

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RECRUITMENT VIDEOTAPES FROM  
INSTITUTIONS UTILIZING ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

by

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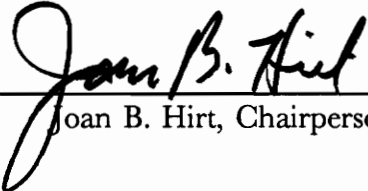
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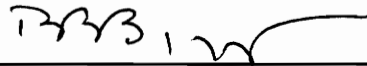
Student Personnel Services

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# CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RECRUITMENT VIDEOTAPES FROM INSTITUTIONS UTILIZING ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

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Student Personnel Services

## (ABSTRACT)

Recruitment materials such as videotapes help students to form expectations about the college experience. Students' expectations have been linked to retention. Research has indicated that students whose pre-matriculation expectations are not consistent with the reality they experience in college are more likely to drop out.

The frequent use and socializing effect of recruitment videos suggests that determining the messages the videos communicate is an important matter to address. This study analyzed the messages of 30 college recruitment videos in regards to four content areas: academic, social, personal, and institutional characteristics. The content analysis compared the messages from public and private institutions, as well as the messages from small, medium, and large institutions. The narrative and images in the videos were categorized as relating to one of the four content areas. The frequency and duration of content devoted to each area was analyzed. The actual messages communicated about each content area were also analyzed. Each video in the nationally representative sample of four-year institutions was obtained from an institution with an existing enrollment management system. The enrollment management philosophy includes a commitment to depicting institutions in an honest

an accurate fashion. Since enrollment management systems were designed to stabilize enrollments, examining how recruitment videos depict college to prospective students is an important step in assessing the effectiveness of the enrollment management system.

Results of the content analysis for duration and frequency indicated that videos emphasized personal issues. Academic issues received the second greatest attention, followed by institutional characteristics. Social issues received the least emphasis. Although very few differences among institutional types were found, large, public institutions devoted the most emphasis to personal issues.

The analysis of messages revealed that college provides students with a great deal of practical, hands-on learning. The purpose of attending college was characterized as career preparation. Narrative indicated that academics were challenging,; however, this characterization was not supported by images in the videos. Images indicated that studying is a casual activity, and that students receive support, often through one-on-one instruction and interaction with faculty. Another disconnect between narrative and images was found in the characterization of student diversity. Narrative indicated institutional commitment to diversity, while images displayed a majority of racially homogenous social groups. Finally, institutions were pictured as sites of activity and movement. Students were frequently depicted walking on campus, characterizing them as busy and purposeful.

Institutions would be well advised to case their recruitment videos on data gathered through institutional research. By presenting accurate messages about their

respective campuses, institutions would help prospective student form realistic expectations about the college experience.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Modern marketing often attempts to influence targeted audiences by appealing to lifestyles they desire. Consumers are persuaded to buy shampoo not because advertisements communicate that the product cleans hair, but because the ads suggest that users are transformed into supermodels. Homemakers receive messages that certain food products will ensure that their families eat dinner together, and young men are convinced that buying brand X beer will get them the women of their dreams. On one level, consumers realize that ads do not always reflect the reality that results from buying products. Yet, these marketing techniques continue to persuade consumers.

What is the harm done to consumers if hopes of improving their lives are not realized after purchasing a few products? What are the consequences of the disparity between consumers' expectations and reality? The \$2.00 investment in, and month-long commitment to, a bottle of shampoo will not permanently disillusion the typical consumer if this promise of a new and better lifestyle is not realized. Even if her life does not become more glamorous, chances are, she will not stop buying shampoo.

Marketing which does not reflect reality may have more serious consequences, however, for consumers of higher education. Research has indicated that students whose prematriculation expectations are not consistent with the reality they experience in college are more likely to drop out (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Baker & Schultz,

1992). These consumers will not continue to invest in the product of higher education when it fails to live up to their expectations. Has the marketing of higher education influenced students to have unrealistic expectations about the college experience?

Over the last two decades, institutions of higher education have implemented aggressive marketing techniques to compete for students. Many institutions have produced recruitment videos to attract applicants (Hays, 1994; Landers, 1986; Rubman & Theiblot, 1992). This surge in the use of the video medium has seemed appropriate, in light of our society's fascination with technology, and in particular, the televised message. Roehr (1991) reported that over two-thirds of Americans receive most of their daily information from television. The medium of television has been shown to be favored especially by youth (Hayes, 1994; Landers, 1986). Young peoples' attraction to television has strengthened the reasoning behind, and motivation for, using this medium to communicate information to traditional-aged college applicants.

Students have reported extensive use of recruitment publications and videotapes in their college-search process (Carnegie Foundation, 1986). They state these materials helped them to form expectations about the college experience (Strayer, 1988). Because of their frequent use and socializing effect, determining the messages recruitment materials communicate would appear to be an important matter to address. Yet, little research has been conducted that examines the messages of these recruitment materials.

Students have expressed a belief that recruitment publications, in their efforts to attract students, gloss over reality and present only the positive aspects of their respective institutions (Strayer, 1988). Have recruitment publications, frequently used by students, contributed to the unrealistic expectations pervasive among incoming freshmen? If so, has the emphasis on appealing to students affected subsequent attrition rates by fostering unrealistic student expectations? These questions cannot be answered until the messages communicated by recruitment publications are examined.

Research has revealed that over 50% of the students in a typical freshman class do not graduate from the institutions where they began their post-secondary study. Freshman year attrition rates have commonly soared to 20% of the entering class (Tinto, 1987). High attrition rates, combined with a forecasted decline in the traditional-aged student population, have caused institutions to formulate new methods to stabilize enrollments (Hossler, 1985a).

Over the past 15 years, many institutions have implemented a structural system aimed at combining recruitment and retention efforts to stabilize enrollments. This system, commonly referred to as enrollment management (EM), incorporates the admissions activities of promotion and marketing into a system which addresses the needs of students from the college-search process through graduation. One of the objectives of the EM philosophy is to promote accurate depictions of institutions to prospective students (Williford, 1987).

However well intended the objectives are, implementing effective EM systems has been difficult (Clagett, 1991). Over the last 10 years, the trend to restructure services to form an enrollment management system has developed little more than in name only (Hossler, 1985a; Tinto & Wallace, 1986). Many institutions have restructured the connections between the offices of the registrar, admission, financial aid, and orientation forming a division of enrollment services. However, little evidence exists to suggest that this effort to stabilize enrollments has been as collaborative as the name changes have implied.

Research has not established whether the philosophies of EM have been incorporated into recruitment and marketing activities. In particular, little evidence exists to suggest that marketing efforts have communicated realistic messages to prospective students. Before research can address the accuracy of recruitment messages, defining and analyzing the messages must be completed.

Despite the popularity of using the video medium in recruitment practices, research is limited which examines the effectiveness of this approach. Fielder (1993) conducted a pilot study on recruitment videos to determine their themes and relative effectiveness in appealing to high school students. This research, however, did not address the actual messages that were communicated by the videos and was severely limited in that only three videos were examined. A gap remains in the literature about what messages are communicated through recruitment videos.

## Purpose of Study

This study attempted to analyze the messages conveyed by 30 videos obtained from a nationally representative sample of four-year institutions. Messages must be analyzed and defined before research can determine their accuracy. Assessing the relationship between recruitment messages and institutional realities will be left to future research. All videos in the sample were produced by institutions with formal EM programs. Existence of an EM program theoretically indicated the institution's commitment to conveying accurate information in recruitment materials. This study made no attempt to assess institutional purpose for EM programs or commitment to EM philosophy.

## Research Questions

The content analysis of the videos was undertaken to answer the following research questions:

1. What messages did recruitment videos from baccalaureate degree-granting institutions with formal EM systems communicate about academic, social, and personal issues and institutional characteristics?
2. What were the similarities/differences in messages between recruitment videos from public and private institutions in the sample?
3. What were the similarities/differences in messages among recruitment videos from small, medium, and large public and private institutions in the sample?

Video messages were examined and categorized as pertaining to either academic issues, social issues, personal issues, or institutional characteristics. Messages regarding academic, social, and personal issues were deemed important as students have reported unrealistic expectations in these areas (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Baker & Schultz, 1992). Institutional characteristics were deemed important in that they convey unique aspects of an institution, thereby enabling prospective students to assess their fit with the campus.

#### Outline of Remainder of Research

The present study is organized in the following fashion. Chapter One presents an overview of the phenomenon under study and the purpose of the present research. Chapter Two presents a review of related literature. This review focuses on EM and the emergence of recruitment videos. Chapter Three presents the methods used to select the sample and complete the content analysis. Chapter Four reports the results generated from the content analysis of the recruitment videos and discusses these results, emphasizing the relationship between video messages and the aims of enrollment management. Limitations of the study, and implications for future practice and research are also presented in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

In order to address what messages promotional videotapes have communicated regarding the nature of college at institutions using EM, several bodies of research were examined. First, topics related to EM were explored, including studies aimed at defining the concept of EM, describing the structures of EM, and explaining the role of marketing in EM. A review of the works detailing the professional expertise needed in the areas of college choice and student-institutional fit was also included.

Second, the body of research relating to the emerging use of recruitment videotapes as a college admissions marketing technique was examined. Related literature included the power of the medium of television, and the accessibility and convenience of videos.

Finally, the literature related to content analysis and effectiveness of recruitment videotapes was explored.

### Enrollment Management

Enrollment management emerged in the 1980s as a means to offset the impact of forecasted declines in college enrollment (Hossler, 1985a). Although actual enrollments did not decline as predicted (Cohen & Kroe, 1988), the projections prompted institutions to formulate new means of stabilizing enrollments (Pollock & Wolf, 1989). The marketing efforts of the 1970s were not explicitly coordinated with retention efforts. Although the emphasis on marketing helped to fill freshmen classes, it

did not ensure stable enrollments. All students admitted to college are potential drop outs, and efforts to retain admitted students were necessary to achieve stable enrollments (Kuh, 1991). In the 1980s, institutions began to incorporate admissions activities, such as marketing and recruiting, into broader efforts which also addressed retaining matriculants. Initiatives that combined the issues of recruitment and retention became known as EM systems (Hossler, 1984).

The philosophy behind EM argued that both effective recruitment and retention efforts were necessary to stabilize and maintain desired levels of enrollment. EM systems addressed both the informational needs of applicants as well as the educational and transitional needs of matriculants (Williford, 1987). Attention to the needs of students from their initial point of contact with an institution, through their matriculation, to their graduation, required institution-wide efforts (Hossler, 1985a). The most commonly cited definition of EM has been:

A process, or activity, which influences the size, shape, and the characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in the areas of marketing, recruitment, and admissions, as well as pricing and financial aid. In addition, the process exerts a significant influence on academic advising, the institutional research agenda, orientation, retention studies and student services. It is not simply an administrative process. Enrollment management involves the entire campus (Hossler, 1984, p. 6).

Although the institutional offices mentioned in Hossler's definition traditionally worked towards common goals of recruitment and retention, typically these units worked independently (Ewell, 1985). EM systems replaced the previous methods of recruitment and retention by proposing a cohesive effort among institutional offices.

### Structure of Enrollment Management

Despite the wide acceptance of Hossler's (1984) definition, the concept of EM frequently has been misunderstood (Hossler, 1985a). The definition explicitly stated that enrollment management involves the entire campus and named specific offices which were necessary participants for the successful implementation of an EM system. However, many attempts to implement EM systems have resulted in little more than name changes for admission offices to "enrollment services" (Hossler, 1985a; Tinto & Wallace, 1986).

Regardless of name changes, admission offices did not have the capabilities to meet the needs of students after the point of matriculation. The duties of admission offices have been limited to marketing institutions and to recruiting and admitting students (Hossler, 1985a). One of the foundations of the EM concept has been that offices such as financial aid, orientation, and academic advising must work cooperatively with admissions to ensure that both recruitment and retention are addressed (Hossler, 1984). Despite EM's explicit dual focus on recruitment and retention, Novak and Weiss (1984) found that only 15% of institutions reporting use of EM systems stated that financial aid offices were active forces in EM efforts. Only 22%

of the institutions reported that registrars and other student affairs offices took part in EM activities. The failure to recognize offices such as financial aid, the registrar, and other student services areas as participants in EM activities in Novak and Weiss' (1984) study demonstrated fundamental misunderstandings of the structural concepts of EM (Hossler, 1987).

While responsibilities of the admissions office, including marketing and recruiting, only represent part of the EM objective, these functions have been vital to the maintenance of college enrollments (Williford, 1987). In the interests of retention, admission offices have attempted to portray institutions accurately and attract students who are compatible with what the institution has to offer (Hossler, 1985a). Enrollment management has assumed that students equipped with accurate information have been better able to make sound decisions regarding which college to attend. Students who have experienced consistency between their expectations of college and the reality they experience once enrolled have been more likely to persist to graduation (Baker & Schultz, 1992).

Given this understanding of the concept and structure of enrollment management, as well as the functions of the admissions office, the nature of this research required a deeper exploration of the role of marketing in the admissions component of the enrollment management system.

## The Role of Marketing in Enrollment Management

The traditional admissions objective of attracting a large pool of applicants was not abandoned by institutions using EM systems (Hossler, 1987). Marketing has remained a necessary activity to attract the best students in times of stiff competition among institutions (Grossman, 1987; Kotler, 1975; Welki & Navaratil, 1987).

Despite the necessity of employing marketing techniques to attract students, many faculty members have found these activities to be inappropriate and incompatible with the purposes of higher education (Grossman, 1987; Leach, 1984). Faculty view education as a commitment to higher learning rather than as a product to be bought and sold. Those who have objected to the use of marketing have feared that, in making the "sale", institutions will place the students' desires above the commitment to academic excellence (Grossman, 1987).

Perhaps these objections to the marketing of higher education have been rooted in the principles of marketing. Kotler (1975) argued that primary objectives of marketing are identifying the wants, needs, and values of its targeted constituencies and adapting the product to the desires of these constituencies. In the context of higher education, marketing principles have guided institutions to conduct research as to what students expect from a college education. Once the institutions have gauged the market demand, marketing principles have led institutions to shape their marketing efforts and services to meet these demands (Kotler, 1975).

Higher education's willingness to adapt to the changing demands of society has been controversial. As noted, faculty members have viewed marketing as dangerous to the continued quality and rigor of academic programs (Grossman, 1987). Enrollment managers, conversely, have viewed marketing, understanding and meeting the needs of students, as responsive actions that lead to increased student retention (Hossler, 1987).

Enrollment managers have tracked the changing characteristics of students through continual assessments of institutional environments. Data generated from institutional research has helped institutions to better serve the retention needs of students. For example, findings that students were academically under-prepared have led institutions to develop study skills programs to serve students' needs (Zarvell, Kuskie, Bertram, Noel, Levitz, & Jones, 1991). To contribute to the EM objective of retaining students, admission offices have attempted to produce publications that accurately portray the institution, while still appealing to applicants (Hossler, 1984). It was believed that students who had accurate information would be able to make sound decisions regarding their college choice. The admission office's role in marketing has been focused on communicating messages to prospective students about institutional image and identity (Grove, 1992). Through recruitment publications, as well as personal communications with applicants, admission offices have attempted to convey the institution's mission, values, and climate (Kuh, 1991).

In order to create accurate, yet appealing, recruitment publications, professionals have needed expertise in a growing body of research related to EM

(Hossler, 1985a). A closer review of the professional expertise relevant to admissions marketing functions was necessary, given the nature of the present research.

### Professional Expertise Areas

A mere structural understanding of the concept of EM has not been sufficient to guide a successful EM system (Hossler, 1987). The most important factor in establishing an effective EM system has not been a functional adaptation, but rather the level of professional knowledge among those responsible for managing that system (Hossler, 1985b). Professionals involved in EM activities needed a base of knowledge in various areas to effectively address issues of recruitment and retention. For example, literature in the area of tuition price (Litten, 1984) has aided institutions in understanding the effect of student costs on enrollment decisions. More closely related to the purpose of this research were studies in the areas of college choice and student-institution fit. An understanding of how students make their college-attendance decisions and how issues of fit influence retention have affected admission practices (Hossler, 1985b).

Armed with information on the college-choice process and student-institution fit, enrollment managers have narrowed their focus to recruiting students whose needs can be addressed by their institutions (Hossler, 1988). Institutions have attempted to send prospective students accurate messages regarding the qualities and demands of their environments (Langley, 1988). Adherence to institutional missions (Hossler, 1988) and an understanding of the findings generated through institutional research have

helped enrollment managers to create honest depictions of their environments (Clagett, 1991).

College choice. Knowledge in the area of college choice has been an important component of professional competency for enrollment managers (Hossler, 1985a). An understanding of the target markets' perceptions, desires, and values has helped institutions to adapt their programs and promote their images. Studies on college choice have addressed students' reasons for attending college as well as factors motivating students to choose a particular institution (Strayer, 1988).

A number of researchers have determined a progression of stages in the college-choice process (Chapman, 1981; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Stages included the predisposition to attend college, the search stage (obtaining information from various institutions), and the choice stage which concludes with the acceptance of admission to a particular university (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Research involving the three stages of the college-choice process has generated many findings that have guided the marketing and recruitment activities of admissions offices. Different kinds of information were more relevant to students at different points in their searches (Jackson, 1982). Specific information, such as course descriptions and class schedules, has been found to overwhelm students in the initial stages of decision making (Chapman, 1981). These studies have helped enrollment managers to disseminate information to prospective students in the time frame most influential and pertinent to the college choice process.

The predisposition and choice stages of the process have been the subjects of extensive research (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989). Findings related to the predisposition stage have helped admissions staff to target those students most likely to attend college. Much of the research on the choice stage has confirmed that students base their decisions on issues of cost and academic reputation (Feldman & Newcomb, 1973; Strayer, 1988). The majority of students reported that their decisions to attend college were based on career goals (Murray, 1990). Word of mouth has been a strong influence on college choice (Grove, 1992). Family and friends have been reported as having the most influence on student decisions. Recruitment publications have been identified as additional resources used in the choice process (Galotti & Mark, 1994). College-choice research has resulted in practical applications. Admission offices have used research findings to determine which aspects of their institutions to emphasize, when, and to whom.

The search stage, more closely related to the purpose of the present research, has not been the subject of as much research as the other two stages (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989). The limited research completed on the search stage, however, has provided useful insights into admissions office practice. After taking the Pre-Scholastic Assessment Test, high school students have been bombarded with mailings of recruitment publications (Canterbury, 1989). The goal of most of these recruitment publications has been to distinguish institutions from their competitors (Anderson, 1994). Recruitment literature has typically focused on providing students with

information concerning the traditions, cultures, and values of institutions (Kuh, 1991). This information has been designed to make students feel welcomed and wanted by institutions. While recruitment publications have not greatly influenced their final decisions, the publications have confirmed students' existing perceptions about college and helped them form an idea of what college life is like (Strayer, 1988).

Although students have indicated frequent use of recruitment literature, ironically, they have reported a belief that information contained in recruitment literature was not accurate (Carnegie Foundation, 1986). Students, wise to basic marketing strategies, felt that institutions highlighted only attractive aspects in their recruitment literature. This finding suggested that while the EM objective was to portray institutions accurately, recruitment literature has been produced with the primary goal of appealing to students.

Despite their apparent marketing savvy, most students' expectations of college have been more positive than the reality they have experienced after they enroll (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Stern, 1966). Stern's (1966) research indicated that in addition to possessing unrealistic expectations, students have relied on institutional stereotypes in their college-choice process. Even when supplied with recruitment literature geared towards their expressed informational needs, applicants chose colleges based largely on stereotypes and insufficient information (Chapman, 1981). College choices based on incomplete or incorrect information have likely been poor decisions (Cotoia, 1986).

Students' expectations of college have affected their college-choice process as well as their ultimate fit with the institution they attend. Research in the area of student-institutional fit has explored student expectations more thoroughly than the area of college choice (Williams, 1987). A review of the literature on student-institution fit was undertaken to reexamine the relationship between student and recruitment and retention.

Student-institutional fit. Enrollment management scholars have agreed that admissions' acceptance decisions based on the notion of student-institution fit contribute to student retention (Hossler, 1984). Admissions staff operating under EM systems have attempted to help students choose the institution that is best equipped to meet their needs and expectations. The concept of student-institution fit has focused on three variables: student characteristics, institutional characteristics, and the interaction of students with the institutional environment (Williams, 1987).

Student characteristics have included academic abilities, interests, and expectations. The traditional criteria for college acceptance have included standardized test scores, high school course selections, high school grade point averages, class rank, and the availability of the student's desired academic major (Williams, 1986). These factors have related only to the academic characteristics of applicants. Early research in retention revealed that academic factors accounted for only half of the variance in drop-out decisions (Pantages & Creedon, 1978). Social and personal adjustment issues,

while largely disregarded in admissions decisions, have influenced student attrition (Williams, 1986).

Students have entered college with expectations more positive than the realities they experience. These expectations have focused on academic, social, and personal adjustment, as well as institutional attachment (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Baker & Schultz, 1992; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Stern, 1965). The discrepancies between students' expectations and eventual realities have caused many to feel disillusioned with their college experiences. Students who have experienced difficult transitions due to these overly optimistic expectations have been more likely to drop out (Baker & Schultz, 1992).

To attract students likely to persist until graduation, the EM philosophy has suggested that admissions staff assume the role of educator (Tinto & Wallace, 1986). In this advising role, admission counselors have attempted to assist students in forming realistic expectations about their college experience. Again, the EM objective of presenting the institution in a realistic and accurate fashion had important implications for retention.

Ensuring that recruitment publications accurately portray the institution (Hossler, 1984) has remained an important function of the admissions office. Students have reported frequent use of recruitment publications (Carnegie Foundation, 1986; Galotti & Mark, 1994; Jackson, 1982) and have indicated that these publications have helped to socialize them as to the nature of college (Strayer, 1988). In other words,

Students have reported that recruitment publications have helped them to gain an understanding of what the college experience is like. However, no research has specifically addressed how these publications, which have informed students about the nature of college, have contributed to students' pervasive misconceptions and unrealistic expectations concerning college.

The need to compete for students has led to the production of slick recruitment publications, and has been acknowledged as problematic in the literature concerning the marketing of higher education (Grossman, 1987). Has the competitive nature of college recruitment overpowered EM's commitment to honestly depict institutions? Little data have been generated to suggest that the philosophies of EM have been implemented in practice (Pollock & Wolf, 1989). In analyzing the messages of recruitment videos, this study has attempted to address this gap in EM literature. This study will analyze the messages in 30 recruitment videos. The messages must be defined before their accuracy can be determined. Assessing the relationship between recruitment messages and institutional reality will be left to future research.

#### Emergence of Recruitment Videotapes

Since 1980, a growing number of institutions have developed videotapes to aid in their recruitment efforts (Fielder & Others, 1993; Landers, 1986; Rubman & Theiblot, 1992). The trend to produce recruitment videotapes has gained popularity for several reasons.

The most obvious reason for the popularity of recruitment videotapes has been society's fascination with technology, and in particular the televised message. According to Roehr (1991), over two-thirds of Americans receive most of their daily information from television. The medium of television has been especially appealing to young people (Landers, 1986). The cohort of the traditional-age college students has grown up with MTV. They are among the most visually and technologically advanced generation in history (Hays, 1994). Young peoples' attraction to television and video has strengthened the reasoning for using this medium to communicate information to traditional-aged college applicants.

Recruitment videos have also been popular because of their accessibility (Landers, 1986). Close to 90% of the homes in the United States have been equipped with a video cassette recorder (VCR) (Miller, 1991). The widespread ownership of VCRs has allowed institutions to market themselves to prospective students across the country. Students and parents have been able to get an impression of an institution without leaving home. The videotapes have allowed viewers to learn about institutions at their convenience, and to forward or rewind to specific points of interest on any given tape (Landers, 1986).

Videotapes have been distributed in a variety of ways, depending on what message an institution has attempted to convey (Rubman & Theiblot, 1992). Some institutions have mailed prospective students copies of recruitment videotapes that they may keep. Others have sent the videos to feeder schools including high schools and

community colleges. Admission counselors from some institutions have shown videos during their visits to high schools and college fairs. Some institutions have used the video on-site, as a preface to a campus tour. All methods of presenting the videos have advantages and disadvantages (Rubman & Theiblot, 1992); however, many institutions have expressed a belief that the videos have boosted their recruitment success (Landers, 1986).

The actual effectiveness of the videos in recruiting students has been difficult to ascertain, as the videos have not been the only recruitment tool used to attract students (Landers, 1986). Poorly made, or outdated videos, have not appealed to the visually sophisticated audience of traditional-aged students. A low quality video may portray an institution unfavorably and actually defeat the recruiting purpose (Rubman & Theiblot, 1992).

The script, pace, and visual images of videos have sent strong messages about institutions (Hays, 1994). Therefore, it has been important to consider the target market and institutional mission when creating a recruitment video. As the trend to use recruitment videos has been relatively recent, little systematic research has been conducted to examine this recruitment tool's effectiveness in attracting students (Fielder, 1993).

In a pilot study based on the content of three recruitment videos, Fielder (1993) uncovered seven themes that recruitment videos shared. These themes included: (a) testimonials, (b) student-teacher interactions, (c) campus/building/town aesthetics, (d)

text, (e) varsity athletics, (f) student activities, and (g) academic symbols (e.g., convocation, graduation). Each of the videos examined in the study dedicated similar amounts of time to each of the seven themes. The categories of student-teacher interaction, testimonial, campus aesthetics, and student activities received the greatest attention in each of the videos. The videos followed a similar order in presenting the aforementioned categories and focused on testimonials, student-teacher interaction and campus aesthetics during the first three to four minutes of the videos. A survey of video viewers found that the information concentrated at the beginning of the videos was determined to be the most remembered (Fielder, 1993).

Although the Fielder (1993) study produced some initial information regarding the categorical content of recruitment videos, the findings were based on only three videos and avoided description or interpretation of the messages the tapes conveyed. There has remained a gap in research regarding what messages these recruitment videos communicate about the nature of college. As the messages communicated through recruitment videos may influence student expectations of the college experience, and expectations have been found to impact retention, the examination of video messages is important to retention efforts.

### Summary

#### Enrollment Management

Enrollment management has attempted to improve upon traditional recruitment and retention practices (Hossler, 1984). Although much of the research in the area of

EM has focused on the concept and issues of structure, EM has remained largely misunderstood (Hossler, 1985a). The most important variable in determining the success of EM has been professional expertise in related areas (Hossler, 1985b).

Research has suggested that recruitment materials help to socialize students about the nature of college. Recruitment materials which communicate accurate and honest messages help students to develop realistic expectations. Realistic expectations increase the likelihood of student retention. Currently, many institutions use videos in their recruitment efforts. However, little research has been completed which examines what messages recruitment videos communicate to prospective students.

#### Emergence of Recruitment Videos

As television has been a major force in the socialization of viewers (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986) and recruitment publications have helped to socialize students concerning the college experience (Strayer, 1988), it is reasonable to suggest that recruitment videos have an effect on students' perceptions and expectations regarding college. Unrealistic expectations have been associated with student attrition (Baker & Schultz, 1992). Recruitment materials have demonstrated the power to influence expectations (Strayer, 1988). Therefore, to address attrition, it is critical to determine what messages recruitment videos communicate regarding the nature of college, particularly in the areas of academic, social, and personal adjustment, and institutional attachment.

Additionally, determining the message of the videos has been labelled important in the context of the philosophical foundations of EM. As the trends of producing recruitment videos and adopting EM systems have coincided, many of these videos could have been conceived and scripted with the ideals of enrollment management as a guiding force. More precisely, the promotional videotapes could have been created with a commitment to portray institutions in a realistic and honest fashion. Before the messages of recruitment videos can be compared with the realities of college, the inherent messages in the videos themselves must be systematically analyzed.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the videos to determine what messages they send regarding academic, social, and personal issues, and institutional characteristics.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Method

A content analysis of recruitment videos was undertaken to determine what messages institutions communicate to prospective students regarding academic, social, personal and institutional characteristics of the college experience. The messages were thought to contribute to the expectations of future students. Students' expectations have been found to be a significant influence on persistence.

### Sample

The selection of institutions for this study was based on the following criteria: (a) status as baccalaureate degree granting institution, and (b) the existence of a formal EM program at the institution. These criteria were determined using the 1995 Higher Education Directory. The 1995 Higher Education Directory listed the Carnegie Classification codes for each institution. The Carnegie Classification codes determined whether or not campuses met the criterion of status as a baccalaureate degree granting institution for the purposes of this study. The following Carnegie Classifications satisfied the criterion: Research Universities I and II, Doctoral Universities I and II, Master's (Comprehensive) Universities and Colleges I and II, and Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) Colleges I and II.

Requiring status in one of the above listed classifications eliminated community colleges, fine arts schools, and theological seminaries, among other specialized institutions, from the sample used for this study. Four-year, baccalaureate degree-

granting institutions were judged to represent the average high school student's perception of the college environment for purposes of this investigation.

The 1995 Higher Education Directory also listed administrative officers at each institution and indicated the officer's position using position classification codes. These codes helped to determine the existence of a formal EM program. One of the codes represented was "Director, Enrollment Management." Institutions which listed an employee designated as director of EM were considered to have a formal EM program for the purposes of this research. As not all institutions with offices of enrollment management list this in the 1995 Higher Education Directory, institutions were phoned to inquire as to the existence of an EM office in order to complete the sample.

After baccalaureate degree-granting institutions with formal EM programs were identified, these institutions were categorized by control (public or private), geographic location (northeast, southeast, central, northwest, and southwest), and enrollment size. All information necessary to create these categories was available in the 1995 Higher Education Directory. This source indicated institution's status as public or private, listed enrollment figures, and identified location.

Enrollment size was categorized as small, medium, or large depending on the institution's total enrollment. Institutions were categorized as small if the enrollment was up to 5,000 students, medium if the enrollment ranged between 5,001-15,000 students, and large if the enrollment was at least 15,001 students. The size parameters were based on the researcher's definitions.

The classification of institutions into the five geographic locations was accomplished by predetermining which states comprised each geographic area. The classification of states into geographic areas was summarized in Table 1. The classifications of geographic area were determined by the researcher's definitions. The purpose of categorizing institutions by control type and enrollment size was to compare the content of recruitment videos based on these institutional characteristics. For example, the categories allowed comparisons of video content between small and large private institutions, as well as between small private and small public institutions.

Geographic location was considered solely to ensure a national sample of institutions. Geographic location was not considered in the analysis of the results obtained in this study. Determining influence of geographic location on recruitment video messages may be the subject of future research.

Once institutions were categorized based on control, enrollment size, and geographic location, an effort was made to identify those institutions using recruitment videos and to solicit the videos. The desired sample consisted of a total of 30 videos. Six videos were obtained from each geographic location to achieve a nationally representative sample. Three of the videos from each geographic location were received from public institutions, and 3 were received from private institutions. For each group of three public and three private institutions, one was identified in the small enrollment group, one in the medium enrollment group, and one in the large

Table 1

Distribution of States in Geographic Categories

Northeast	Southeast	Central	Southwest	Northwest
Connecticut	Alabama	Arkansas	Arizona	Alaska
Delaware	District of Columbia	Illinois	California	Idaho
Maine	Florida	Indiana	Colorado	Missouri
Massachusetts	Georgia	Iowa	Hawaii	Montana
New Hampshire	Maryland	Kentucky	Kansas	Nebraska
New Jersey	Mississippi	Louisiana	Nevada	North Dakota
New York	North Carolina	Michigan	New Mexico	Oregon
Pennsylvania	South Carolina	Minnesota	Oklahoma	South Dakota
Rhode Island	Tennessee	Ohio	Texas	Washington
Vermont	Virginia	Wisconsin	Utah	Wyoming
	West Virginia			

enrollment group. The categories resulting from this sampling strategy were summarized in Table 2.

Videos were purchased from a distribution service called Search By Video. Search By Video could not, however, supply all the necessary videos to complete the desired sample. Institutions were contacted by telephone to fulfill the necessary quota of videos in each category (e.g., one northeast/private/small, one northeast/private/medium, one northeast/private/large). The process of telephoning institutions was performed until the desired number of videos in each category was obtained.

### Methodology

The content analyzed for the purposes of the study included both the narrative and the images of the recruitment videos. The content of the videos was examined in relation to four themes: academic issues; social issues; personal issues; and institutional characteristics. Student adjustments in these areas have been found significant to their persistence (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Baker & Schultz 1992).

In general, academic issues included references to structures and opportunities pertaining to intellectual development. References to programs of study, statistics on student/faculty ratios, and figures on library holdings were examples of the academic issues theme.

Table 2

Sample

Location	Control	
	Private	Public
Northeast	1 large	1 large
	1 medium	1 medium
	1 small	1 small
Southeast	1 large	1 large
	1 medium	1 medium
	1 small	1 small
Central	1 large	1 large
	1 medium	1 medium
	1 small	1 small
Northwest	1 large	1 large
	1 medium	1 medium
	1 small	1 small
Southwest	1 large	1 large
	1 medium	1 medium
	1 small	1 small

Social issues included references to structures and opportunities associated with interpersonal relationships. Examples of social issues included references to social clubs and testimonials of friendships.

Personal issues included references to structures and opportunities in place for individual development and daily survival. For example, such issues included references to leadership opportunities and career services.

Institutional characteristics related to distinctive aspects of the institution and surrounding community. Descriptions of campus history and traditions were examples of institutional characteristics. Table 3 provides examples of images and narrative relating to each content area.

It was understood that additional content areas might emerge during the process of screening the videos. If so, the researcher identified the new themes and the references that characterized these themes.

Categorizing images and narrative required close attention to detail. For example, content focusing on residence life may have related to more than one of the content areas. Narrative or images highlighting the availability of designated study areas in residence halls were categorized as an academic issue. Narrative or images portraying residence halls as sociable and friendly were categorized as a social issue. Narrative or images presenting features such as laundry and cooking facilities in residence halls were categorized as personal. Narrative or images focusing on the architecture of residence halls were categorized as an institutional characteristic.

Table 3

Description of Content Categories

Category	Images and Narrative
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>student-faculty interaction and ratio</li> <li>class size</li> <li>programs of study</li> <li>library holdings</li> <li>computer facilities</li> <li>graduation ceremonies</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spectator sports</li> <li>social clubs</li> <li>friendships</li> </ul>
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>housing considerations</li> <li>food services</li> <li>career services</li> <li>financial aid</li> <li>leadership opportunities</li> <li>religious opportunities</li> </ul>
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>city and surrounding area</li> <li>campus traditions and history</li> <li>tuition</li> <li>student population statistics</li> </ul>

Each video was analyzed for two components related to the four content areas (academic, social, personal, and institutional). The first component involved determining the amount of time devoted to coverage of the four content areas. The second component analyzed the frequency with which each content area was addressed. The Content Analysis Coding Form (CACF) was created to aid in tracking the timing and frequency of the categorical content of the videos (see Appendix A).

A separate CACF was used for each video. Each scene was categorized as focusing on academic, social, personal, or institutional issues. The time devoted to each of these issues was tracked and recorded on the CACF. Both the visual images and narrative content were analyzed via this process. Visual and spoken content were analyzed in separate screenings of the videos, as these two forms of content did not necessarily address the same content areas simultaneously. To determine the total time devoted to each of the content areas through the narrative and images, times for each were summed.

In addition to determining the amount of time devoted to each content area, the frequency with which the content areas appeared in the video was also tracked. Although certain areas were not displayed or discussed for long periods of time, the frequency of their inclusion underscored their importance. For example, a video might not have included lengthy narrative about making lasting friendships; however, friendships might have been frequently addressed throughout the video. The practice of repeatedly referring to friendship emphasized social issues. To determine the

frequency of content coverage, the appearance of each content area in the category column of the CACF was counted.

Since the videos varied in length, the most reasonable analysis was to calculate the percentage of time and frequency devoted to each content area through narrative and images. This approach standardized the data across videos.

After viewing the videos to determine percentage of time and frequency devoted to each content area, a final analysis was performed. The nature of this analysis was more descriptive and subjective than the previous methods. The results of the timing and frequency of content were considered and expanded on in this analysis.

For example, content timing and frequency may have indicated that a particular institution emphasized academic issues. However, these results did not reveal the essence of academic issues at that institution. Were the scenes focused on personal contact between faculty and students, on large, crowded lecture halls, or towering stacks of journals in a library? Each of these images presented a very different notion of academic issues. Was the pace of speech, music, and scene changes regarding academic issues fast or slow? While a fast pace indicated innovation, high energy, and technology, a slow pace connoted tradition, resistance to change, and introspection. Were faculty members shown as somber, formally dressed, and lecturing rather than as lively, causally dressed, and interacting informally with students?

Analyses that delved deeper into the presentation of content were made for each of the content areas. Findings regarding these more subtle aspects of the content

were based on the descriptions of narrative and images for each scene on the CACF. The questions used to guide this analysis for each content area were summarized in Table 4. Results of this analysis were recorded in narrative form and cited direct quotations and descriptions of images from the videos. The narratives were based directly on the questions outlined in Table 4. These narratives were recorded on the Descriptive Summary Forms (DSF). A separate DSF was used for each video in the sample (see Appendix B).

### Results

Total time and frequency of each of the content themes were reported for each video. Average time and frequency of the content themes were reported for the following groups: the total sample, all public institutions, all private institutions, small public schools, medium public schools, large public schools, small private campuses, medium private campuses, and large private campuses.

Results of the analysis for messages were reported for the aforementioned groups (videos from total sample, all public, all private, etc.) in narrative form. These results were presented in terms of common themes within the groups based on the questions outlined in Table 4. For example, results indicated whether small private institutions characterized learning as an active or passive process. Direct quotations and descriptions of images supporting these themes were also reported. Results for individual videos were not included in the results section. Although individual

Table 4

Questions Guiding Analysis of Overall Message

Content Area	Questions
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Who narrated academic content? (faculty, students, alumni, etc.)</li><li>· Was learning presented as an active or passive process?</li><li>· Was the academic atmosphere presented as challenging/competitive or supportive/collaborative?</li></ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Who narrated social content? (student leaders, Greeks, Student Activities Coordinators, etc.)</li><li>· Were students featured individually or in groups?</li><li>· Were groups of students homogenous or heterogeneous in terms of age, sex, and ethnicity?</li><li>· What sorts of social activities were presented? (structured activities, dating, cultural events, etc.)</li><li>· Did social scenes focus on daytime or nighttime activities?</li></ul>

Table 4 continued

Personal

- Who narrated personal content? (students, parents, administrators, alumni, etc.)
- Did content include information on housing, banking, health care, campus security, etc.?
- On what areas of personal development did content focus? (moral, character, career, religious, fitness, etc.)

Institutional

- Who narrated institutional content? (Administrators, faculty, students, alumni, etc.)
  - Was the institution characterized as steeped in tradition or as innovative?
  - Was the institution characterized as "having something for everyone" or as a focused, specialized environment?
  - Were scenes focused on campus or on the surrounding community?
-

institutions were not named when providing examples or quotations, a list of the institutions whose tapes were examined for this research was included in Appendix C.

### Limitations

This study was limited to analyzing what messages were communicated by recruitment videos. No steps were taken to validate the fidelity of the messages in the videos to the unique realities on the respective campuses. Comparing recruitment video messages concerning the academic, social, personal, and institutional messages to the reality of the respective institution was left to future research.

Additionally, institutions which met the criteria of employing EM systems were believed to have varying levels of commitment to the philosophies of EM. Determining level of commitment to EM philosophy was beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, it was unknown if the videos used in the sample were produced with equal dedication to presenting the institution accurately. Additionally, no attempt was made to determine if the videos were produced in-house or by professional production agencies. Likewise, the cost of production was not considered by this study. These facts, in addition to the qualitative nature of the study, limited the generalizability of the findings.

### Reliability and Validity

A second rater viewed 30% of the sample as a measure of rater reliability. The results of the content analysis for the videos viewed by two raters were similar. For example, the percentages of narrative time devoted to institutional issues were 6.9% v.

11.4% on the first video, 11.3% v. 9.2% on the second, and 34.1% v. 30% on the third. The percentages of image time devoted to social issues were 11.1% v. 9.6% on the first video, 16.5% v. 15.1% on the second, and 6.8% v. 5.8% on the third. The percentages of narrative frequency were 16.7% v. 11.1% for the first video, 24.2% v. 26.5% for the second, and 28.6% each for the third. The percentages of image frequency for personal content were 21.3% v. 20.7% for the first video, 18.7% v. 20% for the second, and 26% each for the third.

The validity of the findings depended upon the reader's concurrence with the definitions of academic, social, personal, and institutional content. If these definitions were deemed appropriate, concern regarding the validity of this research is diminished.

### Summary

As unrealistic expectations about the nature of college have been found to contribute to student attrition, it was important to determine what messages institutions transmit through recruitment videos. What are the messages in recruitment videos concerning the academic, social, personal, and institutional aspects of college? Institutions with EM systems were chosen for the sample in this study based on an assumption that they were committed to the philosophies of EM, most importantly, to representing their institution in an accurate and honest fashion. Recruiting materials which communicate accurate and honest messages concerning the nature of college help students to develop realistic expectations of college. Students who matriculate with realistic expectations of college are more likely to persist to graduation, hence

stabilizing enrollments. Since EM systems were designed to stabilize enrollments, examining how recruitment videos depict college to prospective students is an important step in assessing the effectiveness of the EM system.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results and Conclusions

#### Description of the Sample

Videos chosen for this study included tapes from institutions that granted baccalaureate degrees and which employed a formal enrollment management (EM) program.

The sample of 30 videos included 6 videos from each of five pre-determined geographic areas of the United States. In each geographic area, 3 videos were chosen from public institutions, and 3 were chosen from private institutions. Campuses were further categorized as small, medium, and large based on enrollment size. In each geographic region of three public and three private institutions, 1 video was obtained from a small, 1 from a medium, and 1 from a large institution.

Thirteen of the videos in the sample were purchased from Search By Video, a distribution service which provides videos to potential students. Eleven videos were received directly from institutions. The remaining six videos were obtained from a media library at the researcher's home institution. The names of institutions whose videos were used in the sample are listed in Appendix C.

#### Content Analysis

##### Duration of Narrative Devoted to Content Areas

Each video was viewed by the rater three times. The narrative portion of the video was the focus of the first screening. Narrative passages were timed in seconds.

and categorized as related to academic, social, or personal issues, or institutional characteristics. Table 3 on page 32 provides a description of each of these content areas.

Shifts in content area marked the separation of timed passages. These shifts occurred in a variety of ways. In some instances, content shifts occurred as speakers or visual scenes changed. In other circumstances, themes shifted in mid-sentence. In each case, the shift in narrative from one content area to another marked the end of one timed section attributed to the appropriate content area, and the beginning of a new section attributed to the related content area.

Examples of narrative and images contained in the videos are identified by institutional type and a random numerical classification (small, private 3). These classifications protect the identity of the institutions while allowing the reading to track content from individual videos throughout the results section. Examples of narrative that were timed and categorized as academic content included:

All classes are taught by real professors. No teaching assistants ever conduct a class here. (small, public 3)

The environment is conducive to learning...you can't help but succeed if you apply yourself. (medium, private 3)

Examples of narrative that were timed and categorized as social content included:

It usually takes me a long time to get to know someone, but not here! (large, private 4)

Getting to know people from different backgrounds and making lasting friendships are all part of your home away from home here. (medium, public 3)

Examples of narrative that were timed and categorized as personal content

included:

There are many food services options. Its not just burgers! (small, public 4)

All the comforts of home, but you do have to do your own laundry, unless you can make until Thanksgiving break! (large, public 2)

Examples of narrative that were timed and categorized as institutional content

included:

What makes it great is campus - which is all of (name of city). (large, private 2)

The campus looks like a garden,...its very soothing. You forget you're on an urban campus. (medium, public 4)

After timing and categorizing narrative content, total time devoted to each of the four content areas was computed. Total duration of narrative devoted to academic content ranged from 22 seconds to 367 seconds (6 minutes, 7 seconds). Total duration of narrative devoted to social content ranged from 0 seconds to 153 seconds (2 minutes, 33 seconds). Total duration of narrative devoted to personal content ranged from 0 seconds to 392 seconds (6 minutes, 32 seconds). Total duration of narrative devoted to institutional content ranged from 0 seconds to 282 seconds (4 minutes, 42 seconds).

Total time devoted to each of the four content areas was then added together for each video. The resulting time in seconds represented the total duration of narrative content on the video. Total narrative duration ranged from 135 seconds (2 minutes 15 seconds) to 947 seconds (15 minutes 47 seconds).

Duration of narrative devoted to content areas by percentage. Since the videos varied in length, the most reasonable analysis was to calculate the percentage of time the narrative devoted to each of the four content areas. This approach standardized the data across videos. The total duration of narrative devoted to each content area was divided by total narrative duration to determine the percentage of narrative devoted to each content area on the video. For example, small-public 1 contained 2 minutes and 3 seconds of narrative related to academic content. This video presented a total of 8 minutes and 15 seconds of narrative content. To determine the percentage of narrative time devoted to academic issues, 2 minutes and 3 seconds was divided by 8 minutes and 15 seconds, resulting in 24.8% of narrative time devoted to academic issues. A table detailing the duration of narrative devoted to each of the four content areas for each of the 30 videos in the sample is presented in Appendix D.

Percentages of narrative related to academic content ranged from 11.8% to 100% of the total narrative of the video. Percentages of narrative related to social content ranged from 0% to 34.8% of the total narrative of the video. Percentages of narrative related to personal content ranged from 0% to 68.2% of the total narrative

of the video. Percentages of narrative related to institutional content ranged from 0% to 64.2% of the total narrative of the video.

Percentages of the duration of narrative devoted to each content area were then averaged for the following 12 groups of institutional types: (a) all public institutions, (b) all private institutions, (c) all small institutions, (d) all medium institutions, (e) all large institutions, (f) small-public institutions, (g) medium-public institutions, (h) large-public institutions, (i) small-private institutions, (j) medium-private institutions, (k) large-private institutions, and (l) the total sample. Table 5 summarizes the duration of narrative devoted to the four content areas, presented in percentages, for the 12 groups.

Public institutions, on average, devoted 36.2% of the total narrative to academic content, 8.5% to social content, 37.7% to personal content, and 17.7% to institutional content. Academic content ranged from an average of 25.1% of total narrative content for large, public institutions to an average of 48.4% for small, public institutions. Social content ranged from an average of 4.1% of total narrative content for small-public institutions to an average of 11.7% for medium-private institutions.

Large institutions on average, devoted a greater percentage of narrative to personal content (40.8%) than did small institutions (33.7%) or medium institutions (34.6%). Very little difference existed between the average percentage of narrative devoted to social content between public institutions (8.5%) and private institutions (9.8%). The total sample devoted the least percentage of narrative to social content (9.2%). The total sample devoted the greatest percentages of narrative to personal

Table 5

Percentages of Narrative Time Devoted to Content Areas

Group	% A	% S	% P	% I
Publics	36.2	8.5	37.7	17.7
Privates	33.1	9.8	34.9	21.1
Smalls	39.6	5.5	33.7	21.3
Mediums	34.7	11.5	34.6	19.4
Larges	29.7	10.5	40.8	19.1
Small publics	48.4	4.1	29.5	18.0
Medium publics	35.0	11.3	37.5	16.3
Large publics	25.1	10.0	46.1	18.8
Small privates	30.8	6.8	37.8	24.6
Medium privates	34.3	11.7	31.6	22.4
Large privates	34.2	11.0	35.4	19.4
Total Sample	34.7	9.2	36.3	19.9

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional.

content (36.3%) and academic content (34.7%). Each of the 12 groups, on average, devoted similar percentages of narrative to institutional content. Institutional content ranged from an average of 16.3% for medium-public institutions to an average of 24.6% for small-private institutions.

### Duration of Images Devoted to Content Areas

The visual content was the focus of the second screening of the videos. To standardize the results across videos, the visual content was analyzed in a manner similar to that performed on narrative content. Each visual scene was timed and categorized as relating to academic, social, personal issues, or institutional characteristics. Table 3 on page 32 provides a description of each of these content areas. Each visual scene was timed as a cohesive unit and categorized as relating to one of the four content areas.

Examples of images that were timed and categorized as academic content included:

A white, male student typing at a computer in a computer lab. (small, public 5)

A white, female student dressed in shorts reading on a bench beside a lake. (large, public 4)

Examples of images that were timed and categorized as social content included:

A group of six white, female students and three white male students sitting on the floor playing cards. (small, private 5)

Two white, female students and two white, male students sitting on a residence hall room floor, eating pizza and smiling. (small, public 4)

### Examples of images that were timed and categorized as personal content

included:

White, male alumna dressed in a dark suit with his name, major, and occupation summarized graphically on the bottom of the screen giving testimonial. (medium, private 5)

White, male student lifting weights in a campus fitness room. (medium, public 4)

### Examples of images that were timed and categorized as institutional content

included:

Aerial view of campus on a sunny day. (small, public 4)

Graphics reading: "For more information, write us at: (admissions address) or call (phone number)." (medium, private 4)

After timing and categorizing visual content, total time devoted to each of the four content areas was computed. Total duration of images devoted to academic content ranged from 50 seconds to 413 seconds (6 minutes, 53 seconds). Total duration of images devoted to social content ranged from 9 seconds to 265 seconds (4 minutes, 25 seconds). Total duration of images devoted to personal content ranged from 45 seconds to 431 seconds (7 minutes, 11 seconds). Total duration of images devoted to institutional content ranged from 40 seconds to 559 seconds (9 minutes, 19 seconds).

Total duration of images devoted to each of the four content areas was then added together for each video. The resulting time in seconds represented the total duration of images on the video. Total visual duration ranged from 370 seconds (6 minutes 10 seconds) to 1,162 seconds (19 minutes 22 seconds).

Duration of images devoted to content areas by percentage. The total duration of images devoted to each content area was divided by total image duration to determine the percentage of images devoted to each content area on the video. For example, small-public 1 contained a total of 3 minutes and 23 seconds of images related to academic content. This video presented a total of 9 minutes and 30 seconds of imagery. To determine the percentage of images devoted to academic issues, 3 minutes and 23 seconds was divided by 9 minutes and 30 seconds, resulting in 35.6% of image time devoted to academic content. A table detailing the duration of images devoted to each of the four content areas for each of the 30 videos in the sample is presented in Appendix E.

Percentages of images related to academic content ranged from 10.7% to 54.1% of the total images of the video. Percentages of images related to social content ranged from 1.7% to 32.7% of the total images of the video. Percentages of images related to personal content ranged from 9.3% to 71.1% of the total images of the video. Percentages of images related to institutional content ranged from 8.6% to 53.7% of the total images of the video.

Percentages of the duration of images devoted to each content area were then averaged for the following 12 groups of institutional types: (a) all public institutions, (b) all private institutions, (c) all small institutions, (d) all medium institutions, (e) all large institutions, (f) small-public institutions, (g) medium-public institutions, (h) large-public institutions, (i) small-private institutions, (j) medium-private institutions, (k) large-private

institutions, and (1) the total sample. Table 6 summarizes the results of the analysis of duration of images devoted to the four content areas, presented in percentages, for the 12 groups.

Public institutions on average devoted 32.4% of the total images to academic content, 14.2% to social content, 35.9% to personal content, and 17.4% to institutional content. Academic content ranged from an average of 25.5% of total visual content for large-private institutions to an average of 37.5% for small-private institutions. Social content ranged from an average of 11.9% of total visual content for medium-public institutions to an average of 14.9% for medium institutions.

Similar percentages of images were devoted to personal content by large (37.3%) and medium institutions (36.6%). Small institutions devoted a lesser percentage of visual content to personal issues at an average of 30.5%. Small-private institutions devoted even a smaller percentage to personal issues at an average of 28%. All 12 institutional groupings, however, devoted more than a quarter of visual content to personal issues.

Academic content followed personal content in average duration of visual content. The average duration of visual academic content for the total sample was 31.6%. Small institutions devoted the most time to images related to academic issues, at an average of 36% of total images. Medium institutions followed with 33.3% of images devoted to academic content. Large institutions devoted the least amount of time (25.6%) to academic content through visual images.

Table 6

Percentages of Image Time Devoted to Content Areas

Group	%	%	%	%
	A	S	P	I
Publics	32.4	14.2	35.9	17.4
Privates	30.8	13.7	33.6	21.9
Smalls	36.0	14.1	30.5	19.5
Mediums	33.3	13.0	36.6	17.3
Larges	25.6	14.9	37.3	22.3
Small publics	34.5	13.8	33.0	18.7
Medium publics	37.2	11.9	36.9	14.1
Large publics	25.6	17.0	37.9	19.5
Small privates	37.5	14.3	28.0	20.2
Medium privates	29.3	14.0	36.3	20.4
Large privates	25.5	12.7	36.6	25.1
Total Sample	31.6	14.0	34.8	19.7

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional.

The range of percentages for each of the content areas for the 12 institutional groupings was relatively small. Visual academic content varied by 12 percentage points, social by only 5.1 percentage points, personal by 9.9 percentage points, and institutional by 11 percentage points.

A comparison of Table 5 and Table 6 provided insight into the relationship between content areas which received audible emphasis and those which received visual emphasis. The results revealed that social content was displayed for somewhat longer amounts of time than discussed (14% v. 9.2%). Other content areas received similar amounts of narrative and visual emphasis. In each analysis, personal content received the most emphasis, followed closely by academic content. Institutional content received close to 20% of narrative and visual emphasis. The least amount of time was devoted to social content through narrative and images.

#### Frequency of Narrative Devoted to Content Areas

After completion of the first two screenings, the frequencies of narrative passages devoted to each of the content areas was computed. The frequency of narrative devoted to each of the content areas was determined using the Content Analysis Coding Form (CACF). Classifications of narrative and images completed in the analysis of time devoted to each content area were recorded on the CACF. To determine frequency, the number of times that narrative was categorized as relating to each content area was counted on the CACF.

The frequency of narrative passages for each content area ranged from 3 to 40 occurrences for academic content, from 0 to 15 for social content, from 0 to 46 for personal content, and from 0 to 28 for institutional content.

Total frequency of narrative passages devoted to each of the four content areas was then added together for each video. The resulting number represented the total frequency of thematically distinct narrative passages on the video. Total frequency of distinct narrative passages ranged from 9 to 115.

Frequency of narrative devoted to content areas by percentage. The total frequency of narrative passages devoted to each content area was divided by total narrative frequency to determine the percentage of narrative passages devoted to each content area on the video. For example, small-public 1 contained 6 narrative passages related to academic issues. This video presented 21 thematically distinct narrative passages. To determine the percentage of narrative passages devoted to academic issues, 6 was divided by 21, resulting in 28.6% of total narrative passages devoted to academic issues. Appendix F presents the frequency of narrative passages devoted to each of the four content areas for each of the 30 videos in the sample.

Percentages of narrative passages related to academic content ranged from 13.2% to 100% of the total narrative passages in the video. Percentages of narrative passages related to social content ranged from 0% to 21.1% of the total of the video. Percentages related to personal content ranged from 0% to 66.7% of the total

narrative in the video. Percentages of narrative passages related to institutional content also ranged from 0% to 66.7% of the total video.

Percentages of the frequency of narrative passages devoted to each content area were then averaged for the following 12 groups of institutional types: (a) all public institutions, (b) all private institutions, (c) all small institutions, (d) all medium institutions, (e) all large institutions, (f) small-public institutions, (g) medium-public institutions, (h) large-public institutions, (i) small-private institutions, (j) medium-private institutions, (k) large-private institutions, and (l) the total sample. Table 7 summarizes the frequency of narrative devoted to the four content areas, presented in percentages, for the 12 groups.

Public institutions on average devoted 32.4% of total thematically distinct narrative passages to academic content, 8.8% to social content, 34.7% to personal content, and 19.6% to institutional content. Academic content ranged from an average of 31.9% of total thematically distinct narrative passages for large institutions to an average of 43.5% for small-public institutions. Social content ranged from an average of 6.5% of total frequency of narrative for small-public institutions to an average of 11.8% for medium-private institutions.

On average, public and private institutions addressed each content area with similar frequency. Academic content differed between publics and privates by .9 percentage points, social content by .9 percentage points, personal content by .1 percentage point, and institutional by 2.9 percentage points.

Table 7

Frequency of Narrative Devoted to Content Areas (by Percentage)

Group	%	%	%	%
	A	S	P	I
Publics	32.4	8.8	34.7	19.6
Privates	33.3	9.7	34.6	22.5
Smalls	37.7	7.0	35.1	17.3
Mediums	32.4	10.9	30.0	25.7
Larges	31.2	9.8	39.0	20.2
Small publics	43.5	6.5	30.1	13.9
Medium publics	33.7	10.0	29.7	24.5
Large publics	25.5	9.9	44.3	20.3
Small privates	31.9	7.4	40.0	20.7
Medium privates	31.1	11.8	30.2	26.9
Large privates	36.9	9.8	33.5	20.0
Total Sample	33.8	9.3	34.7	21.1

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional.

Narrative most frequently addressed issues related to personal content (34.7%) followed closely by academic content (33.8%) in the total sample. Large publics in particular, emphasized personal content (44.3%) through the frequency of narrative.

Small institutions devoted the greatest percentage of narrative passages to academic content (37.7%). Mediums devoted 32.4%, followed closely by large institutions which devoted 31.2% to academic content.

As with the previous two analyses on duration of narrative and images, the total sample devoted the greatest percentage of narrative passages to personal content (34.7%), followed closely by academic content (33.8%). The sample devoted 21.1% of narrative passages to institutional content. Social content received the least percentage of narrative passages (9.3%).

A comparison of the results presented in Table 5 and Table 7 indicated that each content area received similar emphasis on the analysis of narrative duration and narrative frequency. For example, on average, the total sample devoted 34.7% of narrative time to academic content and to 33.8% of narrative frequency to academic content. Percentages of time and frequency for social content were 9.2% and 9.3%, for personal content were 36.3% and 34.7%, and for institutional content were 19.9% and 21.1%, respectively.

#### Frequency of Images Devoted to Content Areas

The frequency of images devoted to each of the content areas was computed in a similar fashion to the computation of narrative frequency. The frequency of images

devoted to each of the content areas was determined using the CACF which is presented in Appendix A. To determine frequency, the number of times that images were recorded as relating to each content area was counted on the CACF.

Each visual scene had been timed and categorized previously as related to academic, social, personal, or institutional content in the analysis of duration of images. Each time a scene was classified as related to one of the content areas, that categorization increased the frequency count for the related content area, regardless of the duration of the scene. This analysis attempted to discover the frequency with which certain content areas were pictured.

The frequency of images for academic content area ranged from 10 to 53. Frequency of social images ranged from 3 to 41. Personal content ranged from 9 to 122. Frequency of institutional images ranged from 8 to 57.

Total frequency of images devoted to each of the four content areas was then added together for each video. The resulting number represented the total frequency of thematically distinct visual scenes on the video. Total frequency of images ranged from 73 to 268.

Frequency of images devoted to content areas by percentage. The total frequency of images devoted to each content area was divided by the total frequency of all images to determine the percentage of images devoted to each content area on the video. For example, small-public 1 contained 34 images related to academic content. This video presented 73 images. To determine the percentage of images devoted to

academic content, 34 was divided by 73, resulting in 46.6% of images devoted to academic issues. Appendix G presents the frequency of images devoted to each of the four content areas for each of the 30 videos in the sample.

Percentages of images related to academic content ranged from 7.7% to 50.5% of the total frequency of images in the video. Percentages of images related to social content ranged from 3.2% to 29.4% of the total frequency of images on the video. Percentages related to personal content ranged from 11.5% to 52.2% of the total images in the video. Percentages of narrative passages related to institutional content ranged from 10% to 35.9% of the total video.

Percentages of the frequency of images devoted to each content area were then averaged for the following 12 groups of institutional types: (a) all public institutions, (b) all private institutions, (c) all small institutions, (d) all medium institutions, (e) all large institutions, (f) small-public institutions, (g) medium-public institutions, (h) large-public institutions, (i) small-private institutions, (j) medium-private institutions, (k) large-private institutions, and (l) the total sample. Table 8 summarizes the frequency of images devoted to the four content areas, presented in percentages, for the 12 groups.

Public institutions, on average, devoted 32.2% of total images to academic content, 17.3% to social content, 31.9% to personal content, and 19.1% to institutional content. Academic content ranged from an average of 25.3% of total images for large, public institutions to an average of 39.1% for medium, public institutions. Percentages of frequency of images varied little among the 12 institutional groups for social content.

Table 8

Frequency of Images Devoted to Content Areas (by Percentage)

Group	%	%	%	%
	A	S	P	I
Publics	32.2	17.3	31.9	19.1
Privates	29.9	16.9	32.2	21.0
Smalls	35.2	17.0	27.6	20.8
Mediums	32.6	16.9	32.3	18.2
Larges	25.4	17.5	36.2	21.1
Small publics	32.1	17.3	30.0	21.7
Medium publics	39.1	17.2	28.2	15.5
Large publics	25.3	17.3	37.4	20.0
Small privates	38.3	16.6	25.2	19.9
Medium privates	26.1	16.6	36.4	20.9
Large privates	25.4	17.6	34.9	22.1
Total Sample	31.1	17.1	32.0	20.0

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional.

Social content ranged from 16.6% of total image frequency for small and medium, private institutions to 17.6% for large, private institutions.

Personal content was displayed more often in videos from large institutions (36.2%) than in those from small (27.6%) or medium institutions (32.2%). The reverse was true for academic content. Small institutions devoted 35.2% of images to academic content, followed by medium institutions which devoted 32.6% of images to academics. Large institutions devoted the least amount of images to academic content, with 25.4% related to academics.

As with the results from each of the other analyses, the total sample devoted the greatest emphasis to personal content (32%), followed closely by academic content (31.1%). Institutional content was displayed with the third most frequency (20%), followed by social content (17.1%), which received the least number of visual scenes.

A comparison of Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 revealed that social content received more visual emphasis than spoken emphasis. Although social content was not discussed at length (9.2% of total duration of narrative), or discussed often (9.3% of total frequency of narrative), social situations were communicated visually. The sample devoted 14% of total duration of images to social content, and 17.1% of total frequency of images.

#### Messages Conveyed about Content Areas

The third screening of the videos was conducted to determine the messages the videos conveyed about academic, social, personal issues, and institutional

characteristics. The questions outlined in Table 4 on pages 36-37 guided the analysis of message. Results were reported in narrative form, and include direct quotations and descriptions of visual content from the videos.

Results from the analysis of message were grouped by content area. The purpose of this analysis provided the rationale for this approach. The previous analyses aimed to determine which content areas were emphasized through time and frequency of narrative and images. The analysis of message attempted to determine how each content area was characterized. Therefore, grouping the results by content area was the most straightforward presentation.

The messages concerning academic issues are presented first, followed by social issues, personal issues, and finally, institutional characteristics. Within the discussion of each content area, common themes among groups of institutional type are presented. The institutional types considered in this analysis included the 12 types used in previous analyses.

Unique messages conveyed in the videos are also presented in the discussion of the related content area.

### Academic Messages

The messages about academic issues were analyzed using the questions in Table 4 on pages 36-37. These questions were used to guide the discussion of the general themes contained in the narrative. The questions were not intended to produce quantitative results. The narrator, narrative, and images were examined to determine if

learning was characterized as an active or passive activity. Content was further examined to determine if the academic environment was characterized as challenging/competitive or supportive/collaborative. Narrative and images were analyzed further to discover how faculty were characterized as supportive/friendly or as unapproachable/intimidating.

The majority of videos relied on multiple speakers to present academic issues. Across all institutional types, the common method of presenting academic content was a combination of student and faculty commentators. Generally speaking, students gave testimonials about their majors, their work load, and their relationships with faculty. Faculty's comments generally focused on academic programs, characterizations of students, and the goals of higher education.

Unidentified narrators were also used by at least one institution in each institutional group defined by control and enrollment size (at least one small public, at least one large private, etc.). Only two, both small-public institutions, however, used single, unidentified narrators to present all academic issues. One small public institution used no narrators or obvious script. All spoken content consisted of excerpts from what appeared to be unstaged class sessions.

Private institutions featured several celebrities who contributed to the academic content of the videos. One small private institution used the state's governor to present a small portion of academic content. A nationally known sports commentator presented a portion of the academic content for one of the large, private institutions.

The commentator was a native of the city where the institution was located, but not an alumnus. The same large, private institution also called on two celebrity alumni (the city's mayor and a professional basketball player) to present academic content. Another large private used footage of a commencement speech given by the First Lady of the United States. A former president, and a well-known anthropologist, were pictured and referred to as having an association with a medium-private institution and large-private institution, respectively. The use of celebrity endorsements emphasized the prestigious images of these institutions.

Coaches and administrators also contributed to academic content. Coaches from three of the private institutions made remarks indicating that they cared about their athletes' academic progress. One commented that athletes from his program had gone on to graduate and professional schools. Administrators from several institutional types remarked that learning takes place both in and out of the classroom.

Remarks by faculty characterized learning as an active process. College was described as an environment that encourages students to look critically at the world. Statements like the following characterized students as an active creators of knowledge:

To question is to learn. Students are encouraged to push against established ideas. Does yesterday's knowledge survive the scrutiny of today? (unidentified narrator at small, private 5)

You leave here with the ability to think critically...to synthesize information across disciplines. (faculty at large, private 5)

Learning to formulate good questions is as important as answering them. (faculty at large, private 3)

[One learns to] judge, analyze, appreciate human creativity...most of all to think for yourself. (unidentified narrator at small, public 2)

College students were described as participating in class and as actively contributing to the academic community.

The class becomes a community. Their best teachers are each other. True learning is synthesizing, not memorizing. (faculty at small, private 3)

Students participate and are involved in class. (faculty at small, private 1)

I call on them [students], force them to participate, even when they haven't read. I get them to interact. (faculty at large, private 5)

Despite narrative describing students as active participants in classroom dialogue, many classroom scenes pictured students listening or taking notes. Students were depicted listening in lecture-style classrooms three times more than they were shown speaking in class. All medium, public institutions and small, public institutions showed at least one scene with students speaking in class. Only two large, public institutions showed students speaking in class.

Only eight videos (26.7%) depicted students giving class presentations. Six of these were private institutions. Of the public institutions, only large institutions showed students presenting.

Although students speaking in class received little emphasis, students were depicted as getting a tremendous amount of hands-on experience with scientific equipment. All institutions in the sample showed students in laboratory settings

working with equipment such as microscopes (N = 170). Scenes in engineering and drafting classes also showed students engaged in activity with the equipment and instruments associated with these disciplines.

All but one video pictured students working on computers. The majority of these scenes depicted students working on computers in campus labs or classrooms. Only 33.3% of the videos showed students working on personal computers in their residence hall rooms or apartments. These videos were evenly dispersed among the institutional types under examination.

Ninety percent of the videos demonstrated students benefitting from one-on-one or small group instruction. Seventy percent of the videos featured faculty giving students individual or small group attention in computer and science laboratories. The message conveyed through these scenes was that students learn to use scientific and technical equipment under direct supervision of faculty. The academic environment of all institutional types was presented as hi-tech, yet supportive.

Fine arts students were pictured in very hands-on activities. Scenes highlighted theater productions, musical performances, art studios, and dance classes. The focus was on execution rather than theory.

Practical experience was also highlighted by videos from all institutional types. Twenty-three videos (76.6%) showed students conducting fieldwork or completing internships. Scenes showed students conducting fieldwork in a variety of settings.

Common examples included scenes showing students performing research in greenhouses, in medical settings, and in natural settings such as waterfronts or forests.

Practical, hands-on experience was also highlighted in scenes depicting internships. Students were frequently shown student teaching (N = 19) and working in newsrooms and broadcasting studios (N = 25). Business offices (N = 12) and manufacturing plants (N = 5) also were sites of student internships. Twenty-three percent of internship content depicted students with professionals from the site. Such scenes suggested mentoring or networking opportunities. Scenes showing interns and professionals working together further implied that interns were accepted as valuable members of the work force at the site.

The narrative supported the emphasis on hands-on, practical education. The following excerpts were typical examples:

We have a learn-by-doing philosophy. (faculty at medium, public 5)

Employers want you to have practical experience. That's what you get at (name of institution). (faculty at small, private 1)

Students do real things here...one wrote a novel. (faculty at large, private 5)

Even freshman can intern...and get practical experience. (student at small, public 4)

[Students get] practical, hands-on experiences that are more valuable in the market. (faculty at small, private 5)

Although location was not a variable considered in the analysis, contrasts between rural and urban institutions were apparent in each of the four content areas.

In terms of academic content, urban institutions suggested a relationship between the city environment and student's education. Several of the institutions located in urban areas emphasized their location as a major benefit in students' internship experiences. Several large-private institutions in particular highlighted a number of prestigious sites where its students had interned. One scene focused on a white, male student standing outside the World Bank saying, "I intern here." Another scene depicted a white, female intern working at the Internal Revenue Service. Excerpts like the following further emphasized this point:

The urban environment is the only place to learn complex business operations. (faculty at large, private 4)

You can't find [internships] in a prairie. You need a city like (name of city). (faculty at large, private 5)

Only a few are fortunate enough to go to a city like (name of city) for college. Form relationships in (name of city). Use us. Use (name of college). Nothing is beyond your reach in (name of city). (faculty at large, private 2)

The opportunity for students to get involved in research was also characterized as part the academic experience. Although this was most often mentioned or depicted at large institutions, each institutional type devoted some attention to this aspect of education. Several mentions of undergraduate research insinuated that this opportunity was not commonly offered to students at other institutions.

There's lots of research going on, and students are in the middle of it, benefitting all the way! (student at large, public 2)

Our students get research experiences in many disciplines. This is a unique opportunity for undergraduates. (faculty at small, private 3)

We involve our students in our research. (faculty at large, private 1)

Nineteen (63.3%) of the videos included testimonials from students which characterized the academic environment as challenging. Private institutions mentioned academic challenge more frequently than public institutions did (N = 29 v. N = 18). However, no institution characterized academics as undemanding. Students indicated the need for time-management skills:

I didn't study in high school. I received a shock when I came to college. I've had to learn to balance my time. (small, private 1)

I stayed up until 4:30 a.m. doing a paper, then had to get up at 8:00. I was dead! (medium, private 4)

Students also stated that academic success required hard work and commitment:

People here have to be serious about studying. I spend a lot of time studying. (medium, public 1)

Expect to work hard and be ready to be challenged. (small, private 1)

Because of the one-on-one relationship with the faculty, they will challenge you to do your best. They won't let you get away with your second best when they know what your best is. (small, private 5)

In contrast to these statements, which suggested the challenging nature of academics, images of students studying did not suggest a struggle. Tests, quizzes, and exams were mentioned and pictured in only one video (large, public 2).

Students were more often pictured studying outside (N = 58) than in the library (N = 42) or in their rooms (N = 30). Examples of such scenes included students reading by lakes with others playing frisbee nearby, a couple sitting under a tree reading with arms around each other, or students reading while suntanning.

Twenty-one videos in the sample (70%) pictured students studying in pairs or groups. The majority of these scenes characterized the activity as casual and laid back. Students were frequently pictured in close conversation with others while books and notes layed open around them. These conversations often involved smiling or laughing. Many of the scenes (N = 33) ran while an unseen narrator commented on related or unrelated issues. Without hearing the actual conversation pictured, the nature of the dialogue (academic or social) could not be discerned.

While narrative suggested the challenging nature of college academics, only one image in the sample hinted that a student was becoming discouraged with an assignment. In this scene, a white, female student was reading from a textbook while typing on a computer in a residence hall room. She looked back and forth from the computer screen to the textbook with increasing frustration. Finally, a smile appeared on her face, and she turned to the computer and typed, "All work and no play, NO WAY!" The scene then changed to a series of outdoor recreation activities. This type of imagery was an example of a disconnect between narrative and visual content of the videos. The image did not suggest that the academic challenge was taken seriously by the student.

Narrative passages characterizing institutions as challenging, were often followed by descriptions of academic support services. In addition to specific support programs, faculty and other students were characterized as caring and willing to help students succeed.

If you need help, it's there. (student at medium, public 2)

Students are willing to work together, its not cut-throat. (student at medium, public 1)

(Name of institution) is ideal if you want personal attention...No matter what your major is, you get a challenge and the personal assistance that you need to succeed. (unidentified narrator at small, public 4)

Professors know your name. You're a person, not a number... not just a face in the crowd. (student at medium, public 4)

The faculty and students at large institutions attempted to send the message that faculty were available to assist students. Students from large institutions made statements like the following:

I was really discouraged, but my professor took the time to meet with me individually. He still remembers my name. (large, public 4)

I came to college thinking I knew everything. My faculty advisor made sure I knew my interests would change over the next four years. (large, private 3)

I was surprised by the faculty. They are so open and honest. They want to help students learn. They want to learn themselves. It's great! (large, public 4)

Faculty at large institutions verified their willingness to make themselves available to assist students:

I don't want to be the kind of professor that leaves students on their own. (large, private 2)

I tell my students what my expectations are, and then I work with them to help solve problems. (large, private 5)

Faculty from small and medium institutions also communicated their availability:

I see students pretty much constantly when I'm not in class. (small, private 5)

These institutions further characterized student relationships with faculty as personal. Images from these institutions showed faculty casually walking around campus with students, and on several occasions, dining with students. Students characterized the personal nature of their relationships with faculty in statements like the following:

Professors will invite you over to dinner. (student at small, private 1)

[My professors] even help me with personal problems. They look at more than just my academic side. They look at you as a whole person. (student at small, public 5)

I got very close to my professor. We would talk for hours about each others' lives. (student at medium, private 4)

The faculty are friendly, relaxed, and informal. (faculty at small, public 5)

Seven videos (23.3%) made references to other institutional types in order to distinguish the academic environment at their respective campuses. Small and medium institutions described their environments in contrast to larger institutions:

The relationship between you and your faculty is personal and therefore more meaningful than what you could expect at a larger university. (student at small, private 5)

I was used to classrooms with 200 to 300 students. It was so impersonal. Since I transferred here, I get personal attention. I can ask questions in class. It feels great. (student at medium, public 4)

The visuals that accompanied the second passage above reinforced the message that smaller institutions were more personal than larger institutions. Graphics read:

Warning: Not a (name of institution) class. This may be disturbing to those used to small classes and personal attention. (medium, public 4)

The scene behind this graphic displayed a large lecture hall packed with students. Several students were seated on the floor.

In one circumstance, a large institution indicated that certain aspects of its campus were like a small institution's environment.

Our honors college is like a small, private institution in the midst of a large, research institution. (large, private 5)

This statement acknowledged the benefits of the small institution but suggested different benefits of a larger environment. Namely, that more and varied academic opportunities were available to students attending a large institution. One medium institution compared itself to each type of institution:

We have the wide selection of programs of large-public institutions with the small classes of a small-private institution. (medium, public 4)

Finally, the analysis of message devoted to academic content revealed a description of the liberal arts education. All institutional types made an attempt to

inform the viewer that a liberal arts education requires students to take courses from a variety of disciplines. This form of education was described by one small-private institution as "an academic buffet." Content that conveyed messages about liberal arts study included a series of two- second testimonials in which various students named courses they had taken. The list of courses demonstrated the variety available: "abnormal psychology"; "human sex"; and, "theater." Without exception, the liberal arts experience was described as positive.

There is such a wide variety of academic opportunities, you can go from reading Homer to doing art. (student at medium, private 4)

I like the variety of academics. I leave a physics lab and go to private voice lessons. (student at medium, public 1)

The liberal arts experience was further characterized as being beneficial to the undecided student. The requirement of completing course work from several disciplines was described as helping students to discover their true interests.

If you are undecided, we have a big variety. (unidentified narrator at small, private 4)

It doesn't matter if you know what your major is, you have to take a little bit of everything. (student at small, private 2)

### Social Messages

Social messages were analyzed using the questions outlined in Table 4 on pages 36-37. These questions were used to guide the discussion of the general themes contained in the narrative. The questions were not intended to produce quantitative results. Identity of the narrators was considered. Attention was given to whether

students were depicted in heterogeneous or homogeneous social groups. The types of social activities students engage in were examined.

Among all institutional types, the majority of narrative (83%) devoted to social issues was delivered by students. In many videos, graphics were superimposed over images of student testimonials. These graphics typically provided information such as the student's name, major, class year, and hometown. In most cases, students were not identified as having an affiliation with a social organization or holding a leadership position unless they were speaking directly about the respective organization or position. White students delivered the majority (70%) of social content. Female and male students were featured as narrators with similar frequency (N = 51 v. N = 56). The graphics accompanying these testimonials typically indicated that students of the respective institution were from many states and frequently from other countries. A wide variety of majors was also represented.

Often, student's commentary concerning social issues focused on friendships (N = 59). Students stated that the friendships they made in college would last throughout their lifetimes:

You meet a lot of people that you will remain friends with beyond your time here. (student at large, public 1)

I've made the best relationships here that I'll make in my entire life. (student at medium, private 4)

Some students revealed that they had been worried about fitting in, or making friends before coming to campus. In each of these cases, the students said that social environment was accepting, and that they were able to make friends easily.

It usually takes me a long time to get to know someone, but not here!  
(student at large, private 4)

When I was first accepted, I was scared. I had a lot of friends in high school, but I knew nobody at (name of institution). I'm only a freshman, but I already have lots of friends!  
(student at large, private 2)

I've found everyone to be really friendly. I never feel lost.  
(student at small, private 5)

Living on campus was identified as the best way to make friends. This was the one of the few aspects of social content that campus administrators spoke about.

Students also advocated living in residence halls as a good way to meet people.

There are many ways to meet other people, but living on is the best way to make friends that you will keep for the rest of your life.  
(unidentified narrator at small, public 2)

You really get to know someone when you live with them on a daily basis. Its been great!  
(student at large, public 1)

I live in a dorm. Its been great for socializing and making friends. I like having people down the hall to study and eat with.  
(student at large, public 5)

Ninety percent of our students live on campus. It helps them to get to know each other.  
(administrator at small, private 3)

Living on campus allows you to support your friends emotionally and academically.  
(administrator at small, private 2)

The opportunity to make friends from a wide variety of backgrounds was also emphasized. Speakers on this topic included campus administrators as well as students. Speakers stated that the interaction with a diverse population helped them to grow.

There are students here from 40 states and 15 foreign countries. Its important to get a broader perspective. We value diversity here. It contributes to learning. (unidentified narrator at small, private 3)

We are well-balanced ethnically. Students from all over the world enjoy the international flavor here. (administrator at medium, public 3)

The video which contained the second quote was 1 of 10 which showed racially heterogeneous groups interacting together. Of these 10 videos, scenes displaying racially homogeneous social groups heavily outnumbered the example of heterogeneous groups. Examples of heterogeneous interaction included scenes such as a black and white male walking and talking together, two white females and one black female playing in snow and posing for pictures together, and an Asian and a white female walking down a corridor, talking. In no circumstance was an interracial or same-sex couple pictured. Four videos showed roommates who were not of the same race. The low frequency of images portraying interracial interaction was a disconnect from the narrative.

This disconnect could be related to the tendency of narratives to define "different backgrounds" as "from different areas of the country". The following quotes demonstrated the tendency to link diversity with student's home town, or other non-race related characteristics.

There are people on my hall from Hawaii, Virginia, even Los Angeles. Even though their backgrounds are different...these are my friends for life. (student at large, public 5)

I'm from the city, and my roommate grew up on a farm. We didn't know each other before we got here, but now we're inseparable. (student at medium, public 3)

We do not tolerate diversity, we thrive on it. People of different social, religious, and cultural backgrounds bring the world to our door. (medium, private 5)

Making lasting friendships, in residence halls, with people from different backgrounds was not the only message delivered about the social aspects of college. Narrative and scenes communicated the types of social activities in which students engage. One video addressed the viewer with the following question:

What did you think college would be? Bundling up at a football game in the chilly autumn air? Joining a student organization? Ordering pizza in your dorm room with your friends? (unidentified narrator at small, public 4)

The visual content of the video then proceeded to show students in these very activities. Most of the videos in the sample pictured crowds of spectators at sporting events (93.3%). Football and men's basketball were frequently highlighted. Public institutions, in particular, highlighted the social aspect of their intercollegiate sports programs. Example of the corresponding narrative included:

NCAA sports bring excitement to campus. (large, public 3)

All the excitement of Division I sports! (large, public 2)

There's nothing like being with all my friends, rooting on the (name of team)! (large, public 5)

Participation on intramural teams or in less structured, pick-up games was also discussed and pictured in the videos. These scenes were either classified as personal or social, depending on the type of sport, and the level of seriousness of play.

Males were pictured playing intramural sports and pick-up games more often than females (N = 122 v. N = 75). Males were shown playing frisbee, catch, and volleyball with considerable frequency. Females were often depicted in aerobics or dance classes (N = 25).

The most frequent example of social interaction was of a less active nature. Most scenes pictured students walking or sitting outside, talking to others. Many images (N = 87) were presented of students "hanging out" on lawns or plazas, by lakes or fountains. Females were more often depicted in conversation with other females (N = 74), than were males in all-male conversations (N= 28). Co-ed conversations, however, were pictured often (N = 76). Many videos also featured outdoor festivals, homecoming parades, and cookouts.

Watching television and eating together were other examples of casual forms of socializing. Most dining scenes (N = 50) were staged in campus dining halls or snack bars. Students also were pictured eating pizza or drinking coffee in gatherings in residence hall rooms. Outings to restaurants were shown with lesser frequency (N = 15). The majority (93%) of scenes staged in restaurants were contained in videos from private institutions. Scenes depicted eating at restaurants as a group activity rather than a dating situation.

Couples were most often shown walking on campus, holding hands. Physical contact beyond hand holding was rarely pictured. Students were pictured hugging in three videos, and kissing in one. Other dating activities included playing in snow, window shopping, and in one instance, going to church. One white female student commented that she had met her boyfriend in the library. In a different video, a white male and white female student passed provocative looks back and forth over the tops of the books that they were reading in the library.

Several videos ( $N = 7$ ) showed students at dances with live music. Students were pictured dancing together; however, distinguishing whether or not these students were "dating" was not feasible. Not one video mentioned students involved in long-distance relationships.

All institutional types showed images of theatrical and musical productions attended by students. These cultural events were put on by student groups, touring companies, and local organizations. Students were also shown visiting art galleries and museums. This type of activity, however, was shown infrequently ( $N = 12$ ).

Both urban and rural institutions showed the activities previously discussed. Urban institutions displayed additional types of social activities, highlighting the nightlife of the city. In contrast, nighttime social scenes from rural institutions were rare. Nighttime views of city skylines often proceeded a rapid display of marquis signs for clubs and restaurants in videos from urban institutions. Some marquis flashed

names of nationally recognized performers. Urban institutions also included footage from professional sports competitions located in their respective cities.

Membership in student organizations was also highlighted as a social activity. For example, several of the videos reported the percentage of students affiliated with Greek organizations. Examples of the Greek experience included images of organizational meetings, a group of fraternity members sunning themselves, a fraternity date party, and a tug of war competition. Narrative concerning Greek organizations was minimal. The small portion that addressed Greek membership included:

Being Greek helps you to adjust to college life. It gives you a sense of belonging. You develop your leadership skills. (small, public 2)

[On his Greek membership] I always have someone to hang out with. (large, public 5)

### Personal Messages

The analysis of messages related to personal content was guided by the questions outlined in Table 4 on pages 36-37. These questions were used to guide the discussion of the general themes contained in the narrative. The questions were not intended to produce quantitative results. Attention was given to who narrated personal content. Content was examined to determine what areas of personal development (e.g., moral, character, career, religious, fitness) were emphasized.

Personal content was narrated by a combination of students, administrators, faculty and alumni. Some videos used an unidentified narrator. The most frequent aspect of personal concern addressed by the videos was career preparation.

Alumni gave testimonials which indicated that their present professional success was, in part, due to their college experience.

The education I received from (name of school) helped prepare me for my career in government. I learned self-discipline. (medium, public 4)

Classes were high-pressure and intense. It helped me break in to a difficult field. (medium, public 4)

Faculty talked about how education would prepare students for the competitive job market.

When you get involved in the internship program, you get to practice what you learn in class. It makes you more marketable after graduation. (small, public 5)

Our faculty has business links to help you [find employment]. (small, private 1)

Students talked about how their internships allowed them to explore their professional opportunities:

My co-op helped me decide what field I wanted to enter. I learned what a real nine-to-five job is like. (small, private 1)

Personal fitness received considerable emphasis from all institutional types. Ninety-six percent of the videos pictured students working out or participating in sports. Students were frequently pictured in weight rooms, aerobics classes, and participating in sports. Narrative listed the intercollegiate, club, and intramural teams available. Institutions' athletic facilities were featured in the scenes of physical activity. The great majority of students featured in the videos appeared to be in good physical shape. This was the case even for content not related to fitness.

Only six videos (20%) showed students with obvious physical disabilities. All of the students were wheelchair bound. Narrative did not address these students. The students were simply featured in typical college activities including an individual advising session and traveling to class. Another example showed a student with a disability socializing with other non-disabled students. These scenes, although few in number, conveyed the message that students with physical disabilities were able to succeed as college students.

Students' religious development was rarely referred to in the videos with the exception of private, religiously affiliated institutions. Videos from these institutions often pictured images of campus churches or ceremonies. Priests lecturing added subtly to the religious characterization of these institutions due to their clothing.

The narrative of seven videos from religiously affiliated institutions stated that the institutional mission was based on religious values. However, narrative of a religious theme was in all cases minimal. One institution described religion as a "quiet presence on campus" (medium-private 4).

Several of the videos from religiously affiliated institutions included student testimonials regarding their level of religious involvement. For very few students (N = 2), the religious affiliation of the institution was their primary reason for attending. Other students stated that the religious aspect of the institution had no impact on their experience. One student stated that she did not belong to the religious faith of the

institution, and that this did not make a difference. One Catholic institution stated that only 60% of its enrollment was Catholic.

Only one public institution pictured students attending religious services. All the specific religious references in the sample were to Christian religions. However, one institution made a vague reference to other religions:

(Name of institution) was founded by (Christian denomination); however, there are opportunities for the spiritual development of all faiths. (small, private 2)

A testimonial by a student attending a religiously affiliated institution remarked that her college experience had exposed her to other faiths:

I'm taking a class on other contemporary religions...learning about Judaism for the first time. (medium, private 4)

References were made to moral or character development (N = 65). The general message that this sort of personal content communicated was that college influences student growth, independence, and self-discovery.

I was ready to get away from Mom and Dad, to go to bed when I want to. (medium, private 4)

College teaches you how to live. (small, private 2)

Getting to know yourself is a big part of being at (name of institution). You ask who am I? You get comfortable with yourself. It doesn't matter what other people think of you like it did in high school. (small, private 1)

A number of videos stated that students developed self-confidence, self-esteem, self-awareness, and leadership skills through involvement in student organizations.

[Involvement] builds a sense of responsibility to the good of society and promotes the dignity of the individual. (small, private 1)

One Hispanic female student commented that she had learned independence and compromise from her experience living in a residence hall with a roommate.

Another reference to character development suggested a similar growth in maturity as a result of the college experience:

Your college years: an exciting time of new experiences and meeting new people; learning to make your own decisions, and accepting responsibility for those decisions; learning to be a team member, and a leader; learning to lead your own life. (small, public 2)

One institution which emphasized public service and an ethic of hard work as components of its institutional mission stated:

Students are ready to tackle real world issues and do something meaningful with their lives when they leave. (small, public 1)

All institutional types communicated the availability of services such as student housing, and dining and laundry facilities. Large-public institutions devoted considerable emphasis to this form of personal information (N = 22). Health services were very rarely mentioned. One large-public institution pictured a sign listing health and counseling center offices with narrative that explained that help was available if needed.

Safety was another issue that received little mention. A small number of videos (N = 6) featured content related to safety. All videos which contained content related to safety were from large institutions. One urban institution pictured a security gate, a

student using a key card to gain access to a building, and a campus escort service at different points in the video. Other urban institutions made remarks including:

You forget you're on an urban campus. (medium, public 4)

It's a self-contained campus in the middle of an urban environment. Its the best of everything. (large, private 1)

Remarks such as these seemed to dismiss any dangers that are typically associated with urban areas.

A final component of personal messages was content related to the cost of attending the institution. Several public institutions (N = 8) mentioned the word "affordable". One private institution closed the video with a series of two second testimonials by students dressed in graduation regalia each saying, "Its worth it!" (medium-private 5) Financial aid availability was infrequently referred to by both public and private institutions (N = 7). Private institutions made the following dramatic statements:

The financial aid staff is dedicated to ensuring that every qualified student who wants to attend can attend. (large, private 5)

If you want to come to (name of institution), we'll help you find a way to make it happen. Over 85% of our students receive financial aid. (small, private 5)

Interestingly, only one video featured a student in what appeared to be a part time job. One black male student was depicted as a worker in a fast food restaurant. Other students were portrayed as being able to afford college independently or through financial aid. The overwhelming majority of scenes and narrative depicting students in

work environments portrayed students at internships or in fieldwork. Clearly, these work activities were completed to gain experience, not money. Very few videos showed students in their roles as resident advisors or as orientation leaders, but whether these were paid positions was not addressed.

### Institutional Messages

The analysis of message related to institutional content was guided by the questions outlined in Table 4 on page 36-37. These questions were used to guide the discussion of the general themes contained in the narrative. The questions were not intended to produce quantitative results. Attention was given to who narrated institutional content. Content was examined to determine whether the institution was characterized traditional or as innovative. Further analysis attempted to discover if institutions were portrayed as "having something for everyone" or as specialized.

It should be noted that most of the visual and narrative content in the videos could have been categorized as relating to institutional characteristics. Almost every topic was specifically tied to the respective institution. When content related to both institutional characteristics and another content area, the content was always categorized in the "other" area. For example, a scene showing students walking from campus buildings in conversation, that could have been categorized as relating to either social or institutional, was counted as social.

Despite this approach, all content contained in the video was subject to the analysis of messages relating to institutional characteristics. All content areas influenced

the overall message about the institution. For this reason, this section referred to areas previously discussed.

This analysis revealed that institutional content was narrated by a variety of people. Faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and unidentified narrators presented content related to institutional characteristics.

A great portion of institutional content focused on campus aesthetics and architecture. Although messages related to the beauty of the campus were most frequently communicated through visual means, students added remarks like the following:

The campus is gorgeous, beautiful trees and landscaped. (medium, public 4)

The location is so beautiful and spacious. Its a really wonderful place. (small, public 5)

The campus and buildings are beautiful. (small, private 1)

The campus is beautiful..palms, roses, clay tiles. (medium, private 4)

The thing I remember about my first visit to campus was how green and alive it was...leaves were changing color, bricks and ivy. I thought this is what a university should look like. (large, public 5)

The accompanying images showed off the buildings, fountains, gardens, lakes, and trails located on the various campuses. In most of these scenes (67.8%), students were seen walking. This image was so common (N = 297) that the overall impression of the 30 videos was "students walk." This impression led to the characterization of college as a place of action and movement. Images of students cycling around campus

(N = 47) contributed to the message of movement. One small-private institution, which featured a number of campus views with few or no students seemed unnaturally deserted in comparison to the rest of the sample.

The characterization of movement and action coincided with earlier descriptions of the hands-on approach that so many of the videos featured. This characterization also coincided with narrative and images relating to the state of the art equipment and hi-tech facilities used in instruction and research. The focus on research, in particular, suggested an innovative, dynamic environment.

In contrast, the architecture of campus buildings suggested a more traditional image of college. The frequency with which faculty were pictured lecturing also contributed to a traditional image. The majority of faculty pictured were white males in ties, and most often, coats. Students, however, were pictured in more casual dress (e.g., shorts, jeans, baseball hats). Racially diverse students were seen and heard. However, students were not typically pictured interacting in racially heterogeneous groups outside of class. No interracial or same-sex couples were featured. Such content also suggested a traditional, conservative environment.

The combination of these two messages resulted in a characterization of the college environment as an active but traditional environment with hi-tech equipment.

The focus on liberal arts education promoted the characterization of institutional environment as "having something for everyone." The wide variety of academic offerings, coupled with the varied opportunities for involvement, suggested an

atmosphere where individuals could find their niches. Large institutions communicated this message more effectively.

### Summary

Recruitment videos from 30 institutions were analyzed to determine what messages were communicated to prospective students regarding the college experience. The messages were believed to influence the expectations of future students. Research has suggested that students' expectations significantly influence persistence.

Content of the videos was categorized as relating to one of the following content areas: academic, social, personal issues, or institutional characteristics. Narrative and images devoted to each of the four content areas was timed. Frequency of narrative passages and images devoted to each content area was tabulated. Duration and frequency of narrative and images devoted to each content area were then converted to percentages of total content.

Results of the analysis of duration and frequency of content areas were compared among the following institutional types: (a) all public institutions, (b) all private institutions, (c) all small institutions, (d) all medium institutions, (e) all large institutions, (f) small-public institutions, (g) medium-public institutions, (h) large-public-institutions, (i) small-private institutions, (j) medium-private institutions, (k) large-private institutions, and (l) total sample.

Results of the analysis of duration and frequency indicated that all institutional types devoted the most time and number of passages and images to personal issues.

Academic issues received the second greatest amount of time and frequency, followed by institutional characteristics. Social issues received the least amount of time and frequency of narrative and images from all institutional types.

The finding that personal issues received more emphasis than academic issues was an important result. This finding indicated that videos were produced to appeal to the person, not to the intellect. By focusing on personal content, the videos communicated that students decide to attend a particular college based on personal, rather than academic factors.

Questions presented in Table 4 on pages 36-37 guided the third analysis. This analysis attempted to determine what messages were communicated regarding the nature of academic, social, personal issues, and institutional characteristics.

Results of the analysis of duration and frequency were considered in combination with results from the more subtle analysis of message to create a descriptive narrative of the college experience. This analysis considered not only the amount of time and frequency with which a content area was addressed, but also how the content area was characterized.

Findings revealed that the focus on career preparation inflated the percentages of content related to personal issues. The overriding message was that students attend college to prepare for careers, rather than for the sake of higher learning. Narrative and images communicated that college students receive a "hands-on", practical

education. Videos further suggested that employers look for students with practical experience, such as the type depicted in the videos.

While students were not shown speaking in class often, they were frequently shown working with scientific equipment and computers. Narrative and images indicated that students routinely participated in research and completed internships.

While all institutions emphasized personal issues, large, public institutions devoted the most attention to this content area. Large public's emphasis on personal issues communicated that students were "not just a number" at these institutions. Despite the great number of students at large public institutions, the videos demonstrated student's needs being satisfied. Personal services highlighted on the videos ranged from career planning and placement to food services, laundry and computing facilities, and housing options. This was perhaps a reaction to the stereotypes which suggest that large institutions are impersonal. The focus on personal issues may be the result of an intentional effort to debunk this characterization.

Videos from small institutions devoted the most time and frequency to academics. This emphasis suggested that small institutions were the most academically serious and rigorous of all institutional types. Several videos from medium and large institutions indicated that small, private institutions provided the optimum education. The superiority of the small privates was suggested through comparisons made by large and medium institutions to the small-private experience, as if small privates were the ideal.

All institutional types included students testifying that academics were challenging. Images, however, did not indicate a challenge. Students were pictured most often completing work in class, many times with individual assistance from faculty. Students were depicted studying outside more often than in the library or their residence hall rooms. This is likely an example of institutions' desire of appealing to students superseding a commitment to portraying environments accurately. This disconnect between narrative and images poses an interesting dichotomy that campuses may wish to address in future video productions.

All institutional types attempted to communicate to viewers the essence of a liberal arts education. The message that students complete courses in a wide array of disciplines was conveyed repeatedly. Prospective students further received the message that the liberal arts requirement would contribute to their growth as individuals. The liberal arts experience was portrayed as helping students to define their true interests, and as preparing them to become life-long learners. Several videos communicated that individuals change careers multiple times in their lives. The liberal arts education was described as instilling the skills and flexibility individuals need to adapt to the unavoidable transformations that occur in the world of work. While such a message may be relevant for liberal arts colleges, it is puzzling that other institutional types, which offer extensive professional programs in disciplines like engineering and architecture, would elect to convey the benefits of the liberal arts curriculum. A likely explanation is that institutions with limited financial resources must appeal to the

widest market possible. This is another area that enrollment managers may wish to address in the future.

Institutional content further characterized the college environment as one of action and movement. Students were pictured walking across campus constantly. Clearly, the message conveyed was that students have places to go; they lead busy, full lives. Students go to class, complete internships, participate in student organizations, meet individually with faculty, study, attend cultural events, and spend time with friends and significant others.

Students did not, however, work at part-time jobs with the purpose of earning money. The work situations in which students were pictured related to their fields of study. The purpose was to gain practical experience, not to earn money. The implication of this message communicated the idea that holding a part-time job was not necessary to afford the expense of a college education. The videos implied that the costs of college were managed either through independent means or financial aid. Furthermore, many videos stated that college was "affordable." These messages represent a third example of how the messages of the videos may have misrepresented the college experience. Institutional research conducted at the respective campuses would reveal the percentage of students who work 20 or more hours per week to support the costs of their education. Yet, without such data, the accuracy of the message that students do not hold jobs remains questionable.

All institutional types included social content which characterized students as "hanging out" with friends and romantic partners outside, watching intercollegiate sporting events, and participating in intramural sports. There were several striking messages conveyed regarding social activities. First, students socialized almost exclusively with students of the same race. Second, all-male social groups typically were depicted in physical activity, while all-female groups were shown in conversation. Males in conversation and females in competition were shown most often in coed situations. Finally, all images showing dating situations featured heterosexual couples. These messages characterized college as adhering to traditional and conservative values. Although appreciation of diversity was mentioned in narrative, students were visually depicted in racially homogenous groups, traditional sex-role stereotypes, and heterosexual relationships.

This disconnect between the narrative and images may be attributable institution's tailoring of messages to the conservative values that parents may hold. As many parents provide the financial support for students, institutions must market themselves both to students and parents. Institutions may tone down liberal values relating to diversity as not to clash with parents' more conservative values.

In summary, the results of the content analysis indicated the following:

1. Personal issues were most emphasized, especially by videos from large, private institutions.

2. Career preparation was presented as the purpose of pursuing higher education.

3. Academics were characterized as challenging through narrative passages; however, the images portrayed a supportive environment including a great deal of one-on-one instruction.

3. Learning was characterized as hands-on, often including the use of hi-tech equipment.

4. Liberal arts education was emphasized by all institutional types.

5. Institutions were portrayed as sites of movement and activity.

6. Diversity was communicated as valued by institutions, yet students were most often pictured interacting in racially homogenous social groups.

7. Higher education was characterized as affordable, with virtually no indication that students must work to defray the costs of their educations.

Taken together, these messages characterized college as a challenging but supportive environment that engages students in hands-on activities. The purpose of higher education was career preparation. Liberal arts requirements broadened student's intellect and prepared them for the rapidly changing world of work. Students were active and busy, but had time to socialize with others like themselves. The college environment was characterized as innovative and cutting edge in regards to

technology, but traditional in terms of architecture, and conservative in social interaction.

### Limitations to the Study

Selection of the sample used in this study introduced several limitations. For the purposes of this research, institutions were considered to adhere to principles of EM based on the existence of an office with a title including "enrollment management." No attempt was made to determine institutional purpose for this office, or level of commitment to EM philosophies. For this reason, there were no grounds for assuming that institutions represented in the sample held similar views of EM, including goals to portray institutions accurately and honestly.

The research did not attempt to determine what audience and setting was intended for showing of the videos in the sample. However, the majority of videos were obtained through a video distribution service or directly requested from the respective institution. It was therefore assumed that the videos were intended to be viewed by prospective students off-site without any additional commentary from admissions counselors. If such commentary normally accompanied viewings of the videos, the results of the present research might have been skewed.

The videos were received with a variety of other recruitment materials. These materials included, but were not limited to, viewbooks, program descriptions, and applications for admission and financial aid. Information from these additional recruitment materials was not considered by this researcher. If these materials further

elaborated on, or explained the videos, the results of this research might have been skewed.

Finally, the study was limited to analyzing what messages were communicated by videos. No attempt was made to validate the fidelity of the messages in the videos to the unique realities on the respective campuses. This study's purpose was to examine what messages the videos communicate to prospective students as recruitment materials help students form expectations of the college experience. Future research may compare the messages on the videos to the reality of the respective campuses.

These facts, in addition to the qualitative nature of the study, limited the generalizability of the findings.

#### Recommendations for Research

Future research addressing the connection between messages presented in recruitment videos and the reality of academic, social, personal, and institutional characteristics on the respective campuses would further knowledge on this topic. Results of such research may clarify aspects of the relationship between students' expectations and persistence rates.

The execution of this research provided insight into improving the method for analyzing the content of recruitment videos. Results could have provided more in-depth information if content areas were more narrowly defined. An analysis that sought to describe faculty characteristics, student's independent work, technology, class room participation, research, student's performance evaluation among other

components, would have revealed more detailed insight than the method of grouping all of these issues as academic content, as was the practice for the present research. Future research may seek to examine these narrower issues.

Geographic location seemed to emerge as an influential factor on the nature of messages conveyed. Although mentioned occasionally in the discussion of the present study's results, this factor was not a variable used for analysis. The urban versus rural location variable would seem to provide valuable insight how institutions portray themselves in videos. Viewers likely received different messages regarding the college experience from these types of institutions.

Finally, as the literature suggested the importance of prospective student's expectations coinciding with the reality they experience once enrolled, institutions would be advised to conduct and examine institutional research characterizing the reality of student experience at their respective institution. Presenting realistic images of the institution's environment would attract students who believe they are well matched with the institution's culture and more effectively help students form expectations of their future college experiences.

#### Recommendations for Practice

Research has suggested that college students whose pre-matriculation expectations do not coincide with their experiences once enrolled were more likely to drop out. As recruitment materials, such as videotapes, have been found to influence students' expectations of the college experience, practitioners involved in recruitment

video production would be well advised to present accurate and honest messages regarding their institutions.

The present research has noted some disconnects between narrative and visual content in the sample of 30 videos. Institutions would be well advised to present clear and consistent messages about the college experience. For example, many of the videos in the present sample stated academics at the respective institutions were challenging. Visual content, however, suggested that students receive a great deal of one-on-one instruction, and study outside while conversing with friends. This disconnect may send mixed messages to prospective students. Will prospective students focus on the narrative or on the visual content? Will they prepare to work hard and be challenged, or expect to succeed without a sacrifice to social time? Practitioners would be well advised to minimize conflicting messages, potentially resulting in unrealistic expectations.

In order to communicate honest and consistent messages, producers must rely on information produced by institutional research. Students' collegiate experiences at the respective institutions must be measured and analyzed in order to present a realistic representation on recruitment videos. The marketing goals of appealing to and attracting students must be balanced with providing accurate information to applicants.

### Conclusion

The present research attempted to describe the messages conveyed in 30 recruitment videos. The college experience was portrayed similarly among the different

institutional types in the sample. The sample used in the present research consisted of videos from institutions utilizing enrollment management (EM) systems. The rationale for this was that institutions with EM systems would have a commitment to portraying their campuses in a realistic fashion. The characterization of college conveyed in the videos suggested that marketing goals were more important than conveying accurate information to applicants.

While it is not believed that institutions would purposefully misrepresent themselves, certain aspects of their environment were likely glossed over. The need for students to hold jobs and to spend time in serious study received minimal focus in the videos. The messages contained in the videos presented a different reality from the homesickness, roommate conflicts, and academic struggle that students may experience. This discontinuity between expectation and experience has been linked to student attrition.

Recruitment videos are produced to "recruit." Videos which contain content unappealing to students defeat the purpose for which they were designed. However, the current emphasis on marketing may have influenced the current generation of students to expect college to provide experiences different from the true nature of higher education.

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Appendix A  
Content Analysis Coding Form

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Institution:

Carnegie Code:

Location:

Control:

Enrollment:

Scene	Length	Content	Category
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Appendix B  
Descriptive Summary Form

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Institution:

Carnegie Code:

Location:

Control:

Enrollment:

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Category	Description	Supportive Narrative/Images
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Academic

Social

Personal

Institutional

## Appendix C

### Institutions Comprising Sample

Cabrini College	Santa Clara University
California State University-Dominiguez Hills	State University of New York/Binghampton
Carnegie Mellon University	State University of New York/Stony Brook
Carroll College (Montana)	University of Dayton
College of Sante Fe	University of Maine at Fort Kent
Colorado State University	University of Oregon
Cornell College	University of Pennsylvania
Creighton University	University of Southern California
Eastern Washington University	University of Southern Colorado
Emory University	University of West Alabama
George Washington University	University of Wisconsin/Green Bay
Kent State University Main Campus	Virginia Tech
Northwest Missouri State University	Virginia Wesleyan College
Northwestern University	Western Illinois University
Saint Louis University	Winthrop University

## Appendix D

### Percentage of Narrative Time Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution)

Institution	%	%	%	%
	A	S	P	I
Small, public 1	24.8	0.0	41.0	34.1
Small, public 2	44.8	13.2	28.5	13.5
Small, public 3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Small, public 4	35.7	6.3	41.7	16.4
Small, public 5	36.8	1.2	36.1	25.9
Medium, public 1	53.6	7.1	37.3	1.9
Medium, public 2	25.3	2.3	65.5	6.9
Medium, public 3	51.1	5.2	23.6	20.0
Medium, public 4	33.0	6.9	40.0	20.1
Medium, public 5	11.8	34.8	20.9	32.6
Large, public 1	15.7	15.9	68.2	0.2
Large, public 2	14.2	14.3	39.4	32.0
Large, public 3	20.1	2.2	55.6	22.1
Large, public 4	45.8	2.0	26.6	25.7
Large, public 5	29.5	15.7	40.9	13.9

Percentage of Narrative Time Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution), cont.

Institution	%	%	%	%
	A	S	P	I
Small, private 1	26.9	3.4	58.4	11.3
Small, private 2	41.3	3.8	33.8	21.1
Small, private 3	30.3	8.9	37.7	23.0
Small, private 4	25.6	5.8	24.7	43.9
Small, private 5	29.7	12.2	34.2	23.8
Medium, private 1	43.5	25.6	26.6	4.3
Medium, private 2	35.8	0.0	0.0	64.2
Medium, private 3	39.1	19.5	39.6	1.9
Medium, private 4	32.6	4.7	38.5	24.3
Medium, private 5	20.7	8.6	53.5	17.2
Large, private 1	48.9	14.9	11.7	24.5
Large, private 2	12.1	26.2	42.9	18.8
Large, private 3	38.1	9.5	43.4	9.0
Large, private 4	43.0	4.4	40.8	11.8
Large, private 5	28.8	0.2	38.0	33.0

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional. Results presented as percentages of total time of narrative as measured in seconds.

## Appendix E

### Percentage of Image Time Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution)

Institution	%	%	%	%
Institution	A	S	P	I
Small, public 1	35.6	6.8	40.2	17.4
Small, public 2	31.5	23.3	28.5	16.7
Small, public 3	37.2	17.0	14.7	31.1
Small, public 4	40.3	12.1	34.0	13.7
Small, public 5	27.7	10.0	47.8	14.5
Medium, public 1	39.3	20.5	30.6	9.5
Medium, public 2	45.0	11.1	29.6	14.3
Medium, public 3	54.1	5.1	15.9	24.9
Medium, public 4	36.7	13.0	37.1	13.2
Medium, public 5	10.7	9.6	71.1	8.6
Large, public 1	12.3	27.6	49.0	11.1
Large, public 2	15.9	11.3	46.4	26.4
Large, public 3	20.2	9.6	43.2	27.1
Large, public 4	2.3	12.8	31.1	13.8
Large, public 5	37.4	23.7	20.0	18.9

Percentage of Image Time Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution), cont.

Institution	% A	% S	% P	% I
Small, private 1	50.0	16.5	24.6	8.9
Small, private 2	39.0	14.9	27.8	18.3
Small, private 3	30.1	18.7	17.9	33.3
Small, private 4	43.5	1.7	36.1	18.8
Small, private 5	25.0	19.6	33.8	21.6
Medium, private 1	33.0	26.5	26.4	14.2
Medium, private 2	45.1	3.9	9.3	41.6
Medium, private 3	30.2	13.8	41.6	14.4
Medium, private 4	15.9	7.3	62.1	14.8
Medium, private 5	22.4	18.3	42.3	17.0
Large, private 1	38.2	6.3	36.8	18.7
Large, private 2	16.4	32.7	38.6	12.2
Large, private 3	30.3	11.8	44.5	13.3
Large, private 4	27.5	2.7	42.0	27.8
Large, private 5	15.2	10.0	21.1	53.7

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional. Results presented as percentages of total time of images as measured in seconds.

## Appendix F

### Percentage of Frequency of Narrative Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution)

Institution	%	%	%	%
Institution	A	S	P	I
Small, public 1	28.6	0.0	38.1	3.3
Small, public 2	26.8	19.5	34.2	19.5
Small, public 3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Small, public 4	31.7	8.3	43.3	16.7
Small, public 5	30.2	4.7	34.9	30.2
Medium, public 1	54.6	9.1	31.8	4.5
Medium, public 2	16.7	5.6	22.2	45.5
Medium, public 3	44.0	8.0	28.0	20.0
Medium, public 4	38.9	8.3	33.3	19.4
Medium, public 5	14.3	19.0	33.3	33.3
Large, public 1	14.6	16.7	66.7	2.1
Large, public 2	21.2	13.3	40.7	24.8
Large, public 3	27.0	2.7	43.2	27.0
Large, public 4	36.2	1.7	36.2	25.9
Large, public 5	28.3	15.2	34.8	21.7

Percentage of Frequency of Narrative Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution), cont.

Institution	%	%	%	%
A	S	P	I	I
Small, private 1	24.2	6.1	54.5	15.2
Small, private 2	37.7	5.8	37.7	18.8
Small, private 3	31.0	8.6	41.4	19.0
Small, private 4	38.9	2.8	25.0	33.3
Small, private 5	27.6	13.8	41.4	17.2
Medium, private 1	39.5	21.1	23.7	15.8
Medium, private 2	33.3	0.0	0.0	66.7
Medium, private 3	31.7	19.5	46.3	2.4
Medium, private 4	35.7	7.1	32.1	25.0
Medium, private 5	15.1	11.3	49.1	24.5
Large, private 1	67.8	8.5	10.2	13.6
Large, private 2	13.2	20.8	37.7	28.3
Large, private 3	35.6	11.1	37.8	15.6
Large, private 4	38.3	6.4	40.4	14.9
Large, private 5	29.4	2.0	41.2	27.5

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional. Results presented as percentages of total frequency of narrative passages.

## Appendix G

### Percentage of Images Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution)

Institution	%	%	%	%
Institution	A	S	P	I
Small, public 1	46.6	9.6	26.0	17.8
Small, public 2	29.3	19.1	38.2	13.4
Small, public 3	22.2	25.0	18.1	34.7
Small, public 4	32.4	16.7	27.2	23.7
Small, public 5	29.9	15.9	35.4	18.9
Medium, public 1	41.1	22.2	26.7	10.0
Medium, public 2	48.3	15.7	21.3	14.6
Medium, public 3	50.5	11.0	18.7	19.8
Medium, public 4	36.1	23.0	22.1	18.9
Medium, public 5	19.6	14.1	52.2	14.1
Large, public 1	7.7	29.2	49.2	13.8
Large, public 2	19.8	13.4	45.5	21.3
Large, public 3	23.5	7.8	42.2	26.5
Large, public 4	29.1	13.7	34.2	23.1
Large, public 5	46.2	22.6	16.1	15.1

Percentage of Images Devoted to Content Areas (by Institution), cont.

Institution	% A	% S	% P	% I
Small, private 1	48.0	22.7	18.7	10.7
Small, private 2	34.5	18.9	29.1	17.6
Small, private 3	39.2	19.0	20.3	21.5
Small, private 4	36.6	3.2	29.0	31.2
Small, private 5	33.1	19.4	29.0	18.5
Medium, private 1	25.9	29.4	29.4	15.3
Medium, private 2	46.1	6.4	11.5	35.9
Medium, private 3	26.5	17.6	43.0	13.0
Medium, private 4	17.1	10.6	51.2	21.1
Medium, private 5	14.9	19.0	47.1	19.0
Large, private 1	33.0	14.7	40.4	11.9
Large, private 2	16.0	27.3	41.3	15.3
Large, private 3	19.8	16.7	33.3	30.2
Large, private 4	34.0	9.7	33.3	23.0
Large, private 5	24.1	19.5	26.3	30.1

Note. A = Academic, S = Social, P = Personal, I = Institutional. Results presented as percentages of total frequency of images.

# MELISSA H. KEEN

## EDUCATION

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**Master of Arts in Education, College Student Affairs Administration**, May 1996, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia

**Thesis:** Content Analysis of Recruitment Videos from Institutions Utilizing Enrollment Management

**Bachelor of Science, Psychology**, May 1991, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

**James Madison University Studies Abroad**, London, England, Fall 1990

Additional Graduate Studies

Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia, Spring 1994

Foundations of Urban Studies

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, Fall 1992

Foundations of Career Counseling

## EXPERIENCE

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### **Employment History**

**Community Assistant**

Residential and Dining Programs, Division of Student Affairs, Virginia Tech, Fall 1995-Present

- Recruit, train, and supervise 60 night monitors and 10 fitness room monitors
- Facilitate training sessions on programming and funding for Resident Advisors and Hall Council Officers
- Advise six Hall Councils regarding leadership and university policy
- Administer six Resident Advisor and six Hall Council budgets totaling \$3,850

**Research Assistant**

College Student Affairs Graduate Program, College of Education, Virginia Tech, Fall 1994 and Spring 1995

- Designed and implemented recruitment plan to increase diversity within program
- Conducted campus visits to four historically black colleges and universities in Virginia to promote program and interview candidates
- Maintained communication with candidates
- Designed new application procedures and coordinated the process with Virginia Tech Graduate School

## **Practica**

### **Admissions Center**

Counseling Services, Tidewater Community College,  
Virginia Beach, Virginia, Summer 1995

- Trained and supervised five Student Ambassadors in the Admissions Center
- Advised applicants of the admissions process, placement testing, transfer procedures, and program offerings
- Administered group placement tests
- Assisted students with bound and computerized career information resources

### **Office of Undergraduate Admissions**

Division of Enrollment Services, Virginia Tech,  
Spring 1995

- Reviewed applications and made admissions decisions
- Conducted group information sessions on National Student Exchange (NSE)
- Provided individual advising sessions for students participating in NSE
- Assisted NSE Coordinator in evaluating applications
- Evaluated the success of NSE program at Virginia Tech

## **Professional Activities**

### **Co-facilitator, Introduction to Residence Education**

Residential and Dining Programs, Virginia Tech,  
Spring 1996

- Present class sessions on student development theory, community development, diversity, educational programming, peer helping, confrontation, time and stress management, and study skills

### **Resident Advisor Recruitment and Selection Committee**

Residential and Dining Programs, Division of Student Affairs, Virginia Tech, Fall 1995 and Spring 1996

- Designed and implemented recruitment efforts and selection process
- Reviewed and evaluated letters of interest, resumes, essays, and letters of recommendation
- Facilitated group activities and evaluated participants' performance
- Conducted panel interviews of individual applicants
- Participated in final committee review of applicants and made hiring decisions

**Facilitator, Mock Interview Program**

Career Services, Division of Student Affairs, Spring and Fall 1995

- Interviewed students in simulated employment interview
- Evaluated interviewee's performance
- Advised students on effective interviewing techniques and resume formats

**Graduate and Professional School Fair Committee**

Graduate Student Assembly, Virginia Tech, Fall 1995

- Planned and implemented campus and community publicity for event
- Solicited participation of graduate departments at Virginia Tech
- Staffed event providing assistance to exhibitors and students

**Publications Chair, Association for Student**

**Development, Virginia Tech, Spring and Fall 1995**

**American College Personnel Association, 1995, 1996**

**Additional Experience**

**Associate Teacher/Counselor**

Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP), Portsmouth, Virginia, August 1993-June 1994

- Taught academic subjects and affective education to emotionally disturbed adolescents with violent behavior disorders
- Collected and analyzed behavioral data
- Led daily group sessions and problem solving meetings
- Intervened in crisis situations and provided counseling

**School/Community Trainer**

SECEP, Portsmouth, Virginia, Summer 1994, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Summer 1993

- Taught developmentally delayed students affective education and independent living skills

**Instructional Support Teacher/Counselor Assistant**

SECEP, Virginia Beach, Virginia August 1992-June 1993

- Administered and scored standardized achievement tests
- Assisted in the selection of appropriate instructional materials

*Melissa J. Keen*