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College Graduates' Perception of Placement-Service Impact at Three Selected Institutions of Higher Education in the Michiana Area

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Andrews University
School of Education

COLLEGE GRADUATES' PERCEPTIONS OF PLACEMENT-SERVICE IMPACT AT THREE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MICHIANA AREA

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Javan Lukema Ntaganda
September 2001
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ABSTRACT

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by

Javan Lukema Ntaganda

Chair: Edward A. Streeter
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

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Problem

Colleges have established offices of career planning and placement services to advise students who are making decisions concerning their vocational goals and to help graduates secure employment in their field of study. However, despite good intentions and efforts put together by colleges in establishing such offices, one problem still exists and needs to be addressed: It appears that the impact of career planning and placement services is not clearly understood by all potential graduates. There is a need for research to investigate how students perceive services provided by this office.
Method

The study acquired the perceptions of 255 graduates regarding the impact of placement services. Data were organized and coded into various categories and related to the different classifications of the respondents. By this method the researcher was able to see how different categories of the graduates responded to different questions. The responses given by the graduates for each item on the Likert-type scale provided an indication of the degree to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement. The data collected in this study were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (one-way classification). This method analyzed the effect of gender, college major, job position, annual salary, and how respondents secured employment in the perceived impact of placement services.

Results

There were significant differences between gender, college major, job position, annual salary, and how the job was found regarding the perceived impact of placement services. All factors were tested at .05 level of significance; \( p \) was below .05 with all factors tested.

Conclusions

More females (45%) than males (36%) were very satisfied with placement services. Job satisfaction was ranked higher (70%) than any other item. Five other items had scores between 60% and 67%, suggesting that graduates were satisfied by placement services. The item asking if the resume services offered by the placement office were of great value ranked between 40% and 49%, suggesting that graduates needed more
assistance with resume preparation. Placement-office personnel need to provide more resume preparation than they previously offered.
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Above all, I express my gratitude to my Heavenly Father.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first college placement office was created in the United States in 1919 (Teal & Herrick, 1962). The rise of career centers in American higher education was an attempt to assist prospective graduates in identifying and securing employment following graduation. College placement services were also established to teach young people the skills they need to get a job and to skillfully make subsequent transitions from job to job throughout the course of their working life (Rayman, 1993). These placement offices offer a variety of services geared to empower students to seek and obtain employment in their fields of study.

Services offered by college placement offices include: connecting students with placement services, offering career counseling to individual students or groups of students, providing job-seeking skills training, helping students to complete their credential packages, teaching job-search strategies, assisting students with resume preparation, conducting job-interview skill building, and scheduling interviews between students and employers (Rayman, 1993). In order to maximize services provided by the placement office, the institution of higher education should assess the impact of these services on students as it is perceived by the graduates who have utilized them and those who have not utilized the same services for various reasons.
This study gathered opinions from three selected groups of graduates in order to help those who might need guidance in serving potential students looking for employment. The opinions gathered will hopefully motivate the institutions surveyed to reevaluate their placement office services so that they may be better equipped to meet their graduates' needs, interests, and preferences. Findings of this study may also reveal some trends in educational programs as they relate to the graduate job market.

Statement of the Problem

Colleges and universities establish offices of career planning and placement services to advise students making decisions concerning their vocational goals and to help graduates secure employment in their field of study. However, despite good intentions and efforts put together by colleges and universities in establishing such offices, one problem still exists and needs to be addressed: it appears that the impact of placement services is not clearly understood by all potential college graduates. Although it is a common practice for such offices to seek feedback from graduates who use their services on an individual basis, there is a paucity of scientific studies done at the institutional level to investigate how students perceive services provided by these offices. Information gathered from graduates who utilized placement services and those who did not utilize them could help to clarify the relationship between the services and students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore, evaluate, and interpret the opinions of 1996-1997 academic-year graduates of selected institutions of higher education toward
the services offered by the placement office of each college. This study determined whether:

1. Gender of the respondents had a significant impact on their opinions of the placement services offered by their Alma Mater.

2. College major of the respondents had a significant impact on their opinions of the placement services offered by their Alma Mater.

3. Job position of the respondents had a significant impact on their opinions of the placement services offered by their Alma Mater.

4. Annual salary of the respondents had a significant impact on their opinions of the placement services offered by their Alma Mater.

5. Obtaining a job or not through the placement services had a significant impact on their opinions of those services offered by their Alma Mater.

The Population for the Study

The population utilized in this study consisted of 375 college graduates of the selected institutions of higher education. These graduates were chosen at random from the rolls of the alumni office of each institution. The sample of study was limited to those individuals who graduated during the calendar year of 1997. Only graduates residing and working in the Michiana (Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana) area were surveyed.

Hypotheses

Data were collected to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in the perception of the placement
services among graduates by gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by college major.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by job position.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by annual salary.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates who got a job through the college placement offices and those who did not.

Limitations

Every scientific work encounters some limitations inherent to the research design. This study experienced a number of them.

1. There is a possibility that some graduates who were selected and who made the most use of the placement services did not respond to this survey.

2. There is a possibility that some respondents were employed before graduation and did not make the most use of the placement services.

3. There is a possibility that some respondents were able to obtain a job without using the placement services.

4. There is a possibility that graduates who made the most use of the placement services did not participate in the survey because they were not residing in the Michiana regional area.
Delimitations

This study was limited to the 1996-97 academic-year graduates of three selected colleges. Only graduates residing in the Michiana area at the time of the survey participated in the survey. The institutions selected ranged from a community college to a senior college.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that during the period the survey was conducted the employment market or economic conditions were normal.

2. Graduates who did not use the college placement services had sufficient knowledge about the operations to respond to the survey.

Significance of the Study

Costs for college education today continue to increase while employment opportunities for college graduates seem to decrease (Freeman, 1976). This study calls for a more efficient and effective placement service by institutions of higher learning in order to continue their traditional-education reputation and at the same time help the graduates to achieve their vocational goals.

The credibility of educational and training programs of an institution, whatever their quality may be, will be undermined if a substantial number of its students remain unemployed. It is believed that the examination of data from this study concerning graduates' attitudes toward the college placement services might prompt institutions to reexamine their placement services in light of changing priorities and conditions of the
job market.

**Procedures**

This study has examined and analyzed significant relationships between individual factors and opinions of the 1996-1997 academic-year graduates from selected colleges toward the quality of services offered by the placement services office of each college. The investigation has surveyed the attitudes of these graduates toward the impact of the placement services and attempted to discover how those graduates with jobs were assisted in seeking and securing employment.

Opinions gathered were rated on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5. Scoring was as follows: 1 = strong disagreement with the statement; 2 = disagreement; 3 = no opinion; 4 = agreement; and 5 = strong agreement. One hundred and twenty-five questionnaires were sent to each of the three colleges for the 1996-1997 academic year's graduates, who were randomly selected by the alumni offices.

The questionnaires were sent to the individuals requesting their opinions toward the effectiveness of the placement services offered by their Alma Mater. The study has attempted to analyze and interpret the data.

**Treatment of the Data**

The data received from 255 respondents were organized, coded, and analyzed using one-way Analysis of Variance statistical procedure with the SPSS statistical package. Data were organized into various categories and related to the different classifications of the respondents. By this method, I was able to see how different
categories of the graduates responded to different questions. The responses given by the graduates for each item on the Likert-type scale provided an indication of the degree to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose, hypotheses, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions, which help the reader to envision the scope of the study. The significance of the study, procedures, sample, a brief statement of the treatment of the data, and the organization are also part of chapter 1.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertaining to this study, and also provides needed background information.

Chapter 3 describes the methods and procedures used in this study.

Chapter 4 reports, analyzes, and interprets the data.

Chapter 5 contains a summation of the study, conclusion, recommendations, and other suggestions for further additional research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this section is to investigate from literature any study conducted on the effectiveness of the office of career planning and placement services in colleges and universities. The first part of this section is an historical aspect of the college graduate job market, and the second part focuses on the attitudes and perceptions of graduates and employers toward the effectiveness of college placement services.

Overview of Literature Pertaining to an Historical Aspect of the College Graduate Job Market

Some studies have been conducted regarding the historical aspect of graduates' job opportunities and trends in the 1970s as there was an economic crisis at that time compared to the preceding decades. Freeman, in *The Overeducated American* (1976), stated that in the 1950s and 1960s a college graduate had a choice of good jobs in his/her area of study. This period was called the “golden age” of employment opportunities in which jobs sought graduates.

College degrees during the 1950s and 1960s meant high earnings and social and economic advance. They also were a passport to the American dream of success and the good life. Since higher education was considered as an economic investment in skills and
human capital, financial incentive to college students from the government doubled. College enrollment tripled and the number of graduates increased 91% by 1970 (Freeman, 1976).

Nearly one-half of Caucasian males of college age (18-19) were attending institutions of higher learning. Employment in higher education reached 1,669,850 in 1970, thus making it the largest industry in the country. It was estimated to be higher than the automobile or steel industry. The rate of return on investment in higher education remained higher compared to other investments (Freeman, 1976).

Ginzberg (1979) explained why there was a surge of high-school graduates to college education. Many young people moved on from high school to college due to pressure from society who preached that a college degree was the ticket to success—a good job, career, and income. Ginzberg continued to argue that the 1950s and 1960s witnessed major federal, state, and government actions directed to the expansion of higher educational facilities and the lowering of economic barriers to higher education:

1. When the Russians launched the first satellite, the United States government responded with substantial funding for higher education. There were substantial investments by state and local governments to establish branches of state universities in urban area centers; to start new institutions in heavily populated areas; and also to initiate and expand systems of community colleges.

2. When hostilities in Vietnam started, many young men recognized that their prospects of staying out of uniform were much better if they were enrolled in college or graduate school.
3. Enrollment also increased by the growing awareness of women and minorities that a college education was the best route into a good job and a career.

Freeman (1976) noted that a September 9, 1974, report of a seminar on Labor Market for College Graduates, sponsored by the Policy Analysis Service of the American Council of Education, magnified problems faced by degree holders in the 1970s' job-opportunity situation. College education, which in the "golden age" era was considered an assurance for life, was called into question in the 1970s. It was estimated that 80% of all jobs would not require a college degree.

The unemployment or underemployment of college graduates, which was almost nonexistent during the 1950s and 1960s, became a common experience in the 1970s. The job market of the 1970s forced college-degree holders to compete with high-school dropouts for low-paying, entry-level positions (Freeman, 1976).

Freeman also pointed out that the dawn of the 1970s brought a totally different picture of a college-graduate worker. It was a shift in the mind of American society vis-a-vis the college education credentials. It was a collapse of the academic job market. The job market "downturn" for college graduates in the 1970s had tremendous consequences on the college-experience outlook.

Due to the decline in salaries for new graduates, scarcity of job opportunities, and shifts in occupational choices, college graduates were forced to take non-college-level jobs. Consequently, colleges and universities experienced a significant decline in enrollment (Freeman, 1976).

Freeman (1976) pictured the 1970s as the depressed college labor market or,
again, the college market “downturn.” He asserted that new college graduates, who, in
the 1950s and 1960s enjoyed larger gains in real salaries than those of other workers,
experienced a striking decline in the 1970s. The humanities and social-sciences
graduates, who had enjoyed an increase in real pay of a sizeable 2.7% a year from 1961
to 1969, saw their pay drop drastically from $608 per month in 1967 to just $470 per
month in the 1970s.

Freeman (1976) noted that in the “golden age” era, a college-degree holder had a
choice of good jobs in his/her area of study. In the 1970s college-graduate prospective
jobs shrank. The collapse of the job market forced new graduates to take non-college-
level jobs that were often outside of their field of study. In 1952 there were 2.33 college-
level jobs per graduate worker; in 1969, 1.90 college-level jobs per graduate worker; and
in 1974 only 1.60 jobs per graduate worker. The placement offices were aware that they
could not control the job market but could only advise students accordingly.

In studying job opportunities for college and university graduates in the 1970s,
Freeman (1976) exemplified the labor market “downturn” indicators with the following:

1. University of California at Berkeley English Department in 1973: out of 55
graduates and doctoral candidates searching for college-teaching jobs, only 24 found
employment in their field of study. Out of 62 persons searching for jobs in 1974, only 15
gained employment.

2. Of the 1,225 history graduates and doctoral candidates in the United States
hunting for jobs as academics in 1973, just 182 found them.

3. Eighteen percent of the graduates of 1973 of the College of Arts and Sciences
at one of the “big ten” universities who entered the labor market were still unemployed 6 months after graduation. Another 15% were working as receptionists, clerks, laborers, factory workers, and janitors.

4. From the 1970 class at Montclair State College, unemployment averaged 13%. Of 1,800 graduates surveyed about the jobs they had obtained after graduating, only 289 of those who responded indicated that their jobs were commensurate with their education.

5. At the University of Illinois, in the spring of 1975, students slept overnight in front of the placement office to sign up for interviews with firms. The job situation was so bad that the university sent out recruiters to bring in more employers.

6. At Harvard University in February 1975, students lined up outside the office of career services for interviews with banks with nearly twice as many seeking interviews as there were available time slots, causing one placement director to remark that the only time he had seen more people in that building was during a demonstration.

The job-market opportunity seems to be an ongoing concern for many new college graduates. During October 1992, I visited the Career and Placement Services Office at the University of Notre Dame for research purposes. There were so many students in the hallways signing up for job interviews with companies that I thought that they were buying tickets for a football game. Sanyal (1987), in Higher Education and Employment, stated that career and employment opportunities seemed to be the dominant factors in motivating individuals for higher education.
Career Development Theory

When college students, professors, or students' parents heard the name Career Development and Placement Services, they thought of a place where students went during their final year of college to get help in securing their first job. Of course, the most visible service offered by career development and placement services was usually job placement, suggesting on-campus interviews conducted by the placement service. This unfortunate perception had its roots in an obsolete conception of career development and in a history of single-purpose placement offices designed principally to meet the job-search needs of some graduates. In fact, placement was only a very small part of what went on in a modern-day office of career development and placement services.

As students' needs changed and as the general public became increasingly aware that a career was not simply a job but rather a sequence of jobs held over the course of a lifetime, placement offices changed both their names and their functions (College Placement Council, 1991). Some modern comprehensive career development and placement services devoted up to 60% of professional staff time to the functions of counseling and programming while the remaining 40% was spent assisting students with the task of finding their initial job (Pennsylvania State University, 1991). This reality required a new understanding of career development. According to Super (1963), career development was a critically important component of human development. It was a process that took place from approximately age 4 until death. Super characterized career development as a sequence of life stages with attendant tasks and coping behaviors. The process of career development was analogous to physical development: A set of skills had
to be learned and a degree of mastery achieved before one could proceed to the next stage of development. Deficiencies in one stage of development could limit or restrict development in a subsequent state; and although there was a normal or average rate and time by which most individuals reached each stage, there was also a wide range of individual differences. Super's (1963) developmental theory seemed to have power and relevance to modern-day career development and placement services.

The following model was an adapted version of Super's career development life-span. In this schematic, chronological age appeared in column 1. Column 2 showed the relationship of developmental stages to age, and column 3 consisted of the developmental tasks identified by Super and the relationship of these tasks to ages and stages. Finally, the narrative portion of the schematic listed the coping behaviors associated with the tasks. Careful examination of this schematic clearly indicated that the "four critical years" (Astin, 1977) during which students were engaged in undergraduate education were critical not only because of their impact on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge, as Astin suggested, but also because of their impact on and relationship to career development. The crucial exploration stage, with its attendant tasks of crystallization, specification, and implementation, was clearly where much of the intense "action" was through the lifelong span of the career development process. The tasks themselves and facilitation of the attendant coping behaviors were the business of the modern-day career development and placement services.
Figure 1. Model of developmental stages, tasks, and coping behaviors.
Ginzberg’s Stages of Adolescent Career Development

In studying the career-choice process of upper-middle-class white adolescents and children, Ginzberg et al. (1951) distinguished three periods in the choice process: The fantasy stage (up to age 12) referred to the role of play and imagination in thinking about future work. The tentative stage (from age 13-17) concerned recognition of one’s interests, abilities, and values, as well as knowledge of work. The realistic stage (after age 17) included specifying and crystallizing occupational choice. Within the tentative stage, four periods were identified: Development of interests, capacities, values, and transitions. Following the progress of adolescents through these periods could help the counselor appreciate the readiness of an adolescent to make career decisions. According to Ginzberg et al. (1951), at about the age of 11, children ceased to make fantasy choices, and instead tended to base their choices on interests. In particular, Ginzberg et al. found that many choices of young boys were related in some way to their fathers’ careers. The capacity period covered the ages of 13 and 14. For 13- and 14-year-olds the educational process became more important in their preparation for work. Development of values came during the following period which took place around the ages of 15 and 16. At that particular time adolescents took their goals and values into consideration when making a career decision. The transition period took place around the ages of 17 and 18. According to Ginzberg et al. (1951), adolescents at this age were capable of making decisions whether to go to college and what field of study to select as a major.

The concepts of Super and Ginzberg et al. might help the counselor who works with young people, assisting them in their decisions regarding life, school, and work.
Job Placement Concepts and Practice

What did placement mean in the context of the market place of the twenty-first century? According to Power and Kirts (as cited in Rayman, 1993), it meant preparing students to place themselves repeatedly in jobs throughout their working lives. The number of students coming to college continued to grow, but there were not enough college entry-level jobs to accommodate all the graduates. Students were experiencing anxiety and frustration. Employment in the first career job was not guaranteed by graduation day (Rayman, 1993). Adler (1997) studied the role community colleges should play in job placement for students. He explained how schools and community agencies could work together to ensure that school training actually resulted in jobs. Adler also discussed the interconnectedness of economic development, job training, and placement. The most recent economic downturns in the United States’ economy and labor market, according to Adler, taught everyone that it was not enough just to provide job training, hoping that the jobs for which students had prepared were always there. Educators should be able to identify future careers and train for those broad-based skills that would meet the needs of the labor market of the future. Some model projects of school and business partnerships were identified by Adler in order for those entities to stay ahead of the job market and create new jobs.

1. Oregon Youth Transition Program. The goal of the partnership was to provide a menu of services to students while they were still in school, to help them make the transition from the classroom to employment. Services provided by the transition
specialist were, but not limited to, recruitment of students, assessment, development of individualized plans, job placement, and on-site supervision.

2. Kalamazoo Valley Consortium Education for Employment Program. This program was a school-to-work partnership of the community college. Schools furnished staff beyond classroom teachers to provide job development services to students. Unpaid interns got early, firsthand knowledge of the demands of a real workplace. The partnership network of colleges, schools, and businesses allowed for a sharing of resources and access to job development services that no one school or college could provide on its own. The report on student response to the program indicated that students who participated in the program were encouraged to remain in school and modified their career goals because of the program.

3. Baltimore Commonwealth. This was a partnership between the city’s business and education communities and government that provided employment training and placement services to the city’s youth. A one-stop approach was used. Services from many agencies and businesses were provided under one roof. Job clubs were used for career counseling and training on specific job-getting and job-keeping skills.

Partnerships between businesses, community agencies, and community colleges could successfully meet the challenges of the new economy and labor market. Job placement became a last step in the educational process achieved through collaboration with all stakeholders.

A study conducted by Ahrens (1997) examined the two-year public college students’ satisfaction with career planning and job placement services in relation to
occupational choice, gender, and job cluster in the United States. Two thousand, eight hundred and seventy-three students were included in the study and attended 212 public colleges in 11 states. Analysis of Variance of career planning for job clusters and gender was used.

In this study, the results revealed significant differences in students' satisfaction levels. Students in the Business Operations job cluster rated career planning and job placement services significantly higher than did students in other job clusters. Women rated these same services significantly higher than did their male counterparts.

When examining students' satisfaction levels across gender and job clusters, it was found that job placement was significant and career planning was not significant. Men in the arts job cluster rated their satisfaction with job placement significantly higher than did women in the arts job cluster. Overall, students were more satisfied with career planning services than they were with job placement services.

The results from this study might be generalized about community colleges located in the Midwest. However, caution should be used if these results are to be extrapolated to community colleges outside this regional area. These results should not be generalized about students enrolled at 4-year colleges because that population was not involved in the study.

The Evolution of the University Career Center: Contemporary Trends and Models

In the early centuries of higher education in Europe and the United States, career services were essentially confined to a professor as a mentor of a student who spoke in
behalf of that student to persons of importance who might employ him. This was primarily a male activity, an old boy's network. Such activation of the professor's network of friends and acquaintances typically arose at about the time of a student's graduation from college (Rayman, 1993).

Through time, placement of students into the workplace and professions for which they prepared in colleges and universities became less an act of mentorship, advocacy, or networking at the level of individual professors and increasingly a centralized role of a college or university to be implemented for all students, not only those fortunate enough to have a personal advocate.

The Rise of Career Centers in the United States

The first placement office in the USA was established by Yale University in 1919 (Teal & Herrick, 1962). In 1924 the first professional organization devoted to placement in the United States was established in Chicago (Herr, Rayman, & Garis, 1993). It was originally called the National Association of Appointments Secretaries, using the British notion of appointment secretary, equivalent to the American term, placement director. This organization changed its name to National Association of Placement and Personnel Offices in 1928. During the 1930s the name of the organization was changed again to American College Personnel Association (Shingleton & Fitzpatrick, 1985). Student placement was linked to business, economics, employment, rather than to psychology, emotions, or personal development. Placement was a process by which the student's training, abilities, and preferences could be matched to the requirements of commerce,
industry, and the profession.

The rise of career centers in American higher education was an attempt to meet the needs for career development and meet the assistance in job placement following graduation. Career centers stand astride the two cultures of academe and the world of employment. They must respond to and reflect the values of academic culture as they foster the career development of students. They must respond to and reflect the values of the corporate culture as they match the placement or employment needs of students with the human capital needs of diverse corporate organizations. Their goals aim to develop formal mechanisms through which students can be placed into employment. Career centers in the 1990s continued to be concerned with the development of the antecedents to such placement, exploratory processes, career-planning linkage of academic majors to career paths, and job-search strategies.

Counseling and Placement Functions

The counseling office was responsible for career planning and career explorations while the placement office was focused on the specific skills (e.g., job interviews and resumes) associated with the job-search process. Placement offices tended to be concerned with matching students and jobs, using traits (individual abilities, preferences, attitudes) and factors (job requirements, performance demands of occupations) as the content. These activities tended to be limited to the weeks and months before a student’s graduation. In contrast, counseling centers were more process and clinically oriented, concerned with students’ development or the remediation of emotional or academic distress during the students’ college career (Kroll & Rentz, 1988; McLaughlin, 1973).
In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the disparity in function between counseling centers and placement offices took a new direction (Kroll & Rentz, 1988). The career-planning process activities that had been a part of the counseling center tended to be pulled out of such organizations and combined with the activities formerly associated with the placement office.

In many colleges and universities, career planning and placement offices were formed. The college's or university's commitment to placement of students was no longer seen only as an event or matching activity relegated to just weeks or months preceding the student's graduation. Rather, it was increasingly assumed that the placement event needed to be viewed as the end process of career development that brought the student to the activity called placement, or again was considered as the culmination of the student's career development in a college or a university. Combining the career-planning activities formerly located in counseling centers and the job-search activities of the placement office into one entity known as career planning and placement or career services (College Placement Council, 1991) gave the career development of students a holistic and developmental perspective, which suggested that career development was not a peripheral and limited mission of higher education, but was vital to it and gave many students purpose in their pursuit of a course of study.

Review of Related Literature Pertaining to Attitudes/Perceptions of Graduates and Employers Toward Career Planning and Placement Services

At the time of this research there were not many publications or much scientific
research related to graduates' attitudes toward the impact of college placement services. However, there was some information that had been gathered by Moss (1988) pertaining to this study. He studied opinions of baccalaureate graduates toward the effectiveness of placement services in the University of Southern Mississippi. This literature was helpful for guidance and inspiration for further research work.

A study by Marion, Cheek, and Harris (1983) gathered data relative to the role of the placement services office of the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill, in helping graduates to find employment. This study indicated that graduates used several other sources for finding jobs before using college placement office services.

Dennis and Gustafson (1980) conducted a study to determine employers' perceptions toward the effectiveness of college placement office services and found that college campuses were the best source for young talented employees. The company which was surveyed hired 54.4% of graduates through college-recruiting periods.

Another study was conducted by Winn (1981). He wanted to find out the influence recruiters might have in the selection of new employees or on colleges with which they worked. The recruiters reported that their influence within their recruitment area activity was moderately high to high, but it was also reported that their influence in curriculum modification at colleges they worked with was little or none. The respondents felt there should be at least some shared influence in college curriculum areas.

The Impact of Placement Services on Students of Different Backgrounds

A study by Mau and Kopischke (2001) on job-search methods, job-search
outcomes, and job satisfaction of college graduates was undertaken. A nationwide sample of 11,152 college graduates was surveyed regarding their job-seeking behaviors and outcomes. Race and gender differences among the job-search strategies used, number of job interviews, number of job offers, annual salary, and job satisfaction were examined. Results indicated significant race and gender differences in job-search methods used. There were significant differences in underemployment and job satisfaction because of race, and in underemployment and annual salaries because of gender. There were no significant differences in the number of job interviews or job offers regardless of race or gender. Findings in this study suggested that the resume was the most often reported method for obtaining a job, although most literature indicated that the most effective search method for white-collared workers was informal contact through networking, and the use of resumes and advertisements.

The above findings suggested that despite the efforts of colleges and universities in assisting students to prepare for careers and to successfully enter professions of their choices, there were significant race and gender differences in job-search methods used. Also, there were significant differences in underemployment and job satisfaction because of race, and in underemployment and annual salary because of gender. This situation might have been due to the fact that the majority of women and minorities pursued non-technical subjects in college which often lead into low-paying jobs. Employment counselors might want to help students make wise decisions in selecting the major areas of study in college. Could institutions of higher education go farther in helping college students prepare for careers without impeding their traditionally performed major roles in
the discovery, transmission, and preservation of knowledge (Kenepp, 1981)? According to Hesburgh (1979), the central purposes of the university were teaching, learning, researching, and educating. Educational scholars were divided on the issue. Some of them were concerned that universities had gone too far in vocationalizing education (Kuh, Shedd, & Whitt, 1987); others questioned whether education was preparing American employees to compete in the global economy (Feller, 1991; Grayson & O'Dell, 1988).

The National Conference on Graduate Education in Psychology urged high-school, undergraduate, and graduate faculty to provide their students with the education necessary for employment in the world outside the university (American Psychological Association, 1987). The question for many educators was not whether, but how best, to prepare students for work. Through program and curriculum initiatives, student affairs professionals, academic departments, and faculty were finding answers to this question. Undergraduate career development courses were offered for college credit (Hardesty, 1991). Career-planning interventions were integrated into traditional courses (Quinn & Lewis, 1989). Faculty advised students about career-oriented issues (Matthews & Ware, 1988). Student affairs career-development programs, such as individual counseling and career workshops, had been evaluated (Bjorkquist, 1987), and had been supported by research with students and alumni (Healy & Reilly, 1989).

Teachers gave tests to their students to make sure they understood what they learned, and the students were hired to prove they could put their knowledge into practice. Preparing students for careers would not impede the progress of the college or university, but would rather complete it.
The Characteristics Considered Important 
by Employers During Job Interviews

A study done by Atkins and Kent (1988) investigated what recruiters (employers) considered important during the employment interview. Respondents completed demographic information on a questionnaire and circled their attitude toward the hiring process. Recruiters overwhelmingly ranked overall oral communication skills as most important. Also included in the top 25% were enthusiasm, motivation, credentials, and degree. Ranked in the bottom 25% were sense of humor, report-writing skills, summer or part-time job experience, ability to resolve conflict, and extracurricular activities (which ranked last).

Isaacson and Brown (1997) listed the following factors by college recruiters as the most important considerations in the employment interview:

1. Overall communication skills
2. Enthusiasm
3. Motivation
4. Credentials
5. Degree
6. Career maturity
7. Initiative
8. Grade-point average
9. Listening skills
10. Punctuality
11. Overall appearance
12. Assertiveness
13. Manners
14. References
15. Preparation or knowledge of employer
16. Sense of humor
17. Report-writing skills
18. Summer or part-time job experience
19. Ability to resolve conflicts
20. Extracurricular activities.

How Graduates Generally Perceive College Career and Placement Office Services

Marion et al. (1983) surveyed 203 graduates of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to determine sources of information the students used to find jobs and how helpful those sources were.

The results of the findings were:

1. Regarding individual initiative, direct contact with the employer was the method most often used. Of the 164 graduates who used direct contact with employers as a source of information in gaining initial employment, 94% reported that such contact was helpful.

2. Information provided by family and friends was the second alternative to obtain a job. Ninety-two percent of the 142 who used family and friends said that source
was helpful.

3. College Career Planning and Placement Offices were the third in importance. Of the 107 who used the college placement office, 73% indicated that it was helpful.

4. Of the 37 who used a private employment agency, 41% perceived that source as helpful.

5. Seventy-five percent of the 28 who used a professional association placement service reported that it was helpful where this source was available.

6. Finally, newspaper advertisements were the least-used method of job search.

How significant were differences in the use of the university placement office? According to Marion et al. (1983), differences were analyzed by characteristics of the responding graduates. These characteristics were: gender, academic major, grade-point average, field of employment, when employment was secured, relationship of job to academic major, whether the skills and training acquired at the university were used in the job, and degree of job satisfaction. Chi-square analysis indicated that the use of the placement office in relation to gender, academic major, and grade-point average was not statistically significant. However, differences in relationship to area of employment when employment was secured, relationship of job to academic major, whether the skills and training received at the institution were used in the job, and degree of job satisfaction were statistically significant. Another chi-square analysis showed that the perceived helpfulness of the placement office was not statistically significant in terms of gender, academic major, grade-point average, or field of employment.

Analysis did reveal significant differences related to when employment was
secured, relationship of the job to academic major, whether skills and training acquired at
the institution were used in the job, and degree of job satisfaction. Marion et al. (1983)
reported findings that showed direct contact with the employer was the source of
information respondents used most often in securing initial employment, followed by
family and friends, the placement office, newspaper advertisements, the employment
security commission, private employment agencies, and professional association
placement services. The order of these sources was ranked according to use (see “The
results of the findings” above), except for professional association placement services.
Although the respondents reported that professional association placement services were
used less than any of the other sources, the services were considered helpful by a higher
percentage of the respondents. While the professional association placement services
were probably not available to all college graduates, the results implied that the services
were helpful in those employment fields where they were available.

How Employers View College Career
Planning and Placement Offices

A survey by Dennis and Gustafson (1980) studied the relationship of recruiters to
college placement offices. A questionnaire was sent out to employers in order to get a
feedback of their attitudes toward college placement services. Dennis and Gustafson
found that, according to the employers, college campuses were the best source of talented
workers. In response to the statement that college placement offices did an adequate job
of counseling, 52% of the respondents felt that college placement services were doing a
good job, and 32% felt that they were not. Specific responses suggested that there was a
real need for a career-planning course, career counseling of students, lessons on how to do research on a company, and how to interview. There was also an expressed need for more contact between the college placement office personnel and the visiting companies, and more contact between recruiters and faculty. Other suggestions made were for better facilities at the student personnel offices in terms of privacy for conducting job interviews, and careful screening of students by placement office personnel in order to ensure that the candidates met pre-established standards.

College Graduates and Job Satisfaction

Kenepp (1981) surveyed 1,481 persons 5 years after graduation. He wanted to find out how satisfied they were with their employment. Kenepp found that job satisfaction was not due to a single factor, but was multi-dimensional. Several factors, such as opportunity for career growth, job status, job challenge, good salary, and fringe benefits, contributed to the employees' job satisfaction.

Placement Services in the 1980s and 1990s

Rayman (1993) stated that a fundamental restructuring of business during the global recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s created significant problems for employers and institutions of higher education:

1. The number of entry-level positions available to college graduates decreased, which caused anxiety and frustration among students who assumed that a degree from a college or university was a guarantee of a job.

2. A reduction of the financial support to higher education forced institutions to
do more with less money.

3. Some institutions had to charge fees to students and employers for career and placement assistance that had been free prior to economic recession.

4. The assessment of fees created negative reactions among students who believed that they had already paid enough money.

In the dynamic employment market of the 1990s, with over 1 million degree recipients entering the workforce each year, it was impossible for university and college officials to place every student. In the context of the marketplace the word "placement" changed its meaning. It no longer meant placing persons on jobs but rather preparing students to place themselves repeatedly throughout their working lives (Rayman, 1993). The placement office could function best if it provided students with a realistic view of the world of work, the ability to assess their own strengths, weaknesses, desires, and goals, and then helped them only as they developed plans for self-placement. Despite the expectations of many students and probably parents, employment was not guaranteed by graduation day. At Purdue University a survey of post-graduation plans was conducted just prior to graduation and a 90% response rate to each survey was typically achieved (Rayman, 1993).

From these surveys, the acceptance of employment prior to graduation varied depending on the supply and demand for each academic area. Nursing students in the late 1980s and early 1990s reported an employment rate of over 80% prior to graduation. Some majors in nontechnical areas reported a rate of less than 30%. The 1990s saw a shift in employers' recruitment practices. Traditionally, on campus, recruiting had served
local employees who wanted to tap the readily-available pool of talent in their own community and also national firms that needed to fill thousands of entry-level openings. The 1990s employers changed from a “shotgun” approach where large employers visited many universities and colleges, to a “rifle” approach (Rayman, 1993) where even the largest firms scaled down the number of campus visits to a few targeted schools. Employers wanted the best candidates available regardless of from which school they came. Employer demand to hire the top students remained strong.

In order to satisfy employers’ hiring needs, universities and colleges developed a variety of systems and procedures. The most prevalent method for scheduling interviews between students and employers was to post job information and schedule interviews on a first-come, first-served basis. This process worked relatively well for institutions for many years. However, as higher education grew substantially, this same process created a major problem. The number of students interested in and qualified for interviews with a given employer exceeded the interviewing time made available by the employer. Placement offices were faced with an overwhelming number of students lined up several hours for job interviews without assurance of an opportunity to have an interview. Though some institutions retained the first-come, first-served procedure because it seemed to treat all students the same, some other universities and colleges introduced several other solutions to the problem: lotteries, drawings, computerized sign-up systems, or any other electronic communication with students for job interview arrangements. For some employers, review of candidate credentials and preselection of those whom they wished to interview made more sense than the first-come, first-served system. For
employers this preselection of candidates saved time and money.

A study by Hatcher and Crook (as cited in Isaacson & Brown, 1997) suggested that certain aspects of the career development of students were not being addressed. They surveyed graduates of a small liberal arts institution to determine what surprises they had encountered on their jobs. They found that students were better workers than they expected, and the organizations' demand for good work was greater than expected. It was also found that when expectations regarding work did not coincide with reality--negative reality--students expressed intentions to leave their current jobs.

It is important that the career development needs of students be met. Healy and Reilly (1989, as cited in Isaacson & Brown, 1997) tried to determine if career development needs of vocational-technical students enrolled in 10 California community colleges varied by age level. Older students indicated that they had less need to set career goals, to become certain of career plans, to explore career-related goals, to select courses relevant to career goals, to develop employability skills, and to obtain a job than did younger students.

However, about 25% to 50%, even though a wide gap, of all age groups studied rated these needs of major concern. They also rated knowing more about their interests and abilities as an important need. The authors reported that the finding that older students had less need for career development activities was not unexpected. It was suspected that more younger respondents did not rate their needs for career development activities higher because of lack of awareness of the problems encountered by college graduates. Sixty-four percent of college graduates would try to get more information if
they were starting over. This might result in the fact that only 54% of adults who attended or graduated from college believed that their skills were being fully utilized on their current job. Moreover, 6% of this group expected to be forced out of their jobs within 3 years after the 1993 National Career Development Association survey. Though it was expected that the number of jobs requiring college education would increase in the next decade, it was also forecast that unemployment and underemployment would increase among college graduates because of a mismatch between their skills and the demands of the workplace (Isaacson & Brown, 1997).

Some other considerations should be taken into account when helping college students in career planning. According to Isaacson and Brown (1997), it was projected that as many as two-thirds of the students entering college would be nontraditional students. These students included: those older than 22, those reentering school due to previous academic failure, those displaced by marriage or jobs, or those who decided to change careers. The influx of older-than-average students into college was not the only change to occur in college enrollment. Other groups of American society requiring some type of accommodation also increased the college student body. Minorities, persons with disabilities, women, gays, and lesbians also presented challenges to career development specialists.

Though the general belief that career development must be an individualized program in order to satisfy the needs of each student, Isaacson and Brown (1997) stated that there were common needs among groups of students, and the career development services available to students should include some or all of the following: career and self-
awareness activities; exploration of interests, values, goals, and decisions; practical realities of the job market and future trends; accurate information about careers; workshops that deal with special needs such as risk taking, resume development, interviewing, and an academic advising system that makes it possible for students to get the assistance they need in academic planning.

Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature related to the evolution of college placement services in higher education in the United States. The college placement office evolved from a single-purpose administrative unit offering a narrow range of placement services to a comprehensive services center providing a complex array of career services to different constituent groups. College placement services in the United States before 1919 were essentially confined to a professor as a mentor of a student who spoke in behalf of that student to persons of importance who might employ him as a favor to, or out of respect for, the professor. Such activation of the professor's network of friends and acquaintances typically arose about the time of the student's graduation. Through time, placement of students into jobs and professions for which they prepared in colleges and universities became less an act of mentorship, advocacy, or networking at the level of individual professors and increasingly a centralized role of a college or university to be implemented for all students.

This review identified the economic and educational forces that made placement services imperative to colleges and universities. The demographic explosion in college education of the 1950s and 1960s, the college graduates' salary shrinkage of the 1970s,
and the business restructuring of the 1980s and early 1990s, made it necessary for many institutions of higher education to create placement offices. In the 1950s and 1960s, college education was a good and wise investment in money, social advance, and a good life. This period was called the "golden age" of employment opportunities in which jobs sought graduates. Good salaries; federal funding for college education; federal, state, and local government actions for the expansion of higher educational facilities; creation of new educational institutions in heavily populated areas; establishment of community college systems; and pressure from society that a college education should be the ticket to success prompted young people to get a college education.

The 1970s brought a different picture of a college-degree holder. College education, which in the "golden age" era was considered an assurance for life, was called into question. There was a shift in the minds of American employers vis-a-vis a college degree. Hiring criteria shifted from educational credentials to performance. This situation forced college graduates to compete with high-school dropouts for low-paying, entry-level jobs. Due to the decline in salaries for new graduates, scarcity of job opportunities, and shifts in occupational choices, students lost interest in college education. Consequently, colleges and universities experienced a decline in enrollment.

The fundamental restructuring of businesses and industries in the late 1980s and early 1990s created significant problems for employers and institutions of higher education. There was a decrease in the number of entry-level positions available to college graduates. This caused anxiety and frustration among students who assumed that a college degree was a guarantee of a professional job. A reduction of the financial
support to higher education forced colleges and universities to do more with less money. Some institutions of higher education had to charge fees to students and employers for career planning and placement assistance that had been free prior to economic recession. In the dynamic employment market of the 1990s, it became impossible for college officials to place all graduates. The word "placement" changed its meaning. It no longer meant placing persons in jobs, but rather preparing them to place themselves repeatedly throughout their working lives.

The review also investigated the impact of the placement services on higher education:

1. Some institutions of higher education conducted surveys every year to find out when their graduates obtained employment, types of jobs they got, and how satisfied they were with their employment.

2. Colleges and universities offered diversified services to students.

3. More recognition was given to career services allowing vocational classes to be taught, seminars to be held, and workshops to be conducted within the scheduling of regular academic activities.

4. In order to meet students' needs and employers' demands, institutions of higher education continued to revise the way job interviews were conducted on campus.

Finally, the review of literature explored how graduates and employers viewed the college placement services. Employers' preferences were also included in this review.

In regard to the perceptions of graduates toward the placement office in helping them to find employment, some studies found that graduates used other ways for finding
jobs before using college placement office services. Individual initiative—direct contact with the employer—was often used as a method to get a job. Other findings suggested that the resume was the best method for obtaining a job. However, most literature indicated that the most effective search method for white-collar workers was informal contact through networking, the use of a resume, and advertisements.

For employers’ perceptions toward the effectiveness of college placement services, it was found that college campuses were the best source for young, talented employees. Recruiters overwhelmingly considered the applicant’s overall oral communication skills as the most important and determinant factor in the hiring process.

What could an employment counselor learn from the above findings? A college population is made up of students from diverse cultural backgrounds with different needs, interests, abilities, and preferences. There is no single method appropriate to all people. Services need to be individualized. Businesses buy college products. Employers and colleges are business partners. Neither of them could survive without the other.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study acquired the opinions of 255 college graduates of 1996-1997. I aimed to find out how college graduates felt about services offered by the career planning and placement office personnel during the college experience. The graduates chosen to participate in the survey were from three selected institutions of higher learning operating in the Michiana region. Participating graduates were living and working in the Michiana area during the period the survey was conducted. Factors that influenced these graduate opinions were identified and tested for significance in chapter 4.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was made up of 375 college graduates of the 1996-97 academic year from three selected institutions of higher learning in the Michiana area. A random selection of 125 students who graduated in 1997 was made at each institution alumni office. The sample was made up of the 255 who responded. The rationale for this selection was the belief that recent graduates would best remember the activities and services provided by the career planning and placement office of their Alma Mater. The respondents were identified by their gender, college major, job position, annual salary, and how they found their job.
Description of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was an opinionnaire developed by Moss (1988) to inventory graduates' opinions or perceptions regarding the effectiveness of college placement offices in helping students secure employment. Since this opinionnaire was originally intended to gather data from the graduates of the University of Southern Mississippi, it had to be slightly revised in terms of wording and number of questions.

A group of experienced graduate students at Andrews University was asked to review the questionnaire and revise its contents, if necessary. They evaluated each statement on the basis of clarity, relevance, and feasibility. The questionnaire was then submitted to another group of graduate students to scrutinize each statement before it was mailed to the randomly selected population of 375 graduates of the class of 1996-1997 whose residences were located in the Michiana area.

The revised instrument was a two-page questionnaire based on a Likert-type scale, 5-point response mode. It contained three sections: demographic data, questions regarding employment information, and 15 statements asking their opinion regarding how they felt about services provided by the college placement office. Respondents were asked to express their opinion by ranking each of the given statements that was pertinent to the role of the placement office services that were provided for the students. The respondents' opinions were recorded by a check mark that indicated whether they strongly disagreed (1), disagreed (2), had no opinion (3), agreed (4), or strongly agreed (5).

Three institutions of higher learning were chosen to participate in the research.
These educational institutions were reluctant to participate in this study. In the end, with several interventions, the permission to conduct this study was granted but with two conditions: names of the participating college would not be published; and no comparison of results would be made between participating institutions. Randomization of individual participants was made at the alumni office of each campus. Questionnaires were also mailed out to informants through the same channel.

**Collection of the Data**

In order to collect data, I visited the alumni office of each of the participating institutions. The random selection of alumni to participate in the study was conducted at that time. The criteria for selection were as follows: (1) participants must be graduates of the 1996-1997 academic year; and (2) the participants must reside in the Michiana area. Those selected were asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it to their alumni office. All returned responses were channeled to me for analysis. A total of 255 responses received represented 68% of the population.

**Null Hypotheses and Treatment of the Data**

The following hypotheses are presented in the null form as required for statistical significance testing:

*Hypothesis 1*: There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among the graduates by gender.

*Hypothesis 2*: There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by college major.
Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by job position.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by annual salary.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates who secured a job through the college placement services and those who did not.

The data collected in this study were analyzed by using Analysis of Variance (one-way classification). This methodology sought to determine the opinion of 255 college graduates of the 1996-1997 academic year toward the quality of services they received from the career planning and placement office during their college-life experience. Participating graduates were chosen from three selected institutions of higher education in the Michiana area during the time of the survey.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire previously used in other similar types of research. Data were collected through the alumni office of each participating educational institution.

In an attempt to determine how the graduates who participated in this study were impacted by the performance of the placement services of their Alma Mater, the responses received from 255 were analyzed. One-way Analysis of Variance was the statistical method used to analyze the data collected from the graduates. This method of analysis allowed me to: (1) partition the total sum of squares into two parts (a between-group and within-group sum of squares); (2) test the significance of the differences
between different means; and (3) make a decision whether to reject or accept the hypotheses being tested. The null hypotheses of this research asserted that there would be no significant difference between the opinion of the groups tested and the perceived quality of the placement services.

Summary

This chapter includes methods and procedures of the study, the population studied, the instrument utilized to collect data, how data were collected, and the presentation of the null hypotheses as required for statistical significance testing. The selection of participating graduates was randomly conducted. A two-page questionnaire was mailed out to informants, and returned responses were channeled to me for analysis.

The reader of this study might find that names of participating institutions of higher education were not mentioned. The permission to conduct this survey was granted under certain conditions: names of participating colleges would not be published; and no comparison of results would be made between participating colleges.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the completion of the study. The reader will bear in mind that this study was conducted to investigate the opinions of the 1996-97 academic-year college graduates from three selected institutions in Michiana area regarding the effectiveness of their college offices of career planning and placement services in helping college students with career development and job placement for prospective graduates. I visited the three selected colleges and had discussions with the offices of alumni and career planning and placement services. Suggestions from these offices were incorporated into the instrument. The questionnaire was submitted to 30 college students for critique. It was then revised in light of suggestions from students. The instrument was submitted to the study sample which was randomly selected. The permission to conduct this study at the three institutions of higher education was granted under the following conditions:

1. The names of participating colleges would not be published.

2. The data collected would not be used to compare participating institutions.

After collecting demographic data from respondents, responses were statistically analyzed and reported in this chapter.
Descriptive Data

Three hundred and seventy-five college graduates of the 1996-97 academic year were randomly selected from three chosen institutions of higher education in the Michiana area to participate in the study. The population for this study was obtained through the participating colleges' alumni offices. From the 375 surveys sent out, responses were received from 255 (68%) individuals. Out of the 255 persons who participated in the survey, 135 (52.9%) were males and 120 (47.1%) were females.

One hundred and thirty-two (51.8%) graduated in the spring, 122 (47.8%) in the summer, and 1 (0.4%) in December 1997. The number of respondents were as follows: 65 (25.5%) from institution A, 87 (34.1%) from institution B, and 103 (40.4%) from institution C.

Each respondent was classified according to his/her field of study. Sixty-nine (27.1%) respondents graduated from health-related fields of study (nursing, medical technology, physical therapy), 65 (25.5%) from business/computer, 26 (10.2%) from social sciences, 1 (0.4%) from history, 44 (17.2%) from education, 17 (6.7%) from communication/English, and 33 (12.9%) from science/architecture.

Two hundred and fifty-one (98.4%) of the respondents were employed at the time the data were collected and 4 (1.6%) were unemployed. Relative to the job positions of the respondents, 69 (27.1%) were employed in health-related fields, 2 (0.8%) in computer-related work, 18 (7.0%) in clerical work, 15 (5.9%) in construction design, 1 (0.4%) in journalism, 16 (6.3%) in accounting, 34 (13.3%) in social work, 20 (7.8%) in teaching, and 80 (31.4%) in non-specified positions.

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At the time the survey was conducted, 2 (0.7%) of the respondents reported an annual salary of less than $15,000; 25 (9.8%) had an annual salary between $16,000 and $20,000; 110 (43.1%) between $21,000 and $25,000; 95 (37.3%) between $26,000 and $30,000; 18 (7.1%) between $31,000 and $35,000; and 1 (0.4%) above $35,000. Four (1.6%) subjects did not respond to this question.

One hundred and eighty-four (72.2%) respondents reported they found employment through the office of career planning and placement services, while 71 (27.8%) said they obtained jobs through other means. Fifteen subjects (5.9%) reported they were working while attending school and 240 (94.1%) said they were not.

Fifty-nine (23.1%) of the respondents reported they were informed of career planning and placement services 2 years before graduation, 101 (39.6%) 1 year before graduation, 73 (28.6%) 6 months before graduation, and 17 (6.7%) 3 months before graduation. Five (2.07%) did not respond to this question.

The persons who participated in the survey were also asked to provide an answer to the question asking how they found employment. Ten (3.9%) of the respondents reported they found jobs themselves, 184 (71.8%) used college placement services offices, 44 (17.6%) obtained employment through their friends or relatives, and 15 (5.0%) had no opinion because they were employed before graduation. Two (0.8%) did not respond to this question.

To the question regarding preference of current employment, 126 (49.4%) of the respondents who were employed reported the job they obtained was their first choice, 78 (30.6%) said the job they had was their second choice, 2 (0.8%) said the job obtained
was their third choice, and 49 (19.2%) reported that the jobs they were holding were not their choice at all. Out of 255 graduates who participated in this survey, 15 (5.9%) reported they were employed before graduation, 23 (9.0%) got a job 1 month after graduation, 38 (14.9%) were hired 3 months after graduation, 88 (34.5%) obtained employment 6 months after graduation, and 87 (34.1%) did not get a job until 9 months after graduation. At the time these data were collected, 4 (1.6%) graduates did not report whether they were employed. I was unable to determine whether these persons were without employment since graduation or if they had lost their first job. See Table 1.

Other Findings

These findings reflected frequency of response by specific questions to the graduates. They were asked to give their opinion on each of the 15 statements describing services performed by the Office of Career Planning and Placement Services of their Alma Mater. Respondents were asked to express their feelings for or against the statements by selecting a number between 1 and 5 representing their approval to the statement: Number 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. The 255 respondents who received services from the placement office rated these services as outlined below:

Question #1 sought to determine if career counseling services offered by the college placement office were of great value. Responses reflected that 106 (41.6%) strongly agreed, 66 (25.9%) agreed, 58 (22.7%) had no opinion, 24 (9.4%) disagreed, and 1 (0.4%) strongly disagreed.
### TABLE 1

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES FOR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation Date</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of Study</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-related fields</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/computer</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication/English</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/architecture</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employed at the Time of Data Collection</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>98.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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Table 1—Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Position</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-related fields</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer-related work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction design</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Salary Range Per Year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $15,000</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>$16,000-$20,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21,000-$25,000</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$26,000-$30,000</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$31,000-$35,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $35,000</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obtained Job Through CPPS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worked While Attending College</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Were Informed of CPPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years before graduation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year before graduation</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months before graduation</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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Table 1—Continued.

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<td>3 months before graduation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How Employment Was Found**

| By themselves                              | 10        | 3.9        |
| Through CPPS                                | 184       | 72.2       |
| Through friends/relatives                   | 44        | 17.2       |
| Employed before graduation                  | 15        | 5.9        |
| No response                                | 2         | 0.8        |
| Total                                      | 255       | 100.0      |

**Current Employment**

| First choice                               | 126       | 49.4       |
| Second choice                              | 78        | 30.6       |
| Third choice                               | 2         | 0.8        |
| None of the above                          | 49        | 19.2       |
| Total                                      | 255       | 100.0      |

**Current Employment Obtained**

| Before graduation                          | 15        | 5.9        |
| 1 month after graduation                   | 23        | 9.0        |
| 3 months after graduation                  | 38        | 14.9       |
| 6 months after graduation                  | 88        | 34.5       |
| 9 months after graduation                  | 87        | 34.1       |
| None of the above—still unemployed         | 4         | 1.6        |
| Total                                      | 255       | 100.0      |

Question #2 asked if the graduate was fully informed of services offered by the placement office before he/she reached his/her senior year. Responses reflected that 81 (31.8%) strongly agreed, 65 (25.5%) agreed, 25 (9.8%) had no opinion, 35 (13.7%) disagreed, and 49 (19.2%) strongly disagreed.
Question #3 asked if the graduate was informed of services offered by the placement office during his/her senior year. Responses reflected that 51 (20%) strongly agreed, 48 (18.8%) agreed, 24 (9.4%) had no opinion, 65 (25.5%) disagreed, and 67 (26.3%) strongly disagreed.

Question #4 asked if counseling services offered by the placement office helped the graduate make the right decision about his/her career. Responses reflected that 66 (25.9%) strongly agreed, 67 (26.3%) agreed, 100 (39.2%) had no opinion, 15 (5.9%) disagreed, and 7 (2.7%) strongly disagreed.

Question #5 asked if placement office personnel were always available and helpful. Responses reflected that 71 (27.8%) strongly agreed, 95 (37.3%) agreed, 73 (28.6%) had no opinion, 16 (6.3%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

Question #6 asked if the placement office personnel had enough information about job openings. Responses reflected that 45 (17.7%) strongly agreed, 87 (34.1%) agreed, 85 (33.3%) had no opinion, 38 (14.9%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

Question #7 asked if the job-seeking skills offered by the placement office were of great value. Responses reflected that 53 (20.8%) strongly agreed, 93 (36.4%) agreed, 82 (32.2%) had no opinion, 27 (10.6%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

Question #8 asked if the resume services offered by the placement office were of great value. Responses reflected that 43 (16.9%) strongly agreed, 69 (27.1%) agreed, 110 (43.1%) had no opinion, 33 (12.9%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

Question #9 asked if the job-interview preparation offered by the placement office was of great value. Responses reflected that 63 (24.7%) strongly agreed, 87 (34.1%)
agreed, 83 (32.6%) had no opinion, 22 (8.6%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

Question #10 asked if the selection of job openings offered by the placement office was adequate. Responses reflected that 66 (25.9%) strongly agreed, 87 (34.1%) agreed, 73 (28.6%) had no opinion, 28 (11.0%) disagreed, and 1 (0.4%) strongly disagreed.

Question #11 asked if the job-search leads offered by the placement office were very helpful. Responses reflected that 81 (31.8%) strongly agreed, 87 (34.1%) had no opinion, 7 (2.7%) disagreed, and 4 (1.6%) strongly disagreed.

Question #12 asked if the placement office personnel offered valuable assistance in completing the credential package. Responses reflected that 73 (28.6%) strongly agreed, 103 (40.4%) agreed, 57 (22.4%) had no opinion, 22 (8.6%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

Question #13 asked if the job interviews on campus that were arranged by the placement office were effectively scheduled. Responses reflected that 72 (28.2%) strongly agreed, 99 (38.8%) agreed, 80 (31.4%) had no opinion, 2 (0.8%) disagreed, and 2 (0.8%) strongly disagreed.

Question #14 asked if the job secured through the placement office was the right choice for him/her (the graduate worker). Responses reflected that 95 (37.3%) strongly agreed, 61 (23.9%) agreed, 24 (9.4%) had no opinion, 9 (3.5%) disagreed, 4 (1.6%) strongly disagreed, and 62 (24.3%) did not answer this question. (It might have been that the 62 who did not respond to this question already had employment or had other means of finding employment, and so it was not necessary for them to use the services of the
placement office to find employment.)

Question #15 asked if the employed graduate was satisfied with his/her present job. Responses reflected that 104 (40.8%) were strongly satisfied, 89 (34.9%) were satisfied, 55 (21.6%) had no opinion, 7 (2.7%) were not satisfied, and none were strongly dissatisfied. See Table 2.

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY OF GRADUATES’ OPINION TO THE STATEMENTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strong Agreement</th>
<th>No Agreement</th>
<th>Strong Disagreement</th>
<th>No Disagreement</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
<td>24 (9.4)</td>
<td>58 (22.7)</td>
<td>66 (25.9)</td>
<td>106 (41.6)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>49 (19.2)</td>
<td>35 (13.7)</td>
<td>25 (9.8)</td>
<td>65 (25.5)</td>
<td>81 (31.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>67 (26.3)</td>
<td>65 (25.5)</td>
<td>24 (9.4)</td>
<td>48 (18.8)</td>
<td>51 (20.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 (2.7)</td>
<td>15 (5.9)</td>
<td>100 (39.2)</td>
<td>67 (26.3)</td>
<td>66 (25.9)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>16 (6.3)</td>
<td>73 (28.6)</td>
<td>95 (37.3)</td>
<td>71 (27.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>38 (14.9)</td>
<td>85 (33.3)</td>
<td>87 (34.1)</td>
<td>45 (17.7)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>27 (10.6)</td>
<td>82 (32.2)</td>
<td>93 (36.4)</td>
<td>53 (20.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>33 (12.9)</td>
<td>110 (43.1)</td>
<td>69 (27.1)</td>
<td>43 (16.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>22 (8.6)</td>
<td>83 (32.6)</td>
<td>87 (34.1)</td>
<td>63 (24.7)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
<td>28 (11.0)</td>
<td>73 (28.6)</td>
<td>87 (34.1)</td>
<td>66 (25.9)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4 (1.6)</td>
<td>7 (2.7)</td>
<td>76 (29.8)</td>
<td>87 (34.1)</td>
<td>81 (31.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>22 (8.6)</td>
<td>57 (22.4)</td>
<td>103 (40.4)</td>
<td>73 (28.6)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>2 (0.8)</td>
<td>2 (0.8)</td>
<td>80 (31.4)</td>
<td>99 (38.8)</td>
<td>72 (28.2)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4 (1.6)</td>
<td>9 (3.5)</td>
<td>24 (9.4)</td>
<td>61 (23.9)</td>
<td>95 (37.3)</td>
<td>62 (24.3)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>7 (2.7)</td>
<td>55 (21.6)</td>
<td>89 (34.9)</td>
<td>104 (40.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. Percentages are given in parentheses.

Tests of the Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested using one-way Analysis of Variance. The results were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the perception of the
placement services among graduates by gender. With regard to the opinion of male and female graduates, the mean of the female group (3.78) was found to be significantly different from the male-group mean (3.66) at the .05 level of significance with $F_{1,253} = 4.80$, and $p = .029$.

Female graduates more than male graduates highly valued services provided by the placement office of their institution.

The evidence presented demonstrated that the mean of the female group was significantly different from the mean of the male group. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a difference in the perceptions of male and female graduates toward the impact of services provided by the placement office. See Table 3.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by college major.

The null hypothesis was rejected ($F_{5,248} = 26.18, p = .000$). Hence there is a significant difference with regard to perceptions held by graduates based on their college majors. Table 4 presents the ANOVA table for the result. Post-hoc analysis reveals where these differences lie as summarized in Table 5. The health-related field held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services, and the social sciences the lowest. There were widespread differences among the different groups. The asterisks in Table 5 point out which groups were significantly different from each other; those marked with a "-" were not significantly different from each other.
### TABLE 3

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE--TABLE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF PLACEMENT SERVICES BY GENDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>.029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>47.332</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.230</td>
<td>254</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.3872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.4784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.4358</td>
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### TABLE 4

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE--TABLE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE PLACEMENT SERVICES BY COLLEGE MAJORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Major</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.282</td>
<td>26.18</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>31.092</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.500</td>
<td>253</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5

**POST-HOC ANALYSIS OF PAIRED DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE MAJORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Major</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 - Social Sciences</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Business/Computer</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Education</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - Communication/English</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - Science/Architecture</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Health-related Fields</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the .05 level; – No difference between these groups.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by job position.

The null hypothesis was rejected ($F_{6,245} = 11.15, p = .000$). Hence there is a significant difference with regard to perceptions held by graduates based on their job position. Table 6 presents the ANOVA table for the result. Post-hoc analysis reveals where these differences lie as summarized in Table 7. The teaching position held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services and the social worker the lowest. There were widespread differences among the different groups. The asterisks in Table 7 point out which groups were significantly different from each other; those marked with a "—" were not significantly different from each other.
### TABLE 6
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE--TABLE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE PLACEMENT SERVICES BY JOB POSITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Position</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>10.173</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.695</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>37.262</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.435</td>
<td>251</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7
POST-HOC ANALYSIS OF PAIRED DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTIONS BY JOB POSITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Positions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 - Social Worker</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Clerical</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - Accounting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - Other</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Construction Design</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Health-related Fields</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - Teaching</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the .05 level; – No difference between these groups

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates by annual salary.
The null hypothesis was rejected \((F_{4,248} = 7.44, p = .000)\). Hence there is a significant difference with regard to perceptions held by graduates based on their job position. Table 8 presents the ANOVA table for the result. Post-hoc analysis reveals where these differences lie as summarized in Table 9. Those respondents earning salaries of $31.00 to $35,000 held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services and those earning less than $15,000 the lowest. There were widespread differences among the different groups. The asterisks in Table 9 point out which groups were significantly different from each other; those marked with a "*" were not significantly different from each other.

### Table 8

#### Analysis of Variance--Table of Differences in the Perception of the Placement Services by Annual Salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>(F)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.096</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.274</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>42.492</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.589</td>
<td>252</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significance difference in the perception of the placement services among graduates who secured a job through the placement services and those who did not.

The null hypothesis was rejected \((F_{2,246} = 38.66, p = .000)\). Hence there is a
TABLE 9
POST-HOC ANALYSIS OF PAIRED DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTIONS BY ANNUAL SALARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Less than $15,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - $21,000 to $25,000</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - $16,000 to $20,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - $26,000 to $30,000</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - $31,000 to $35,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the .05 level; – No difference between these groups.

significant difference with regard to perceptions held by graduates based on those who secured a job through the placement services and those who did not. Table 10 presents the ANOVA table for the result. Post-hoc analysis reveals where these differences lie as summarized in Table 11. Those who got jobs through the placement services held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services and those who got jobs by themselves the lowest. There were widespread differences among the different groups. The asterisks in Table 11 point out which groups were significantly different and indicate every group different from each other.

Summary

This chapter discusses how collected data were processed, analyzed, and how statistical results were interpreted. The tests of the hypotheses were also discussed.

The reader should bear in mind that the research was done to inquire the
TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE—TABLE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE PLACEMENT SERVICES BY THOSE WHO GOT A JOB THROUGH THE PLACEMENT SERVICES AND THOSE WHO DID NOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding a Job</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.042</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.521</td>
<td>38.66</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>35.132</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.174</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 11

POST-HOC ANALYSIS OF PAIRED DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTIONS BY THOSE WHO GOT A JOB THROUGH THE PLACEMENT SERVICES AND THOSE WHO DID NOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Job Was Secured</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Themselves</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Friends/Relatives</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Through CPPS</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the .05 level.
opinions of the 1996-97 academic-year college graduates toward the impact of career planning and placement services of colleges from which they graduated. Three selected institutions of higher education operating in the Michiana area participated in this study. The reader should also remember that although 375 individual questionnaires were sent out to potential respondents, only 255 of them (68%) were completed and returned to the researcher. There were 65 participating graduates from institution A, 87 from institution B, and 103 from institution C. The study group consisted of 135 males and 120 females. All individual responses from participating graduates were entered into the computer at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Information was analyzed using one-way Analysis of Variance, yielding statistical reports allowing the investigator to quantify the graduates’ opinions, to interpret results, and to test the level of significance that variables might have on graduates’ opinions toward the impact of career planning and placement services.

In the same chapter, the null hypotheses were tested using one-way Analysis of Variance. All five null hypotheses were tested for significance at 0.05% level and rejected, resulting in significant differences between variables tested and the perceived impact of placement services. Post-hoc analysis of paired differences was conducted to specify where differences, if any, lay among gender, college majors, job positions, annual salary, and those who got a job through the placement services and those who did not.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections: section one summarizes the problem, purpose, and methodology of the study; section two discusses conclusions reached as a result of the study related to the literature review and analysis of the data; section three provides recommendations for practice and further research.

Summary

Problem

Since 1919 until the time of this research, institutions of higher education progressively established offices of placement services to assist students in making decisions concerning their vocational goals and to help graduates obtain employment in their field of study. Despite the good intentions and efforts of colleges in establishing such offices, one problem still exists and needs to be addressed: It appears that the impact of services provided by career planning and placement offices is not clearly understood by all potential college students. There is a need for research to investigate how students perceive services offered by the placement office. It is hoped that information gathered from graduates who utilized college placement services and those who, for one reason or another, did not use them will help to understand the relationship between this office and
the students served.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to explore, evaluate, and interpret the opinions of 1996-1997 academic-year graduates of selected institutions of higher education toward the impact of placement services offered by the placement office of each selected institution of higher education. This study attempts to offer suggestions that might help college officials make the placement services more responsive to the students' overall needs.

**Methodology**

In an attempt to determine the opinions of the graduates of the 1996-1997 academic year, I selected three institutions of higher education operating in the Michiana area. A revised and tested questionnaire, along with a cover letter, was sent to 375 randomly selected former graduates of three institutions of higher education that agreed to participate in the study. One hundred and twenty-five questionnaires were sent to the graduates through the alumni office of each institution. The graduates completed the questionnaires and returned them to me through the alumni office of the same institution. Upon receipt of the responses, data were compiled and organized to correspond with the order of the hypotheses. Statistical treatment of data was conducted using one-way Analysis of Variance.

**Conclusions**

The second section discusses some conclusions reached as a result of the study.
in relation to the literature review and from the data analyzed.

It is important that the career development needs of students be met. In helping students to reach their career goals, the office of career planning and placement services ought to be aware of the needs of different categories of college student population.

The institution of higher learning was perceived to be effective if it was providing service based on what its constituency deemed necessary and desirable. For many years colleges and universities performed their major and traditional roles in the discovery, transmission, and preservation of knowledge. Now the focus of colleges and universities has shifted from a traditional role toward assessment of measurable outcomes that includes job placement, job satisfaction, and financial remuneration. Higher education institutions are currently using these assessments of outcomes that include job placement, job satisfaction, and financial remuneration to justify effectiveness of their programs. Career preparation, career satisfaction, and career advancement are now perceived as critically important variables for measuring higher-education program effectiveness. Colleges and universities must study and determine factors that contribute to graduates' job satisfaction. Colleges need to orient their research toward the changing trends of the job market.

Individual job satisfaction has its own benefits for both employees and employers. It may result in reduced production costs, overhead costs, reduced absenteeism, lower employee turnover, and reduced unemployment. In order to stay on the top of their responsibilities, college administrators should strive to see their institutions providing programs beyond traditionally performed roles. Universities should obtain information
about students' high academic preparation, employment success for graduates, and a
college's effectiveness in career preparation. At the end of the college experience,
graduates must be ready to face successfully challenges of employment in their field of
study.

Fifteen items were presented to the graduates and the findings were as follows:

1. Job satisfaction ranked highest (72%).
2. Of the female students, 45% were very satisfied with the job they were
holding.
3. Of the male students, 36% were very satisfied with the job they were holding.
4. Of the female students, 29% were just satisfied with the job they were holding.
5. Of the male students, 41% were just satisfied with the job they were holding.

Five items had scores between 60% to 67% indicating that placement office
personnel were always available and helpful, the selection of job openings by the
placement office was adequate, job tips provided by the office were very helpful, job
interviews on campus were effectively scheduled, and the jobs secured through the
placement office were the right choice for the graduates.

Five other items ranked third with scores between 50% and 59%. This group
stated that they were fully informed of services offered by the placement office before
they reached their senior year, counseling services helped them to make the right decision
about a career, enough information about job openings was available, and the job-
seeking skills they received as well as interview scheduling were of great value.

The item asking if the resume services offered by the placement office were of
great value ranked between 40% and 49%, which suggests that graduates needed more assistance in this area than they received. To the item asking if they were informed of placement service during their senior year, the score was as low as 39%. This low score shows that only a few students (99 out of 255) were informed of services offered during their senior year, suggesting that other students might have already been informed of services during the previous years.

Conclusions were reached from the data pertaining to the graduates’ opinions regarding the impact of the placement services on them:

1. In the analysis of the data obtained in relationship to the impact of gender on graduates’ perceptions toward placement services, the impact of gender was found to be significant. Female graduates more than male graduates highly valued services offered by the placement services of their institution.

2. In the analysis of the data obtained in relationship to the impact of college majors on graduates’ perceptions toward placement services, the impact of college majors was found significant. Post-hoc analysis revealed where differences lay (see Table 5). The health-related fields held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services and the social sciences the lowest. There were widespread differences among the different groups.

3. In the analysis of the data obtained in relationship to the impact of job positions on graduates’ perceptions toward placement services, significant differences were found. The teaching position held the strongest opinion about usefulness of the placement services and the social worker the lowest. There were widespread differences
among the different groups. Post-hoc analysis revealed where the differences lay (see Table 7).

4. In the analysis of the data in relationship to the impact of annual salary on graduates’ perceptions toward placement services, significant differences were found. The $31,000 to $35,000 group held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services and the less-than-$15,000 group the lowest. There were widespread differences among the groups. Post-hoc analysis revealed where these differences lay (see Table 9).

5. In the analysis of the data in relationship to the impact of whether or not graduates found a job through the placement services on graduates’ perceptions toward placement services, significant differences were found. Those who got a job through the placement services held the strongest opinion about the usefulness of the placement services and those who got a job by themselves the lowest. There were widespread differences among the different groups. Post-hoc analysis revealed where these differences lay (see Table 11).

Discussion

Graduates in the 2000s are facing new problems. On one hand the number of students coming to college continues to grow; but on the other hand the number of college graduate entry-level jobs is insufficient to accommodate every graduate. Anxiety and frustration exist among college students. What can college career planning and placement services do to address this question for their students? The following are some options that the review of literature suggests:
1. Make a shift in providing services to students. Instead of trying to place graduates in jobs, offer services to prepare them to find jobs themselves throughout their working lives.

2. Advise the undecided first-year students to go into the more marketable fields of study.

Since the 1990s large employers and firms have scaled down the number of campus visits to a few targeted schools. Employers want the best candidates available regardless of the school they are attending. Colleges should strive to satisfy employers’ hiring needs in order to attract students. The method used by career planning and placement offices to schedule interviews between students and employers should take into consideration the limited time the employers have for such activities. Also, the first-come, first-served method of interviewing, though it worked relatively well for years, is not suitable for the market needs of the 2000s. An employer is unable to see every student who desires an interview. Various techniques have been used, such as lotteries, drawings, computerized sign-ups, and other electronic communications. Some employers again review the candidates’ credentials and preselect those whom they wish to interview. For employers this preselection of candidates saves time and money.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made, based on the review of literature (1 and 2), the findings of this study (3 and 4), and general observations (5, 6, and 7):

1. The goal of the career planning and placement services needs to go beyond just finding students jobs. The goal should be to teach students the skills they need to get
their first job and to skillfully and efficiently, if the need arises, obtain new jobs throughout their work lives.

2. An effort should be made by the career development center to facilitate communication between faculty members and employers about their mutual needs and assistance.

3. The career planning and placement services personnel need to make more effort to inform all college students regarding services provided by their offices.

4. Job-seeking/getting-skills training and resume preparation need to be emphasized throughout career-development programs.

5. A larger sample of college graduates might be used in a future study to determine whether similar findings with reference to the impact of the career planning and placement services would result.

6. Career days could be beneficial to students if they were widely promoted.

7. Alumni week could boost students' vocational enthusiasm if alumni shared with them experiences in the real world of work.

For years colleges have performed their major traditional roles of the discovery, transmission, and preservation of knowledge. Colleges tend to shift the focus from traditional roles toward the assessment of measurable outcomes such as job placement, job satisfaction, and financial remuneration. Colleges are using these assessments of outcomes to justify the effectiveness of their programs. Career preparation, career satisfaction, and career advancement are perceived as important indicators of higher education's program effectiveness.
In order to meet their responsibilities, college administrators should make sure that their institutions are providing programs beyond traditionally performed roles. Again, the credibility of educational and training programs of an institution, whatever the quality may seem to be, will be undermined if a substantial number of student graduates remain unemployed.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE
June 8, 1998

Dear Alumnus,

I am a doctoral student conducting a study on the Effectiveness of Career Planning and Placement Offices as perceived by alumni of higher learning institutions in Michiana area. Your active participation is very important and appreciated. Please take few minutes to answer questions found in the enclosed questionnaire.

After completing this questionnaire, put it in the enclosed self-stamped envelope and mail it out.

Thank you for your input to this study.

Sincerely,

Javan L. Ntaganda
Javan L. Ntaganda
8937 N. Main St.
Berrien Springs
MI 49103

August 26, 1998

Office of Alumni

Dear Sir (Ms),

I am presently conducting a survey on effectiveness of placement services as perceived by college graduates at selected institutions of higher education in Michiana area. This study will be limited to the 1996-97 academic year’s graduates.

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in gathering information to complete my doctoral dissertation.

Sincerely,

Javan L. Ntaganda
September 24, 1998

To Whom It May Concern:

Javan L. Ntaganda is a doctoral student in the School of Education at Andrews University. Mr. Ntaganda is conducting a study of college graduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of placement services at four selected institutions of higher education in southern Michigan and northern Indiana. In order to complete this research he will collect, for each institution, responses from 100 alumni who reside in the Michiana area who graduated in 1997.

The purpose of this letter is to request you to assist Mr. Ntaganda in his efforts of gathering information to complete his doctoral dissertation. He is willing to pay for any work performed or materials used to facilitate the collection of data, to insure confidentiality, and to make this study a very smooth and successful experience.

Any endeavor to assist Mr. Ntaganda in his valuable research project will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jerome D. Thayer, PhD
Assistant Dean and Graduate Programs Director
School of Education
Andrews University
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE
QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. THANK YOU.

MALE__ FEMALE__ DATE OF GRADUATION (month/year)__________

NAME OF UNIVERSITY__________________ MAJOR__________________________

ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED___ IF SO, HOW LONG____________________

JOB TITLE________________________ ANNUAL SALARY RANGE__________

DID YOU LOCATE YOU JOB THROUGH PLACEMENT SERVICES____________

WHERE YOU WORKING WHILE ATTENDING COLLEGE_______________________

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND CIRCLE THE LETTER THAT CORRESPONDS WITH THE APPROPRIATE STATEMENT (ONE WHICH APPLIES TO YOU). PLEASE BE AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE.

1. I WAS THOROUGHLY INFORMED OF THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE COLLEGE PLACEMENT SERVICES OFFICE:
   A. 2 YEARS BEFORE GRADUATION
   B. 1 YEAR BEFORE GRADUATION
   C. 6 MONTHS BEFORE GRADUATION
   D. 3 MONTHS BEFORE GRADUATION

2. I FOUND MY CURRENT EMPLOYMENT:
   A. ON MY OWN
   B. THROUGH THE COLLEGE PLACEMENT SERVICES
   C. WITH THE HELP FROM FRIENDS
   D. I WAS EMPLOYED BEFORE GRADUATION

3. MY CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS WAS MY:
   A. FIRST CHOICE
   B. SECOND CHOICE
   C. THIRD CHOICE
   D. NONE OF THE ABOVE

4. I SECURED MY PRESENT JOB:
   A. BEFORE GRADUATION
   B. 1 MONTH AFTER GRADUATION
   C. 3 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION
   D. 6 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION
   E. 9 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION
   F. 1 YEAR AFTER GRADUATION
   G. MORE THAN 1 YEAR AFTER GRADUATION
Each of the statements below indicates services offered by the Placement Office on campus in an attempt to help potential graduates secure a career/employment. Please answer these questions as accurately as possible. If no answer fits your situation, find the most suitable answer. Thank-you for your participation.

Choose from these responses:
1 = I strongly disagree
2 = I disagree
3 = I have no opinion
4 = I agree
5 = I strongly agree

1. Career counseling services offered by the College Placement Office were of great value. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I was fully informed of services offered by the Placement Office before I reached my Senior year. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I was informed of services offered by the Placement Office during my Senior year. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Counseling services offered by the Placement Office helped me make the right decision about my career. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Placement Office personnel were always available and helpful. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Placement Office personnel had enough information about job openings. 1 2 3 4 5
7. The job seeking skills offered by the Placement Office were of great value. 1 2 3 4 5
8. The resume services offered by the Placement Office were of great value. 1 2 3 4 5
9. The job interview preparation offered by the Placement Office was of great value. 1 2 3 4 5
10. The selection of job openings offered by the Placement Office was adequate. 1 2 3 4 5
11. The job search tips offered by the Placement Office were very helpful. 1 2 3 4 5
12. The Placement Office personnel offered valuable assistance in completing the credentials package. 1 2 3 4 5
13. The job interviews on campus that were arranged by the Placement Office were effectively scheduled. 1 2 3 4 5
14. The job I secured through the Placement Office was the right choice for me. 1 2 3 4 5
15. I am satisfied with my present job. 1 2 3 4 5

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VITA

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