents by telephone. The open ended question, "What was the most important thing about a college that you considered when deciding where you wanted to go?," with a slight deviation for the parents, was used. The study included a population of 530 (291 "invisible" and 239 "visible"). A summary of the findings by rank order according to the students' responses are included in Table 11 (Greer, p.44).

The top two choices for students at both the "invisible" and "visible" colleges involved academic quality. Given the innate differences between the large "visible" colleges and the small "invisible" colleges it is obvious that students who had chosen a small college would rate "Small size" and "Closeness/interaction with faculty/student to Faculty

Table 11

Factors of College Choice According to Students at
"Invisible" and "Visible" Colleges

Rank		Factors
Invisible Colleges	Visible Colleges	
(<u>n</u> =291)	(<u>n</u> =239)	
1	1	Reputation of school and quality of program
2	2	Reputation of teachers and program I needed/wanted
3	6	Small size
4	3	Social climate/campus life/ student interaction
5	10	Closeness/interaction with faculty/student to faculty ratio
6	7	Other location considerations
7	5	Closeness to home/in state

(table continues)

(table 11 continued)

Rank		Factors
Invisible	Visible	
Colleges	Colleges	
(<u>n</u> =291)	(<u>n</u> =239)	
8	12	Financial aid/scholarships
9	15	Sports/sports program I wanted
10	11	Other reason
11	4	Cost/price
12	16	Religious and moral reasons
13	9	Variety and number of programs
14	8	Job preparation/technical programs
15	13	Large size
16	14	Student's choice/happiness
17	20	Influence of friends
18	18	School that accepted me
19	19	Away from home
20	17	Size of community

ratio" higher than those students who had chosen a larger college.

A study involving 188 students who had chosen a small church-related college was conducted by Kellaris and Kellaris (1988). A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to freshmen and transfer students to measure the perceived influences of the "college-student contact" during the recruiting process. The respondents were also asked to list "three significant factors in their decision to enroll." A summary of this study is found in Table 12 with the "Decision factors" listed in rank order (Kellaris & Kellaris, p. 190).

Because the Kellaris and Kellaris study (1988) is restrictive by number of participants and the uniqueness of the college, the results are limited in application. However, it is noteworthy that "Religious orientation" ranks sixth. It could be assumed that the "Religious orientation" of a church-related college would be the primary reason for students selecting it. It is also significant that the respondents rated as the most significant reason for their having selected this college was their "First-hand impressions." The

Table 12

Influence of Decision Factors According to
Students at Small Church-related College

Rank	Factor
<hr/>	
	(<u>n</u> =188)
1	First-hand impressions
2	Recommendations
3	Academic programs
4	College distinctives
5	Location
6	Religious orientation
7	Financial aid availability
8	Divine direction
9	Admissions activities
10	Personal needs
11	Co-curricular activities

Kellaris and Kellaris study also evaluated the impact of the college's recruitment practices. These same students responded that the "Campus visit" was the most significant "College student contact." This certainly

represents a positive correlation to the number one rating of "First-hand impressions" for "Enrollment decision factors" (Kellaris & Kellaris, p. 190).

Early in the summers of 1987 and 1988 a survey of a random sample of 7,800 applicants to the University of Delaware was conducted to gather applicant demographic data and to determine the importance that applicants attributed to 18 characteristics of the University of Delaware and its "competitor colleges" (Trushem, Crouse, and Middaugh, 1990). Responses were received from 3,141 applicants; however, only 1,286 surveys provided complete data on the key variables. The top nine characteristics in determining college enrollment as reported by the respondents are listed by rank order in Table 13 (Trushem et al., p. 299).

In this study, three of the top five characteristics are academic quality related factors, "Quality of academics," "General reputation," and "Quality programs in major." The number one ranking of "Closeness to home" would indicate that a large percentage of the students at the University of Delaware must come from the university's immediate geographic area. However, the article did not provide

Table 13

Characteristics that Determine Enrollment According to Applicants at the University of Delaware

Rank	Characteristic
<u>(n=1,286)</u>	
1	Closeness to home
2	Quality of academics
3	General reputation
4	Athletic facilities
5	Quality of programs in major
6	Intercollegiate athletic program
7	Quality of faculty
8	Social activities
9	Promptness of replies to requests for information

this demographic element (Trusheim et al. 1990).

A 1990 study of factors which influenced college choice was conducted with 120 first-time freshmen students enrolled at Caldwell College, a private liberal arts college located in the metropolitan area

of Greater New York (Christian, 1991). The respondents were asked to rate 12 college choice influence items according to a three-point scale from least important (1) to most important (3). The study also analyzed student demographic data to find correlations between student demographics and the rating of the college choice factors. The respondents' perception of the degree of influence of the college choice factors are included by rank order in Table 14 (Christian, p.60).

The Christian study (1991) also identified "Academic reputation" as the primary influence item in determining college choice as perceived by the Caldwell College first-time freshmen. Receiving the lowest rating were those factors relating to influences from other people, "Advice of guidance counselor," "Relative wanted me to come here," "Friend's suggestion," "Teacher advised me," and "College representative Recruited me."

The Christian study (1991) provided demographic analysis of the ranking of the factors of college choice. When gender was considered, males were influenced by "Financial assistance" and the perception that "Graduates get good jobs," which they ranked

Table 14
College Choice Influence Items as Ranked by
First-time Freshmen at Caldwell College

Rank	Mean	Influence Item
<hr/>		
(n=120)		
1	2.39	Academic reputation
2	2.15	Graduates get good jobs
3	1.86	Special education programs
4	1.84	Offered financial assistance
5	1.83	Graduates' reputation for graduate school admission
6	1.82	Social activity reputation
7	1.73	Low tuition
8	1.67	Advice of guidance counselor
9	1.54	Relative wanted me to come here
10	1.52	Friend's suggestion
11	1.49	Teacher advised me
12	1.43	College representative recruited me

second and third respectively. Females ranked "Graduates get good jobs" second, but ranked "Special

education programs" third (Christian, p. 61). In addition, minority students ranked "Offered financial assistance" higher than "Whites" (Christian, p. 62). When family income was considered those who reported their family income from "\$0 - \$19,999" rated "Offered financial assistance" as their first priority, while those who reported a family income of "\$40,000 - Above" rated "Offered financial assistance toward the bottom" (Christian, p. 66).

A 1990 study conducted by Matthews and Hadley examined the relationship between students' perception of institutional quality and those colleges to which a student eventually submits an application for acceptance (Matthews & Hadley, 1992). The study included 362 randomly selected Ohio ACT test takers during their senior year of high school. The application of the Pearson correlation found a statistically verifiable relationship between the students' perception of institutional quality and their decision to apply for admission (Matthews & Hadley).

A 1990 study conducted by Comegys (1991) attempted to identify the impact of 29 "widely recognized institutional attributes" on the college choice

decision as determined by 182 accepted Merrimack College students and 82 of their parents. The respondents were asked to participate in the study while attending a reception for perspective students and their parents hosted by Merrimack College. Merrimack is a small, private liberal arts college located in North Andover, Massachusetts.

Students and their parents completed two separate self-administered survey instruments that included questions concerning demographic data and a listing of 29 factors that were considered influential in the college choice decision. The respondents were asked to rate from unsatisfactory (1) to excellent (5) each of the 29 factors for Merrimack and a "Other college you may decide to attend." A listing, in rank order, of the top 15 "College decision attributes" for Merrimack college as rated by the responding students is included in Table 15 (Comegys, 1991, p. 133-34).

Academic reputation factors were not rated as high as they had been in similar studies described previously. "Teaching reputation," "General reputation," and "Specific academic reputation" ranked seventh through ninth, behind "Athletic programs" which

Table 15
College Decision Attributes as Perceived by
Students Admitted to Merrimack College

Rank	Mean	Attribute
(n=182)		
1	4.395	Attractive campus
2	4.379	Employment opp. after graduation
3	4.369	Size of student body
4	4.322	Student/faculty ratio
5	4.278	Variety of courses
6	4.258	Athletic programs (varsity & intramural sports)
7	4.255	Teaching reputation
8	4.229	General reputation
9	4.222	Specific academic reputation
10	4.150	Parents' preference
11	4.146	Location of campus
12	4.131	Housing opportunity
13	4.116	Athletic facilities
14	4.107	Male/female ratio
15	4.099	College faculty

was ranked sixth. "Attractive campus" was rated as the most significant decision attribute in choosing Merrimack College by the respondents. The importance attributed to "Attractive campus" would suggest the practicality of the Merrimack officials encouraging prospective students to visit their campus. Obviously, as this study is limited only to students who had been admitted to Merrimack its impact is limited (Comegys, 1991).

A significant study of African-American high school students was conducted during the summer of 1991 to determine who influenced their college choice decision and what institutional characteristics were most influential (Sevier, 1993). Surveys were distributed to 3,809 college-bound African-American high school juniors, which produced 1,127 responses (29%). The respondents indicated that for 56.3% of the students, parents played a role in helping them choose a college (Sevier, p. 49). The students were also asked to choose the words or phrases that they felt best described the institution they would want to attend. The top 10 words or phrases according to the survey results are provided in rank order in Table 16

Table 16

Words or Phrases Best Describing Preferred Institution
According to African American Students

Rank	Word or Phrase
<hr/>	
(n=1,127)	
1	Friendly
2	Relaxed
3	Comfortable
4	Career-oriented
5	Helpful
6	Personal
7	Exciting
8	Fun
9	Caring
10	Social

(Sevier, 1993, p. 49).

The survey also asked the respondents to choose from a list of 27 college choice characteristics the four most important to them. The top 10 choices are listed in Table 17 in rank order with the percentage of

Table 17

Most Influential College Characteristics According to
African-American Students

Rank	Percentage	Characteristic
<hr/>		
(n=1,127)		
1	62.5	Reputation of the college
2	55.2	Availability of majors
3	48.0	Availability of financial aid
4	47.6	Total cost of attending
5	43.5	Job placement record
6	36.9	Quality of faculty
7	36.4	Academic advising
8	36.2	Geographic location
9	35.0	Number of students
10	33.4	Recreational facilities

students choosing the item (Sevier, 1993, p. 49).

The responses of the African-American population parallels similar studies for a more generic population. The top factors relate to academic quality and selection, net cost, and job placement (Sevier,

1993).

A study of 393 Oklahoma National Merit Scholar semifinalists and 222 non-semifinalists was conducted to determine the differences between the two groups in the area of college selection decision criteria (Rickman & Green, 1992). A statistical analysis showed that the factor of academic excellence was more significant in the college choice decision for the semifinalists than it was for the non-semifinalists. The non-semifinalists placed more importance on the factors of individual preference, secondary information, and social opportunity (Rickman & Green).

The American Council on Education and the University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute publish an annual survey of norms for American Freshmen (1994). The study provides a statistical profile of the freshmen and solicits the impact of selected factors that influenced their decision to attend a specific college or university. The most recent study included 220,757 freshmen. The response summary of the importance attached to each of 17 selected factors according to the degree of influence on their college choice

Table 18

Factors that Influence College Choice According to The
American Freshman National Norms for 1993 by Rank

Factor	Percent Rating Very Important
	(n=220,757)
Good academic reputation	51.6%
Graduates get good jobs	43.4
Size of college	37.7
Low tuition	32.0
Offered financial assistance	31.6
Good reputation for social activities	25.6
Graduates go to top graduate schools	24.6
Offered special education programs	23.7
Wanted to live near home	20.5
Friend's suggestion	10.2
Relatives' wishes	9.8
Advice of guidance counselor	9.4
Recruited by athletic department	5.8
Religious affiliation of the college	5.2

(table continues)

(table 18 continued)

Factor	Percent Rating Very Important
Teachers' advice	4.8
Recruited by college	4.4
Not accepted anywhere else	2.9

decision are provided in Table 18 in rank order. The respondents were asked to rate the factors on a three-point scale from very important (3) to not important (1). According to the study the most significant factor in influencing the decision to attend a particular institution was "Good academic reputation" with 51.6% respondents rating it very important. The second most significant factor was "Graduates get good jobs" with 43.4% rating it very important (American Council on Education).

Summary

Comparing the results of previous research on factors that influence college choice some general

conclusions can be drawn. However, it is difficult to be to precise in making specific comparisons because the questionnaires used to gather the responses lack uniformity in content and the survey methodology varied.

One common element present in almost all of the previous studies is the importance that prospective students attach to academic quality. According to the respondents, factors related to academic quality rank in the top three places in 14 of 16 studies. In nine of the studies it ranks first, in two it ranks second, and in four it ranks third (American Council on Education, 1994; Ash, 1987; Campbell, 1977; Christian, 1990; Comegys, 1990; Enrollment Management Consultants, 1987; Flatt, 1981; Greer, 1987; Ingersoll, 1988; Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988; Klenke, 1985; Litten et al., 1983; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1987; Sevier, 1991; Trusheim, D., Crouse, J. & Middaugh, 1990;).

The academic programs available at the institution is also a significant factor according to previous studies. According to survey respondents prospective students choose a college based on the availability of the particular major in which they are interested, or

if they have not selected a major they may be more likely to attend a college that has a wide variety of academic programs from which they may choose. A particular academic program/major or large selection of programs/majors ranked among the top six places in 11 studies. In two of the studies it ranked first, in one it ranked second, in three it ranked third, in three it ranked fifth, and in two it ranked sixth (Ash, 1987; Campbell, 1977; Christian, 1990; Comegys, 1991; Enrollment Management Consultants, 1987; Flatt, 1981; Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988; Litten et al., 1983; Maguire & Lay, 1981; Sevier, 1993, Trusheim, et al., 1990).

Factors involving cost and available financial aid were also ranked among the top four places in six of the studies. It ranked first once, second once, third twice, and fourth twice (Ash, 1987; Christian, 1991; Litten et al., 1983; Maguire & Lay, 1981, Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1993).

A factor that is appearing as significant in more recent studies involves the college's reputation for job placement following graduation. In early studies this factor was not even included as a factor. It appears that more recent prospective college students

are becoming more pragmatic in their view of higher education. This factor is rated among the top five in seven of the studies. It appears first once, second five times, third once, and fourth once (American Council on Education, 1994; Ash, 1987; Christian, 1990; Comegys, 1991; Ingersoll, 1988; Klenke, 1985, Litten, et al., 1983; Sevier, 1993).

Another significant indication of the pragmatism of more recent students is the importance being linked to the college's reputation for graduate school placement. This factor appears three times among the top five places in more recent studies. It appears once each in the second, fourth, and fifth places (Ash, 1987; Christian, 1990; Klenke, 1985,).

Factors of campus appearance, facilities, parents' preference, location, and size are also rated as significant in a number of studies (American Council on Education, 1994; Comegys, 1990; Greer, 1987; Ingersoll, 1988; Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988; Maguire & Lay, 1981; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1987; Trusheim et al., 1990).

Students who select colleges with religious affiliation rate factors related to religious emphasis or spiritual environment either at or near the top.

Three studies involving religious affiliated colleges were included in this study. One of these ranked the religious emphasis first, one ranked it second and the third ranked it sixth (Enrollment Management Consultants, 1987; Flatt, 1981; Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988).

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter will identify study design, population surveyed, instrumentation utilized, procedures used to apply the instrument, and methods used to analyze the data. This study rated the significance of selected factors that influenced college choice for first-year students who chose to attend 1 of 10 American liberal art colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ. This study further evaluated the relationship of the rating of these factors with specific student demographic data and the timing of the college choice decision.

Design

This study is both analytical and descriptive and uses survey methodology. Zikmund (1989) has emphasized the value of descriptive studies in market research. "Descriptive research seeks to determine the answers to who, what, when, where, and how questions" (p. 36).

This study examined certain demographic characteristics of the subjects surveyed. Zikmund also suggested that the most common way of gathering data is through surveys, in which information is gained from a sample of subjects using a questionnaire.

This study gathered descriptive information from first year students who had chosen to attend colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ. In addition, the study is analytical as it compared the importance placed on certain predetermined factors of college choice with the descriptive information on the student.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included first year students at 10 of the American liberal art colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ. These institutions are: Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas; David Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee; Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama; Freed Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee; Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas; Lubbock Christian University, Lubbock, Texas; Michigan

Christian College, Detroit, Michigan; Ohio Valley College, Parkersburg, West Virginia; Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Art, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and York College, York, Nebraska.

The total number of first-year students enrolled at these institutions is approximately 3,500. This total population was given the opportunity to participate in the survey. A response rate of 76% was received ($n=2,677$).

Instrumentation

The survey instrument consisted of an eight and one-half by eleven inch piece of paper with questions on both sides. The instrument was designed to appear simple enough to encourage the respondent to participate.

Respondents were asked to supply certain demographic data including, gender, average grade in high school, religious preference, family income, parents' educational level, and the time when the college choice decision was made. This information was necessary for comparisons.

The remainder of the survey asked the respondents

to rate each of 16 factors that could have influenced their choice of a particular college. The respondents used a three-point Likert-type scale to rate the degree of influence of each factor on their college choice decision. The factors included: relatives' wishes, teachers' advice, good academic reputation, good reputation for social activities, offered financial assistance, offered specific academic program or major, advice of guidance counselor, wanted to live near home, friends' influence, recruited by college, recruited by athletic department, graduates go to top graduate colleges, graduates get good jobs, religious affiliation of college, minister's influence, and campus facilities. In addition, an open-ended question was included which provided the respondents opportunity to state in their own words why they had chosen that institution. The respondents were assured complete anonymity, and the instrument was completed in less than five minutes. Appendix B is a copy of the questionnaire.

The instrument is based on the Student Information Form used by Astin since 1966 to gather data for the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's annual

fall freshmen survey. This annual nationwide sample consists of approximately 300,000 freshmen and is used to establish national norms and profiles (Astin et al., 1987). The results of this annual survey are published by the American Council on Education and the University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute (Astin et al.).

The six demographic questions used in this survey are based on the 1987 Student Information Form (Astin et al., 1987). They include gender, average grade in high school, current religious preference, father's educational level, mother's educational level, and estimated parental income. The question on current religious preference has been expanded to include Church of Christ as a choice.

Thirteen of the 16 selected college choice influencing factors in this study are also based on the 1987 Student Information Form (Astin et al., 1987). They include relatives' wishes, teachers' advice, good academic reputation, good reputation for social activities, offered financial assistance, offered specific education program or major, advice of guidance counselor, wanted to live near home, friends'

influence, recruited by college, recruited by athletic department, graduates go to top graduate schools, and graduates get good jobs. Three additional factors, religious affiliation, minister's influence and college facilities have been added.

A question concerning when the college choice decision was made has also been added. This question was included in student choice surveys conducted by Comegys (1991) and Flatt (1981).

Reliability

Boruch and Creager (1972) established the reliability of the freshman survey items used in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Fall Freshman Survey questionnaires for the years 1966, 1967, 1968, and 1969. The 1969 Student Information Form was administered to a sample population drawn from freshmen attending institutions which did not participate in the fall survey. According to Boruch and Creager the reliability of the biographic and demographic variables was sufficient for analytic use in statistical research with reliabilities ranging from .85 to nearly 1.0.

Validity

The questionnaire in this study consists of selected items from the Student Information Form which is an established national survey. The survey has been administered to approximately 8 million freshmen since 1966 and is used each year to establish national freshmen norms (Astin et al., 1987).

Procedures

A telephone call was made by the researcher during the first week of July, 1994 to the enrollment office at each institution to solicit a willingness to participate in the study. A letter (Appendix C) was mailed August 1, 1994, from Ohio Valley College's president to the president of each institution explaining the research project and emphasizing the benefits the participating college would gain from the study. The letter also asked the president to authorize the study and to inform the institution's chief enrollment officer to encourage that office's participation. On August 9, 1994, a letter (Appendix D) was sent to the enrollment officer, or other designated college contact person, explaining the

project. The middle of August, the participating college's contact person received a telephone call to answer any additional questions, to solicit a definite commitment to participate and to determine the number of survey instruments to be mailed. The appropriate number of instruments, with instruction for administering (Appendix E) and a return envelope were sent by Federal Express on August 19, 1994.

The institution's contact person was instructed to survey the subjects during freshmen orientation, freshmen experience classes, or other freshmen courses. The contact person was telephoned to confirm receipt of the materials and encouraged to respond promptly. Contact persons who had not returned the completed surveys by September 15, were telephoned to encourage response. All institutions had returned the completed surveys by October 6, 1994.

Statistical Analysis

The data from the completed questionnaires were coded to facilitate the process. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software version 6.08 was used to perform the statistical analysis. The means, ranks,

and standard deviations were conducted on the 16 college choice factors for the entire population ($n=2,677$) and each of the 10 participating institutions. These same statistics were analyzed for timing of the college choice decision, gender, high school grade average, religious preference (Church of Christ compared to all others), family income level, and father's and mother's educational level. Analysis of variances (ANOVAs) were used to determine if there were significant differences, with $P < .01$, among groups within each demographic element. The Duncan's Multiple Range Test was used with the ANOVAs to control type I comparisonwise error rate. The responses to the question concerning the timing of the college choice decision were examined and compared to the findings of the Flatt study (1981) involving a similar population.

Chapter 4

Results of the Study

This chapter discusses the survey respondents and presents the results of the data collection and analysis. The analysis is organized on the basis of the specific research objectives of the study.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was guided by three research questions.

1. What is the rating according to degree of influence of selected college choice influence factors by first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ?

2. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ and the rating of the selected factors of college choice?

3. Are first year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ making the college choice decision earlier than

students did at the time of the Flatt study (1981)?

Missing Values

In surveys it is not always possible to obtain a response for each question from every respondent. There are many reasons for this including equipment malfunction, respondents not answering certain questions due to choice, and lack of knowledge or carelessness. Also the response may not be pronounced enough to be picked by the scanner (Norusis, 1986).

The data analyses for this study did not include the cases with missing values for the specific variable that was being examined. As a result, the number of subjects used within these analyses fluctuated depending on the missing values associated with each variable. For example, 2,630 scannable responses out of a base of 2,677 were received for the question on gender. This means 47 respondents did not respond or responded in such a way that the scanner did not read the response. However, these 47 respondents did provide scannable data for other items on the survey.

Survey Respondents

The data base for this study consisted of 2,677 usable replies from 10 institutions. The total population from which the results were drawn consists of approximately 3,500 new students. The 2,677 responses received represented a response rate of 76%. The number and percentage of the total sample that were submitted from each participating institution are included in Table 19. Not all of the students surveyed provided a scannable response to the question identifying the institution they were attending. The name of the institution is not included to provide anonymity.

Question 3 on the survey asked the respondents to identify their gender. The portion of the population who supplied a scannable response to this question consisted of 1,215 (46.2%) males and 1,415 (53.8%) females.

In terms of average high school grade, 2,633 responded by selecting a grade from A+ to C-. Over 87% of the respondents reported an average high school grade of B- or above. The grade responses are included in Table 20 with number of respondents, percent of

Table 19

Number and Percentage of Responses by Institution

Institution	Number Returned	Percent of Population
	(n=2,615)	
A	126	4.8%
B	330	12.6
C	100	3.8
D	107	4.1
E	176	6.7
F	247	9.4
G	285	10.9
H	197	7.5
I	596	22.8
J	451	17.2

population, and rank.

The survey also addressed the religious preference of the respondents providing 18 choices including "Other Protestant," "Other Religion," and "None." Those who selected Church of Christ number 2,026 or

Table 20

Average High School Grade of Respondents

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percent of Population	Rank
(n=2,633)			
A+	554	21.0%	1
A	438	16.6	4
B+	485	18.4	3
B	535	20.3	2
B-	286	10.8	5
C+	196	7.4	6
C	101	3.8	7
C-	38	1.4	8

76.3% of the total responses to the religious preference question. Only 2.4% indicated no religious preference. A breakdown of the responses to the religious preference question are in Table 21.

Question 6 on the survey asked the respondents to estimate their parents' total income last year before taxes and to select the appropriate range in the response section. The most responses (14%) were for

Table 21

Religious Preference of the Respondents

Category	Number of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
(n=2,651)		
Baptist	224	8.4%
Buddhist	5	0.2
Church of Christ	2,026	76.3
Congregationalist	3	0.1
Eastern Orthodox	3	0.1
Episcopal	10	0.4
Islamic	7	0.3
Jewish	2	0.1
Latter Day Saints	4	0.2
Lutheran	8	0.3
Methodist	56	2.1
Presbyterian	21	0.8
Quaker	2	0.1
Roman Catholic	73	2.8
Other Protestant	66	2.5
Other Religion	72	2.7
None	64	2.4

the \$60,000 to \$74,999 range, followed by 13.4% for the \$40,000 to \$49,999 category. The least responses (2.2%) were for the \$6,000 to \$9,999 range followed by the "Less than \$6,000" category (2.9%). The data for the respondents' estimate of parents' total income are included in Table 22.

Question 7 asked the respondents to indicate the highest level of formal education obtained by their parents. The most frequent response to educational level for fathers was "College degree" with a response rate of 27.1% followed by "Graduate degree" with a 20.7% response rate. When "College degree," "Some graduate school," and "Graduate degree" are combined they account for 52.5% of all responses for educational level of fathers. The most frequent response for education level of mother is "Some college" with a response rate of 24.8% followed by a 24.5% response rate for "High school graduate." When "College degree," "Some graduate school," and "Graduate degree" are combined they account for 39.4% of all responses for education level of mothers which compares to a 52.5% rate for fathers. A comparison summary of the formal education level of the fathers and mothers for

Table 22

Respondents Estimate of Parents' Annual Income Before Taxes

Income Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
	(n=2,426)	
Less than \$6,000	71	2.9%
\$6,000 to \$9,999	53	2.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	87	3.6
\$15,000 to \$19,999	109	4.5
\$20,000 to \$24,999	144	5.9
\$25,000 to \$29,999	113	4.7
\$30,000 to \$34,999	202	8.3
\$35,000 to \$39,999	186	7.7
\$40,000 to \$49,999	325	13.4
\$50,000 to \$59,999	282	11.6
\$60,000 to \$74,999	340	14.0
\$75,000 to \$99,999	237	9.8
\$100,000 to \$149,999	150	6.2
\$150,000 or more	127	5.2

for all respondents are included in Tables 23 and 24, respectively. A comparison of the rank and percentage of formal educational level for fathers and mothers are displayed in Table 25.

Question 1 of the survey asked respondents when they had decided on the college they were attending. The majority (29.8%) selected "After high school graduation," followed by "Summer before senior year of high school" (23.8%). The median choice when considering all respondents is "Summer before senior year of high school." Table 26 provides the summary of the responses to the question concerning timing of the college choice decision.

Table 23

Highest Level of Formal Education Obtained by Father
According to Respondents

Education Level	Rank	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
		(n=2,510)	
Grammar school or less	8	54	2.2%
Some high school	7	111	4.4
High school grad	4	409	16.3
Post secondary other than college	6	118	4.7
Some college	3	500	19.9
College degree	1	680	27.1
Some graduate school	5	119	4.7
Graduate degree	2	519	20.7

Table 24

Highest Level of Formal Education Obtained by Mother
According to Respondents

Education Level	Rank	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
		(n=2,547)	
Grammar school or less	8	33	1.3%
Some high school	6	104	4.1
High school grad	2	623	24.5
Post secondary other than college	5	153	6.0
Some college	1	632	24.8
College degree	3	603	23.7
Some graduate school	7	84	3.3
Graduate degree	4	315	12.4

Table 25

Comparing Highest Level of Formal Education of Fathers
with Mothers

Education Level	Fathers		Mothers	
	Rank	Percent of Respondents	Rank	Percent Respondents
	(n=2,510)		(n=2,547)	
Grammar school or less	8	2.2%	8	1.3%
Some high school	7	4.4	6	4.1
High school grad.	4	16.3	2	24.5
Post sec. other than college	6	4.7	5	6.0
Some college	3	19.9	1	24.8
College degree	1	27.1	3	23.7
Some grad. school	5	4.7	7	3.3
Graduate degree	2	20.7	4	12.4

Table 26

Timing of the College Choice Decision According to Respondents

Time of Decision	Rank	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
(n=2,677)			
Before junior year of high school	4	430	16.1%
During junior year of high school	5	290	10.8
Summer before senior year of high school	2	638	23.8
During senior year of high school	3	521	19.5
After high school graduation	1	798	29.8

Research Question 1

What is the rating according to degree of influence of selected college choice influence factors by first year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ?

Question 2 on the survey provided the respondents the opportunity to rate 16 factors that influence college choice on a three-point scale from Very Important (3) to Not Important (1). In order to provide the results in table format it was necessary to use abbreviations for the 16 factors that influence the college choice decision. The key to the abbreviations used are provided in Table 27.

The responses received from the total population to question 2, which included the 16 factors that influence the college choice decision, are included in Table 28. A comparison of the respondents' ratings of the 16 factors by institution attended are included in Table 29. The factors are listed in rank order based on the rating of the total population.

According to the results of the survey, the most influential factor in the students' college choice decision was "The religious affiliation of this

Table 27

Key to Abbreviations Used to Identify the 16 Factors
that Influence College Choice

Factors in Survey	Abbreviation
My relatives wanted me to come here	Relatives
My teacher advised me to come here	Teacher
This college has a very good academic reputation	Academic rep.
This college has a very good reputation for social activities	Social rep.
I was offered financial assistance	Financial help
This college offers a specific academic program or major in which I am interested	Academic prog.
My guidance counselor advised me to attend here	Guid. couns.
I wanted to attend college near home	Near home
A friend suggested attending here	Friend
Recruited by college representative	College Rep.

(table continues)

(table 27 continued)

Factor in Survey	Abbreviation
Athletic department recruited me	Athletic Rcrt.
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate and professional schools	Grad. school
This college's graduates get good jobs	Good jobs
Religious affiliation of this college	Rel. affil.
My minister influenced me to attend	Minister
This college's facilities	Facilities

college," which was rated very important by 68.6% of the respondents. In evaluating the responses on an institution by institution basis, 8 of 10 ranked this factor number one. It was ranked second by institution "H" and third by institution "I" which also provided the most responses.

The factor "This college has a very good academic reputation" was ranked second by the overall population with a very important response rate of 56.5%. It was ranked first by institution "H", ahead of religious

Table 28

Rating of the Factors Influencing College Choice for
All Respondents by Rank Order According to Mean

Rank	Factor	<u>n</u>	Mean	"Very Influential"	
				Number	Percent
1	Rel. affil.	2,617	2.560	1,795	68.6%
2	Academic rep.	2,605	2.493	1,471	56.5
3	Good jobs	2,567	2.367	1,316	51.3
4	Financial help	2,610	2.357	1,420	54.4
5	Academic prog.	2,605	2.321	1,306	50.1
6	Social rep.	2,604	2.094	846	32.5
7	Grad. school	2,556	2.046	859	33.6
8	Facilities	2,592	1.968	601	23.2
9	Relatives	2,629	1.815	558	21.2
10	Friend	2,591	1.743	491	19.0
11	Near home	2,585	1.694	564	21.8
12	College rep.	2,572	1.587	349	13.6
13	Minister	2,535	1.554	342	13.5
14	Athletic rcrt.	2,521	1.291	275	10.9
15	Guid. couns.	2,558	1.245	78	3.0
16	Teacher	2,572	1.208	57	2.2

Table 29

A Comparison of the Ranking of the Factors that
Influence College Choice by Institution

Factor	Institution									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
<u>n</u> =	126	330	100	107	176	247	285	197	596	451
Rel. affil.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
Academic rep.	3	2	4	4	3	2	2	4	1	2
Good jobs	7	3	5	6	6	3	3	5	2	3
Financial help	2	5	2	2	2	5	4	1	6	4
Academic prog.	4	4	3	5	5	4	5	3	4	5
Social rep.	6	6	6	3	4	6	6	7	9	6
Grad. school	10	7	11	10	7	7	7	8	5	8
Facilities	12	8	9	9	11	8	8	10	7	7
Relatives	11	9	7	12	8	9	9	12	10	9
Friend	8	10	10	8	9	10	10	11	11	10
Near home	14	11	8	7	10	13	12	9	8	13
College rep.	5	13	12	11	13	11	13	6	13	12
Minister	13	12	13	13	12	12	11	13	12	11
Athletic rcrt.	9	14	14	14	14	14	16	15	16	14
Guid. couns.	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	14	14	15
Teacher	16	16	16	16	16	16	14	16	15	16

affiliation, and no lower than fourth at the remaining colleges. The five institutions with the most respondents ranked it first and second. The five remaining institutions with fewer respondents rated this factor third and fourth.

The factor "This college's graduates get good jobs" was ranked third by the overall population with a very important response rate of 51.3%. It was ranked second at one institution, third at four, and no lower than fifth at the remaining colleges.

"I was offered financial assistance" was ranked fourth by the overall population when mean was considered. However, when using the percentage of the respondents' rating it very important, it ranked ahead of "This college's graduates get good jobs" with a response rate of 54.4%. When considering only those institutions with fewer than 200 respondents, the financial assistance factor is ranked no lower than second.

The respondents were also provided the opportunity of answering an open-ended question: "Please describe below any other factors that were influential in you choosing this college or university?" Of the 2,615 codable responses to the question, "Which college or university are you now attending?," 1,233 (47%)

provided a written response. Many respondents provided more than one factor in their written response. The total factors provided by the 1,233 respondents were 1,622.

The written responses were separated into 22 factor categories. These included the 16 that were listed in question 2, some with a slight variation, and six additional factors. The additional factors include campus visit/friendliness, size, location, faculty reputation, cost, and miscellaneous. The most popular written responses involve the Christian or religious characteristics of the institution, followed by campus visit/friendliness, influence of relatives, influence of friends, and size. A summary of the responses according to the rank order of the college influence factors separated by institution are included in Table 30.

Most of the written responses (22%) involved the Christian nature of the institution. This was followed by the impression of the campus visit (especially the friendliness of faculty, staff and student body), influence of relatives, influence of friends (especially boyfriends and girlfriends), and size. It is interesting that athletic influence ranked ninth when written responses were considered but fourteenth when the factors were rated.

Table 30

A comparison of the Ranking, by Institution, of the Responses to the Open-Ended Question Concerning Factors that Influenced Student to Choose that College or University

Factor	Institution										Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
<u>n</u> =	126	330	100	107	176	247	285	197	596	451	2,615
Rel. affil.	12	54	20	20	25	40	39	36	51	66	363
Campus visit	7	24	3	7	29	20	39	23	27	37	216
Relatives	6	31	4	6	12	17	30	13	30	58	207
Friends	17	22	3	7	9	17	17	9	18	26	145
Size	8	15	12	2	19	3	15	10	13	10	107
Financial help	3	19	3	2	8	4	4	5	11	30	89
Special prog.	2	16	1	2	8	6	4	11	13	20	83
Distance home	3	7	3	5	7	3	10	2	22	19	81
Athletic rec.	9	10	9	2	5	4	4	7	8	20	78
Academic rep.	-	12	3	3	3	7	5	2	16	18	69
Location	3	3	1	1	3	4	7	-	27	10	59
Faculty rep.	1	3	1	-	1	1	1	3	9	12	32
Cost	1	4	-	-	1	-	1	2	2	7	18
College rep.	3	4	3	1	1	1	-	4	1	-	18

(table continues)

(table 30 continued)

Factor	Institution										Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Facilities	-	5	-	-	1	4	-	-	3	2	15
Misc.	1	4	1	2	1	4	-	-	-	-	13
Grad. school	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	10
Social rep.	1	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	2	9
Minister	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	1	8
Jobs	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Teacher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guid. couns.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	79	239	67	62	133	136	180	127	257	342	1,622

Research Question 2

Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of first year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ and the rating of selected factors of college choice?

A series of one-way analysis of variances was used to determine if there were any significant differences between the rating of the selected college choice factors and the sample's response to gender, average high school grade, family income level, religious preference (Church of Christ compared to all others), father's and mother's education level, and timing of the college choice decision.

When considering the demographic of gender, codable responses to the question were received from 1,215 (46.2%) males and 1,415 (53.8%) females for a total sample of 2,630. The analysis of variances tests showed significant differences to the rating of certain factors when the demographic of gender was considered. The greatest difference was apparent for the factor, "This college has a very good academic reputation." This factor was ranked second by both male and females; however, the mean scores were significantly different

with an F score of 52.05 and an F probability of less than .0001. Other significant differences were found for the following factors when considering F probabilities of less than .01: "Athletic department recruited me" ($F=51.03$), "This college's graduates get good jobs" ($F=44.16$), "I wanted to attend college near home" ($F=35.01$), "Religious affiliation of this college" ($F=26.08$), "This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate and professional schools" ($F=13.83$), "This college's facilities" ($F=13.49$), "This college offers a specific academic program or major in which I am interested" ($F=10.31$), and "My relatives wanted me to come here" ($F=7.66$).

The results of analysis of variances tests when considering the variable of gender on the rating of the college choice factors are included in Table 31.

The average high school grade of the respondents was another demographic variable in determining impact on the rating of the factors of college choice. Responses to this question were received from 2,633 students. The grade distribution consisted of 554 (21.0%) A+'s, 438 (16.6%) A's, 485 (18.4%) B+'s, 535 (20.3%) B's, 286 (10.8%) B-'s, 196 (7.4%) C+'s, 101 (3.8%) C's, and 38

Table 31

Influence of Gender on the Rating of the College Choice
Influence Factors

Factor	Males		Females		F	Pr>F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Relatives	1.770	.7302	1.853	.7812	7.66	.0057
Teacher	1.183	.4310	1.225	.4750	5.13	.0236
Academic rep.	2.398	.6581	2.575	.5858	52.05	.0001
Social rep.	2.072	.7353	2.115	.7434	2.16	.1420
Financial help	2.312	.7790	2.396	.7734	7.45	.0064
Academic prog.	2.271	.7686	2.367	.7498	10.31	.0013
Guid. couns.	1.228	.4716	1.259	.5157	2.53	.1121
Near home	1.590	.7546	1.778	.8356	35.01	.0001
Friend	1.743	.7540	1.745	.7572	0.00	.9479
College rep.	1.593	.7199	1.581	.7154	0.16	.6920
Athletic rcrt.	1.392	.7320	1.207	.5617	51.03	.0001
Grad. school	1.982	.7818	2.099	.7917	13.83	.0002
Good jobs	2.265	.7421	2.455	.6943	44.16	.0001
Rel. affil.	2.487	.7351	2.628	.6699	26.08	.0001
Minister	1.531	.6897	1.569	.7420	1.77	.1841
Facilities	1.915	.7053	2.017	.6965	13.49	.0002

(1.4%) C-'s.

Significant differences were found using an F probability of less than .01. The greatest difference when considering high school grade average was apparent with the factor, "This college has a very good academic reputation." The mean score for those who indicated that their high school grade average was an A+ was 2.606, while those who indicated a C average had a mean score of 2.170. The analysis of this factor produced the largest F score, which was 10.01. Other significant differences were apparent with factors, "I was offered financial assistance" (F=9.39), "This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate and professional schools" (F=4.53), and "Religious affiliation of this college" (F=3.90).

The results of the analysis of variances tests using the Duncan's Multiple Range Test to control the type I comparison-wise error rate are included in Table 32.

Considering the demographic of religious preference, tremendous differences were found in the rating of the factors of college choice. Analysis of variances were performed to identify and measure the

Table 32

Influence of High School Grade on the Rating of the
College Choice Influence Factors

Factors	Mean for Average Grade				
	A+	A	B+	B	B-
Relatives	1.827	1.795	1.822	1.835	1.810
Teacher	1.236	1.185	1.205	1.213	1.174
Academic rep.	2.606	2.558	2.548	2.451	2.377
Social rep.	2.086	2.085	2.105	2.161	2.078
Financial help	2.546	2.413	2.401	2.259	2.201
Academic prog.	2.404	2.368	2.302	2.270	2.279
Guid. couns.	1.225	1.201	1.264	1.244	1.281
Near home	1.736	1.683	1.704	1.653	1.640
Friend	1.664	1.691	1.731	1.775	1.816
College rep.	1.602	1.546	1.603	1.553	1.609
Athletic rcrt.	1.224	1.237	1.314	1.344	1.343
Grad. school	2.185	2.093	2.119	1.992	1.907
Good jobs	2.440	2.382	2.434	2.344	2.324
Rel. affil.	2.658	2.639	2.541	2.526	2.475
Minister	1.509	1.560	1.618	1.527	1.566
Facilities	1.996	1.944	1.981	1.970	1.993

(table continues)

(table 32 continued)

Factors	Mean for Average Grade				
	C+	C	C-	<u>F</u>	Pr> <u>F</u>
Relatives	1.827	1.790	1.703	0.23	.9862
Teacher	1.209	1.196	1.171	0.74	.6578
Academic rep.	2.384	2.170	2.297	10.0	.0001
Social rep.	2.085	1.897	2.139	1.56	.1327
Financial help	2.218	2.165	2.083	9.39	.0001
Academic prog.	2.258	2.286	2.000	2.54	.0095
Guid. couns.	1.305	1.219	1.265	1.17	.3144
Near home	1.754	1.735	1.677	0.95	.4765
Friend	1.791	1.897	1.889	2.71	.0057
College rep.	1.581	1.619	1.917	1.43	.1802
Athletic rcrt.	1.286	1.271	1.472	2.26	.0211
Grad school	1.931	1.800	1.686	6.91	.0001
Good jobs	2.280	2.165	1.919	4.53	.0001
Rel. affil.	2.479	2.432	2.417	3.90	.0001
Minister	1.560	1.537	1.571	0.84	.5649
Facilities	1.926	1.929	1.833	0.53	.8364

differences of the rating of the college choice factors between those respondents who identified their

religious preference as Church of Christ as compared to all others.

The most significant difference was in the rating of the "Religious affiliation of this college." The mean score for those respondents who identified themselves as preferring the Church of Christ was 2.773 compared to a mean of 1.866 for all others. The analysis of variances provided an F score of 1101.35 with an F probability of less than .0001. This is an extremely large variance. Other significant differences were found between the groups when considering the factors of "My minister influenced me to attend here" ($F=143.89$), "This college has a very good reputation for its social activities" ($F=80.75$), "My relatives wanted me to attend here" ($F=65.31$), "I wanted to attend a college near home" ($F=56.25$), "Athletic department recruited me" ($F=56.20$), "My guidance counselor advised me to attend here" ($F=35.09$), "A friend suggested attending here" ($F=32.64$), "My teacher advised me to come here" ($F=19.81$), and "This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate and professional schools" ($F=7.61$). Each of these had an F probability rating of less than .01.

The results of the analysis of variances tests

performed for the demographic of religious preference comparing those preferring Church of Christ with all other responses are included in Table 33.

Considering the demographic of family income level the statistical differences between levels were not nearly as significant as those for religious preference. The most significant difference, according to the results of the analysis of variances, was for the factor "I was offered financial assistance." The analysis of this factor produced an F score of 16.23 with an F probability of less than .0001. Other areas showing the most significance were "My guidance counselor advised me to attend here" (F=3.64), "This college offered a specific academic program or major in which I am interested" (F=2.53), "My minister influenced me to come here" (F=2.48), "My teacher advised me to come here" (F=2.44), and "Religious affiliation of this college" (F=2.21). Each of these had F probability scores below .01. The results of the analysis of variances tests on the demographic of family income level are included in Table 34.

Analyzing the demographic variable of parents' educational level on the rating of the factors of college choice also provided statistically significant results.

Table 33

Influence of Religious Preference on the Rating of the
College Choice Factors

Factor	Church of Christ		All Others		F	Pr>F
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean		
Relatives	9	1.881	10	1.603	65.31	.0001
Teacher	16	1.185	15	1.279	19.81	.0001
Academic rep.	2	2.489	1	2.505	0.31	.5764
Social rep.	6	2.166	9	1.864	80.75	.0001
Financial help	4	2.368	4	2.321	1.70	.1926
Academic prog.	5	2.307	2	2.366	2.81	.0941
Guid. couns.	15	1.213	14	1.348	35.09	.0001
Near home	12	1.629	7	1.904	56.25	.0001
Friend	10	1.790	11	1.593	32.64	.0001
College rep.	13	1.593	12	1.567	0.65	.4201
Athletic rcrt.	14	1.238	13	1.463	56.20	.0001
Grad. school	7	2.022	5	2.123	7.61	.0058
Good jobs	3	2.380	3	2.323	2.88	.0897
Rel. affil.	1	2.773	8	1.866	1101.35	.0001
Minister	11	1.646	16	1.252	143.89	.0001
Facilities	8	1.980	6	1.930	2.39	.1222

Table 34

Influence of Family Income Level on the Rating of the
College Choice Influence Factors

Factor	Mean for Salary Level			
	Less than \$6,000	\$6,000- 9,999	\$10,000- 14,999	\$15,000- 19,999
Relatives	1.739	1.660	1.605	1.887
Teacher	1.477	1.280	1.188	1.262
Academic rep.	2.672	2.571	2.395	2.526
Social rep.	2.358	2.077	2.119	2.078
Financial help	2.706	2.667	2.547	2.539
Academic prog.	2.582	2.510	2.353	2.500
Guid. couns.	1.561	1.380	1.217	1.350
Near home	1.818	1.729	1.647	1.800
Friend	1.923	1.740	1.706	1.772
College rep.	1.697	1.560	1.583	1.592
Athletic rcrt.	1.431	1.265	1.217	1.291
Grad. school	2.108	2.083	1.988	2.109
Good jobs	2.409	2.540	2.247	2.385
Rel. affil.	2.262	2.660	2.635	2.467
Minister	1.723	1.551	1.615	1.614
Facilities	2.030	1.796	1.871	2.087

(table continues)

(table 34 continued)

Factor	Mean for Salary Level			
	\$20,000-	\$25,000-	\$30,000-	\$35,000
	24,999	29,999	34,999	39,999
Relatives	1.799	1.814	1.900	1.822
Teacher	1.166	1.148	1.214	1.243
Academic rep.	2.471	2.441	2.450	2.454
Social rep.	2.079	2.125	2.170	2.044
Financial help	2.585	2.652	2.495	2.460
Academic prog.	2.284	2.491	2.391	2.304
Guid. couns.	1.188	1.296	1.267	1.289
Near home	1.907	1.664	1.648	1.681
Friend	1.723	1.784	1.712	1.868
College rep.	1.579	1.645	1.565	1.629
Athletic rcrt.	1.266	1.340	1.182	1.379
Grad. school	2.043	1.953	1.953	2.089
Good jobs	2.288	2.264	2.304	2.394
Rel. affil.	2.507	2.620	2.589	2.546
Minister	1.619	1.679	1.668	1.654
Facilities	2.043	2.000	1.909	1.928

(table continues)

(table 34 continued)

Mean for Salary Level

Factor	\$40,000-	\$50,000-	\$60,000-	\$75,000-
	49,999	59,999	74,999	99,999
Relatives	1.863	1.765	1.878	1.725
Teacher	1.208	1.175	1.209	1.202
Academic rep.	2.516	2.534	2.505	2.475
Social rep.	2.163	2.141	2.087	2.026
Financial help	2.398	2.388	2.311	2.064
Academic prog.	2.276	2.289	2.318	2.282
Guid. couns.	1.232	1.208	1.238	1.184
Near home	1.715	1.674	1.688	1.598
Friend	1.733	1.734	1.722	1.761
College rep.	1.646	1.536	1.624	1.572
Athletic rcrt.	1.304	1.260	1.278	1.303
Grad. school	1.949	2.087	2.069	2.129
Good jobs	2.333	2.462	2.384	2.417
Rel. affil.	2.628	2.639	2.570	2.596
Minister	1.587	1.466	1.523	1.493
Facilities	1.940	2.000	1.961	2.021

(table continues)

(table 34 continued)

Factor	Mean for Salary Level		<u>F</u>	Pr> <u>F</u>
	\$100,000-	\$150,000		
	149,999	or more		
Relatives	1.846	1.936	1.75	.0401
Teacher	1.148	1.202	2.44	.0021
Academic rep.	2.490	2.376	1.24	.2368
Social rep.	2.014	2.049	1.40	.1449
Financial help	1.959	1.793	16.23	.0001
Academic prog.	2.199	2.210	2.53	.0013
Guid. couns.	1.247	1.171	3.64	.0801
Near home	1.637	1.589	1.57	.0801
Friend	1.757	1.710	0.92	.5323
College rep.	1.524	1.557	0.68	.8002
Athletic rcrt.	1.301	1.415	1.43	.1389
Grad. school	2.103	2.172	1.32	.1874
Good jobs	2.327	2.390	1.41	.1470
Rel. affil.	2.480	2.431	2.21	.0058
Minister	1.462	1.377	2.48	.0017
Facilities	1.980	2.000	1.20	.2702

The most significant difference when considering

the education level of the father was apparent with the factor, "My guidance counselor advised me to attend here," with an F probability score of less than .0001 and an F score of 5.78. Those who indicated that their fathers had "Some high school" relied much more on their guidance counselor's advice (mean 1.443) than those who responded that their fathers had a graduate degree (mean 1.198). Other significant rating of factors included "I wanted to attend college near home" ($F=3.73$) and "I was offered financial assistance" ($F=2.79$). Each of these had F probabilities of less than .01.

A summary of the significance that the variable of fathers' educational level had on the rating of the factors that influence college choice is provided in Table 35.

The most significant difference when considering the education level of the mother is the same as was identified for the father, "My guidance counselor advised me to attend," with an F score of 4.84 and an F probability of less than .0001. Those who indicated that their mothers had a "Grammar school or less" education rated the influence of the guidance counselor significantly higher (mean=1.481) than those who indicated that their mothers' education level was a

Table 35

Influence of Fathers' Educational Level on the Rating of
the College Choice Influence Factors

Factors	Mean for Education Level				
	Grammar	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad.	Post Sc. No Coll.	Some Coll.
Relatives	1.588	1.750	1.735	1.958	1.807
Teacher	1.216	1.314	1.230	1.241	1.213
Academic rep.	2.620	2.569	2.471	2.581	2.491
Social rep.	2.094	2.123	2.080	2.043	2.086
Financial help	2.519	2.439	2.395	2.435	2.410
Academic prog.	2.692	2.398	2.360	2.284	2.276
Guid. couns.	1.250	1.443	1.285	1.293	1.218
Near home	2.000	1.870	1.796	1.644	1.677
Friend	1.654	1.760	1.814	1.675	1.771
College rep.	1.588	1.673	1.661	1.575	1.548
Athletic rcrt.	1.275	1.390	1.351	1.252	1.249
Grad. school	2.353	2.065	2.018	2.089	1.998
Good jobs	2.481	2.314	2.414	2.517	2.337
Rel. affil.	2.392	2.385	2.506	2.568	2.595
Minister	1.500	1.745	1.593	1.593	1.549
Facilities	1.843	2.130	1.997	2.077	1.938

(table continues)

(table 35 continued)

Factors	Mean for Education Level			<u>F</u>	<u>Pr>F</u>
	College Degree	Some Grd. School	Grd. Degree		
Relatives	1.813	1.846	1.860	2.15	.0283
Teacher	1.179	1.191	1.172	1.82	.0695
Academic rep.	2.516	2.458	2.467	1.27	.2548
Social rep.	2.101	2.162	2.084	0.32	.9607
Financial help	2.314	2.400	2.249	2.79	.0045
Academic prog.	2.316	2.350	2.286	2.28	.0197
Guid. couns.	1.209	1.233	1.198	5.78	.0001
Near home	1.659	1.581	1.626	3.73	.0002
Friend	1.701	1.750	1.722	1.09	.3650
College rep.	1.597	1.605	1.536	1.25	.2629
Athletic rcrt.	1.281	1.351	1.291	1.14	.3339
Grad. school	2.024	2.113	2.109	1.93	.0519
Good jobs	2.350	2.391	2.363	1.27	.2524
Rel. affil.	2.594	2.658	2.583	2.24	.0219
Minister	1.560	1.570	1.479	1.86	.0622
Facilities	1.919	1.991	1.976	1.91	.0551

"Graduate degree" (mean=1.198). Significance was also

identified with factors, "I wanted to attend college near home" ($\underline{F}=3.94$), "My teacher advised me to come here" ($\underline{F}=3.36$), and "Religious affiliation of this college" ($\underline{F}=2.55$).

A summary of the analysis of variances tests performed on the demographic variable of the educational level of the mother is included in Table 36.

The importance attached to certain college choice factors can also be influenced by the timing of the college choice decision. The analysis of variances tests showed significant differences for 11 of the 16 factors at an \underline{F} probability rating of less than .01. These include in rank order of significance, "Religious affiliation of this college" ($\underline{F}=46.99$), "This college has a very good reputation for its social activities" ($\underline{F}=16.65$), "My minister influenced me to attend here" ($\underline{F}=14.22$), "This college has a very good academic reputation" ($\underline{F}=12.09$), "My relatives wanted me to come here" ($\underline{F}=12.01$), "Athletic department recruited me" ($\underline{F}=11.15$), "Recruited by college representative" ($\underline{F}=6.48$), "This college's facilities" ($\underline{F}=6.31$), "I was offered financial assistance" ($\underline{F}=5.75$), "This college's graduates get good jobs" ($\underline{F}=5.68$), and "This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate and

Table 36

Influence of Mothers' Educational Level on the Rating of
the College Choice Influence Factors

Factors	Mean for Education Level				
	Grammar	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad.	Post Sc. No Coll.	Some Coll.
Relatives	2.000	1.750	1.792	1.801	1.797
Teacher	1.500	1.314	1.208	1.282	1.168
Academic rep.	2.613	2.606	2.496	2.474	2.480
Social rep.	2.310	2.087	1.987	2.096	2.101
Financial help	2.552	2.446	2.346	2.407	2.359
Academic prog.	2.607	2.442	2.346	2.340	2.315
Guid. couns.	1.481	1.382	1.276	1.286	1.209
Near home	2.148	1.881	1.748	1.807	1.637
Friend	1.929	1.703	1.797	1.682	1.711
College rep.	1.556	1.673	1.565	1.667	1.577
Athletic rcrt.	1.259	1.433	1.289	1.231	1.311
Grad. school	2.036	2.099	2.032	2.074	2.015
Good jobs	2.321	2.426	2.370	2.408	2.328
Rel. affil.	2.333	2.466	2.517	2.443	2.558
Minister	1.556	1.546	1.619	1.597	1.540
Facilities	1.889	1.952	1.998	1.993	1.936

(table continues)

(table 36 continued)

Factors	Mean for Education Level			<u>F</u>	Pr> <u>F</u>
	College	Some Grd.	Grd.		
	Degree	School	Degree		
Relatives	1.842	1.918	1.819	0.72	.6759
Teacher	1.187	1.220	1.193	3.36	.0008
Academic rep.	2.504	2.566	2.456	0.92	.4946
Social rep.	2.101	2.207	2.079	1.24	.2689
Financial help	2.374	2.383	2.245	1.51	.1469
Academic prog.	2.285	2.333	2.292	1.38	.1982
Guid. couns.	1.206	1.217	1.198	4.84	.0001
Near home	1.634	1.554	1.677	3.94	.0001
Friend	1.751	1.687	1.702	1.16	.3176
College rep.	1.599	1.602	1.525	1.01	.4227
Athletic rcrt.	1.248	1.363	1.272	1.42	.1810
Grad. school	2.040	2.220	2.087	0.84	.5653
Good jobs	2.385	2.446	2.342	0.92	.4972
Rel. affil.	2.639	2.735	2.539	2.55	.0092
Minister	1.535	1.482	1.508	1.05	.3961
Facilities	1.980	2.012	1.912	1.00	.4322

professional schools" (F=4.35).

The most striking difference occurs with the factor, "Religious affiliation of this college" ($F=46.99$). Those who indicated that they had decided on the college before their junior year of high school had a mean of 2.831 as compared to a mean of 2.314 for those who decided after high school graduation. The next factor showing the greatest significance, "This college has a very good reputation for its social activities" ($F=16.65$), has a mean of 2.290 for those deciding on the college before their junior year as compared to a mean of 1.945 for those deciding after high school graduation. It is also significant that those who decided on the college before their junior year of high school attached more significance to the factor of academic reputation (mean=2.617) than those who decided after high school graduation (mean=2.391).

The results of the analysis of variances tests for the timing of the college choice decision are provided in Table 37.

Table 37

Influence of the Timing of the College Choice Decision on
the Rating of the College Choice Factors

Factors	Time of Decision Mean			
	Before	During	Sum.	Bef. During
	Jr. Yr.	Jr. Yr.	Sr. Yr.	Sr. Yr.
Relatives	2.042	1.809	1.788	1.750
Teacher	1.215	1.269	1.197	1.193
Academic rep.	2.617	2.535	2.557	2.442
Social rep.	2.290	2.132	2.146	2.071
Financial help	2.228	2.358	2.336	2.499
Academic prog.	2.368	2.425	2.338	2.270
Guid. couns.	1.214	1.269	1.248	1.243
Near home	1.718	1.710	1.702	1.628
Friend	1.732	1.744	1.760	1.743
College rep.	1.516	1.617	1.525	1.718
Athletic rcrt.	1.165	1.199	1.248	1.378
Grad. school	2.000	2.114	2.013	1.978
Good jobs	2.400	2.445	2.445	2.312
Rel. affil.	2.831	2.740	2.581	2.583
Minister	1.716	1.734	1.515	1.516
Facilities	2.019	2.092	2.014	1.902

(table continues)

(table 37 continued)

Time of Decision Mean

Factors	After H. S.		
	Graduation	<u>F</u>	<u>Pr>F</u>
Relatives	1.757	12.01	.0001
Teacher	1.198	1.61	.1684
Academic rep.	2.391	12.09	.0001
Social rep.	1.945	16.65	.0001
Financial help	2.317	5.75	.0001
Academic prog.	2.276	3.04	.0165
Guid. couns.	1.252	0.61	.6589
Near home	1.712	1.06	.3735
Friend	1.736	0.12	.9765
College rep.	1.580	6.48	.0001
Athletic rcrt.	1.374	11.15	.0001
Grad. school	2.013	4.35	.0017
Good jobs	2.291	5.68	.0001
Rel. affil.	2.314	46.99	.0001
Minister	1.454	14.22	.0001
Facilities	1.901	6.31	.0001

Research Question 3

Are first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ making the college choice decision earlier than students did at the time of the Flatt study?

Flatt's study (1981) was also of first-year students at colleges associated with the Churches of Christ. His study included a sample population of 273 participants at nine colleges. The largest portion of his respondents, 37.0%, indicated that they had made the college choice decision during the senior year of high school (Flatt, p. 67). In addition, only 37.4% had made the decision before their senior year of high school. The results of Flatt's findings are included in Table 38 (Flatt, p. 67).

The current study found that the largest portion of the Fall 1994 first-year students (29.8%) made their college choice decision after high school graduation. However, 50.7% of the 1994 first-year students had made their college choice decision before their senior year, compared to only 37.4% of first-year students in Flatt's 1981 study. The one category that showed the greatest difference between the two studies was the

summer before the senior year of high school. According to the 1981 study (Flatt), only 6.2% of the sample indicated that the decision was made during the summer before their senior year, compared with 23.8% of the 1994 population.

The 1981 results are provided in Table 38, the 1994 results are in Table 39, and a comparison between the two studies are displayed in Table 40.

Table 38

Flatt's 1981 Findings on College Choice Timing

Time of Decision	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents	Cumm. Percent
Before junior year of high school	63	23.1%	23.1%
During junior year of high school	22	8.1	31.2
Summer before senior year of high school	17	6.2	37.4
During senior year of high school	101	37.0	74.4
After high school graduation	70	25.6	100.0

Table 39

1994 Findings on College Choice Timing

Time of Decision	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents	Cumm. Percent
Before junior year of high school	430	16.1%	16.1%
During junior year of high school	290	10.8	26.9
Summer before senior year of high school	638	23.8	50.7
During senior year of high school	521	19.5	70.2
After high school graduation	798	29.8	100.0

Table 40

Comparison of Flatt's 1981 Study and This 1994 Study

	1981 Study		1994 Study	
	% of Respdnts.	Cumm. %	% of Respdnts.	Cumm. %
Time of Decision				
Before junior year of high school	23.1%	23.1%	16.1%	16.1%
During junior year of high school	8.1	31.2	10.8	26.9
Summer before senior year	6.2	37.4	23.8	50.7
During senior of high school	37.0	74.4	19.5	70.2
After high school graduation	25.6	100.0	29.8	100.0

Chapter 5

Summary and Recommendations

One of the greatest challenges facing many private liberal arts colleges and universities during the decade of the 1990s is increasing or maintaining enrollment (Wiese & Townsend, 1991). To answer this challenge many private institutions are aggressively employing various marketing strategies (Hutchins, 1995). These marketing strategies are only as effective as the research on which they are based (Trusheim, Crouse & Middaugh, 1990). Recent studies (Ash, 1987; Christian, 1991; Greer, 1987; Hutchins, 1995; Rickman & Green, 1992) have identified common factors that students consider in choosing a particular college.

Among colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ only one comprehensive study has been conducted to determine the influence of certain factors on college choice and the influence of student demographics, including decision timing, on this decision (Flatt, 1981). There have been significant

environmental changes (i.e. size of student pool, tight job market, and increased competition for students) since Flatt's study (Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988).

Overview of Study

It was the purpose of this study to rate the significance of selected factors that influence college choice for first-year students who chose to attend 1 of 10 American liberal arts colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ (Appendix A). This study further evaluated the relationship of the rating of these factors with specific student demographic data and the timing of the college choice decision.

Specifically, this study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What is the rating according to degree of influence of selected college choice influence factors by first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ?

2. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of first year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ and

their rating of selected factors of college choice?

3. Are first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ making the college choice decision earlier than students did at the time of the Flatt study?

The data base for this study consisted of 2,677 usable replies from 10 institutions. The total population from which the results were drawn consisted of approximately 3,500 new students. The 2,677 responses received represented a response rate of 76%.

Respondents were asked to complete a one-page survey by supplying certain demographic data including gender, average grade in high school, religious preference, family income, parents' educational level, and the time when the college choice decision was made. This information was necessary for comparisons.

The remainder of the survey asked the respondents to rate each of 16 factors that could have influenced their choice of a particular college. The respondents used a three-point Likert-type scale to rate the degree of influence of each factor on their college choice decision. The factors included relatives' wishes, teachers' advice, good academic reputation, good

reputation for social activities, offered financial assistance, offered specific academic program or major, advice of guidance counselor, wanted to live near home, friends' influence, recruited by college, recruited by athletic department, graduates go to top graduate colleges, graduates get good jobs, religious affiliation of college, minister's influence, and campus facilities. In addition, an open-ended question was included which provided the respondents opportunity to state in their own words why they had chosen that institution. The respondents were assured complete anonymity, and the instrument was completed in less than five minutes. Appendix B is a copy of the questionnaire.

The instrument was based on the Student Information Form used by Astin since 1966 to gather data for the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's annual fall freshmen survey. This annual nationwide sample consists of approximately 300,000 freshmen and is used to establish national norms and profiles (Astin et al., 1987). The results of this annual survey are published by the American Council on Education and the University of California at Los

Angeles Higher Education Research Institute (Astin et al.).

Summary of Findings

According to the results of the survey, the most influential factor in the students' college choice decision was "The religious affiliation of this college," which was rated very important by 68.6% of the respondents. The other most significant college choice factors consisted of "This college has a very good academic reputation," "This college's graduates get good jobs," "I was offered financial assistance," and "This college offers a specific academic program or major in which I am interested."

Respondents were also given the opportunity to respond to an open-ended question: "Please describe below any other factors that were influential in you choosing this college or university?" Most of the written responses (22%) involved the religious affiliation or Christian nature of the institution. This was followed by the impression of the campus visit (especially the friendliness of faculty, staff and student body), influence of relatives, influence of

friends, and size.

A series of one-way analysis of variances was used to identify significant findings between demographic characteristics of the respondents and the rating of the selected factors of college choice. The demographic variables consisted of gender, average high school grade, family income level, religious preference (Church of Christ compared to all others), fathers' and mothers' educational level, and timing of the college choice decision.

When considering the demographic variable of gender, the greatest difference was apparent for the factor of academic reputation of the college. This factor was rated more significant by females than by males (female mean=2.575, male mean=2.398). Other significant differences were found when considering the factors of athletic department recruit (male mean=1.393, female mean=1.207), graduates get good jobs (female mean=2.455, male mean=2.265), attending a college near home (female mean=1.778, male mean=1.590), religious affiliation of the college (female mean=2.628, male mean=2.487), admission to graduate schools (female mean=2.099, male mean=1.982), college's

facilities (female mean=2.017, male mean=1.915), specific academic program of the college (female mean=2.367, male mean=2.271), and influence of relatives (female mean=1.853, male mean=1.770).

Significant differences were also found when considering the demographic variable of average high school grade. The greatest difference was apparent with the factor of academic reputation of the college. The mean score of those who indicated that their high school grade was an A+ was 2.606, while those who indicated a C average had a mean of 2.170. The other most significant differences were apparent with the factors of financial help (A+ mean=2.546, C- mean=2.083), gaining admission to top graduate schools (A+ mean=2.185, C- mean=1.686), and the religious affiliation of the college (A+ 2.658, C- mean=2.417).

Considering the demographic of religious preference, large differences were found in the rating of the factors of college choice between those respondents who identified their religious preference as Church of Christ as compared to all others. The most significant difference involved the factor of religious affiliation of the college. The mean score

for those respondents who identified themselves as preferring the Church of Christ was 2.773 compared to a mean of 1.866 for all others. The analysis of variance provided an F score of 1101.35 with an F probability of less than .0001. This is a large variance. Other significant differences were found between the groups when considering the factors of influence of minister (C of C mean=1.646, others' mean=1.252), the college's reputation for social activities (C of C mean=2.166, others' mean=1.864), influence of relatives (C of C mean=1.881, others' mean=1.603), a college near home (others' mean=1.904, C of C mean=1.629), recruited by athletic department (others' mean=1.463, C of C mean=1.238), influence of guidance counselor (others' mean=1.348, C of C mean=1.213), influence of friends (C of C mean=1.790, others' mean=1.593), influence of teacher (others' mean=1.279, C of C mean=1.185), and graduates gain admission to top graduate and professional schools (others' mean=2.123, C of C mean=2.022).

Considering the demographic of family income level, the statistical differences between levels were not nearly as significant as those for religious

preference. The most significant difference involved the factor of offered financial assistance. The analysis of this factor produced an F ratio of 16.23 with an F probability of less than .0001. Obviously it is not surprising that the lower the family income level the higher the rating of this factor. Other factors showing the most significance included influence of guidance counselor (higher for lower income levels), specific academic program or major (higher for lower incomes), influence of minister (higher for lower incomes), and influence of teacher (higher for lower incomes).

Analyzing the demographic variable of parents' educational level on the rating of the factors of college choice also provided statistically significant results. The most significant difference when considering the educational level of the father was apparent with the factor of influence of guidance counselor with an F probability score of less than .0001 and an F ratio of 5.78. Those who indicated that their fathers had "Some high school" relied much more on their guidance counselor's advice (mean 1.443) than those who responded that their fathers had a graduate

degree (mean 1.198). Other significant differences were found with the factors of attending a college near home (the lower the educational level, the less influence) and the offer of financial assistance (the lower the educational level, the higher the influence). This latter factor could also be related to family income level considering that the higher the educational level of the father the higher the family income and the less dependent the student would be on offered financial assistance.

The most significant difference when considering the educational level of the mother is the same as with the father, influence of guidance counselor with an F ratio of 4.84 and an F probability of less than .0001. Those who indicated that their mothers had a "Grammar school or less" education rated the influence of the guidance counselor significantly higher (mean=1.481) than those who indicated that their mothers' education level was a "Graduate degree" (mean=1.198). Additional significance was identified with the factors attending a college near home (the lower the educational level, the higher the rating) and the influence of teacher (the lower the educational level, the higher the rating).

The importance attached to certain college choice factors can also be influenced by the timing of the college choice decision. The most striking difference occurred with the factor involving the religious affiliation of the college ($F=46.99$). Those who indicated that they had decided on the college before their junior year of high school had a mean of 2.831 as compared to a mean of 2.314 for those who decided after high school graduation. Other factors showing the greatest significance included the college's reputation for social activities (the earlier the decision, the greater the influence), the academic reputation of the college (the earlier the decision, the greater the influence), the influence of minister (the earlier the decision, the greater the influence), influence of relatives (the earlier the decision, the greater the influence), athletic recruit (the later the decision, the greater the influence), influence of college representative (the later the decision, the greater the influence), and facilities (the earlier the decision, the greater the influence).

The final research question involved the timing of the college choice decision in comparison to the

findings of the Flatt study (1981). Flatt's study was also of first-year students at colleges associated with the Churches of Christ. His study included a sample population of 273 participants at nine colleges. The largest portion of his respondents, 37.0%, indicated that they had made the college choice decision during their senior year of high school (Flatt, p. 67). In addition, only 37.4% had made the decision before their senior year of high school.

The current study found that the largest portion of the Fall 1994 first year students (29.8%) made their college choice decision after high school graduation. However, 50.7% of the 1994 first-year students had made the college choice decision before their senior year, compared to only 37.4% of first-year students in Flatt's 1981 study. The one category that showed the greatest difference between the two studies was the summer before the senior year of high school. According to the 1981 study (Flatt), only 6.2% of the sample indicated that the decision was made during the summer before their senior year, compared with 23.8% of the 1994 population.

Comparison of Studies

This section compares the current study with those of Flatt (1981) and the American Council on Education's (ACE) survey of American freshmen for Fall 1993 (1994). Flatt also researched colleges and universities associated with the Church of Christ; however, his research was conducted in 1981. The ACE study is conducted annually to establish national norms for American freshmen. The current study drew questions from the ACE annual survey instrument.

There are similarities between this researcher's study and Flatt's (1981) which was conducted with a similar population. Flatt also found that the religious emphasis of the college was the most influential factor in the college choice decision. This factor was followed by the factors of "Social atmosphere," "Academic quality," "College reputation," and "A particular academic program." Flatt did not include a factor concerning opportunity for good jobs after graduation. However, three of the factors that Flatt found to be among the top five selections were also among the top five selections in this study (religious emphasis, academic quality, and particular

academic program). A significant difference involved the factor of social reputation, which Flatt found to be the second most influential factor compared to a ranking of sixth in this study.

Considering the demographic of gender, there is only one point of similar findings between Flatt's (1981) study and this study. Both studies found that females placed greater importance on proximity to home.

Only one similarity exists when considering the demographic of high school class rank (Flatt) and average high school grade (this study). Flatt (1981) found that students in the upper quarter of their class placed a significantly greater importance on the academic reputation of the college than did those in the lower one-half of the class. This study also found a significant difference between the rating of this factor when comparing those with higher high school grades to those with lower grades.

There was also a positive correlation between the Flatt study (1981) and this study when considering the demographic of family income. Both studies found that the lower the family income, the more importance that was attached to the factor of financial assistance.

There was no correlation between the two studies when considering the demographic variable of timing of the college choice decision. In addition, the Flatt (1981) study did not provide correlations between gender and the rating of the college choice factors.

The American Council on Education annual freshmen survey (1994) produced findings that closely parallel this study. The top factor influencing college choice in the ACE study was academic quality with a very influential response from 51.6% of respondents compared to a 56.4% response rate in this study. Other factors that both studies identified in the top ten include, with slight variations in factor wording between surveys, graduates getting good jobs, offered financial assistance, good reputation for social activities, graduates go to top graduate schools, offered special education program, influence of friends.

Marketing Recommendations Based on Findings

The results of this study lend themselves to some general recommendations that should be considered in marketing institutions of higher education. Given the detailed demographic data that is now available to

college admissions' offices through such services as ACT and SAT, it is possible to tailor recruitment efforts to specific populations. This segmenting of the market provides additional opportunities to supply specific information to specific groups.

However, one caveat should be noted. The population for this study consisted of first-year students at colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ. One should be careful in drawing universal generalizations when making applications to colleges and universities that are public and have no church association.

Considering the analyses of the data produced by this study the following recommendations are made:

1. The religious affiliation of the institution is the most significant reason that the vast majority of current students are electing to attend. Therefore, these institutions should ensure that their religious climate is maintained, which should provide for their market uniqueness.

2. Academic reputation consistently ranks at or near the top of all studies of factors that influence college choice. Colleges must insure that academic

integrity and quality are focal points. Sacrificing this main ingredient will eventually impact a college's academic reputation, which in time will negatively impact enrollment.

3. Given the increased importance attached to the factor of the college's reputation for job placement, colleges must place greater focus on this essential element. Job placement must be effective and highly visible if it is to produce enrollment dividends. Another side benefit should be appreciative alumni, who are more likely to encourage others to attend and may themselves contribute to their alma mater financially.

4. The religious nature and church association of the college should be clearly emphasized in all general publications (viewbooks, search pieces, catalogs) and recruiting tools (videos, campus visits, telephone calls). All written and video materials should be of the finest quality in order to make the most of the initial contact.

5. All general recruiting materials and approaches should emphasize elements of the college that highlight and validate academic reputation, job placement success rate, financial assistance (need-based and non-need-

based), and specifics of special academic programs and majors. A brochure highlighting alumni successes with quotes concerning the college's assistance with job placement should be considered.

6. Special programs, incentives, and opportunities should be provided to encourage campus visits. These visits should be orchestrated in such a way that they impress the visitors with the friendliness of faculty, staff, and students. The visits should provide interface with friendly and caring representatives of each of the above groups.

7. Special letters or brochures should be mailed to parents of prospective students emphasizing the advantages of the college's Christian climate, size, available financial aid, and job placement record.

8. Correspondence should be designed to emphasize, especially to prospective female students, the college's attributes associated with academic reputation, job placement, proximity to home, religious affiliation, graduate school admission rate, facilities, and specific academic programs. One approach might be a letter with these attributes highlighted with "bullets" on the side.

9. Prospective students who report high grade point averages or score high on college entrance exams (i.e. ACT, SAT) should receive specific correspondence or brochures. These should emphasize the academic reputation of the college, available academic scholarships, the college's reputation for graduate and professional school placement, and the religious affiliation of the college.

10. When mailing to prospective students who are identified as preferring the religious affiliation of the college, the institution should greatly emphasize religious affiliation. Considering the influence of relatives on this group, a concentrated effort should be made to highlight the advantages of the college in separate mailings to parents.

11. An effective method, considering the influence of friends, would be to involve current students in the recruitment efforts. Perhaps some incentive (college shirt, coupon for free item in bookstore) could be provided for students who assist the admissions' office in contacting prospective students. Allowing current students to host a friend at the college for a weekend or a special day, without cost, might prove effective.

12. Those prospective students who are identified as coming from lower-income families should be provided with extensive information on financial assistance available to qualified students. The material should also provide application procedures and do everything possible to simplify the qualifying process. This same information should be provided to significant influencers for this group including parents, ministers, and guidance counselors.

13. Students whose parents do not have a higher education background should receive materials and correspondence emphasizing available financial assistance. There is a correlation between family income and the educational level of parents.

14. Contacts made with prospective students before their senior year of high school should also emphasize the following college characteristics: religious affiliation, social reputation, academic reputation, and facilities. Campus visits are highly effective in exposing prospective students first-hand to the college's social environment and facilities.

15. Prospective students who are initially contacted during their senior year or after high school

graduation are more influenced by the personal attention and efforts of the college's admissions personnel. These contacts should be as personal as possible and include letters, telephone calls, visits to the student's high school and campus visits. The ability of the college representative to relate and communicate are most important considerations.

16. It is imperative that the recruitment effort begin as early in the student's high school experience as possible. With 50.7% of students deciding on a college before their senior year of high school the sophomore and junior years are prime recruiting periods.

17. Recruiting efforts should continue following a student's graduation from high school as 29.8% of students do not decide on which college they will attend until this period. Some of these have applied to more than one college and are waiting to make the final decision until this late date.

18. According to the responses to the open-ended question, location was a significant influence for students who choose colleges in larger cities. Several comments were made concerning entertainment, sporting,

and cultural events that were available within close proximity of the college. These institutions should emphasize the advantages of their location by highlighting available activities.

19. The influence of family, including older siblings, was also a frequent response to the open-ended question. Colleges might capitalize on this influence by hosting sibling weekends or special days to encourage students to invite their younger brothers and sisters to campus.

20. Colleges should host informational meetings for high school guidance counselors to inform and encourage them to recommend the institution to potential students.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. There is a need for greater regularity of research involving factors of college choice at institutions associated with the Churches of Christ. There has only been one other comprehensive study which was conducted in 1981 by Flatt. Thirteen years is too long of a gap between studies.

2. This study could be replicated at other church

associated colleges and universities by using the same questionnaire. Non-church-related colleges, both private and public, could replicate this study with modifications to the questionnaire.

3. A longitudinal study using the same population throughout their college tenure could provide research on changes in the perceptions of college choice issues or better validate those factors that might encourage persistence. Retention studies are necessary to ensure that colleges are meeting the needs of their matriculants.

4. A study of non-matriculants could provide valuable insights into the reasons why students did not elect to enroll. A questionnaire could be designed and mailed to applicants or inquirers who did not follow through with enrollment.

5. A study of factors that influence the parents of students could provide valuable information. This could be significant considering the influence that parents have on the population who choose to attend colleges associated with the Churches of Christ.

6. Given the emphasis placed on the academic reputation of the college, it would be valuable to know

what institutional attributes students consider in determining academic quality.

7. Further research would be appropriate to determine why so many (20.7%) of the respondents identified their fathers as having graduate degrees.

8. Researchers are encouraged to include the opportunity for respondents to reply to open-ended questions as the information gained from this process was invaluable.

Conclusion

Maintaining enrollment is an ongoing challenge especially for small church related colleges and universities. It is imperative that these institutions have timely research on which effective and efficient enrollment strategies can be based. Hopefully, the research generated from this study will provide assistance not only to colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ, but also to a broad segment of higher education.

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Appendix A

Colleges and Universities Participating in the Study

Colleges and Universities Participating in the Study

Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas

David Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee

Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama

Freed Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee

Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas

Lubbock Christian University, Lubbock, Texas

Michigan Christian College, Rochester Hills, Michigan

Ohio Valley College, Parkersburg, West Virginia.

Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts,

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

York College, York, Nebraska

Appendix B
Factors of College Choice Survey Instrument

FACTORS OF COLLEGE CHOICE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please fill in the appropriate mark positions, using a number 2 pencil. Make erasures cleanly.

1. When did you decide on the college you are attending? (mark one)

- Before junior year of high school
- During junior year of high school
- Summer before senior year of high school
- During senior year of high school
- After high school graduation

2. Below are some reasons that might have influenced your decision to attend this particular college. How important was each reason in your decision to come here? (mark one answer for each possible reason)

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
a. My relatives wanted me to come here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. My teacher advised me to come here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. This college has a very good academic reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. This college has a very good reputation for its social activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I was offered financial assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. This college offers a specific academic program or major in which I am interested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. My guidance counselor advised me to attend here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. I wanted to attend college near home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. A friend suggested attending here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Recruited by college representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Athletic department recruited me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate and professional schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. This college's graduates get good jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Religious affiliation of this college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. My minister influenced me to attend here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. This college's facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Your gender:

- Male
- Female

4. What was your average grade in high school? (mark one)

- A or A+
 A-
 B+
 B
 B-
 C+
 C
 C-

5. What is your current religious preference? (mark one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Baptist <input type="radio"/> Buddhist <input type="radio"/> Church of Christ <input type="radio"/> Congregationalist <input type="radio"/> Eastern Orthodox <input type="radio"/> Episcopal <input type="radio"/> Islamic <input type="radio"/> Jewish <input type="radio"/> Latter Day Saints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Lutheran <input type="radio"/> Methodist <input type="radio"/> Presbyterian <input type="radio"/> Quaker <input type="radio"/> Roman Catholic <input type="radio"/> Seventh Day Adventist <input type="radio"/> Other Protestant <input type="radio"/> Other Religion <input type="radio"/> None |
|---|--|

6. What is your best estimate of your parent's total income last year? Consider income from all sources before taxes. (mark one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Less than \$6,000 <input type="radio"/> \$6,000 to \$9,999 <input type="radio"/> \$10,000 to \$14,999 <input type="radio"/> \$15,000 to \$19,999 <input type="radio"/> \$20,000 to \$24,999 <input type="radio"/> \$25,000 to \$29,999 <input type="radio"/> \$30,000 to \$34,999 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> \$35,000 to \$39,999 <input type="radio"/> \$40,000 to \$49,999 <input type="radio"/> \$50,000 to \$59,999 <input type="radio"/> \$60,000 to \$74,999 <input type="radio"/> \$75,000 to \$99,999 <input type="radio"/> \$100,000 to \$149,999 <input type="radio"/> \$150,000 or more |
|---|---|

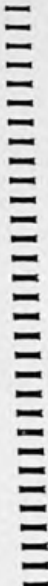
7. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents?

	FATHER	MOTHER
Grammar school or less	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school graduate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post secondary school other than college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some graduate school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduate degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Please describe below any other factors that were influential in you choosing this college or university:

9. Which college or university are you now attending? (mark one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Abilene Christian University | <input type="radio"/> Michigan Christian College |
| <input type="radio"/> David Lipscomb University | <input type="radio"/> Ohio Valley College |
| <input type="radio"/> Eastern University | <input type="radio"/> Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts |
| <input type="radio"/> Freed Hardeman University | <input type="radio"/> Southwestern Christian College |
| <input type="radio"/> Harding University | <input type="radio"/> York College |
| <input type="radio"/> Lubbock University | |



Appendix C
Introductory Letter to Presidents



Introductory Letter to Presidents

Ohio Valley College
College Parkway
Parkersburg, WV 26101

304.485.7384 / 800.678.6780

August 1, 1994

Dear :

I trust this letter finds you doing well and continuing to make great progress. I am writing to solicit the involvement of your university in a study that will be mutually beneficial to all the institutions within our fellowship.

My Executive Vice President, Bob Stephens, has chosen as his dissertation topic a study of the factors that influence our students to choose our institutions. The results of his study should assist us in doing a better job of targeting our student market and utilizing our limited student recruitment resources. It has been thirteen years since a study of this nature has been conducted with our colleges and universities.

The assistance of your Admissions Office will be required to distribute a brief, one-page survey form to this fall's new students. A draft of the survey is enclosed for your examination. Mr. Stephens will be in contact with _____ to solicit assistance with the study and to explain the procedures. The study will require only limited involvement from your admissions staff, but the pay-off should be extremely beneficial. Mr. Stephens will supply your Admissions Office with a copy of his dissertation and is willing to attend the annual meeting of our Admissions Officers to discuss the research findings.

I hope that we can count on you to contact your Admissions Office to encourage their participation in this project. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Stephens for more information. He will be sending a letter to your chief enrollment officer within ten days explaining the project and referring to this letter. Thank you for your assistance.

Most sincerely,

E. Keith Stotts,
President

Appendix D

Introductory Letter to Survey Coordinators



Introductory Letter to Survey Coordinators

Ohio Valley College
College Parkway
Parkersburg, WV 26101

304.485.7384 / 800.678.6780

August 9, 1994

Dear

I realize that this letter arrives at a very busy time as you and your staff prepare for a new freshman class. On August 1, our President sent a letter to President and to the other presidents of our sister institutions announcing a research study that I am conducting for my doctorate dissertation. The study is an examination of the factors that influence students to choose colleges and universities associated with the Church of Christ. The study will rank the importance of these factors, examine any differences in ranking based on student demographic differences, and identify the time that the college choice decision was made. The results of this research should help our institutions identify why students choose us and what factors they consider most important in the decision making process. By evaluating the impact of student demographic data we can do a better job of targeting segments of our student market and make better use of our limited student recruitment resources. The study will look at our institutions collectively and individually. It has been thirteen years since a study of this type was conducted with our colleges and universities.

The study will require only a limited amount of your time. You would need to distribute a brief one-page survey instrument to your first time college students soon after their arrival on your campus. A draft of the survey is enclosed for your examination. The survey is being re-designed to provide for scanning and should be delivered this week. The instrument could be distributed and completed in conjunction with a freshmen experience course or other freshmen level course or, if such is not possible, through campus mail. I would supply the survey instruments and when they have been completed you would mail them back to me for tabulation and study.

The amount of time required from you and your staff is minimal, but the results would be most valuable. I will provide you with a copy of my finished dissertation and I am willing to attend the Annual College Admissions Conference to discuss the findings.

I will call you in a couple of days to answer any questions that you might have and to arrange for mailing the survey instruments. Once you receive them I would hope that they could be completed and returned within a two week period. Thank you for considering joining this valuable study.

Most sincerely,

Robert W. Stephens, Jr.
Executive Vice President

Enclosure

Appendix E

Instruction Letter to Survey Coordinators



Instruction Letter to Survey Coordinators

Ohio Valley College
College Parkway
Parkersburg, WV 26101

304.485.7384 / 800.678.6780

August 19, 1994

Dear:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study of factors that influence our students to choose our institutions. By you personally overseeing the surveying of your first time students the participation should be excellent.

As I mentioned to you on the telephone, students should be able to complete the one page survey in approximately five minutes. The form is designed to be scannable and students need to complete it with pencils. The testing department should have pencils available to those students who do not have them and they should read the following to them prior to administering the survey:

- (a) This survey is the basis of a dissertation study that plans to identify and rate the factors that influence students to choose a particular college.
- (b) Your participation is voluntary.
- (c) You are not required to respond to every item on the survey.
- (d) Your responses are confidential and anonymous.
- (e) If you choose not to participate it will in no way jeopardize your class standing or grade.
- (f) If you are on a sports team, your status will not be affected if you choose not to participate.

Once the surveys have been completed they should be placed in the two-day priority mail envelope that I have provided and returned to me at this address. Please return the completed surveys as soon after completion as possible.

Thank you again for assisting with the study.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Stephens, Jr.
Executive Vice President

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution A

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution A

1. Close to home.
- 2.
3. Size of student body.
4. It was small, my grandparents lived here, it's very God-oriented and spiritual and has a very friendly atmosphere conducive to learning.
- 5.
6. My friends were coming and have visited and enjoyed my time here.
7. Recruiters from summer camps were very friendly.
8. It seemed nice.
9. Scholarship for basketball.
10. Friends, parents, place.
11. Parents
12. Atmosphere
13. My friends were going there.
14. The schools environment and its spiritual basis was the most important reason I chose to attend here.
15. Location (); weather; Christian atmosphere
16. Farthest away from home.
17. My friends told me I should come here. I need this school so I can go to a state college next year.
18. My best friend, also my boyfriend, attends school here.
19. My church recommended it.
20. It was a christian college.
21. Good christian school with good people.
22. The chorus is awesome!!!
23. My sister came here 17 years ago.
24. I like because it is a smaller college and it has a christian atmosphere.
25. My preacher helped me with my decision.
26. I prayed about it a lot and it seemed to be the place for me.
27. The people
28. All the programs offered here.
29. The
30. Athletic department; atmosphere of
31. Small school atmosphere.
32. My family & friends.
33. Athletic scholarship - less expensive.
34. I met real special people in the most awkward places and I just thought to myself; if I had not met all those people before I wouldn't have come here. It was a sign!
35. The school size is small.
36. Experiences that I've had on this campus, like
37. I came to visit and I liked it. The closeness with all of the people and the small size of the school.
38. I already knew some people here (a very few-but I knew some).
39. I felt it would be a good experience.

40. The spiritual atmosphere.
41. Lots of friends here.
42. I was recruited to play basketball & I wanted to go to a christian college.
43. Basically money and it was away from home.
44. My brother & sister.
45. Athletic program.
46. Close friends attend.
47. My sister attended here & always talked about it and I knew I could play volleyball here.
48. I knew some people who were going here.
49. Girlfriend
50. Family went here. I knew people who went here (alumni).
51. The representative who attended regular camp sessions (not) at were the most important reason.
52. I had friends & a boyfriend attending the college. I also liked the small atmosphere and that I could be involved in choir and softball.
53. I knew I'd be rooming next to and with
54. God's will for me is here at (at least for now). That is the single factor - the only factor in my choice. My choice was His after all.
55. Friends go here. Camp counselors go here. Athletic scholarship.
56. The smallness of the school gives me a chance to have more and practice more leadership skills and be involved in more activities.
57. Alumni - talked about a lot!
58. My babysitter is in

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution B

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution B

1. Christian environment.
2. Sister goes here & both parents went here.
3. Christian environment.
4. It has always been between _____ I liked the faculty better here. Their sincerity really came out when I visited here.
5. Very sincere recruiter, real professors in the classrooms, made pre-arrangements, GREAT atmosphere, great orientation.
6. Size of the school.
7. _____ was cheaper than _____
8. They had a band & gave me a great scholarship.
9. Christian environment, friends here, needed to get away from my hometown.
10. _____ - My youth minister.
11. Best school for the money.
12. Christian atmosphere & other unique opportunities.
13. Sister attends here.
14. My cousin went here & still lives here.
15. My aunt works in the library here.
16. Athletic scholarship
17. Music scholarship & my best friend goes here.
18. I want to teach in christian private schools & want a good basic knowledge of the Bible. This will look good on my resume' to teach in a christian school.
19. Christian women.
20. Christian atmosphere & the christian based classes.
21. Total cost is less than most schools.
22. Organization of the faculty & the kindness blew the other colleges out of the water.
23. Older sister attends her so it was convenient for me to come here.
24. Any visit to _____ was pleasant because of the friendly student body & staff.
25. Good atmosphere & friendly people. I was accepted so easily. They were willing to try & help me obtain financial aid.
26. Has a better than average baseball program.
27. I was very familiar with the school so it was an easy transition.
28. Siblings attend this university so it's easier on parents.
29. Conservative strong Bible background & the terrific help I received through the mail & phone from _____
30. Atmosphere here is almost like family.
31. Being close to a big city & my friends attend here.
32. Family attending & friends.
33. A girl on the Cross Country Team has been real nice to me and also the Coach since I was a sophomore.
34. Small size, helpful professors, the only Christian engineering school.
35. Because the school understood that even though my folks have lots of money doesn't mean they have \$10,000 a year for me to _____

- go to school.
36. The only christian school that offered
 37. Scholarship, good church of Christ school & alumni talked very good about it.
 38. It's not
 39. Professors seemed interested & people seemed genuine.
 40. Wanted to change to another environment.
 41. Sister attends here & she was anxious for me to attend.
 42. Christian university, outstanding academic reputation, the atmosphere.
 43. Friends. Important for me to know people my first year away from home.
 44. Familiar with the campus & my parents met here.
 45. The best school I could find with a Youth Minister degree.
 46. Wanted to get away from immoral activities that take place at state colleges & universities.
 47. Sister & brother came here & parent wanted me to.
 48. Had to be a christian college. I went to a popular university but I needed a christian influence. I'm church of God so it's different.
 49. Students & teachers are nice.
 50. Our family is all from
 51. Friendly place & I knew lots of people here.
 52. Friends were going here & I wanted to see what it was like.
 53. Friends & I knew personally a lot of the professors. Wanted a christian atmosphere.
 54. My parents.
 55. Four aunts & uncles went here & they recommended it.
 56. Church of Christ affiliation.
 57. Christian atmosphere.
 58. High percent of christian girls to choose from for marriage.
 59. Small, private university.
 60. Christian university. So I can learn more about God.
 61. My father wanted me to study here.
 62. Want a christian husband.
 63. Relative attended & I knew some alumni who reflect well on the college.
 64. Far from home & inexpensive.
 65. Relatives came here so I grew up expecting to attend
 66. Atmosphere.
 67. Grandparents paid as long as I go to a christian college.
 68. Students that attended last year talked me into coming.
 69. Small school, christian atmosphere therefore the temptation to go out with friends is lessened & I can concentrate on studies.
 70. Options. I had little chance of getting in elsewhere.
 71. Religion.
 72. My girlfriend.
 73. Wanted a change in my life that would bring me closer to God.
 74. Older sibling came here & I have known about it since very young age.
 75. Father worked for the University. Mother went to school here.
 76. Ease of admissions process - acceptance of hours from where I previously attended.

77. Close to home.
78. A scholarship & closeness to my house.
79. Good reputation & friendly students.
80. Scholarships, christian atmosphere, my desire to receive the best education therefore attending a private institution.
81. Friends.
82. Cousins attending. recruited me.
83. Friendly people.
84. Small classes & christian people.
85. Scholarship & close to home.
86. Nice, helpful people on campus.
87. Conservative & small.
88. Scholarship & my brother lives nearby.
89. fly away weekend.
90. Offered good programs in what I am interested in.
91. Influence of friends, family & school reputation.
92. Wanted to be near where I will do graduate study & get to know the area.
93. Family member employed here.
94. Recruited by the soccer program right out of the air force. This would have been the university of choice anyway.
95. Christian atmosphere. Professors who would not make christians uncomfortable, small classes. Previously attended a private christian high school.
96. Problems getting into another college at the last minute.
97. Beautiful campus, nice helpful people, and I wanted to go to a christian school the offered sciences as well as the arts.
98. A coach here.
99. Its Bible courses & mission work as well as its students.
100. Friendliness of the people & its push for academic excellence.
101. Christian, good gym & track, small student teacher ratio
102. Chosen for a long term exchange program students from
103. To learn about the Word of God and myself.
104. Parents.
105. New environment, change way of life.
106. Atmosphere.
107. Excellent campus grounds & quiet, comfortable location in a country atmosphere opposed to a more central city location.
108. Size, general friendliness of students & faculty, religious opportunities, great Elementary Education Program
109. My parents wouldn't pay if I went anywhere else.
110. A coach at High School was an grad & influenced me.
111. Parents went here.
112. No choice.
113. Small classes, friendliness of people, acceptance rate to medical school.
114. Christian environment.
115. Wanted to go somewhere where it was warmer than Michigan.
116. Radio, TV and History departments are very good.
117. Athletic program in women's softball.
118. To be in a good christian atmosphere & environment.
119. Teaching program is very well respected.
120. Faculty discount.
121. Helpfulness and friendliness of staff.

122. "Free thought" is now more accepted & encouraged more in christian schools than in "public" colleges.
123. I learned about it from Bible Bowls.
124. Friends & I wanted to major in _____ Away from home.
My family all went to _____ & I wanted to be different.
125. Saw it advertized in a _____ College yearbook.
126. Met reps at Bible Camp and have wanted to come here for years.
_____ was a big influence.
127. Good communication from the college.
128. I met a teacher & the faculty on a personal tour of the campus.
129. Brother went to _____ & I wanted to be different.
130. Right size & friends go here.
131. Professors & teachers very person oriented & pursue a christian atmosphere & example.
132. A coin toss.
133. Parents.
134. Small christian atmosphere, spiritual reasons.
135. It's a better environment for people to attend a private christian school because it doesn't tear you away from your christian beliefs.
136. Has an excellent --- in the Bible Dept. Offers
Program in Bible & Ministry.
137. The christian religion that is present here.
138. Financial aid
139. Christian environment. Transferred most of my credits from my other university.
140. To get my degree & live in a christian atmosphere for 2 1/2 years.
141. Friends recommendations. Nice campus.
142. Christian college. Great academic program, especially in Business (my field), friends who already attend, great job offers after college.
143. Knew a lot of people here.
144. It wasn't
145. Friends from my church came here so I did too. Also because of my church of Christ relations to the college.
146. My friend goes here.
147. The people & church affiliation.
148. Because it is a christian university.
149. The size.
150. Teachers have to be members of the church of Christ. Friends that go here told me it's great & I would be fellowshiping christians. A great Elementary Education Program.
151. Christian environment & a lot of christian friends from all over go here.
152. Mostly parents. Knew a lot of people who already attended. Wanted to strengthen my spirituality.
153. Missions program.
154. To play
155. Wanted to attend a good academically inclined university with Christ and the Bible as the main focal point.
156. Delta - Good athletic program.
157. Christian environment.

158. Being able to associate with christian people.
159. Teacher to student ratio. Friends, christian environment & close to home.
160. To get away from family.
161. Staff was so friendly & helpful. Liked the friendly atmosphere.
162. The personal christian atmosphere.
163. Baseball.
164. Liked the campus and the classes it offered.
165. People very kind & helpful & appreciate students hospitality when I have visited.
166. Like the academic reputation.
167. Parents went here, familiar with the college & knew some people that were going here.
168. Wife offered a job with
169. It's a church of Christ school with a minimum amount of students and it has accessible mission programs.

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution C

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution C

1. Baseball
2. The Lord
3. ... and God.
3. I hated those worldly gay rights, hippie infested colleges like ...
4. I wanted to be around other Christians.
5. The feeling that God really wanted me to be here was the most important factor and I heard that there was an ...
6. I didn't want to go to a state college, wanted a small school where I could get involved.
7. Academics
8. Small school
9. My cousin
10. The former admissions director was a member at my church and he offered a scholarship to me.
11. Relatives and C. atmosphere
12. C. college and small enough for more attention in classes.
13. It is small and gives professors a chance to know the students.
14. Atmosphere
15. Small campus
16. Ratio of teachers to students
17. C of C affiliated and a small college
18. Spiritual and educational growth
19. Friends and C. atmosphere
20. Friends and C. atmosphere
21. Positive influence of people here.
22. Music programs and Bible program
23. I wanted to go here
24. Baseball
25. Baseball
26. Baseball
27. Baseball
28. Good education
29. Wanted a good Christian school close to home.
30. Visiting the college for high school days
31. My cousin really wanted me to come here. Now I'm not so sure this is the right one for me.
32. This college has a C. atmosphere.
33. This is a C. environment.
34. Baseball
35. Many of my family members have gone here.
36. Friendly, personal atmosphere that allows a person to mature yet offers guidance.
37. A C. college
38. Close to home and offered scholarships.
39. The people I met
40. Small size and baseball
41. Polite and generous faculty and students are fun to be around.

42. Liked the music of express
43. C. instead of state university
44. Size of college and a C. college
45. I live close by and my husband will be a junior.
46. Small size
47. Wanted a change
48. Thought a small college would be better than a large one studies
49. Scholarship for singing in
50. Singing group
51. Small in student to teacher percentage
52. Athletic program
53. Location
54. Athletic program

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution D

Responses to Open Ended Questions

Institution D

1. Good reputation, small size, good vocal department.
2. Professors go to my church.
3. Impressed with people I met from the college.
4. My sister goes here.
5. I was recruited by coach to be the basketball team's manager. Very important reason for attending.
- 6.
7. My friend influenced me.
8. I loved the people & campus.
9. I like it a lot.
10. My parents said they would pay only if I went here.
11. Atmosphere (christian friends & teachers) - small classes.
12. The students & faculty are good friends of mine & it felt like that would be the most comfortable situation for me.
13. Members of my church influenced me.
14. A friend that goes here highly recommended it. I came & visited and I liked it a lot.
15. &
16. The people who attend here, the faculty & staff - the kind of people they are.
17. All my friends had planned on attending . It is a small college. It is a good opportunity to meet new people.
18. God leading me here.
19. I wanted to attend a college that was close to home and small. Since I go to the Church of Christ this was a good choice for me.
20. Friends, relatives, parents, religion.
21. Loans. Get them there or don't go to college.
22. Parents
23. I wanted to attend someplace near home & anywhere with a christian atmosphere.
24. It was a christian school near home.
25. My father went here.
26. Close to home, nonchristian family, want to influence them & improve relationship with them, pursue goals in the process.
27. I wanted to attend a christian school.
28. Because of what a christian college can offer which public schools cannot. It is better possibilities of a good foundations that is Christ.
29. Friends and I really don't know why.
30. That it was a christian college.
31. It wasn't in the south.
32. The christian environment.
33. Christian
34. , friends
35. Christian college close to work
36. TV programs and a chance to play a sport.
37. The Lord. Talking to some people here.
38. My brother attended and insisted this was the college for me.
39. The christian based education.

40. Members of my church - former graduates.
41. Obtain higher education.
42. The atmosphere here.
43. I got a basketball scholarship and my dream was going school and playing ball.
44. Atmosphere
45. Selected for
46. Good college.
47. Christian atmosphere
48. Family, and are nearby

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution E

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution E

1. The people here were so friendly.
2. Friendly atmosphere and it isn't a large university.
3. Good friends here.
4. Girlfriend goes here
5. It was nice.
6. The people had a lot to do with it. Also it is near my home and the atmosphere is good here.
7. The people seemed to want me here and went out of their way to show this. This not happen at other universities.
8. The baseball coaches and the attitude that this would be a good experience for me.
9. I wanted a small college where I could meet everyone.
10. I love the Christian atmosphere. The people are really friendly and I enjoy being included.
11. Money was a factor
12. The people were nice, and the baseball team was good.
13. My girlfriend goes here.
14. The financial assistance I was offered by others if I would attend here.
15. Smaller school atmosphere, Christian environment
16. Christian atmosphere, closeness of the students and classes aren't as big.
17. would accept underage students.
18. I just like the students and campus.
19. Size
20. I came from a small high school so I like it because it is a small campus and the atmosphere and attitudes are excellent.
21. Size
22. I wanted to join choir and I hoped I would strengthen my Christianity.
23. I wanted to attend a small university.
24. I felt this university was what I needed in my life.
25. I feel this school will help one grow closer to my Lord.
26. Baseball player
27. My friends that I was going to school with started drinking and partying and I didn't want the pressure to be involved.
28. My brother's and friends attitude about the school when they attended here. The closeness of the students and the size of the school.
29. The people
30. The fact that I was sent a lot of letters people seem interested in me coming here.
31. Location, I was moving back to and I knew was a good school.
32. It is small.
33. Trainer at school got me into the school.
34. My mother came to and I felt we could help each other.
35. The atmosphere and the students and the staff were so friendly.
36. People are so close here, they know your name and face. The

- atmosphere is just eh peace and harmony that should always be.
37. I didn't feel that I was ready to be away from home.
 38. Best friends here.
 39. Friendly atmosphere
 40. Strong Christian atmosphere and somewhere that I would feel comfortable without being looked down on because of my spirituality.
 41. A lot of nice people and the positive attitudes.
 42. My parents went here.
 43. Christian atmosphere and the people makes a difference.
 44. Size
 45. A \$7,000 scholarship and it is a small school.
 46. My best friends and parents attended and they encouraged me to here.
 47. Good academics and my girlfriend goes here.
 48. Smaller university with a good teacher ratio.
 49. Need to grow closer to God, quality of Christian women and recommended by family and friends.
 50. My brother attends
 51. Financial assistance, could possibly find acting work in and my financial situation.
 52. It is a very social inclined place and I had some little scholarship.
 52. My parents
 53. Students, professors, sports, and Christian atmosphere.
 54. The elementary and education program, was suppose to be excellent and it is close to my home.
 55. It was I wanted to do.
 56. I really like the people and the surroundings.
 57. The people who attend here.
 58. I wanted to get away from home.
 59. Adventures in missions, a scholarship from
 60. My sister went here and she enjoyed it.
 61. I wanted to meet a good Christian girl for myself.
 62. It was a Christian university where you can learn more about God and develop close friendships.
 63. Location of school
 64. Small classes.
 65. I was influenced by the size of this school and by the friendliness of the people.
 66. Personalities, and religious perspectives of the students and the teachers. Very highly recommended by a few very respected friend. The undergraduate Bible program.
 67. Change in lifestyle
 68. Everyone emphasized Christian atmosphere above all else.
 70. Christian college, the way I was treated when I came and I felt they really cared about me. I want to play baseball too.
 71. Size of the university and the personal feelings I got from the staff.
 72. I was accepted.
 73. I visited the college a few months ago and everyone acted like they knew me. It was cool! People here art too friendly.
 74. The Christian attitude and caring of the students and faculty on campus.

75. Very friendly and they have a great deal to offer to me both education and religious.
76. I wanted to grow spiritually, socially, and academically.
77. My brother is going here.
78. The students that I've met have impressed me.
79. Size
80. My brother attended here.
81. Brother attended here and liked it, and the school works with the Hospital nursing program, people are friendly.
82. It feels like a big family here and we all care about each other.
83. The people are very friendly. Everyone make you feel good.
84. The help with financial assistance I got.
85. It was close to home. I love the hugs and smiles.
86. Christian ethics and youth minister degree.
87. Environment and hospitality.
88. Religious aspect, scholarships and the size.
89. Size of school
90. I hope it will help me grow.
91. The classes will be smaller and the professors will have more time to help.
92. Friendly people
93. Several told me about the education department.
94. Small and close to home.
95. Hometown and small
96. People
97. My parents went here and wanted me to go here too.
98. People
99. Environment of loving, friendly, helpful people and the feeling of belonging here.
100. Christian atmosphere and the Christian activities.
101. Everyone was friendly and cooperative.

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution F

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution F

1. Beautiful campus and friendly people
2. Being able to grow independent in an environment with values and morals before getting my degree at a public university.
3. I love . sister and friends attend, scholarship, religious, and family wanted me to.
4. I just felt I would belong here and be happy here.
5. My parents did not give me a choice.
6. pre-physical therapy
7. My parents went here and grandparents live close by.
8. Environment and the people here.
9. Atmosphere of the entire-school.
10. Friends told me about it.
11. Since I was in 4th grade I wanted to go here.
12. Sister and cousins came here and I loved it when I visited.
13. I like the atmosphere.
14. I felt like I needed to go here.
15. My sister, brother, brother-in-law came here and loved it.
16. People here are loving and caring.
17. People here are good Christian people, always smiling.
18. I love the location, people, atmosphere and spiritual life.
19. Christian atmosphere
20. Influence they have had on others that came here.
21. Atmosphere
22. Environment, close to home and friends.
23. I felt like God wanted me to.
24. Christianity, I was shocked at the public schools I visited.
25. Only place I applied.
26. Brother came here.
27. Good people are here.
28. I live in France and there aren't many Christians there.
29. I grew up here near and I'm familiar with it. My dad, mom, and brother came here. Good reputation and good academic standards.
30. I heard wonderful things about it.
31. Brothers attended and liked it.
32. Wonderful spiritual atmosphere and my major is youth ministry.
33. Closer to home.
34. I like it here.
35. My parents made me.
36. Personal contact with the advisors was very influential and important to me.
37. I always wanted to attend a Christian university.
38. Atmosphere
39. Very spiritual here.
40. Boyfriend influenced me.
41. Christian atmosphere
42. Came to and liked it here.
43. Beautiful campus, friendly town, and nice teachers.
44. I am unhappy here because everything is directed to the

- traditional campus student. I am married, 20, and live 10 miles away. I pay the same money that everyone else but there are not things for married people. Even this form is for the single student.
45. Friends and relatives are here.
 46. Fifteen yrs ago my sister graduated here and it was a good experience.
 47. Friends from church came here.
 48. Friends are going here and love it. Parents both attended here.
 49. Beauty of location of , guys, friendly atmosphere.
 50. People/staff, students stand out above the rest.
 51. Just to learn something.
 52. Friends here
 53. Good academics and good C. atmosphere.
 54. Brother and some friends liked it here.
 55. Religious affiliation
 56. Social club, general C. atmosphere, kind people, and everyone is friendly here.
 57. Extremely friendly
 58. Size of student body and campus. Location was good, not too far away.
 59. Friendly people and students and faculty and some friends go here.
 60. A friend at home
 61. People here treated me like they knew me forever.
 62. 1993 Symposium
 63. Attitudes were unlike any other C. school I visited and very friendly.
 64. Other kids in my youth group always loved it here and did very well here.
 65. Always my dream and I felt like I should be here.
 66. God wanted me here.
 67. My youth minister helped me to get in, no other would take me.
 68. Football program
 69. How nice people are here.
 70. program was major reason and I want to study in Italy.
 71. Sister went here and the size of the school was good.
 72. Atmosphere, friendliness and meet good spiritual friends and for a C. spouse.
 73. Keep me out of trouble, a lot of girls and have teachers who care.
 74. Surroundings, people and awesome women.
 75. I had went to a church camp here and liked it a lot.
 76. Good C. school
 77. Mainly the religion and a degree in nursing.
 78. Many friends said it was a wonderful place and I want to play
 79. High moral standards and reputation for spiritual growth.
 80. C. teachers, good influences and close relationships.
 81. Good academics and religion commitment.
 82. Size of college.
 83. Location, friendliness and C. atmosphere.
 84. Atmosphere and people here.

85. Women, women, Good C. women.
86. Went to state school last year and it's environment was awful.
87. People are so nice and seem to share a common bond.
88. Relatives wanted to have a C. education.
89. C. environment and meeting C. women
90. Environment and everyone was so nice.
91. Good C. environment
92. Because my parents came here and I wanted to be here too.
93. People were so friendly.
94. C. atmosphere and academically.
95. C. college and I'd like to speak the English and learn about other cultures.
- 96.
97. C. surroundings, people were so friendly and very close like a family.
98. Near relative, great people and beautiful campus.
99. Positive attitude of school.
100. To compete in job force with a C. attitude.
101. Having a good reputation for serving God
102. Didn't like public schools.
103. Friends coming here.
104. People were great.
105. Environment and relationships.
106. Family here.
107. Physical therapy program
108. team and attitude of the people.
109. Religious beliefs, friends here and campus appearance.
110. Scholarship I got.
111. Scholarship
112. Academics and good foundation in Jesus.
113. Scholarship
114. I love it.
115. High level of spirituality felt and knew several people here.
116. Sister attends here.

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution G

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution G

1. It has a good teacher and student ratio.
2. Small campus, friendly people and Christian atmosphere.
3. The great Christian atmosphere that is here.
4. My mother works here and I have grown up being around here. I like it.
5. I had many friends here.
6. The staff, small classroom, more student attention, nice atmosphere.
7. Friendly atmosphere and religious activities appealed to me. This is where I will grow spiritually.
8. Attitude of people on campus and the Christian atmosphere.
9. I wanted a conservative and scripturally based college. The people are extremely friendly and helpful.
10. It is a small town, the teachers and administrators seemed helpful and extremely nice.
11. I came for a visit and I was really impressed by the friendliness of all the people.
12. I wanted to attend a college where I could continue my education and grow spiritually. Also the visits I made during the summer helped me to decide to go to .
13. The friendliness of the people at the school along with the religious affiliation.
14. This is a small school. It has religious emphasis and a wonderful Christian atmosphere. It has a good education program.
15. Relative live close by.
16. I was very familiar with
17. Positive influence here and my boyfriend lives here.
18. My mother went here and I visited other colleges but they treated me the best here.
19. Good morale.
20. Students, faculty and Christian atmosphere.
21. Great people and conservative in spiritual matters.
22. Small
23. My mother works here and I get a discount on my tuition.
24. The only place I could afford.
25. Small town atmosphere.
26. I needed discipline back in my life since my divorce.
27. Spiritual environment, friendly people, and they teach straight from the Bible.
28. I wanted to have a better spiritual life.
30. Good environment and it has a great academic profile.
31. My mother and boyfriend encouraged me.
32. I came to and fell in love with the place.
33. They have a team.
34. Very friendly
35. Best friend and other friends from church went here.
36. I knew several people here.
37. Christian friends.
38. Location and people

39. A good sound Christian college.
40. Closer to my home
41. Basketball
42. Friendly atmosphere.
43. Atmosphere
44. My brother is here.
45. People are outgoing and friendly.
46. Closer to home
47. My father went here and really enjoyed it.
48. I wanted a college that was not very big.
49. My friends convinced me.
50. Both of my parents attended here.
51. Close to where I work and I know a lot of people here.
52. My parents offered me financial help.
53. Close to my grandparents and I wanted to go south.
54. The general atmosphere of the college. Basically, what kind of people were here.
55. Basketball scholarship.
56. Most of my friends come here and I did not want to leave them behind.
57. Many of my friends chose to attend here so that made it an easier choice.
58. The atmosphere and the people
59. The main reason was to be in a strong christian environment and to gain independence & self sufficiency from my home and family.
60. The people here were very nice to me and treated me like they wanted me here. No other school did that to me.
61. My parents made me come but I'm glad they did because I love it here.
62. The people were really friendly when I visited here. It felt right to be here.
63. It was far from home enabling me to test myself.
64. The rules keep me focused on my school work.
65. The people were very friendly.
66. I wanted to be in a christian atmosphere and I loved the color here. It was so green and there were so many trees.
67. . Scholarship Program.
68. My husband has a job near here and I heard about a lot while growing up.
69. Friendly atmosphere.
70. I came to many weekend and week long activities because my sister attended here. I fell in love with this place.
71. Close to home. Good atmosphere.
72. Being chosen for the Honors Program.
73. It offered a good christian atmosphere.
74. It is a small college - just the right size I was looking for.
75. Friends that I already had at the university.
76. My grandmother was a dorm mother here and my cousins also attended When I came for I met wonderful people and knew was for me.
77. The friendliness of students and the caring faculty.
78. Parents wanted me to attend. Good christian atmosphere.

79. I wanted to attend a small university.
80. Environment was friendly.
81. The attitude of christian love & concern emanating from both the faculty and the students helped attract me to
82. Friends here at
83. The reputation of the students here is very friendly and Christ-like.
84. The people are friendly and there is an air of excitement about the people. I also love small town living.
85. My uncle said he would pay for my schooling but only if I came here to
86. Family members attended here. Liked the size & friendly atmosphere.
87. Grandparents were the biggest reason. I always want my grandmother to be proud of me.
88. Christian University.
89. The student body seemed to be supportive. People here would really listen to my problems.
90. I love the closeness of the students & faculty. Christianity is really stressed. I have seen a lot of spiritual growth in each of the students.
91. Went to my first year. Had to. Did not do well so left. Invitation to a
92. Came to visit and loved it. There's no place in the world like
93. Atmosphere of friendliness on campus, closeness between students, small class sizes, one-on-one work with caring teachers.
94. Because of the caring atmosphere surrounding the school. Also to be with my future mate.
95. The faculty and friendliness of the students.
96. Because of the friendly atmosphere that I came in contact with when I visited here.
97. The school was small - I wouldn't get lost in a crowd.
98. Wanted to attend a christian school & offered me financial support.
99. My grandmother & I went to & visited the college and I really liked it.
100. A lot of friends attend & I know a lot of the teachers. It's also close to home.
101. Two older sisters graduated from here & my brother attended for a year.
102. Love the people and the place and I've wanted to attend for a long time.
103. Youth minister.
104. My cheerleading sponsor advised me that this was a good school and only thirty minutes away from my home town.
105. All three of my sisters & brother in laws went here.
106. I loved the campus and environment.
107. A small school & the student teacher ratio was good. All the people are friendly.
108. Close to home.
109. My mother works here.
110. A good education program and close to home.

111. All of my friends came here.
112. The people here are very friendly & there are lots of pretty girls.
113. The conservative reputation of the school & the percentage of teachers who were church of Christ members. To find a husband.
114. Family that has attended here. Recommended by close family friend. Church of Christ affiliation.
115. Siblings attending this university.
116. My brother attends here.
117. The college's good reputation. It has everything I am looking for.
118. Town of People were friendly & helpful. I didn't feel like just another student.
119. The christian atmosphere as well as the college's reputation for students getting a good education here.
120. Because of the interest the faculty took in my interest.
121. Reputation and size.
122. Scholarship in athletics.
123. Family attended.
124. Wanted to be surrounded by christian environment. It also has a CAD computer which no other uses for fashion.
125. Only university that I found that would take a GED.
126. I heard that when you graduate from you will have no problem getting a job. This University has good teachers plus higher education also.
127. Type of people here - small student to teacher ratio - friends.
128. My mother told me that I couldn't go out of state until one of my sisters graduated from .
129. Love the christian atmosphere. I love having christian teachers. Many of my friends & relatives went here and loved it.
130. God was and is the main factor why I am at this University. The reason I chose is from the suggestions of my daughter who attends here and also from an alumni who used to be one of the pastors at the church I attended in .
131. Visited the campus and was impressed by the attitude and friendliness of the staff. I felt like God wanted me here.
132. My sister goes to & she talked about how she loves it so when I came up I made a lot of friends and seem to fit in.
133. Because of the way people are treated when they visit and because of the good atmosphere.
134. Friendly people. Anyone here would do anything for you.
135. Wanted to go to a christian college where only a few people would know me so that I could be myself. I also wanted more independence. (I live near .)
136. I was very familiar with the campus & various faculty members. My parents also attended here.
137. When I visited campus for the first time everyone was very friendly with me. All of the other campuses made me feel since I was still in High School I didn't belong. I'm a long way from home and wanted to completely make new friends.
138. Small numbers of students compared to other universities.

139. I prayed very hard and asked God to show me the right direction and I ended up here.
140. My parents went here so it was expected of me.
141. People at my church have gone here and told me what a great school it is. I wanted to attend a good christian school even if it is far from my home.
142. Because of the christian atmosphere and the wonderful people that go here. I was so tired of going to school every day where people didn't care about God. Don't have to worry about that here.
143. My preacher went to school here and told me how nice the people are here. It's close to home but I'll still be getting the best education available here. The biggest factor was the christian atmosphere and the friendliness here.
144. Family ties.
145. Everybody told me what a good school it was and a bunch of my classmates are here.
146. Christian atmosphere and friends I have here.
147. Christian atmosphere.
148. Christian atmosphere and the attitude the students & teachers have. Everyone is friendly.
149. My brother & sister both went here. I grew up being down here all the time so I felt very comfortable here.

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution H

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution H

1. Softball scholarship
2. Softball scholarship
3. My recruiter allowed me to view a Christian university from a different point of view.
4. My sister graduated from here.
5. Softball scholarship
6. The atmosphere, people, teachers, attitudes
7. Friends attending, overall good reputation
8. The persistence of the recruiter to keep me interested.
9. Co-workers went to school here and asked me to give a look.
10. Because of the major I would like to take up and the leadership of Jesus Christ our Lord.
11. I wanted to go to a christian University because it is just very important to me that I'm close to God in all that I do.
12. Mother works at University.
13. When I came to visit the campus my first time everybody introduced themselves to me. I noticed the christian atmosphere and thought I'd like it here.
14. Because recruited me. He is the most awesome cool boy in the house. He rules. Oh but yes!
15. Because of its close knit surroundings. Everyone knows one another.
16. Attitudes people met while visiting - everyone was friendly, etc.
17. The christian atmosphere suggested on campus.
18. I was aware of some of the leaders of this school & their christian background and influence on this school. Also I knew and had some friends in this area and I previously visited this school and liked what I saw.
19. The christian attitude would help me push myself for better grades and a better life as a christian.
20. I like the atmosphere of people around here.
21. I previously attended and found the spiritual life less comfortable than
22. Friends from the college.
23. My sister is in college here and she talked very highly of so I thought I would see what it is really like. So far so good.
24. Reputation, many of my friends attended, mainly because it is a church school.
25. One important thing was the friendliness of everyone I met. Second was the program.
26. The location and the size of the student body and campus.
27. My parents forced me to attend college here.
28. My uncle is working here & he wanted me to come to this college because of my major.
29. Several cousins graduated from here after attending other colleges and said this was the best and that anyone could

- fit in here.
30. I wanted to grow more spiritually and be in a small school with a friendly environment.
 31. The people were very friendly.
 32. I felt the University was satisfactory enough for me to attend and I was correct.
 33. Christian college & not too big for classes.
 34. Atmosphere & environment. My sister influenced me a lot about . The people.
 35. Choral department
 36. I thought this would be a good school in helping me become a teacher.
 37. Most important was the christian environment. I want to get a good education as well as developing stronger spiritual life & a closer relationship with friends.
 38. I don't know but I'm ready to transfer back to my previous college.
 39. The christian atmosphere here is awesome & I think I will make friends here that will last a lifetime.
 40. Athletics, friends here.
 41. Bible knowledge is important to me. I came in order to take Bible classes and learn.
 42. It offered many of the requirements I needed to get my mathematics education degree.
 43. People so nice. Everyone cares for each other.
 44. Small university, Christian university.
 45. Good housing. Not the curfew. Very good teachers & person. who seem to care about what you do with your life.
 46. I wanted to come to a college that Christ first.
 47. This University has a wonderful atmosphere. The classes are very in depth and I hope to increase my knowledge to make a difference.
 48. I came because I wanted to understand the Bible and its teaching better. It is close to home and the people here treat you much better since they somewhat can understand me better.
 49. I was looking for a good christian school to attend many friends from my home church told me that was a great place so here I am.
 50. It is close to home. The people here are very generous and I'm better off at a smaller school and it is a religious school.
 51. Affiliation with
 52. The athletic program.
 53. I had talked with ?? & they were kind of snobby. has always done more than expected just to help me. That's really motivating.
 54. It has a christian atmosphere and it is the closest christian college to home.
 55. I liked the people.
 56. Knowing members in Cornerstone, admissions recruiter, my own will and a lot of prayer.
 57. My brother went here.
 58. Friends and boyfriend.

59. My sister attended _____ and I loved what my sister liked about her christian education so I decided to do the same.
60. It was a christian college, somewhat close with a tuition not as high as others.
61. Friends I've made that already go here. My parents both work here.
62. Not very expensive.
63. The small classes & close relations within the school.
64. The people here & friends that I already knew here.
65. Brother attended here. Knew some of the instructors. Relatively small student body.
66. Admissions & faculty are so friendly and helpful.
67. Decided to transfer because at _____ I can obtain my degree in CIS, as well as some knowledge of Christ.
68. Its religious background & it has a _____ on campus which is very convenient.
69. Felt I needed to attend a good christian influence and felt I could find it here.
70. Wanted a christian environment to attend college in.
71. Smaller classrooms allow for a more personal/professional learning situation.
72. The positive example the students I met showed.
73. Baseball
74. The size of the campus & the friendliness of the people Also, the size of the classes.
75. Wanted to be around the influence of christians and the people that go here are wonderful.
76. Christian coach. Good staff members.
77. The friendly, christian environment.
78. I like the theater and music program.
79. The attention placed upon incoming freshmen at pre-orientation.
80. The atmosphere, people who attend here and the good standards. It holds as a christian school.
81. I liked the people and the faculty on this campus. I felt this would be the best environment to be around during my college schooling.
82. They gave me a big scholarship.
83. I went to _____ and was able to see and get to know several people (students) at _____
84. The nice people and the feeling of unity by everyone on campus. They made me feel welcome when I visited.
85. I was interested in the basketball program here.
86. People at the college were so willing to help. All of the students were really nice.
87. Mainly because it's paid for & I have a good chance in cheerleading here & I like the atmosphere.
88. The size of the college.
89. My Dad and Mom went to a christian college.
90. Brother attended this university.
91. I thought people here would be friendlier and help me be a better christian. It works!!
92. The atmosphere is pleasant, it is morally beneficial and the people are extremely nice and helpful.

93. Small college, friendly faculty, great christian environment.
94. The friendliness of the people I met, both students and faculty. The soundness of the doctrine practiced by the administration of University.
95. The fact of knowing that I would still have some sense of guidance as if I was at home.

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution I

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution I

1. Christian atmosphere
2. Being in a Christian environment
3. The size is relatively small and compact
4. This college offered Bible classes which I believe to be very important.
5. My grandmother offered to pay
6. The # 1 influence was the program has with (the nursing program)
7. Close to home, C. atmosphere, golf
8. The atmosphere of provides an excellent study environment compared to those like or is a well-respected university and its graduates are respected as well.
9. I know someone who was attending there and she talked really good about the school and the people you are around. The fact that it was a C. college was a big part.
10. I wanted a change so I went out of state.
11. My parents really wanted me to. I wanted to attend a church affiliated school.
12. I liked it because it is small and I came from a small high school. I like the religious background.
13. I live about 3 hrs. away from far enough from parents, but not too far.
14. The academic program here is excellent and the scholarships that I received convinced me to attend here.
15. The scholarship I was offered was the biggest factor.
16. I felt like God wanted me to attend a C. Univ.
17. Because it was a C. Univ.
18. Its close to my house, C. environment, a lot of my friends go here.
19. The atmosphere of the campus, facility, and students. Small size of student body. TA does not teach class but teacher does. Teachers are Christian.
20. Spiritual attitudes
21. I wanted to attend a C. college. I also liked the compact area of the campus and the small student body.
22. The outstanding faculty, the professional demeanor of college recruiters, the Univ. location.
23. Very impressed on visits during senior year of high school.
24. CIS department
25. Leaving the house
26. Friends were coming here and it's in a big city.
27. It's C. atmosphere
28. Location, C. college, not so much that it was Church of Christ.
29. Admissions counselor

30. Staying close to my girlfriend
31. The atmosphere involved and the area which the campus is.
32. The people, atmosphere and the impression they gave me.
33. I attended _____, and I enjoyed it very much. I also wanted to go to a college that was close to my house.
34. My father
35. My parents
36. The size and the way the campus is.
37. The people were very friendly and my brother had attended here and liked it tremendously.
38. Its a beautiful campus and a great C. environment.
39. My goal is to get into Med. school. The science dept. has 95% w/a Ph.D. and acceptance to a Med. school was double the national avg.
40. Location
41. It was in _____ a really cool city and I'm from a boring little town.
42. The fact that it was located in a big city.
43. Baseball and good buddies.
44. I was most influenced by watching how much my older brother has enjoyed _____. He has learned a lot and really enjoyed himself, too.
45. Private university with a great reputation.
46. Private university
47. Baseball
48. My father's tuition discount
49. My parents made me come.
50. The type of people that attend this university.
51. C. environment and helpful teachers
52. My finance was here.
53. Grandparents live nearby and parents went here.
- 54.
55. The education program is super.
56. The size of the school.
57. Pre-med school
58. Overall concern of the students through the teachers.
59. The beautiful campus.
60. Loved the environment and the whole meaning behind it.
61. Closer to home than _____
62. I have relatives in _____ and I appreciated that Betty in admissions knew me by name when I would call with a question.
63. Sister
63. I knew a lot of people here.
64. 64% of the pre med students make it to medical school.
65. Mission work opportunities
66. Baseball
67. Religious school
68. People were friendly on any visit, good atmosphere, C. professors, good academic reputation.
69. A lot of my friends come here.
70. I play baseball.
71. Location
72. Getting away from home
73. Parents

74. My parents chose my college for me.
75. Baseball
76. The small size
77. I wish I could go back to last year, if I could I would not come here.
78. I did not choose to come here.
79. I did not receive enough money to attend the college I wanted.
80. The spirituality of the faculty and students.
81. My girlfriend attends here. This area is also good for going into youth ministry with all of the churches.
82. The city is great.
83. I was very much influenced by family and friends to attend here.
84. Your program for
85. I wanted to grow spiritually and I like
86. Parents work here and I get a large tuition discount.
87. Rate of acceptance into major medical schools
88. Good environment and people to be surrounded by.
89. denied me and I got accepted here with no problem.
90. Friends
91. The atmosphere, my friends and I agreed to here when we were little.
92. I felt this school was part of God's plan for my life.
93. Friendly people and good friends.
94. Friends and Christians
95. My major is not offered everywhere (Dietetics) and has a good program.
96. was very well known for its spirituality and academics, both which are important to me.
97. Girls
98. Friends and women
99. I want to be a youth minister.
100. The religious aspects and going away from home.
101. seemed to be the most interested, also the reputation.
102. Baseball
103. I wanted to go to a school near a city.
104. Girls and I love the curfew.
105. My best friend and I had planned to go here since our junior year in high school.
106. My sister came here.
107. The academic standing and religious influence.
108. Girls
109. My sister and cousin liked it here.
110. Location
111. Nice, small, friendly campus
112. Away from home
113. Nice people, kindness, facilities
114. My parents decided
115. I attended and was familiar with
116. Financial aid and religious affiliation were most important. 2nd friends were here.
117. God opened the door for me to come home.
118. The resources in the area
119. I knew people here and they told me about it.

120. I have friends that attended, may want to major in Bible.
121. Many of my friends attend with me.
122. Scholarship
123. Scholarship, C. environment, close to home, good location
124. Close to friends
125. Attended
126. I am already familiar with
127. Close to family and best friend
128. Near city
129. Relatives lived here
130. Size of school and people I knew already
131. I am nondemoninational C church and have attended C of C before and heard about
132. I like the size and location and it has a good reputation.
133. Offered an academic and athletic scholarship
134. Had no choice, do it or die
135. Only place I could ge excepted.
136. Flipped coin
137. Wanted a good C. university and get far away from home
138. Atmosphere, nice location
139. Knew many students and faculty here
140. C. teachers and activities
141. A lot of friends here and could learn and have fun at the same time.
142. Near home, family went here has
143. Sister graduated from
144. Good reputation, small, friendly faculty and staff, very concerned and caring.
145. Someone informed me of this school.
146. Went to and all my friends went here.
147. Like the school's location and brother went here.
148. Felt it was a good college.
149. Christian education
150. and close to home
151. People that attend and their attitudes.
152. Small size
153. Religious freedom and wouldn't pollute my mind with liberal thoughts.
154. Parents
155. Religion, friends, good academics
156. Overall reputation
157. Father wanted me to stay at home
158. I'm a C. who loves the Lord and I chose a university of this quality.
159. Small college and has nice people
160. Reputation of the school
161. Cheaper than other colleges
162. Grown up in the campus school and mother went here
163. When I was 7 years of age I attended it was since then my choice.
164. I decided myself to come here.
165. I wanted to come so I did
166. I like the city of
167. It is in and a C. university.

168. Good reputation for spiritual growth combined with an excellent academic program.
169. Bible program
170. I had no choice, my parents made me.
171. I wouldn't be here if my mother didn't work here and make it possible for the tuition to be discounted.
172. I heard from other students how fun it was.
173. The city of _____ and the closeness of Vanderbilt for graduate school.
174. My grandmother lives here.
175. The professors and academic courses.
176. Church affiliation
177. I took the ACT here and you wouldn't let the score out.
178. I love _____ it is a good school and not far from where I live.
179. Wanted a good strong C. background where I could grow with God.
180. Wanted to be far away from home and it is a small university.
181. This college has a good Christian environment and it is somewhat close to home.
182. Only college still accepting applications when I found out I couldn't go to the college of my choice.
183. It was the closest church of Christ affiliated school to me.
184. Both of my parents graduated from here and my sister is here.
185. It gave me a chance to get away from home and start over with a good C. environment.
186. I like the C. environment and the people at the school.
187. The only C. college that I had looked at that had a band program.
188. I attended _____ for a year and I wanted to be closer to home.
189. I like the town.
190. Basketball scholarship
191. Friendliness of people on campus
192. Wanted to attend a C. university and I got a scholarship. was closer to my home than some of the others.
193. The people I met that attended here
194. I needed to get away from but still with people I know.
195. Insanity, in other words, if I had seen through _____ mold of hypocrisy and lies I wouldn't be here. _____ is not a good place.
196. Visiting _____ during the _____
197. A big city and a 8 hour drive home.
198. The hours the college transferred from my University in Pen.
199. Location, academics, computer systems
200. My brother goes here.

Appendix F
Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution J

Responses to Open Ended Questions
Institution J

1. Playing football.
2. A friend who highly recommended it.
3. Affiliated with church of Christ.
4. At the time I thought I wanted to be far away from my family.
5. My father & my girlfriend.
6. Friends that go here say that they really liked it.
7. I tried out for cheerleader.
8. My friends came here & knew I needed a good christian education.
9. Wanted to get away from home.
10. Having been on campus due to other High School activities.
11. God wanted me here.
12. My visit to the campus.
13. The overall atmosphere felt so happy. loving, secure.
14. The strong christian importance to the school. Athletics. Good academic standards.
15. The christian atmosphere. I wanted to grow stronger with Jesus and share that with others of my same beliefs.
16. The amount of scholarships offered to me influenced my decision to attend
17. A family friend attended here and encouraged me to apply and visit the campus. I visited and loved it.
18. I wanted to run track & cross country & the program here was exceptional. I also wanted a school that used christian values as their selling point and not "wild parties."
19. It was just far enough away from home.
20. Christian atmosphere & friendly people.
21. They have a strong missions department.
22. I have visited many other colleges & was the best.
23. Size, location and people.
24. The people were very nice. The admissions councilor was a sweetheart and greatly influenced my decision in coming here. Also, the financial aid package they offered was very good.
25. Scholarships.
26. Had always wanted to attend this college but couldn't because of the cost but was able to after getting financial assistance in the form of scholarships.
27. They offered me a great financial aid package.
28. Distance from home, academic reputation & church affiliation.
29. Size was an important factor & teachers had a very good reputation.
30. It was less expensive than the other college I wanted to attend.
31. The music department was good, my friends were coming here & the campus is beautiful.
32. The professors seemed to care about the students.
33. Good staff. Financial aid. Good facilities. I liked the

- campus.
34. Prayer. I just prayed & felt God wanted me to go here so I did.
 35. Scholarships, parents, asking me to come.
 36. Volleyball.
 37. Cost. Private school.
 38. God himself.
 39. I like the christian atmosphere. The professors here will work with you.
 40. Opportunity scholarship teacher (Mom) discount.
 41. My brother & his several friends had the most influence on attending
 42. Financial aid & religious affiliation.
 43. The excellent faculty & staff.
 44. Parents went here. The University kept in touch with me all through my senior year & the spiritual and academic opportunities were abundant.
 45. Wanting to move to
 46. I was awarded a scholarship for Bible majors. I also wanted to get good quality teaching so I could learn more.
 47. The church of Christ affiliation. A basketball scholarship. My brother attends Friendly staff.
 48. The Missions Dept. at greatly influenced my desire to be here. They also have an excellent Pre-Med program.
 49. It was a christian university with high standards.
 50. Visits to the campus and being around the students led me to believe that was the school for me.
 51. Academics, religious background, athletic scholarship.
 52. Sister was here.
 53. Christian atmosphere, friendly people, good education.
 54. I didn't want to be subject to all the other stuff at a state school.
 55. Good atmosphere socially, academically and spiritually.
 56. Whenever I came to visit everyone made me feel very welcome. I have older friends here who encouraged me to come here.
 57. -- religion.
 58. My Mom.
 59. I wanted to go to school but close and away from home.
 60. My friend.
 61. Most of my friends went here.
 62. My sister influenced me. Good word-of-mouth reputation.
 63. The academic quality & the percentage of admittance from the pre-med program.
 64. My friend suggested it because of tuition. My parents thought tuition was expensive (but it's not true).
 65. Just the right size - not too large - not too small. My mother attended It's known for being a good christian school. Good financial aid.
 66. The Mass Communication is the best program at
 67. Financial aid, influences, religion and friends.
 68. It was a christian university.
 69. Parents, grandparents, brother goes here.
 70. Christian atmosphere.
 71. I like it here.

72. I wasn't doing anything better.
73. Good programs to help you as an incoming freshman.
74. I like the campus and it's surroundings. I enjoy the people here also.
75. It's close to home where my parents can help me raise my child until I gain my career.
76. The atmosphere of good christian people and knowing the I would have christian professors who care about me and my future.
77. My parents really wanted me to come here. I didn't have a choice although I like it very much.
78. I wanted to come here to run or and receive a good first hand education.
79. The good-looking women. The christian environment.
80. Many friends were already here but that wasn't really important.
81. Friendly people and the faculty & staff go out of their way to make your stay better.
82. Religion.
83. My brother goes here & a lot of my aunts and uncles went here.
84. Heard of the high quality atmosphere of the students.
85. Solid christian influence & beliefs, friendliness and safe atmosphere.
86. I was recruited for athletics.
87. Lots of friends and I felt at home on the campus even before coming here. The administration made it a point to keep up with me after my first visit.
88. Friendly people.
89. Wanted to play baseball in a good program and helped pay enough money for me to come here.
90. Biblical college & financial aid were the determining factors.
91. Pre-college program for seniors in high school got me interested.
92. Liked the foreign language program.
93. Religious college.
94. Campus visit. Staff.
95. I liked it.
96. Christian. Good pre-med program.
97. Wanted to get an education in a christian environment.
98. Singing, .
99. A friend goes to school here.
100. My parents, grandparents and sister have come here.
101. Wanted to play & I like the general atmosphere & attitude of the school.
102. My B-ball scholarship enables me to attend. Religious background.
103. Close to home, generous financial aid, good dropout rate.
104. Everyone so friendly and wanted me to attend.
105. My sister goes here.
106. My uncle works here & lots of my family went here. I wanted a school in the south.
107. My sister attended here for two years.

108. Parents attended here & grandparents worked here. Good scholarships.
109. Wanted to stay home the first year.
110. Teachers
111. I didn't apply anywhere else therefore I had no choice.
112. Influence of my minister.
113. Twin sister & cousin were attending here & it's closer to home than
114. Other family members. Campus tour.
115. Friendly people.
116. Good friends here & it is christian.
117. Christian college. Financial assistance.
118. Paid for by relatives.
119. Father wanted me to come here.
120. Always wanted to come here since visiting campus.
121. Faculty here & friends.
122. Parents & grandparents came here. I've always wanted to.
123. To play basketball.
124. Has best music program in a school affiliated with church of Christ.
125. Whole family came here so I did also.
126. Over half of the adults at my church in Oregon graduated from here and a lot of kids from my church attend here. Sister attends here also.
127. The athletic training program offered me a spot on the staff & a scholarship plus some financial aid and a loan.
128. Only 2 hours from home. Christian environment, girls.
129. Friends attending here & I like this school & its traditions.
130. My Dad & they gave me some money to come here.
131. More family in the area.
132. I knew of no other place that I could be a missions major.
133. Friendliness & values of most of the faculty & a large portion of the student body influenced me to come here.
134. My family wanted me to go here & I guess I always felt that I was going here.
135. Good christian school & friendly people:
136. Financial help, close to home, good school, nice people, spiritually uplifting environment.
137. Convenience.
138. Knew a lot of people here. A friend told me about . I like
139. God place a peace in my heart about .
140. It was far enough away and close enough to home at the same time.
141. My parents money came here so I did too.
142. My parents money came here so I did.
143. Offered a scholarship from my mother's office.
144. I like it. It's a good school.
145. The family atmosphere & the fact that I was already familiar with the school.
146. I wanted to try something different & come back to for school.
147. I've always liked the school. Participated in many sports events while going to school in ' I like the people.

148. Christian atmosphere, nursing major, very helpful.
149. Brother attends here. Grandparents live in town. Other relatives nearby in
150. Liked the religious & social atmosphere. It seemed like a good place to be.
151. Cousins attended here & liked it so I thought I would try it. I like the campus & have attended many summer activities.
152. Friends & family.
153. Financial aid was strong, good staff of teachers, good entrance rate into optometry school.
154. Religion.
155. Family attended & loved it. Religious preference.
156. Baseball program.
157. It is helpful with your studies.
158. Small. Biology program & acceptance of graduates. Christian.
159. Christian. TOEFL score meet its requirement.
160. Cost is lower than California University.
161. Liked the school & people around it. Wanted to get away from home.
162. Good med program, students, campus.
163. Scholarships, environment.
164. My brother & sister liked it.
165. Sister attended. I was impressed when I visited the school.
166. It was my parent's dream & I thought working with the football team would be fun.
167. Minority scholarship.
168. Religious. Close to home.
169. Friends & relatives advice. Prayers.
170. Parents & good acceptance rate to med school.
- 171.
172. Excellent international studies department. Near wife & kids. Excellent prep for grad school.
173. Parents made me.
174. Parents made me for at least one year.
175. Campus atmosphere. Reputation was a major influence.
176. Atmosphere of the students & faculty.
177. My "significant other" was here.
178. Church, athletics.
179. Husband's athletic scholarship.
180. Small school & people here very friendly.
181. Amount of financial aid.
182. Visit to campus. Family & friends came here.
183. Needed to grow up & get away from friends. Needed a school with excellent faculty members that was small & inexpensive.
184. Lots of scholarship money & I really liked it.
185. I love to praise God. My sister goes here. Like the people here.
186. Many people from my church came here.
187. Religion and size.
188. Wanted a quality education in a christian environment. My Dad attended here. Wanted to grow up spiritually & meet friends who share some of the same interest as me.
189. Brother is studying here.
190. Good reputation education-wise.

191. Location, friends, education.
192. Wanted to study abroad (I'm from Sweden).
193. Family attended. College athletic scholarship.
194. Through church group.
195. Student's positive attitude.
196. Family tradition. Small christian school.
197. Parents attended & the only one my parents would pay for.
198. My whole family has gone here.
199. Parents wanted me to come here. Friends here.
200. Mom works here.
201. Wanted to learn English better.
202. There is so much to do in
203. People I knew who went here.
204. Christian atmosphere.
205. Family attended
206. Atmosphere, people, hot weather.
207. I have been around all my life & it was just natural to come here.
208. Atmosphere.
209. Christian atmosphere & good academic reputation.
210. Teacher/student ratio
211. Classes with religious emphasis.
for adolescent studies.
212. The location & I've always wanted to go here.
213. Both parents attended here. Wanted to attend small school affiliated with church of Christ. Impressed with relationships between teachers & students.
214. Only heard positive things about
215. The size & location.
216. The academic program.
217. Christian atmosphere.
218. It was the better university
219. Liked the atmosphere & feel of the campus when I visited.
220. People are nice here.
221. I've always wanted to attend here.
222. Like the atmosphere on campus.
223. Received many letters from graduates.
224. A close friend recommended the college & I would like to expand on the possibilities my talents present.
225. A good friend came here.
226. There are lots of departments & the tuition expense is not very high.
227. favored in my household & I visited & wanted to be in an environment that has.
228. Someone told me about it and the tuition is not very high.
229. Religion
230. Parents went here & I wanted to go here myself.
231. Because of the academics.
232. Good program.
233. Scholarship & good psychology department.
234. Came to chapel a few time & atmosphere seemed great. Christian environment.
235. Price range was good considering that we don't qualify for financial aid.

- 236. Dad, Mom & sister went here. Attended leadership camps five years & I adore the school. People are great christian folks. Enjoy all the religious opportunities.
- 237. Girlfriend.
- 238. Parents wouldn't pay for any other college.
- 239. The only college I applied for.
- 240. Near home.
- 241. Baseball
- 242. Wanted to get away from home & I like
- 243. I'm here for free & wanted to be close to other christians in a learning/college environment.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to rate the significance of selected factors that influence college choice for first-year students who chose to attend, during fall, 1994, 1 of 10 American liberal arts colleges and universities associated with the Churches of Christ. This study further evaluated the relationship of the rating of these factors with specific student demographic data and the timing of the college choice decision.

Completed surveys were received from 2,677 respondents representing a 76% rate of return. According to the results, the most influential college choice factors were the college's religious affiliation, academic reputation, job placement reputation, offer of financial assistance, and the availability of a specific major. When considering demographic variables, significant differences in the rating of factors were apparent when gender, average high school grade, religious preference, family income level, and parents' educational level were considered. This study also found that 50.7% of the students had made the college choice decision before their senior year of high school.