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A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS AMONG COUNSELORS AND
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REGARDING THE
NEED FOR A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN
CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

by:
Michelle D. Myles

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan University
May 1, 1997

Approved by _____
professor

Date Approved 5/7/97

ABSTRACT

Michelle D. Myles

A Study of Perceptions Among Counselors and High School Students Regarding
the Need for a Community College In Cape May County, New Jersey
May, 1997

Dr. Burness Broussard, Advisor
Community College Education

The purpose of this study was to compare high school guidance counselors' perceptions in general regarding college attendance with those of their graduating students. It was posited, as well, that guidance counselor rankings and the student rankings of five college-choice aspects would be related; namely, that the guidance counselors' choices would be ranked in the same order that the high school students' choices were ranked, and that the students' choices would be significantly related to those aspects relevant to community college attendance. A pilot study was conducted first over phone interviews of the guidance counselors from the four public high-schools in Cape May County, and two hundred high school senior students and 18 guidance counselors in the four public high schools located in Cape May County were polled. A total of 115 student surveys were used in the chi-square analysis of the rank-order of the categories, and the relevance of aspects of college choice germane to those used in community college selection was found to be significant at the .05 level of significance. Through clear and concise analysis using percentages and tables, it can be said that a vast majority of students who were not planning on attending a community college would entertain the idea of attending one located in Cape May County.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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May, 1997

Dr. Burness Broussard, Advisor
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The purpose of this study was to compare guidance counselors' perceptions regarding college attendance with those of their graduating students, and to suggest that students' choices would be related to aspects relevant to community college attendance. The two aspects of college choice, germane to those used in community college selection, were ranked as most important and found to be significant using Chi Square analyses.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study sought to determine if students in Cape May County, New Jersey would attend a community college located in the county. The respondents, both high school guidance counselors and high school seniors, were asked to rate the five reasons in order from most important to least important to determine their relevance to the aspects surrounding the choice of a community college. This researcher noted that there had been a previous study that was conducted in the county over five years ago to determine high school seniors' attitudes and planned actions in regards to a proposed community college. This current study serves a follow-up of the last study done by the Advisory Commission on the Status of Women in 1991. The 1991 study asked the question of high school seniors "Would you be interested in attending a Cape May County community college if one were built?". This investigation continues by asking the students and counselors to rank various aspects linked with college selection. This design echoes the impetus for attendance to community colleges by high school seniors as cited in many studies discussed in the review of the literature later in this investigation

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to compare high school seniors' perceptions of the need of the community-based college in the Cape May County area with those of their guidance counselors. This study also compares high school guidance counselors' perceptions in general regarding college attendance with those of their graduating students. In light of current legislation in Cape May County surrounding the controversy around building a Community College designed specifically for use by citizens of Cape May County, it would seem quite interesting to distinguish and examine the relationship between the views of high school students, those that would be attending the college, from the opinions of the high school guidance counselors, or those who are voting for and implementing plans for the community college. The views of the counselors, as well as the students, are assessed using a survey in which the respondents rank five college factors, in order from most to least important, that reflect the students' opinions concerning college choice.

Hypotheses

This study investigated the relationships between high school counselors' conceptions and high school seniors' opinions regarding the choice of a college. The participants were counselors and seniors who resided in Cape May County. It is posited that the guidance counselor rankings and the student rankings of five college-choice aspects will be related. The guidance counselors' choices

were ranked in the same order that the high school students' choices were ranked.

History

Since the early 1950's, Cape May County has been seen by many Northeastern coastal states as "Vacationland". It is a coastal county -- "By-the-Sea", as commonly referred to in brochures and pamphlets beckoning to summertime vacationers all over the Northeastern coast, in states like Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and in such diverse countries as countries such as Ireland and Canada. Each year, the population of Cape May County practically quadruples as visitors from every place imaginable pour into and fill up the thousands of hotels, restaurants, boarding homes, amusements, and beaches from one end of the county to the other.

The year-round citizens of Cape May County, or the "locals", seem to be forgotten in this maze of excitement each May to September. Many citizens seem to be caught up in the folly, engaging in summer jobs that are only temporary, and collecting unemployment, welfare monies, disability, or any other general funding that is available throughout the winter -- all while eagerly awaiting the arrival of summer to once again work and save money to support their families.

It is this last segment -- the families -- that would most benefit from the addition of a community college, or at least the jointure with another county's community college. These families do have children who are enthusiastic and willing to learn, and should be afforded the same opportunities as children from

other counties to continue their education after graduation from high school. In the light that many of the families of Cape May County are of low-income levels, many because of this "summer state of mind" where breadwinners are only employed for four months of the year during the summer rush, the accretion of a community college would be more than beneficial -- it is integral to the survival of the families of this county in today's fast-paced, at-least-bachelor-level world.

The accessibility of a community college in any community seems of paramount importance. The students of Cape May County, however, are faced with a dilemma that not one of the other students in other counties of New Jersey faces. They have no community college. These students do have "access" to an extension center of another county's community college, and are able to rely on the charge-back system of their county, as the State statute of New Jersey requires (chapter 64A, County Colleges, Sections 18A - 1 - 78) to obtain courses toward their college education. Yet, the most important aspect of a community college, its accessibility and proximity to the citizens of that community, is lacking. It is for this reason, the students of Cape May County are at a grievous disadvantage

Of the 21 counties in the state of New Jersey, all of them house a community college except for Cape May County at the southernmost tip of New Jersey. Long seen as "vacationland" by visitors, business owners, and legislators of Cape May County, there seemed to be a shift in the interest of the citizenry of Cape May County towards educating themselves and their children while attempting to keep the monies generated from these activities in the county, as demonstrated by the 1992 election of the first Democrat, whose main views encompassed higher education by developing a community college, to the

Cape May County Board of Freeholders since the Civil War. In 1991 and 1992, the Advisory Commission on the Status of Women in Cape May County submitted a report to the Board of Freeholders to support the need for a community college (ACSW, 1991). This lengthy report cited structural options for a county college, the impact of a county college on neighboring colleges, descriptions of Cape May County, financial projections for an operating budget and funding analyses, as well as a high-school student questionnaire given to approximately 70% of the county's graduating seniors that year. The survey indicated that 94% of the respondent students that were enrolled in grade 12 planned to continue their education after high school in either four-year colleges (55%) or community colleges (36%). A large number of the latter percentage stated that they would attend a community college if one were located and available in Cape May County. It is as a follow-up to this survey more than five years later, as well as in addition to it, that this study takes form.

Definitions

There are some terms and concepts that may need further clarification upon encountering them in the body of this study. Some of them are as follows:

Board of Freeholders: This is the governing body of Cape May County. Members of the Board of Freeholders are elected for four-year terms of service and are voted in by the electorate of Cape May County. There is only one Democratic Freeholder, who is now in office, in comparison to four Republican

Freeholders. The county has been primarily Republican in status and representation in office since the time of the Civil War.

college choice model: The explanation of students' decisions to go to college and choice of college. Researchers have developed models to explain that choice process. Many of these models have demonstrated some overlap with the sociologically-bases status attainment models. An important difference is that the college choice models include factors that focuses specifically on students' high school experiences in addition to demographic factors such as socioeconomic status, parental education, sibling achievement, and friendship patters. It also measures consistency of constructs studied, such as consistency regarding influences on predisposition to attend college and student background characteristics (Stage and Rushin, 1993).

cultural capital: This concept is initially discussed in Bourdieu's work (1984) in which he proposes a framework for analysis that emphasizes the concepts of cultural capital, habitus, and fields. For Bourdieu, all human activity is directed toward accumulating capital as a means of maximizing economic or symbolic profit. Cultural capital is an important form of capital and is often translated into elite educational credentials. Individuals with high cultural capital have clear investment strategies of how much and what kind of schooling they or their children should have. Parents with high cultural capital attempt to secure for their children as prestigious a college education as possible because they know it will pay off in later job success and social status.

socioeconomic status (SES): This term, when looking in a dictionary, means pertaining to, or signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors. For the purposes of this study, it is status in society as

determined by how much money a family earns -- for example, low-income, middle-income, or high-income levels.

Assumptions

As this study is undertaken, there are a few underlying assumptions that need clarification. One of these is the presupposition that the high school seniors surveyed were at least in the process of thinking about their plans for after graduation, thus, placing them in the proper state of mind for answering the survey.

Another assumption is in regards to the distribution of the student surveys. Because this researcher could not be at the four public high schools at the time of the survey disbursement, it must be assumed that the teachers or counselors proctoring the survey did not enhance or sway the students towards any one conviction while they were responding to the items

Limitations

There are certain limitations concerning this study, especially in respect to the randomness and size of the samples used for the survey. As alluded to before, this researcher could not be present for the distribution of the survey materials to the respondents. Therefore, the main contact person at each high school had to be familiarized with the concepts and was asked to choose and survey the most heterogeneous and random group possible. Hence, some schools used their "Homeroom" period or their "Gym" periods, while others used their "General English" classes or "Senior Psychology" classes to reach the widest, most random audience of senior high school students. Because of different constructions of class schedules and institution policies throughout the high schools, the researcher had to rely on the judgments of the contact person,

be it the Director of Student Activities or the Vice Principal, to gather the most random assemblage of students possible to participate in the survey. Nonetheless, the model shows promise for a better understanding of the college choice process in Cape May County.

In spite of the restrictions on both the sample and the substance of this research, this researcher believes strongly that attention to the perspectives of methods of college choice of the high school students in the county needs to be brought into discussions of whether or not to construct a community college in the county because the behavior of these students will have profound impacts on the fortune of that community college.

Overview

In Chapter 2, the pertinent literature to the problem asserted is reviewed, and similar studies to the one suggested here are explained and summarized. In Chapter 3, the sample, design, and testable hypotheses are reexamined and illustrated in a step-by-step process. All of these specifics lead to the conclusion that this study was the next logical step in Cape May County's struggle to obtain a community college.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Open access to education is what distinguishes community colleges from all other educational institutions. It is through the community college commitment to access that the American dream of universal higher education is put into action and given substance. Community colleges have become expert at fitting into the context of people's lives and into the communities that they serve, because of their proximity, their affordable tuition, and because of the programs and services they offer.

The community colleges reach out to attract those who were not being served by traditional higher education: those who could not afford the tuition; who could not take the time to attend a college on a full-time basis; whose ethnic background had constrained them from participating; who had inadequate preparation in the lower schools; whose educational progress had been interrupted by some temporary condition; who had become obsolete in their jobs or had never been trained to work at any job; who needed a connection to obtain a job; who were confined in prisons; had physical disabilities, or otherwise unable to attend classes on a campus; or who were faced with a need to fill increased leisure time meaningfully (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

The community college provides a special link in the educational chain. It serves as the only avenue to higher education for many minority students, older students, first-generation college students, and a number of others who may have dropped out of the educational mainstream. The community college provides a means for students to achieve their goals (Cardenas & Warren, 1991). Community colleges are indeed untraditional, but they are truly American because, at their best, they represent the United States at its best. Never satisfied with resting on what has been done before, they try new approaches to old problems. They maintain open channels for the individuals, enhancing the social mobility that has characterized America; and they accept the idea that society can be better, just as individuals can better their lot within it (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Yet many students do not have the chance to travel to the open door beckoning to them, and it is these students, specifically in the Cape May County area of Southern New Jersey, on which this deliberation concentrates.

How high-school seniors become college students is a result of a few interacting processes. Several models of student college choice have been developed to explain this process. Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith, in 1989, identified four types of college choice models: econometric, consumer, sociological, and combined. Each type of model postulates that a specific set of factors determines outcomes of college choice.

Models of Choice

Econometric models assume that individual students will enroll in a postsecondary educational institution if the perceived benefits of attendance are greater than those of non-college alternatives (Hossler & Stage, 1992). This model is specifically important in the current study, as alternatives to college likely look much more appealing than college attendance, as many of the families in Cape May County, especially in southern Cape May County, are of lower-class socioeconomic status. Adjustment to college is a significant problem for entering students in general, but it is particularly acute for students from low-SES backgrounds. Because such students often come from minority ethnic groups and have limited financial resources, and because the parents of such students often have limited formal education, low-SES students are clearly differentiable from "traditional" mainstream college students (Cunningham & Tidwell, 1990)..

Several factors contribute to the difficulties students have in adjusting to the college environment, just from coming from a low-income family. In contrast with students whose parents attended college, many if not most, low-SES students have not been able to benefit from the implicit preparation of having a college-educated role model in their homes. In short, low-SES students must make a greater social adjustment to the typical college environment than their peers from higher-SES backgrounds (Cunningham & Tidwell, 1990). This concept is also applicable to the factor of distance to the nearest higher educational facility for the citizens of Cape May County. Why would the students

travel for over one hour to the nearest educational agency, and spend time and money while attempting to reach it, when they could attain employment upon graduation and begin to immediately earn money?

Consumer models of college choice employ a marketing perspective. This model suggests that students estimate a minimal degree of costs and risks associated with college enrollment. It has been suggested that non-monetary costs and risks such as parental and peer expectations were more influential in the need arousal and information gathering stages than were monetary costs (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989). This mode of college choice would probably be more prevalent at a level where the student is either getting financial aid for his or her education, or when the student is not paying for his education -- his parents are. In this situation, the student doesn't take into consideration the cost of attending an institution of higher learning, and probably takes more seriously where his or her friends will be attending and/or outside activities of the school (like sports or music involvements).

Sociological models are derivatives of status attainment research. They focus on factors that influence aspirations for college attendance. The status attainment process is concerned with the role played by various factors in the allocation of individual positions or occupations of varying degrees of prestige or status. Typically, family socioeconomic background is predicted to have a joint positive effect on aspirations for college. Applicants apply to and enroll in college at the encouragement of family, friends, teachers, guidance counselors, and other sources (McDonough, 1994) as well. Encouraging and modeling include family attitudes toward and encouragement of college attendance; and abilities and experiences include individual capabilities of the student. Even

students who are not "high-achievers" or who have low GPAs are encouraged by parents who are educated and/or from an educated background (Stage & Rushin, 1993). Investigators found both parental expectations and parental encouragement to be related to the likelihood of a student's attending a postsecondary educational institution (Hossler & Stage, 1992). In fact, Hossler and Stage (1992) found that parental level of education, combined with parents' educational aspirations for their children may be the best predictors of student postsecondary plans. In a qualitative study of the postsecondary plans of high school seniors in Pennsylvania, it was reported that as the family income and educational level of parents increased, students started to think about their postsecondary plans earlier (Hossler & Stage, 1992).

Other information suggests that socioeconomic status may not directly influence predisposition to attend college, but does directly influence student high school achievement, which in turn exerts a positive influence upon the predisposition stage. Typically family economic factors and background was predicted to have positive effects on educational aspirations (Hossler & Stage, 1992). For example, parents from high status backgrounds might instill a favorable attitude toward education in their children or they might impart the value of forgoing present consumption and saving for education. Further, it can be noted that individuals with high cultural capital have clear investment strategies of how much and what kind of schooling they or their children should have. Parents with high cultural capital attempt to secure for their children as prestigious a college education as possible because they know it will pay off in later job success and social status. People from different classes make "sensible" or "reasonable" educational or occupational choices by looking at the

people who surround them and observing what is considered "good" or "appropriate" (McDonough, 1994). Further, parental encouragement demonstrates the strongest direct and indirect influences throughout the model of college choice. It is a significant positive predictor of students' plans following high school, students' degree aspirations, goal commitments, and institutional commitments. Additionally, it was the only positive predictor of persistence in college. Parental encouragement was stronger than any of the commitment or integration factors typically employed in persistence studies (Stage & Rushin, 1993).

Winbourne and Dardaine-Raguet (1993) agree that individuals, including children and their parents, are inseparable from their cultural and social environments. However, in an oppositional finding, they found that mainstream students were not as positively motivated towards their ability in school as their at-risk counterparts, and further, found that parents of at-risk students played a more active role in their children's education than parents of mainstream students.

While these models are typically examined independently of one another, there are many variables that overlap the models. It is possible, then, to use elements from each of these models to form an integrated theory of college choice (Hossler & Stage, 1992). In other words, a student who is unsure about college plans may view outside demands as more formidable. A student with a strong commitment to graduation may view college and high school experiences more positively. These experiences and demands continually influence commitment in locating a college (Stage & Rushin, 1993).

Factors Contributing to College Choice

Proximity to the Campus

More than any other single factor, access to a community college depends on proximity. Even the highly selective University of California's urban campuses draw three-quarters of their entering freshmen from within a fifty-mile radius. Hence, the advent of the community college as neighborhood institution did more to open higher education to more people than did its policy of accepting even those students who had not done well in high school. Throughout the nation, in city after city's community colleges opened their doors, the percentage of students beginning college expanded dramatically. During the 1950's and 1960's, whenever a community college was established in a locale where there had been no publicly supported college, the proportion of high school graduates in their area who began college immediately increased, sometimes by as much as 50 percent, and this pattern has not changed. Most people attending a community college, according to the College Entrance Examination Board (1986) live close to the institution, within 40 miles, and of the attendees, 96 percent commute to the campus. In this example, the importance of having a community college in a locale accessible to all of its students is integral (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Location of the institution manifested itself as an influential factor again in 1991 when Martin & Dixon performed their study on college choice. They declared proximity to be an external factor that is highly influential when students are considering a college to attend. In Slater's 1993 study of students' perceptions of postsecondary institutions during the application process,

reasonable geographic proximity of the institution probably contributed to all applications throughout the United States, and was termed one of the top three "most impressive characteristics" for choosing a college. Anderson, Bowman, & Tinto, (1972), found that the relationship between distance from a college and college attendance was complex and fluctuated in different states and among students of various ability levels. Overall, it was discovered that students who lived within 20 miles of a postsecondary institution were more likely to enroll.

In 1991, Peek & Goldstein conducted a study in student college selection behaviors in New York State. Using an interview technique, the researchers found that the college student's choice process was significantly influenced by location. Their findings provided a somewhat limited range of rationale to support decisions on attending specific community colleges, however, geography played an almost exclusive role in their decisions. Sixteen of twenty-five respondents cited "convenience" and the desire not to relocate as reasons for their college choices. For a few respondents, even if they were interested in a particular program offered at community colleges that were of some distance to their homes, they chose other programs at more accessible campuses, rated as lesser in value to the respondent, rather than take up temporary residence at the college further away (Peek & Goldstein, 1991).

In a study conducted at William Rainey Harper College in Illinois, it was found that most of the degree credit students were persuaded to attend Harper CC due to the proximity of the campus. It was also found that there was an increase in people showing interest in taking public transportation, although most of the credit students drove to the campus rather than riding with someone else or using public modes of transportation (Lucas & Meltesen, 1994).

In a survey given to new students to assess academic and career plans, goals, and factors that influenced their selection of GCTC, factors that influenced the decision to attend Gateway Community-Technical College in Connecticut (GCTC, 1990-1993) remained the same and consistent in ranking over a three year period: closeness to home and cost were ranked either one, two, or three each year between 1990 and 1993.

Cost and Tuition Fees

As has been described previously in this section, student and parent socioeconomic status has a particularly critical effect on whether or not a student decides to enroll in college or not, and lends credence to another considerable aspect of community colleges -- their low cost.

In 1993, J. W. Evans, as part of an effort to stem an unexpected decline in full-time community college students, a California community college surveyed students to determine their reasons for taking fewer courses and to assess their reactions to fee increases that spring at the college. It was found that over 40% of the full-time students reported that they were unable to enroll in all of the classes they wanted in the current semester simply due to the fee increases over the spring. A similar study at Diablo Valley College in California (Birdsall, 1994) indicated that the number of students under 20 years of age had been declining, and state-mandated fee increases were the main culprit for the trend.

McPherson & Schapiro (1994) used data on the distribution of college students by income background to analyze college choice on a nationwide level. They found that low income students were increasingly represented at public

two-year colleges, which representations of middle and upper income students in four-year colleges declined. Private four-year colleges had been enrolling a declining share of upper income students, and public and two-year colleges' share of wealthier students had increased. This data seems to support the growing emergence of the community college as a college of choice, even if only used for the first two years of a four-year education system.

Marcia M. Lee (1995) asked the students of Westchester Community College "Why did you select WCC?". Among the top four answers given, "low cost of attendance" was chosen by a high percentage of students, even those who were 22 and younger (66.1%). Two-thirds of the entire college population (66.3%) indicated that the low tuition of the community was the number one reason in deciding to come to WCC (Lee, 1995).

Quite a few student surveys have been administered at diverse community colleges across the nation to determine students' reasons for choosing that college and ultimately attending it. The January 26, 1994 *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported a UCLA study saying there are record proportions of students saying low tuition was a very important and integral reason why they picked their college. In 1992, 32% of students rated cost as the number one reason compared to only 16.6% in 1979.

Among the researchers who agree with this current fact was the team at Blinn College in Texas (1994), where 61% of their students indicated that tuition and cost were the most substantial influential factors concerning their decision to attend Blinn College. The same or similar results were found at studies conducted at Mississippi community colleges (Tarpley, 1992), New York state community colleges (Peek & Goldstein, 1991), William Rainey Harper College in

Palatine, Illinois (Lucas & Meltesen, 1994), as well as in nationwide community colleges (Rouse, 1994).

Urban vs. Rural Surroundings

Anderson and his colleagues also found that students who lived in urban areas closer to colleges were more likely to attend a postsecondary institution, because of the array of transportation choices (such as a bus, train, or a carpool). Also, it is postulated that urban students have more of a "college mind-set", in that their peers are attending college, college is in their future goals, and their careers of choice require a further postsecondary education such as a bachelor's degree.

The results of a discriminate analysis done in 1979 by Lam & Hoffman revealed that students who lived in rural areas were less likely to enroll in college, because of lack of transportation and the distance of the college from the students' homes. In comparison to urban students' attendance patterns, the students from a rural setting have less of a "need" to attend college because their job choices after high school do not require further schooling, such as a family business associate or an agricultural or self-produced commodity.

This current study continues the research done by Anderson and his colleagues in 1972 and by Lam & Hoffman in 1979, almost 25 years later, and applies their principles to a community in which there is no college choice, two year or otherwise, in the area closer than 45 miles away. The only exception that Cape May County has to this bleak secondary educational outlook is a small extension center of a neighboring community college, which offers only 6% of

the courses offered at the main campus, which is 45 miles away (ASCW, 1991). This translates to students of Cape May County having to travel, in all probability at least once per month, to the main campus in the neighboring county in order to visit its library, guidance counselors, advisors, financial aid offices, bookstore, and faculty, as well as for many other entities that are located on a full community college campus.

The students of Cape May County are also in a position in which they cannot be classified as a entirely rural or completely urban setting. They are not more than 1 1/2 hours away from Philadelphia and Atlantic City, making their county not far away from mainstream urban life, yet their lifestyles and small town inclinations closely resemble a rural setting. Their largely rural job choices, which do not require college, are abundant. This seems to reflect the tourism-town mode of thought, in which the citizens do whatever they can to make money and prosper off of the summer tourism industries. This means many individually -owned stores, mom and pop restaurants and businesses, consumer services specifically geared towards the vacationers (such as water ski rentals and sightseer boat tours), and a lack of large chain-stores or franchises which take away from the independence and livelihoods of the market owners.

Guidance Counselor Recommendations

Prospective students are significantly influenced in their decision to attend a particular two-year institution by the institution's academic programs and other information that may only be available upon a very personal chat with a member of the faculty or administration of a particular school. In many cases, students

can't just travel to each and every college they are considering to get a "taste" of that particular institution. As a result, students who receive adequate and accurate information at the point of application are more likely to select that institution. Guidance counselors can assume an active role through involvement in the interviewing process in high school (Garing, 1993).

In a survey done throughout 70 postsecondary institutions across the country in 1993 (Slater), it was found that guidance counselor recommendation is the most influential factor for selecting the colleges to which the students applied. In two recent studies, it was surmised that approximately three-fourths of the high school students used their guidance counselor as a source of information (Johnson, Stewart, & Eberly, 1992), and are an especially important information source for low-income students. Using a questionnaire to survey college freshmen entering a large midwestern university concerning their college choice decision-making process, the students were asked whether or not they considered each of fifteen different factors. They were also asked to indicate the importance of each of them on a 5-point scale. It was found that 70% of the freshmen made their choices during the senior year in high school. For all of those students, the most often identified resource was high school guidance counselors. The counselor was identified as a resource more often than parents or high school teachers (Johnson, Stewart, & Eberly, 1992).

Ron Moss and Robert Young tested faculty and counselor perceptions of college-bound students in 1995. Analyses were done for the relationships between administrators and students, faculty and students, and the guidance counselors and students. It was found that the guidance counselor scores had lowest amount significant differences from the students' responses on the

following subscales: course learning, learning skills, writing skills, and experiences with faculty. It is not uncommon to hear high school counselors say that teaching faculty do not know students as well as they do. If this statement is correct, then counselors should come closest to assessing the real academic and social integration of underprepared students. However, the instructions in this administration of the CCSEQ, a test designed to measure the amount, scope, and quality of effort students put into their college experience, directed the counseling subgroup to answer the questions in the way that they perceived their students, especially the underprepared ones, would. Therefore, the discrepancy, albeit small, between the counselors' responses and those of underprepared students cannot be ignored (Moss & Young, 1995).

Differing Opinions

Consequently, in a 1990 study done by Sanders, it was discovered that counselors hold quite different opinions than those of students contemplating college entrance. There are several reasons that accounted for the differences of opinion between student and guidance counselor, according to Sanders (1990). It can be argued that professional guidance counselors, with years of experience interacting with a wide variety of college-bound students, understand more completely the subtle influences that comprise the entire college selection process. For example, students were primarily concerned about expectations related to how a given college can prepare them for entry into a highly competitive employment marketplace. Counselors, however, recognize that the total college experience must be assessed early in the selection process. In this

regard, for example, counselors clearly appreciate the significance of an institution's location. They rank this variable highly in recognition that students can expect very different campus lifestyles at urban universities in large metropolitan areas as compared to a small campus in rural areas closer to their hometown. But during the inquiry stage students appear not to appreciate fully how this expectation will influence their college selection. Also, this data indicates that students exhibit less concern about what to expect from colleges in terms of cost than do counselors. Perhaps they assume all colleges provide the same levels of need-based support and also believe, of course that they will receive merit-based scholarships! Guidance personnel are much more knowledgeable about what students can realistically expect regarding cost of college, and, rank this expectation as second most important (Sanders, 1990; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1986).

One of the main reasons why counselors were noted as having differing opinions and expectations than their students is that the counselors must advise hundreds of students -- between 320 and 470, according to various estimates. They have little time to visit colleges or talk at length with college representatives. As a result, the guidance counselors report having comprehensive information on only about 15 to 25 four-year colleges and only 5 to 7 two-year colleges (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1986). In four of the ten largest U. S. cities, the average high school counselor-to-student ratio is 1:740. At its best, the national average of one guidance counselor to 325 public high school students does not allow for much personal attention (McDonough, 1994).

Pat McDonough, while doing a project when she studied the influence of social class and high-school guidance on a student's perception of her opportunities for a college education (1994), found that the phenomenon of admissions management to be only an upper-middle-class income level one. The school was a high-SES one and a private preparatory school, where the counselor to student ratio of 1:58 is comparable to the U. S. private preparatory school average of 1:65.

It is this last McDonough study that this researcher feels relates most to the Cape May County public high schools. Although the schools are public, and the vast majority of the students attending the high schools are of low- to middle-SES levels, there are only from 100 to 150 students in each grade of the four public high schools asked to complete the survey instrument. This would indicate, that even though the students are from lower income levels and in a public high school, that they are receiving individualized attention from their guidance counselors due to the low number of students actually enrolled in each grade level of the high school. These students are receiving extended time to talk with a counselor, to answer questions about individual schools, to help with application essays, even to have conferences with the student and the parents about suitable choices for postsecondary education based on GPA, curriculum choices, and SAT coaching. It would then be expected that the guidance counselors from these public schools in Cape May County would have responses that most resembled their students' responses to influences on college choice.

It is at this point that the study at hand will augment previous studies done in regards to the subject of student college choice: When the question is

whether or not to build and support a community college, will senior high-school students and their high-school guidance counselors agree on the reasons why seniors choose their colleges? And further, will high-school seniors in Cape May County, demonstrate support, by ranking five attendance variables from most to least important, for a community college by attendance due to the proximity and low cost policies that community colleges have in common? It is this question that the county of Cape May attempted to answer through the Advisory Commission on the Status of Women five years ago, and that the current study will answer in a more descriptive nature, yet smaller scale, at this time.

Summary

Open access to education is what distinguishes community colleges from all other educational institutions. The community college provides a special link in the educational chain. It serves as the only avenue to higher education for many minority students , older students, first-generation college students, and a number of others who may have dropped out of the educational mainstream. The community college provides a means for students to achieve their goals.

An exhaustive literature review suggests that there is in fact a tested and structured motivation behind high school seniors' choices of a postsecondary institution and importance of specific aspects. Several factors contribute to the difficulties student have in adjusting to the college environment, simply from coming from a low-income, uneducated family. In 1992, Hossler and stage found that parental level of education, combined with parents' educational

aspirations for their children may be the best predictors of student postsecondary plans.

More than any other single factor, access to a community college depends on proximity. There has been an categorical acceptance throughout the nation that having a community college in a locale accessible to all of its students is integral (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). In Slater's 1998 study of students' perceptions of postsecondary institutions during the application process, reasonable geographic proximity of the institution probably contributed to all applications throughout the United States, and was termed one of the top three "most impressive characteristics" for choosing a college. Further, Anderson, Bowman, & Tinto (1972) found that the relationship between distance from a college and college attendance was different among states and students' ability levels. Overall, though, it was discovered that students who lived within 20 miles of a postsecondary institution were more likely to enroll.

Cost has proved as a very influential factor, almost the most influential, among college choice in high school students. McPherson & Schapiro (1994) used data on the distribution of college students by income background to analyze college choice on a nationwide level. They found that low income students were increasingly represented at public two-year colleges, which representations of middle and upper income students in four-year colleges declined. The January 26, 1994 *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported a UCLA study saying there are record proportions of students saying low tuition was a very important and integral reason why they picked their college. In 1992, 32% of students rated cost as the number one reason compared to only 16.6% in 1979.

Anderson and his colleagues also found that students who lived in urban areas closer to colleges were more likely to attend a postsecondary institution, because of the array of transportation choices (such as a bus, train, or a carpool). Also, it is postulated that urban students have more of a "college mindset", in that their peers are attending college, college is in their future goals, and their careers of choice require a further postsecondary education such as a bachelor's degree.

Guidance counselor information recommendation has been found as the most influential factor for selecting colleges to which students applied. In two recent studies, it was surmised that approximately three-fourths of the high school students used their guidance counselor as a source of information (Johnson, Stewart, & Eberly, 1992), and are an especially important information source for low-income students.

Consequently, in a 1990 study done by Sanders, it was discovered that counselors hold quite different opinions than those of students contemplating college entrance. There are several reasons that accounted for the differences of opinion between student and guidance counselor, according to Sanders (1990). One of the main reasons why counselors were noted as having differing opinions and expectations than their students is that the counselors must advise hundreds of students -- between 320 and 470, according to various estimates. They have little time to visit colleges or talk at length with college representatives. As a result, the guidance counselors report having comprehensive information on only about 15 to 25 four-year colleges and only 5 to 7 two-year colleges (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1986).

As is alluded to in the review of relevant literature, the relationship between responses will be evident due to the small numbers per grade in the public high schools, thus affecting the high school student : guidance counselor ratio in these schools. The importance of certain aspects related to college choice, as ranked by the students and guidance counselors, will also be examined. Through the use of a short survey given to high school students and guidance counselors at public high schools in the Cape May County area, it is speculated that the highest ranked values by both students and guidance counselors in favor of attending a community college in the area will be associated with cost and proximity to the home; namely, the two vital influences on college choice lacking in the county because of the absence of a community college, or any postsecondary educational institution with the exception of a Voc-Tech School, in the area and surrounding vicinity of Cape May County. It is further presupposed that many students who indicate on their surveys that they are planning to attend a four-year institution or not planning on attending a college at all will maintain that they would attend a community college if it were in the county, giving credence to the growing list of reasons why Cape May County should have an accessible county college for their young adult population.

It is at this point that the current study will augment previous studies done in regards to the subject of student college choice. In Chapter 3, a design and procedure for the analyses of miscellaneous variables will be offered and described in a step-by-step format.

Chapter Three

Sample

The sample for this study was defined as high school seniors who were enrolled in a public four-year high school institution. The population of students from which the sample was drawn was all senior students in the four public high schools in Cape May County, and further limited to 50 students from each of the four high schools, totaling 200 surveys distributed in all. Of the 200 distributed surveys, 192 were returned to the guidance counselors as usable. Further, of the 192 total surveys, they were almost evenly disbursed as follows for each of the four public high schools: 50 (26%) from Lower Township High School, 43 (23%) from Wildwood High School, 51 (26%) from Middle Township High School, and 48 (25%) from Ocean City High School. Some of the surveys given were returned "unranked"; that is, the student filling out the survey did not rank the five aspects relating to college attendance, yet completed the first two questions on the survey pertaining to plans after high school and attendance to a community college if there were to be one located in Cape May County. The majority of "unranked" surveys belonged to students who chose to not continue their education after high school or to those who chose to go to a four-year college, not a two-year college. The reason that they were not "ranked" could be

because of a miscommunication to the student on the part of the proctor of the survey, or because of unclear directions on the survey instrument itself. The total of the "unranked" surveys was 77 (40%), leaving 115 (60%) "ranked" surveys to be used in further analysis. The students surveyed were drawn from the senior classes of each of the four schools by the guidance staff of the schools

Given the exploratory context of the study, demographic variables (such as gender and high school grade point average) were not asked for from the participants in the study, as the study's main concern was first and foremost the students' responses to the college choice question, and in specific, those choices as they related to proximity and cost of a college education and guidance counselor encouragement. This study was not concerned with the effects that such factors as gender and high school grade point average have on the college choice process. Socioeconomic status of the school communities was characterized as by the school guidance counselors: Ocean City High School and Middle Township High School was comprised of mostly middle-class and some lower-class students, while Wildwood High School and Lower Township High School were characterized as mainly lower-class and some middle-class by the school administrators. Overall, it can be said that many students in attendance at Ocean City High School and Middle Township High School were from middle-income families, while the majority of the students from Lower Township High School and Wildwood High School were from lower-income families.

Measures

A chi square goodness-of-fit analysis will be used to determine if there is a relationship between the expected student responses to the five ranked aspects and the responses given by the students on the surveys. In order to examine the relationship and likeness between guidance counselors' and students' responses to the five ranked aspects of college choice; smaller-scale analyses will be done, using percentages and tables. It is anticipated that the guidance counselors' responses will resemble the students' responses. It is additionally foreseen that the students' will rank the categories of "cost" and "proximity" as the first and second most important reasons for college choice. In other words, it is predicted that the larger percentage of students' number "one" and "two" rankings will be in the categories of "proximity" and "cost"; the two variables most attributed to community college choice.

Instrumentation

Pilot Study

An initial pilot study was conducted because the survey instrument was developed by the researcher; thus, the aspects that were to be included in the survey for ranking by the participants had to be aspects that the guidance counselors and students thought were important, not reasons thought as integral by the researcher. In this fashion, the "ranked" reasons included in the survey

were obtained and extracted by the telephone interviews conducted with the guidance counselor staff.

Although there are standardized instruments available to measure student commitment and involvement, such as the SIQ III (Student Involvement Questionnaire, III Revision), many of these student standardized tests include reasons for college choice as defined by factors that are not related to the questions posed by this particular study. Some of those factors not explored in this particular study include ethnicity, gender, involvement in high school activities, academic track, and grade point average. This study was specific to the geographic location and financial situation of the students tested. Since this county has one of the rare instances in which there is no choice of a community college (with the exception of an extension center of another county's college), these guidance counselors were in a distinctive position to comment on the affects of such a situation on their students. Their comments were of significant consideration to this survey instrument, and therefore constituted the five reasons that were ranked in order of importance by the respondents. The actual survey instrument can be seen in Appendix A.

Design

A pilot study was conducted first over phone interviews of the guidance counselors from the four public high-schools in Cape May County used in this investigation. This was done by asking the guidance staff specific, yet open-ended, questions pertaining to their senior class; i.e.: their comments on their students' perceived choices in continuing education, how the addition of a

community college in Cape May County would benefit the students of their schools if at all, their opinions of the disadvantages their students face because of living in Cape may County, and their predictions, reasons, and explanations of why seniors choose the college they choose.

The guidance staff was informed by the researcher to draw students from the most homogeneous population possible, for example, to gather data from students in a gym period or a homeroom period, and not from an advanced placement class or remediation class of any kind, as well as not from any type of class that did not include all senior-level students. Guidance counselors were also asked to fill out 3 surveys where they ranked the aspects, just as their students had done, so that the data could be kept constant and easier to analyze later. Fifty surveys were distributed to the four high schools, and collected by the researcher when they were completed, approximately one week later.

This instrument, as self-constructed by the researcher, does not have established reliability and validity measures. However, the questions in the survey and the items for rank/analysis are constructed in a content valid manner referencing statements made by guidance counselors during the pilot study linked to this research. Further, Floyd J. Fowler, Jr.'s Survey Research Methods (1988) was used to design an appropriate survey tool. Based on all of the above mentioned aspects, an assumption of this study is that the survey distributed has adequate reliability and validity for the purposes of this study. In keeping with current trends, to date, the vast majority of information regarding college choice has been determined using single-item measures, interview techniques, and survey questionnaires (Martin & Dixon, 1991).

Testable Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that there will be a relationship between the high school guidance counselors' rankings of college choice aspects and the students' rankings of the same criteria. It is further posited that most of the respondents' rankings; that is, a greater percentage than for the other three reasons, for college choice will be for reasons involving "proximity" and "cost". Lastly, by charting the frequency of choice, it is finally presumed that students who indicate on their surveys that they are either uninterested in attending college, or whose plans are already made to attend a four-year institution, will show that if a community college were accessible and available to them in Cape May County, they would consider attendance to that educational institution.

Analyses

It is assumed that the population used in this survey is normally distributed. The chi square analysis is deemed appropriate due to the nominal nature of the data accumulated in this study. In addition, the chi square test for goodness-of-fit, in which the proportion of rankings are measured, the dimensions for the null hypothesis would be as follows:

transportation =	20.0 %
no strict entrance requirements =	20.0 %
undecided on a major =	20.0 %
cost (tuition) =	20.0 %
proximity (closer to home) =	<u>20.0 %</u>
Total =	<u>100.0 %</u>

The dimensions for the expected proportions of rankings in each specific category will be as follows:

transportation =	6.7 %
no strict entrance requirements =	6.7 %
undecided on a major =	6.7 %
cost (tuition) =	40.0 %
proximity (closer to home) =	<u>40.0 %</u>
Total =	<u>100.0 %</u>

As is demonstrated numerically above, it is predicted that the majority of the first and second reasons for choice of a college will be either "cost" or "tuition". The third, fourth, and fifth ranked items; "transportation", "no strict entrance requirements", and "undecided on a major", respectively, will be minimally chosen as the first or second most important reason for choosing a college, and will more likely be given the rank of "three", "four", or "five" in weight.

The chi square analysis will be carried out at a .05 level of significance. The actual raw numbers and percentages of high school students' responses as

well as guidance counselors' responses, both broken down by specific high school and combined to give overall percentages, can be seen in Appendix B.

The analysis of student choices as a function of whether or not they would attend a locally implemented community college, even if plans had been previously made to go to a four-year college or to not attend any college, will be descriptive in nature and will be done using a frequency chart and percentage/proportion breakdowns. There will also be an analysis of student answers as compared with guidance counselor answers, presented as frequency charts which can be viewed in the Appendix B, in Tables B1 thru B9.

Summary

The complete sample size of this study is 192 senior-level high school students, and 13 guidance counselors at four (4) public high schools in Cape May County. The survey instrument was a self-made instrument by the researcher, and was constructed using reliable and content valid means which are related to and a criterion of the preliminary pilot study. The survey consisted of a question pertaining to what the students' plans were after graduation from high school, if the student would be interested in attending a community college if one were to be built in Cape May County, and then both student and guidance counselor was asked to rank five aspects related to college choice. Students and guidance personnel completed the same survey instruments in a matter of one week, yielding a final return of 115 ranked surveys from the students and 13 ranked surveys from the guidance counselors, although the total of 192 surveys will be used in other analyses which add to the

meaning and relevance of the five ranked aspects in the survey. A percentage and raw number tables will be constructed to determine the relationship and likeness between the guidance counselor rankings and the student rankings. A chi square goodness-of-fit test will be performed to support the position that most of the respondents' rankings; that is, a greater percentage than for the other three reasons, for college choice will be for reasons involving "proximity" and "cost". Lastly, a frequency distribution will be constructed to analyze how student choices would change in regards to plans after high school if the choice of a locally implemented community college were present in their county.

Chapter Four

Results

In support of the previously stated hypotheses, it was found that a significant number of respondents ranked as reasons numbers one and two, proximity and cost of attendance. Results from the chi square for the first analysis, meaning totals for the rank of number *one* for proximity and cost, was 12.80 (with degrees of freedom equaling four) at the alpha level of .05. Further, chi square totals for the rank of number *two* for proximity and cost was 22.52, again at alpha level .05 and considering four degrees of freedom. A compilation of the raw data used for analysis can be viewed in chart form in Appendix B, Table B10. The raw data in a format divided among the individual high schools surveyed, broken down for students and guidance counselors, can be seen in Tables B1 thru B9.

Similarity of the guidance counselors' opinions and high school students' opinions was broken down further into specific high schools and their guidance counselors' opinions. Overall, though, it can be said that the guidance counselor opinions mirrored the students' opinions, in that they also ranked accessibility and cost of attendance as the most important two reasons that their students would choose a college. Also, guidance counselors also held as important the

fact that there are no strict entrance requirements for their students at the community college level. The guidance counselors' responses from the individual high schools can be seen in Tables B1 thru B4; the combined responses in all of the public high schools in Cape May County are in Table B9; both located in Appendix B. Further statistical analysis of these guidance counselor results was not permitted, as a chi-square tool cannot be used in such a small sample as is the case with the thirteen guidance counselors that were polled in this study.

A brief analysis was done, in addition, concerning the students' acceptability of a community college even if they had already chosen to attend another college or not to attend college at all. A breakdown of Cape May County's high school students' plans after high school can be seen in Table B11, in Appendix B. Acceptability may be operationally defined in this case as the students' willingness to go to a community college, if one were located in Cape May County. Those affirmative results tended to center around the two-year college attendees and the students who chose to work; groups consisting of 54 and 14 students, respectively. Of the students who were already expecting to attend another two-year college, 90% of the indicated on their surveys that they would rather attend a college located in Cape May County. In addition, of the students who indicated that they were expecting to work and not go to college, 79% said they would attend a college in Cape May County if they had a choice. Upon a closer look at the numbers, however, a small to moderate percentage of each of the four types of students identified : four-year college attendees, two-year college attendees, those who planned to work and not go to college and those who planned to enter the military and not enter college, can be said to

have been persuaded to attend a community college if one were available in the county in place of their original plans. The table in its entirety can be seen in Appendix B, Table B12.

Summary

In short, the relationship between Cape May County's guidance counselors and high school students has been studied and it can be said that counselors' ideas and students' ideas for attending college are largely the same. Further, chi square analyses were done to determine strength of the hypothesis that most students would rank as the most important reasons for attendance to a college "accessibility" and "cost of attendance", at a significance level of .05. Lastly, a clear analysis using percentages and tables was done of students' plans after high school as they relate to the pending acquisition of a community college in Cape May County. Altogether, it can be said that a vast majority of students who were planning on attending other community colleges, and who were planning to work and not go to college at all, would entertain the idea of attending a community college located in Cape May County.

Chapter Five

Synopsis

Community colleges have become expert at fitting into the context of people's lives and into the communities that they serve, because of their proximity, their affordable tuition, and because of the programs and services they offer. The community colleges reach out to attract those who were not being served by traditional higher education: those who could not afford the tuition; who could not take the time to attend a college on a full-time basis; whose ethnic background had constrained them from participating; who had inadequate preparation in the lower schools; whose educational progress had been interrupted by some temporary condition; who had become obsolete in their jobs or had never been trained to work at any job; who needed a connection to obtain a job; who were confined in prisons; had physical disabilities, or otherwise unable to attend classes on a campus; or who were faced with a need to fill increased leisure time meaningfully (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The community college provides a special link in the educational chain. It serves as the only avenue to higher education for many minority students, older students, first-generation college students, and a number of others who may have dropped out of the educational mainstream.

The accessibility of a community college in any community seems of paramount importance. The students of Cape May County, however, are faced with a dilemma that not one of the other students in other counties of New Jersey faces. They have no community college.

This study addressed five major reasons why students in Cape May County would attend a community college located in the county, and invited the respondents, both high school guidance counselors and high school seniors, to rate the five reasons in order from most important to least important. The complete sample size of this study was 192 senior-level high school students, and 13 guidance counselors at four (4) public high schools in Cape May County. The survey instrument used was a self-made instrument by the researcher, and was constructed using reliable and content valid means which are related to and a criterion of the preliminary pilot study. The survey consisted of a question pertaining to what the students' plans were after graduation from high school, if the student would be interested in attending a community college if one were to be built in Cape May County, and then both student and guidance counselor was asked to rank five aspects related to college choice.

Students and guidance personnel completed the same survey instruments in a matter of one week, yielding a final return of 115 ranked surveys from the students and 13 ranked surveys from the guidance counselors, although the total of 192 surveys were used in other analyses which add to the meaning and relevance of the five ranked aspects in the survey. A frequency table was done to determine the relationship and likeness between the guidance counselor rankings and the student rankings, which can be seen in Appendix B. A chi square goodness-of-fit tests were performed to support the contention that

most of the respondents' rankings; that is, a greater percentage than for the other three reasons, for college choice will be for reasons involving "proximity" and "cost"; or ranks *one* and *two*. Results for the chi square tests were found to be significant at the .05 level of significance. Lastly, another frequency distribution table was constructed to analyze how student choices would change in regards to plans after high school if the choice of a locally implemented community college were present in their county. In the following pages, conclusions of this study as well as a discussion of these results will be presented first in the "Conclusions" portion, in a precise, summarized format, and then in a more detailed, problem-oriented viewpoint in the "Discussion" section of the review.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached in the present study:

1. In determining the relevance of high school students' and guidance counselor rankings for reasons influencing their choice of a college to attend, a chi square test for goodness-of-fit was used and the results were found to be significant; yielding for the leading rank of number one for proximity and cost a $X = 12.80$, $df = 4$; at the alpha level of .05.
2. Further, chi square totals for the rank of number two for proximity and cost was 22.52, again at alpha level .05 and considering four degrees of freedom. Two chi square tests were provided to distinguish the two ranks

from one another and to also further clarify the two items as being prominent choices separately, and not entirely mutually exclusive in nature.

3. In looking at the Tables in Appendix B; and in specific, Table B9, it can be clearly seen that Cape May County public high school guidance counselors have also ranked cost (tuition) and accessibility (proximity to home) as the most important reasons for choice of a college for attendance.

4. Cape May County's high school seniors' plans would certainly have been different if a community college were located in the county; as is shown in Table B12 in Appendix B. Ninety percent of the students who were already planning to attend another 2-year college said that they would attend a community college locally, in Cape May County, as well as 79% of the students who responded that they were going to work and *not* to college.

Discussion

Because Cape May County is in the unique situation of being the county in the state of New Jersey to not have their own community college, this study has demonstrated the need for a community college in a distinctive way by asking students what their preferences were for college attendance and relating those preferences to major reasons why any student would choose a community

college; as well as comparing those choices to those of the very students' guidance counselors at the same high schools that they attend. The method of surveying the guidance counselors and students from the same school and comparing their answers is helpful, especially in this situation, as the addition of a community college in Cape May County is pending in legislature in the county as this report is being written. It is a concise but meaningful way to take into account the opinions of those who would be attending a community college but who are not yet of voting age (students) and those who would be voting on such a change for the county (guidance counselors), who would not necessarily be attending the college but who are said to be representative of the majority of persons who would be in attendance .

Guidance Counselor vs. Student Choices

In this particular investigation, only 13 guidance counselors were surveyed for comparison to approximately 115 students' choices. Although the actual number of students surveyed was 192, although only 115 students ranked their surveys, either through a miscommunication of directions by the proctors of the survey or through misunderstanding the directions on the survey instrument. As stated in the Results section of this report, because of the small number of guidance counselors in the public schools of Cape May County, a statistical analysis was not plausible in this situation. In comparing Table B9 to Table B10, the summary tables of the guidance counselor and student responses, it can clearly be seen that the counselors and students agree upon reasons for college attendance. The guidance counselors actually felt that the "no strict

entrance requirement" issue was a particularly important one along with tuition and accessibility options, as they are probably acutely aware that many of their students will not be able to enter a four-year college, even if they tried, with their low grades and test scores: a fact that students all too easily overlook in adolescence, as evidenced in the student ranks in Table B10 under the same heading. This guidance counselor view is indicated by the numbers in Table B9. The guidance counselors ranked as numbers 1 and 2 the "no strict entrance requirement" almost as much as "cost", and even more so than "accessibility", especially in the number 2 rank place (8% as compared to 31%). The guidance counselors ranked "undecided on a major" as a least important variable in student choice of college; while the students gave that aspect a somewhat level ranking; that is to say that across the chart, "undecided on a major" did not differ in as many percentage points from ranks 1 through 5 as did other aspects of college choice, such as with "cost" or "accessibility" (see Table B10). This is interesting to note, as the students seemed to be much more perplexed by their indecision than their guidance counselors were!

Students are influenced by parental and counselor expectations regarding the college experience, but more importantly, guidance counselor recommendation has been regarded as one of the most influential factors in college selection, aside from location of the institution and financial reasons (Slater, 1993). There are conflicting opinions, though, in the research about the amount of influence on students that guidance counselors have, as well as their congruence of opinions with those of the students they counsel. As has been understood earlier, current research finds that high school counselors' opinions as to what their seniors expect from universities vary significantly from those of

their students (Sanders, 1990). For example, in Sanders' study in 1990 at Washington State University, it was found that "career opportunities after graduation" was ranked as important by both student and guidance counselor, although students ranked it as the most important expectation of all of the values viewed (a range of eight altogether), while guidance counselors ranked it as seventh in weight.

There are several reasons that account for the differences of opinion. One of the most obvious is that professional guidance counselors are adults and have had years of experience in interacting with a wide variety of college-bound students, and are said to understand more completely the subtle influences that comprise the entire college-selection process. In the initial inquiry stage, students are primarily concerned about expectations related to how a given college can prepare them for entry into a highly competitive employment marketplace, or how much it is, or how they plan on traveling to there or living away from home. Counselors, however, recognize that the total college experience must be assessed early in the selection process (Sanders, 1990). This includes whether or not the student will be accepted for admission due to scores on tests and if the school has worthy programs for the students' interests and abilities. Guidance personnel are much more knowledgeable about what students can realistically expect regarding aid, and therefore rank cost as a top priority in college choice and application.

In this situation at hand, though, the students were also "thinking ahead" in ranking cost as one of the fundamentals in college choice. This could be because many communities in Cape May County can be characterized as lower- to middle/lower-class (as was done by the guidance counselors in preliminary

interviews), which makes costs and tuition apparent and in the forefront of these students' choices. Much of this awareness by the student can be explained because the students themselves, or financial aid, will provide their funding for college attendance, not their parents. This makes the question of "cost" a remarkable one, even for the young pupils.

According to various estimates, guidance counselors were advising hundreds of students -- between 320 and 470 per counselor. Because of this, they had little time to visit colleges or talk at length with college representatives. Research indicates that the frequency and perceived worth of interaction with guidance counselors is one of the strongest predictors of student persistence and, among those who persist, a predictor of learning gain (Tinto, 1992). As a result, on the whole they report having comprehensive information only about 15 to 25 colleges, including two-year colleges. Much of their job has been taken up through the advisement by private consultants, other high-school seniors, and parents who have attended college more than a decade before their children. A major selling point of these private counselors is the ability of them to offer individualized attention.

Admissions processes are often viewed as an erratic, chancy game over which students have little or no control, especially if coming from a community or a situation in which they have had problems with grades and test scores, are of lower-SES, or are from families who have not produced one college graduate and/or who have no idea about attending college, much less acceptance to one. There are major differences in the application practices of students from different socioeconomic status. High-SES students average ten applications, while lower-SES students filed two to three applications only. According to other reports,

first-generation college-goers tend to apply to few schools, whereas middle- and upper-income students apply everywhere, sometimes submitting up to twenty-two applications (McDonough, 1994). As in many other domains of modern life, the college choice process has become jeopardized and jaded.

In Cape May County, however, student populations are so small, even in the public schools, that the ratio is often akin to that of a private school or a personal counselor caseload, averaging around 100-150 students to each 1-2 guidance counselors, and in some cases, even *less* than those numbers! The daily interaction of student : guidance counselor may have led to the similarities in the responses of the counselors and students and a concomitant conclusion that counselors have the most realistic understanding of these students based on their contact with them. It is for this reason that Cape May County students would be ready and willing recipients of guidance counselor advice for college attendance, and could be the justification behind the counselors' views matching the students' views so well in Cape May County.

Socioeconomic Status

It is also noteworthy to mention the results in the breakdown between the four specific public high schools that were used in this survey, which basically represent four differing areas of Cape May County, especially according to socioeconomic status. As was formerly mentioned, categorization for socioeconomic status of the high schools was not obtained through research *per se*, but was done through polling of the guidance counselors in preparatory telephone interviews. To restate, students in attendance at Ocean City High

School and Middle Township High School were from middle-income families, while the majority of the students from Lower Township High School and Wildwood High School were from lower-income families. In Tables B5 through B8, individual high schools were listed for the student rankings, and in Tables B1 through B4, for guidance counselor rankings. For Middle Township and Ocean City High Schools, much of the importance lay between "cost", and "accessibility", while many of the counselors ranked "entrance requirements" and "transportation" as lower in concern for decision-making. In comparison, the students at these two schools can be characterized as wanting a school that was also low in cost and accessible with transportation, although as already established, the students also put a fair amount of weight on "indecision of major". It is safe to say, then, that the guidance counselor and student rankings were in accordance with each other. Lower Township and Wildwood High Schools were considered to be of lower-SES by their acting guidance counselors. These guidance counselors, as well, seemed to be in agreement that "cost" and "accessibility" were of significance, while "transportation" and "indecision of major" tended to be ranked as last or second-to-last place. Similarly, a bulk of the importance on "cost" and "accessibility" was given by Lower and Wildwood High students, with a middle-of-the-road ranking for "transportation". It can be seen that these two differing SES areas in the county yielded comparable results, even though present literature tends to lean towards the idea that lower-SES areas are much more concerned with tuition costs and accessibility. In defense of these immediate results, the area of Cape May County covers only approximately 260 square miles; making it a very compact area in which to apply statistics that were reached in much larger cities like Los

Angeles and New York (Cunningham & Tidwell, 1990). Further, it is postulated that lower-SES students depend more on their guidance counselors' opinions due to their lack of opinions elsewhere, either through their parents, siblings, or even friends (McDonough, 1994). More dependence on these opinions makes an argument for more consistency of the two groups' opinions when asked about them in regard to college choice.

Effects of a Community College in Cape May County

Insofar as the recruitment-ability of a community college located in Cape May County, the researcher of this investigation directs attention to Table 12 in Appendix B. It is in this table that the impact of a community college in Cape May County can be principally ascertained. In relation to high school seniors' plans after graduation, it is established that an overwhelming 90% of seniors who plan to attend a 2-year college would attend a Cape May County Community College, as well as 79% of the work force-bound students and about 38% of the students planning on entering the armed forces after commencement.

Even more startling is the difference in plans between high schools, and therefore areas, of Cape May County when viewing their high school seniors' outlook. A very small percentage of students are expecting to attend a four-year college at Lower and Wildwood High Schools, as is seen in Table B11, Appendix B, and many students are expecting to attend a two-year college or work after graduation without ever attending college. Of the students preparing to attend a two-year college, 76% (Lower Township and Wildwood's totals combined) would

agree to attending a community college in Cape May County, 65% of the students would agree who are destined to work after graduation, and 38% of those enrolled in the military would change their minds and go to a locally-based community college. In contrast, Middle Township and Ocean City High School students' opinions are a little different. Of the 82 students combined from Ocean City and Middle Township high schools who said they were planning to attend a four-year college (Table B11), only 7 of them (6%) would change their minds and attend a two-year college in Cape May County (Table B12). The same is true for two-year college attendees, work-strategists, and army-bound students; as the possibilities of changing their minds are only 14%, 14%, and 0%, respectively.

The above analysis was done using Lower and Wildwood as representatives of lower-SES and using Middle and Ocean City as mid- to high-SES representation. In doing so, one can more readily see the contrast in attitude for the two SES areas of the county, since these contrasts were not apparent when looking at guidance counselor opinions in relation to their students' opinions. The findings could also suggest that the students in Middle Township and Ocean City High Schools were closer to Atlantic County Community College, a neighboring community college that the citizens of Cape May County have access to since there is no other choice for them in their county. Students from these two counties would be more able to attend this other two-year college, since they are geographically closer to it (Atlantic County is just above the Ocean City area). It is further posited that the students may have had *that* community college in mind when answering this questionnaire.

Atlantic County Community College is a much larger community college than Cape May County's would presume to be, with a reputation (according to

Cape May County public high school guidance counselors) for allowing many students from Cape May County to "fall through the cracks" for a lack of time and too large of a caseload on their counselor's part and a lack of transportation and ability to make a 40-minute drive to ACC's main campus for counseling, on the part of the citizens of Cape May County. As is apparent through this brief discussion of the geography of Cape May County, an Ocean City High School student's drive to ACC would be dramatically decreased in time as compared to a student who was coming from Lower Township in the Villas area of Cape May County. The fact that the area for location of a new Cape May County community college are probably in Lower Township combined with the SES factors make the feasibility for a student in Mid- to Northern Cape May County to attend a college too far away from them *the other way* (in Southern Cape May County) low to non-existent.

This staggering concurrence of opinion *not* to attend a county-based community college is shown in Table B12. All of Ocean City's four-year college students, working students, and students entering the military whole-heartedly corresponded that they would not attend a newly-built community college in the county. The only group of students who admit that they would frequent such an institution are the students who were already entering a two-year college in the fall after commencement. In no other sector of the county is this dramatic of a response seen. Close behind Ocean City High Schools' responses, however, is Middle Township High School -- where only 6% of the students attending a four-year college would have agreed to amend circumstances and attend a county college in Cape May County. Again, the distinctiveness of the two regions of

Cape May County: northern (or more well-to-do-families) and southern (blue-collar working-class families) is seen in particular detail while glancing at Table B12.

Improvement in Quality of Life for Everyone

Taking the opinions of the guidance counselors and high school students to task, the creation of a locally-based community college would serve to benefit all of Cape May County, not only the students in the Southern end of the county - - even though students and citizens in Northern Cape May County may not concur on first examination of the idea. This is because the constituents' own, personal community college would be more interested in their own community's successes, gains, and persistence in the college than another quite large institution; whose main drawing feature is services and training programs for the Atlantic City casinos. While these training programs prepare attendees for a lucrative profession: working at the casino industry in Atlantic City, they are somewhat nonsensical and not economical to a local resident of Cape May County who may not have the money, time, nor the wherewithal to drive approximately 45 minutes to an hour to the classes every day -- not to mention the drive for the work they would be prepared for: shift work-based employment which is at least an hour away from most Cape May County residents.

In a local community college, subject matter in accordance to resources and employment in the area such as marine biology, restaurant management, hotel management, fishing industry options and gerontology certifications for surrounding retirement areas and nursing homes can be taught and used as the

main focus for students planning to frequent the community college. Further, attractiveness of an area for businesses to expand and/or relocate to Cape May County can be reaped by using a local community college to train their employees (at no cost to them) and to give them inservices and retraining when needed.

The community-based college is eminently equipped to provide its services, such as semi-professional retraining for existing businesses, adult education, continuing education, recreation for children and senior citizens, and other quasi-educational endeavors, because of its ability to coordinate planning with other community agencies, its interest in participatory learning experiences as well as cognitive ones, the wide range of ages and life goals represented in its student body, and the alternative instructional approaches it arranges to make learning accessible to various community groups. It is seen as a vital participant in the total renewal process of the community...dedicated to the continual growth and development of its citizens and its social institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Implications for Future Research

A community college in any county, and especially in one such as Cape May County where the resources for employment and opportunities to stay in the county are depleted and for the most part, absent, would be a vital participant in the total renewal process of a community...dedicated to the continual growth and development of its citizens and its social institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Such a college would offer the kinds of education community members want, not

the kind that pedagogues think is a good for them, and at locations where the learners are, not where the college says they should be.

To return to the original question presented by this thesis of whether or not guidance counselors and senior-level high school students in Cape May County agree on the most important reasons for college choice, the answer is "yes". In determining whether or not college-bound students, as well as students with other plans after graduation from high school would patronize a local community college if one were to be built in Cape May County, it was found by way of this study that high school seniors will probably frequent a local community college, even in opposition to their plans now prior to the building of a new community structure, of working or attending a four-year college.

The present findings were pursued not only to improve not only to improve models of college choice, but to update and replicate earlier published research done by the county, as eluded to before in the introductory areas of this presentation. Research of whether or not a community college would best benefit this county of Cape May should continue to be conducted, especially those promoting the benefits of a regional community college, whose mission would be to eventually serve the tri-county area of Cumberland, Cape May, and Atlantic counties and curtail some of the competition between the counties for students. The strong relationship found in this study between student choice and guidance counselor choice, as well as the relative importance of these choices as they are related to a community college indicate that future studies should look carefully at how a community college, either serving Cape May County solely, jointly with another community college affiliation, or regionally with

the cooperation of the surrounding counties would surely benefit Cape May County.

This study focused on the role of guidance counselor encouragement in this county in the formation of their students' future educational aspirations. It would be interesting to see if parental encouragement has a similar impact on the choice of the post-secondary educational institution in which the student actually enrolls, especially in a county where it seems that most of these students involved in this study will be first-generation college students in many of the families. Moreover, the relationship of guidance counselors opinions and parental opinions could be helpful in deciding whether or not a community college would benefit its high school graduates -- as well as assist with the long, political processes that take place when deciding such matters. In addition to quantitative studies, ethnographic research techniques might be useful in examining college choice, shedding light on an important developmental process in such a small community such as Cape May County.

Another interesting concept which could be explored in this county with no community college is the effect of school profile on college acceptance. To be fair to all applicants, all high schools should be not treated the same. It cannot be assumed that every high school is equal because grading practices differ, competition within schools differs, and the level of course offerings differ. The judgment and evaluation of high schools by admission professionals is a very important and key element in the review of applications for entrance into selective colleges, even community colleges, and is worthy of further research.

The model tested in this study provides a useful framework for studying student college choice and guidance counselor relationships within this county.

Nevertheless, whether the same factors are as important and interact in similar patterns among Black, Hispanic, or other ethnic groups is not known, at least from the study at hand. Also, the effect of socioeconomic status was touched upon in this study, and would be enlightening if elaborated upon in future research regarding community college construction.

On the whole, it can be said that the county of Cape May would benefit from a community college being designated to it -- the students, guidance counselors, and research has supported such an impetus. The term community should be defined not only as a region to be served but also as a climate to be created (American Assn. of Community and Junior Colleges, 1988). The community college will play a role in this process similar to that which they have developed over much of this century: prebaccalaureate, occupational, remedial, and adult education provided to a broad spectrum of the local population, including those who cannot afford a private college and those who are planning on using the community college as a stepping stone in their careers -- who have no desire for an associates' degree. By offering an inexpensive, accessible alternative to these students, a community college in Cape May County will allow the underprivileged and possibly minimum-wage bound student to better themselves without moving out of their city, county, or state, to do so.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Distributed to High School Students in Cape May County High Schools

THIS IS A SURVEY TO DETERMINE CAPE MAY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ATTENDING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IF IT WERE LOCATED IN CAPE MAY COUNTY.

Please check the appropriate line to indicate your plans after completing high school:

☐ 2 year college ☐ work/get a job
☐ 4 year college ☐ enter military

If there were a community college located in Cape May County, would you be interested in attending?

☐ yes ☐ no

If planning to attend a community college located in Cape May County; rank, from 1 to 5, the following reasons for attending that college in order of importance (1 = most important and 5 = least important). If you add another reason ("other"), then rank the reasons from 1 = most important to 6 = least important.

☐ transportation
☐ no strict entrance requirements
☐ undecided on a major
☐ cost (tuition)
☐ accessibility/proximity (closer to home)
☐ other (please explain) :

Thank you!

Survey Distributed to Guidance Counselors in Cape May County High Schools

FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR USE:

THIS IS A SURVEY TO DETERMINE CAPE MAY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ATTENDING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IF IT WERE LOCATED IN CAPE MAY COUNTY.

When thinking about whether or not the students in your high school would be planning to attend a community college located in Cape May County; rank, from 1 to 5, the following reasons the students have for attending that college in order of importance (1 = most important and 5 = least important). If you add another reason ("other"), then rank the reasons from 1 = most important to 6 = least important.

- _____ transportation
- _____ no strict entrance requirements
- _____ undecided on a major
- _____ cost (tuition)
- _____ accessibility (closer to home)
- _____ other (please explain) :

Thank you!

APPENDIX B

Individual School Area Results

Table B1

MIDDLE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Guidance Counselor Rankings of Students' Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	00(00%)	00(00%)	02(67%)	01(33%)	00(00%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	01(33%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	01(33%)	00(00%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	01(33%)	02(67%)
COST (TUITION)	01(33%)	01(33%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	00(00%)
ACCESSIBILITY	01(33%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	01(33%)

Table B2

OCEAN CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Guidance Counselor Rankings of Students' Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	01(33%)	01(33%)	01(33%)	00(0%)	00(0%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	03(100%)	00(00%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	03(100%)
COST (TUITION)	00(00%)	02(67%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	00(00%)
ACCESSIBILITY	02(67%)	00(00%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	00(00%)

Table B3

WILDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Guidance Counselor Rankings of Students' Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	00(00%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	02(67%)	00(00%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	00(00%)	02(67%)	00(00%)	01(33%)	00(00%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	03(100%)
COST (TUITION)	02(67%)	00(00%)	01(33%)	00(00%)	00(00%)
ACCESSIBILITY	01(33%)	00(00%)	02(67%)	00(00%)	00(00%)

Table B4

LOWER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Guidance Counselor Rankings of Students' Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	00(00%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	03(75%)	02(25%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	02(50%)	01(25%)	00(00%)	01(25%)	00(00%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	00(00%)	01(25%)	00(00%)	00(00%)	03(75%)
COST (TUITION)	01(25%)	02(50%)	01(25%)	00(00%)	00(00%)
ACCESSIBILITY	01(25%)	00(00%)	03(75%)	00(00%)	00(00%)

Table B5

MIDDLE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

High School Senior Rankings of Their Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	01(05%)	02(11%)	04(21%)	08(42%)	04(21%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	00(00%)	06(32%)	05(26%)	04(21%)	04(21%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	04(21%)	02(11%)	01(05%)	05(26%)	07(37%)
COST (TUITION)	08(42%)	05(26%)	05(26%)	00(00%)	05(01%)
ACCESSIBILITY	06(32%)	04(21%)	04(21%)	02(11%)	03(15%)

Table B6

OCEAN CITY HIGH SCHOOL

High School Senior Rankings of Their Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	06(27%)	02(10%)	02(10%)	08(38%)	03(14%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	02(10%)	05(24%)	02(10%)	08(38%)	04(19%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	06(29%)	04(19%)	03(14%)	02(10%)	06(29%)
COST (TUITION)	07(33%)	04(19%)	04(19%)	01(05%)	05(24%)
ACCESSIBILITY	00(00%)	06(29%)	10(48%)	02(10%)	03(14%)

Table B7

WILDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

High School Senior Rankings of Their Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	08(28%)	02(07%)	04(14%)	07(24%)	08(28%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	03(10%)	04(14%)	08(28%)	10(35%)	04(14%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	03(10%)	10(35%)	06(21%)	01(03%)	09(31%)
COST (TUITION)	11(38%)	05(17%)	05(17%)	06(21%)	02(07%)
ACCESSIBILITY	04(14%)	08(28%)	05(21%)	05(17%)	06(21%)

Table B8

LOWER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

High School Senior Rankings of Their Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	02(04%)	10(22%)	12(26%)	08(17%)	14(31%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	02(04%)	07(15%)	12(26%)	13(28%)	12(26%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	07(15%)	03(07%)	07(15%)	18(39%)	11(24%)
COST (TUITION)	14(31%)	15(33%)	08(17%)	04(09%)	05(11%)
ACCESSIBILITY	21(46%)	11(24%)	07(15%)	03(07%)	04(09%)

Table B9

ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAPE MAY COUNTY

Guidance Counselor Rankings of Students' Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	01(08%)	02(15%)	03(23%)	06(46%)	01(08%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	03(23%)	04(31%)	00(00%)	06(46%)	00(00%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	00(00%)	01(08%)	00(00%)	01(08%)	11(65%)
COST (TUITION)	04(31%)	05(38%)	04(31%)	00(00%)	00(00%)
ACCESSIBILITY	05(38%)	01(08%)	03(46%)	00(00%)	01(08%)

Table B10

ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAPE MAY COUNTY

High School Senior Rankings of Their Reasons for College Attendance

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
TRANSPORTATION	17(15%)	16(14%)	22(19%)	31(27%)	29(25%)
NO STRICT ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	07(06%)	22(19%)	27(23%)	35(31%)	24(21%)
UNDECIDED ON A MAJOR	20(17%)	19(17%)	17(15%)	26(23%)	33(29%)
COST (TUITION)	40(35%)	29(25%)	22(19%)	11(10%)	13(11%)
ACCESSIBILITY	31(27%)	29(25%)	27(23%)	12(10%)	16(14%)

Table B11

ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAPE MAY COUNTY

High School Seniors' Plans After Graduating High School*

	LOWER	WILDWOOD	MIDDLE	OCEAN CITY	TOTAL
4 YEAR COLLEGE	11(06%)	23(12%)	40(21%)	42(22%)	116(61%)
2 YEAR COLLEGE	31(16%)	13(07%)	06(03%)	04(02%)	54(28%)
WORK/EMPLOYMENT	07(04%)	03(02%)	03(02%)	01(01%)	14(08%)
MILITARY/ARMED FORCES	01(01%)	04(02%)	02(01%)	01(01%)	08(05%)

LOWER = LOWER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL (SOUTHERN CAPE MAY COUNTY)
WILDWOOD = WILDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL (SOUTHERN CAPE MAY COUNTY)
MIDDLE = MIDDLE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL (MID-CAPE MAY COUNTY)
OCEAN CITY = OCEAN CITY HIGH SCHOOL (NORTHERN CAPE MAY COUNTY)

* PERCENTAGES ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER

Table B12

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAPE MAY COUNTY

Changes In High School Seniors' Plans if a Community College Were Located in Cape May County*

TOTAL			LOWER	WILDWOOD	MIDDLE	OCEAN CITY	TOTAL
4 YEAR COLLEGE	31%(116)						
ATTENDANCE TO 2 YR COLLEGE IN CMC		Y	5%(06)	9%(10)	6%(07)	0%(00)	20%(28)
		N	4%(05)	11%(13)	26%(33)	36%(42)	80%(96)
2 YEAR COLLEGE	26%(54)						
ATTENDANCE TO 2 YR COLLEGE IN CMC		Y	58%(30)	20%(11)	7%(04)	7%(04)	90%(49)
		N	2%(01)	4%(02)	4%(02)	0%(00)	10%(05)
WORK	8%(14)						
ATTENDANCE TO 2 YR COLLEGE IN CMC		Y	43%(06)	22%(03)	14%(02)	0%(00)	79%(11)
		N	7%(01)	0%(00)	7%(01)	7%(01)	21%(03)
MILITARY	5%(08)						
ATTENDANCE TO 2 YR COLLEGE IN CMC		Y	13%(01)	25%(02)	0%(00)	0%(00)	38%(03)
		N	0%(00)	25%(02)	25%(02)	13%(01)	63%(05)

LOWER = LOWER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL (SOUTHERN CAPE MAY COUNTY)
WILDWOOD = WILDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL (SOUTHERN CAPE MAY COUNTY)
MIDDLE = MIDDLE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL (MID-CAPE MAY COUNTY)
OCEAN CITY = OCEAN CITY HIGH SCHOOL (NORTHERN CAPE MAY COUNTY)

* PERCENTAGES ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER