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## Effects of an on-campus orientation experience on new UNI students' perceptions of the campus environment

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## Effects of an on-campus orientation experience on new UNI students' perceptions of the campus environment

### Abstract

Summer orientation programs are common means of registering new freshmen students at colleges and universities. Frequently, these programs also aim to affect perceptions and attitudes of their students toward the institution (Forrer, 1974). Black (1974: 102) states that orientation "...assists students to become better acquainted with a new educational environment." According to Robert H. Shaffer (1970: 7-121) "...the purpose of the orientation process might well be summarized as that of communicating to the student and all those influencing him what a college, a college education, and a college educated person are."

EFFECTS OF AN ON-CAMPUS ORIENTATION EXPERIENCE ON NEW UNI STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

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A Research Paper  
Presented to  
the Department of School Administration  
and Personnel Services  
University of Northern Iowa

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education

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by  
Charlene W. Backman  
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This Research Paper by: Charlene W. Backman

Entitled: Effects of an On-Campus Orientation Experience on New UNI  
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has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the  
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## CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iii
Chapter	
1. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY . . . . .	1
<u>The Problem</u> . . . . .	1
<u>Definition of Terms</u> . . . . .	2
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE . . . . .	4
3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY. . . . .	8
<u>Design of the Instrument</u> . . . . .	8
<u>Collection of the Data</u> . . . . .	10
<u>Study Sample Population</u> . . . . .	11
<u>Treatment</u> . . . . .	14
4. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA . . . . .	16
5. SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATIONS. . . . .	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	30
APPENDICES . . . . .	31
A. UNI NEW STUDENT INVENTORY. . . . .	31
B. INSTRUCTIONS TO NEW STUDENTS FOR COMPLETING UNI NEW STUDENT INVENTORY. . . . .	35
C. GOALS OF PREVIEW UNI . . . . .	36
D. STUDENT PREVIEW UNI SCHEDULE . . . . .	38
E. PREVIEW UNI EVALUATION . . . . .	39

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Location (distance in miles) of Hometown from the University of Northern Iowa Campus . . . . .	12
2. Number of Visits to the UNI Campus Prior to Preview UNI. . . . .	13
3. Number of Nights Spent in a Residence Hall Prior to Preview UNI. . . . .	13
4. Number of Current or Former UNI Students Known . . . . .	14
5. Responses to Pretest . . . . .	17
6. Responses to Posttest. . . . .	18
7. Practicality Scale . . . . .	20
8. Community Scale. . . . .	21
9. Awareness Scale. . . . .	21
10. Propriety Scale. . . . .	22
11. Scholarship Scale. . . . .	22
12. Campus Morale Scale. . . . .	23
13. Quality of Teaching Scale. . . . .	24

## Chapter 1

### THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Summer orientation programs are common means of registering new freshmen students at colleges and universities. Frequently, these programs also aim to affect perceptions and attitudes of their students toward the institution (Forrer, 1974). Black (1974: 102) states that orientation ". . . assists students to become better acquainted with a new educational environment." According to Robert H. Shaffer (1970: 7-121) ". . . the purpose of the orientation process might well be summarized as that of communicating to the student and all those influencing him what a college, a college education, and a college educated person are."

The purposes stated above are not only difficult to operationally define but are therefore also difficult to measure. This study initiates the use of a student inventory that assesses new students' expectations of their environment. It is expected that continued use of the "UNI New Student Inventory," "Your Expectations of the Environment at UNI" (see Appendix A), will offer a picture of how the students view the University after attending a summer orientation session. The instrument assesses perceptions of the environment and measures changes in those perceptions.

#### The Problem

Each summer over 1,500 students travel to the University of Northern Iowa to participate in "Preview UNI," a two-day summer orientation program offered during June and July (see Appendix D). Attending

"Preview UNI" means travel expense and time away from summer employment for many of the participants. There is little doubt that registration for fall semester classes could be accomplished by mail. The on-campus orientation experience is believed to accomplish more than initial registration and so justifies asking students to incur the expenses.

The goals of "Preview UNI" are to: 1. Bring new students into UNI who are able to successfully live and work in the University community. 2. Promote a partnership between parents, students and the University. 3. Develop a positive attitude toward the college experience. 4. Establish the concept of the University as a mini-community (see Appendix C). The on-campus orientation experience is believed to contribute to attainment of the stated goals. This study will assess students' perceptions of the environment at UNI before and after spending time on the campus. There is an expectation that if a student has an on-campus orientation experience, he/she will feel more positive about the institution's environment.

### Definition of Terms

Throughout the study terms will be used that may not be familiar to the reader. The following section defines these terms.

"Preview UNI" - a two-day summer orientation program for new freshmen students during the summer preceding the students' initial enrollment period.

New freshmen students - students who have not previously attended UNI. For this study, the new freshmen students can generally be assumed to be students who have recently graduated from high school. In the past, very few non-traditional students have participated in "Preview UNI."

"UNI New Student Inventory" - a questionnaire administered to new freshmen students. The Inventory is designed by the UNI Office of Student Research with minor modifications each summer.

"Your Expectations of the Environment at UNI" - The Pretest. One section of the UNI Student Inventory designed by this researcher for inclusion in the Inventory to assess perceptions of the environment at UNI.

"Preview UNI Evaluation" - The Posttest. The instrument given to each participant after completing the scheduling process. A portion of the evaluation is identical to "Your Expectations of the Environment at UNI."

An on-campus orientation experience - participation in a structured "Preview UNI" program.

Summer Orientation Staff - S.O.S. The group of 14 undergraduate students who serve as peer advisers and campus hosts/hostesses during "Preview UNI."

Freshman adviser - a faculty member who meets with new students before registration to confirm the student's schedule of classes. The freshmen advisers are coordinated by Dr. Janice Abel, Director, Academic Advising.

Environment - the feeling of practicality, community, awareness, propriety, scholarship, campus morale and quality of teaching, present at the University of Northern Iowa.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Brown University offered the first structured orientation program in 1888. Since that time much has been done to help new students prepare for their early college experiences (Black, 1964). High school counselors, traveling college admissions counselors, national and local college fairs and volumes of printed material all serve to acquaint prospective students with information about post-secondary institutions. A study by Thomas Risch (1970) found that students do have expectations about their campus environment. Not only did these expectations seem to vary among men and women but also from campus to campus, so there was not a predictable relationship. Since students have perceptions about the environment before coming to campus it is expected that changes in these perceptions can be measured after the student has spent time on campus.

If a student is in harmony with his/her institution's environment he/she is more likely to persist in college (Sagarra & Higginson, 1980). Most college and universities feel that some sort of orientation program helps new students adjust to the new environment and their own potential (Howe & Perry, 1978). There appear to be many ways in which institutions accomplish this orientation: week-long programs, summer camps, courses. Communication about the educational setting is usually accomplished by student affairs professionals through orientation programs (Ferrer, 1974).

Goals of orientation programs will vary widely from institution to institution. Some of the basic aims throughout the years have been: 1. To acquaint students with educational facilities. 2. To test students for placement in appropriate courses. 3. To acquaint students with the campus personality and environment. 4. To help the student know himself/herself better (Black, 1964). The aims clearly include causing changes in the student's perceptions of the campus environment. Orientation, according to Black, should better acquaint students with the new educational environment. This environment includes curricular offerings, student organizations, activities, school policies, rules and regulations and their fellow students and faculty.

Students see the function of orientation as primarily dealing with academic concerns. Course scheduling and sources of academic information were ranked as the two most important results of orientation by new freshmen (Sagarria and Higginson, 1980). In this study students may have rated academic issues high because they saw them as the "essence of the college experience." However, meeting these expressed needs may be advisable before trying to meet other student needs at orientation. Black (1964) cautions about program planning to meet only the students' felt-needs saying that they may not be able to express their felt-needs, they may deliberately mis-state their felt-needs and they may not know all of their needs.

It appears that students' main concerns at the time they attend orientation may be in the academic domain. Although it is wise to deal first with the topic of greatest concern to the student (Rhoten, 1980) once this is dealt with the student will be receptive to other topics that are included in the aims of most orientation programs.

An on-campus orientation experience acquaints new students with the institution's environment. Huebner (1980) states that, "A good fit between persons (their needs, attitudes, goals, and expectations) and the environment (its press, demands, supports, and the characteristics of its inhabitants) is generally hypothesized to have a positive impact, promoting satisfaction, productivity, performance, achievement, personal growth and so on while poor fit creates stress." If we are to promote a good fit between new students and the environment it is important to be aware of the students' expectation of the environment.

Person-environment assessment is not a very advanced science (Huebner, 1980). There are many existing instruments that assess environment at an institution, Pace's College and University Environmental Scales, Astin's Inventory of College Activities, Peterson's College Student Questionnaire, to cite a few (Buros, 1978). There exists a feeling that locally developed instruments, while sometimes lacking reliability and validity documentation, may prove more useful than interinstitutional instruments to evaluate the environment (Aulepp & Delworth, 1966).

In helping a student to know the institution the student must not be overwhelmed nor discouraged by what he/she expects from the campus versus what is really there (Howe & Perry, 1978). Traditional on-campus orientation programs allow new students to see and experience some of what the institution really has to offer: visits with faculty and support personnel, contact with currently enrolled students, campus tours, housing and dining in residence halls. Knowledge about what the student expects of the institution will provide a framework for providing information about how currently enrolled students view the institution.

Shaffer (1970) states that an essential part of the orientation *program is to communicate ideas and concepts concerning the institution* to individuals who are new to the community. An environmental inventory administered before and after an on-campus experience measures students' expectations and perceptions of the institution's environment.

## Chapter 3

### THE STUDY

The obvious result of "Preview UNI" is a fall semester schedule of classes for each new freshman student who attends the two-day program. Goals of "Preview UNI" state outcomes in areas of adjustment, feelings of community and awareness of obligations of the students and the institution. The study was designed to measure how effective "Preview UNI" is in conveying information about the environment at UNI.

All new freshmen students admitted before the last "Preview UNI" session are invited to attend a two-day program. Students are placed in an orientation session after they return a reservation card stating a preferred session date. There was no grouping or placement of a special segment of students in the June 18-19 session of "Preview UNI" 1981. The two hundred fifteen participants were all recent high school graduates and were representative of all "Preview UNI" participants.

#### Design of the Instrument

The instrument was designed by this researcher and made a part of the "UNI New Student Inventory" to minimize the number of different surveys the new students were asked to complete. It was important to keep the instructions for completing the inventory simple and the number of items to a minimum in order for new students to be able to complete the inventory at home in a reasonable amount of time.

There are many definitions of environment. Coyne and Harding (1976) use four categories: 1. Personal characteristics and behavior

of campus inhabitants. 2. Ecological dimensions. 3. Programs, policies and procedures. 4. Psychosocial and campus climate characteristics.

C. Robert Pace (1969) measures environment on seven scales:

1. Practicality. 2. Community. 3. Awareness. 4. Propriety. 5. Scholarship. 6. Campus Morale. 7. Quality of Teaching. In developing "Your Expectations of the Environment" for the "UNI New Student Inventory," the Pace categories were utilized.

The 21 statements on the instruments measure each of the seven categories three times (see Appendices A, E). The practicality scale describes the material benefits, social activities and organization of the institution. It measures students' perceptions of the environment as a place to have good fun and develop leadership skills. The first, eighth and fifteenth items measured practicality.

Items two, nine and sixteen assessed the feeling of community. Community is characterized by a friendly, cohesive campus where students have a sense of belonging.

Awareness reflects a concern about three areas - personal, poetic and political. Awareness allows for personal expansion and tolerance of non-conformity. The awareness items are three, ten and seventeen.

A polite, cautious and thoughtful environment is measured by the propriety scale. Items four, eleven and eighteen measure the mannerly, considerate and proper atmosphere.

Scholarship, items five, twelve and nineteen, is characterized by pursuit of knowledge that is carried on rigorously and vigorously.

A competitive feeling exists and students practice scholastic discipline on a campus with a high rating in scholarship.

A cohesive student body that is acceptant of social norms and that allows free expression will measure high on the campus morale scale. Campus morale combines intellectual pursuits with supportive personal and social relationships. Items six, thirteen and twenty were designed to assess campus morale.

The seventh scale, quality of teaching, describes an atmosphere where professors are viewed as scholarly and competent. The professors will be clear, warm and flexible while setting high standards. Items seven, fourteen and twenty-one measure quality of teaching.

#### Collection of the Data

Students were sent a "UNI New Student Inventory" (see Appendices A, B) with the information packet that is to be received about 10 days before the "Preview UNI" session. Students were to complete the inventory prior to coming to campus with the inventory being collected at the "Preview UNI" check-in point.

Participants in the program were allowed to choose the portions of the "Preview UNI" program that they wished to participate in with the exception of the 12:45 to 3:00 p.m. programs: Understanding the Degree Program and Scheduling Help with S.O.S. (see Appendix D).

The posttest (see Appendix E) was given to students to complete after leaving the Scheduling Office. An S.O.S. member handed each new freshman student a "Preview UNI Evaluation" and asked the student to complete the evaluation and leave it with the S.O.S. member. Seating was available for the new freshmen to complete the posttest and an effort was made to collect a posttest from each individual.

### Study Sample Population

Any admitted, new freshman, student could have been placed in the June 18-19 session of "Preview UNI." Those students requesting this session whose reservation cards were received by May 15 and who had the earliest admission dates were placed in the session. May 15 is the official reservation date deadline for the four June sessions. The June 18-19 session was selected as the population to study as it was an early session and would certainly be attended by at least 200 students which would represent about 10% of the projected new freshmen student enrollment for fall semester 1981. As program offerings do not vary from session to session and since students self-select most of the sessions they choose to attend, the June 18-19 session is representative of experiences students have at any one of the eight "Preview UNI" sessions.

A total of 215 students attended the June 18-19 session of "Preview UNI." The group was comprised of 168 female students and 47 male students. Of the students, 152 purchased the room and board option and so experienced the dining and housing facilities.

All of the 215 students received a pretest in the mail which they were asked to complete prior to checking in at Campbell Hall. Completing the pretests were 203 students, while 186 students completed the posttest after scheduling their fall semester classes on the second day of the program. A total of 175 pairs of pretests and posttests were completed by the 215 students. Of the 175 students completing both pretests and posttest, 131 were female, 44 were male.

Table 1 shows the distance of the 175 students' hometowns from campus. Only two students were from outside of Iowa. A profile of UNI students would show the total population made up of 43% male students

and 57% female students. The study population was made up of 75% female students and 25% male students which is consistent with the percent of female and male students who typically attend "Preview UNI." The low non-resident representation is also consistent with the expected non-resident participation in "Preview UNI."

Table 1

Location (distance in miles) of Hometown from the  
University of Northern Iowa Campus

Miles	Number of Students	Percent
0 - 5	10	5.5%
6 - 10	6	3
11 - 100	88	50
101 or more	68	39
Outside of Iowa	2	2
Unknown	1	.5
Total	175	100.0%

Ninety-four percent (N=164) of the students had visited the campus prior to attending "Preview UNI." Table 2 shows that nearly half of the students had visited campus 2 - 4 times prior to attending "Preview UNI."

Table 2

## Number of Visits to the UNI Campus Prior to "Preview UNI"

Visits to UNI	Number of Students	Percent
0	7	4%
1	34	19
2 - 4	78	45
5 - 9	30	17
10 or more	22	13
Unknown	4	2
	175	100%

Fifty-five percent (N=96) of the students had never spend a night in the UNI residence halls before attending "Preview UNI" (see Table 3).

Table 3

## Number of Nights Spent in a UNI Residence Hall Prior to "Preview UNI"

Nights in Residence Hall	Number of Students	Percent
0	96	55%
1	29	16
2 - 4	37	21
5 - 9	5	3
10 or more	3	2
Unknown	5	3
	175	100%

Only nine percent (N=15) of the population did not have close friends or family who were attending or had previously attended UNI. Table 4 shows the students who had ties with current or former UNI students. It is expected that these students would have gained perceptions of the environment at UNI from these associations.

Table 4  
Number of Current or Former UNI Students Known

Students Known	Number of Students	Percent
0	15	9%
1 - 2	46	32
3 or more	105	54
Unknown	9	5
	175	100%

### Treatment

The 175 students who completed both pretest and posttest had varying experiences during the two-day "Preview UNI" program. No attempt was made to control or monitor the session offerings that the population participated in.

Students were checked in, and pretests collected, by 10:30 a.m. of the first day of the program. Students were required to attend a 45-minute session providing background information on formulating a schedule of classes. In order to complete registration students were also required to attend an hour-and-a-half-long session with an S.O.S. member to develop a fall semester schedule. All other offerings (see Appendix B) were optional.

All of the student sessions were well attended on June 18-19 with the exception of the evening Campus Ministries and Learning Skills Center programs which attracted fewer than 30 students each. All other programs were attended by an estimated 50% of the "Preview UNI" participants or more.

The students had an opportunity to meet with currently enrolled students, student services professionals and at least one faculty member. Students electing to attend the Learning Skills Center program had the most contact with a member of the teaching faculty. All students had an individual conference with a faculty adviser. The students making up the study population had the same "Preview UNI" opportunities as do any students who attend a "Preview UNI" session.

Neither the faculty nor the S.O.S. members were told that the June 18-19 session participants were a study population. The S.O.S. members had spent training time during the spring 1981 semester becoming familiar with the stated goals of "Preview UNI." The S.O.S. had considered ways to be most effective in helping new students meet these goals. There were no expectations that any one part of the "Preview UNI" program would fulfill any specific stated goal. The total two-day experience is the means to the end.

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data collected on the 175 student sample was entered into the Hewlett-Packard 2000 and analyzed through a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program. Data was entered on machine readable five response answer sheets that were marked by this researcher from student responses on the pretest and posttest.

Responses were weighted from one to five with five being the most positive response to the statement about the University environment. All items were stated so that a response of Strongly Agree reflected a high expectation that the statement accurately reflected a desirable environmental condition. Each of the seven areas (practicality, community, awareness, propriety, scholarship, campus morale and quality of teaching) were represented by three items on each instrument hence a maximum score would be 15 for any one of the seven areas. A 15 would be scored if the student Strongly Agreed with all three statements about the area.

Items, number of responses and means for the pretest may be found in Table 5. Mean scores on the pretest ranged from 3.201 for an item measuring propriety to 4.649 for an item measuring practicality.

Table 5  
Responses to Pretest Items

Item	Strongly S A	Agree A	Neutral N	Disagree D	Strongly S D	Disagree D	Mean
1 Attending UNI will make me a more successful adult	71	89	13	1			4.321
2 UNI will be a friendly supportive community	47	108	19				4.160
3 I will broaden my cultural horizons while at UNI	54	99	21				4.189
4 Channels for filing grievances are readily accessible	11	67	89	5			3.488
5 A challenging course will be a popular course	17	57	69	29	1		3.346
6 There will be a lot of group spirit at UNI	23	111	40				3.902
7 Professors will require me to apply what I learn	51	109	11	2			3.630
8 UNI will be a place for me to develop leadership skills	41	97	36				4.028
9 Everyone will have a feeling of belonging here	14	72	61	27			3.419
10 UNI students will be concerned about the world around them	16	96	59	3			3.718
11 Students will learn quickly what is done and what is not done here	23	91	50	10			3.729
12 Students will eagerly pursue their coursework	10	87	65	11	1		3.540
13 I will fit in with students at UNI	31	130	12	1			4.097
14 Most courses will challenge the majority of students enrolled	41	112	20	1			4.109
15 College will prepare me for my vocation (career)	119	49	6				4.649
16 Planned university activities will help me to make friends	66	91	17				4.281
17 Not everyone at UNI will believe as I do	98	69	7				4.522
18 Students at UNI will do things the right way	5	41	113	14	1		3.201

Table 5 (continued)

Item	Strongly	A	N	D	Strongly	Mean
	A				D	
19 Good grades will be difficult to earn	26	84	51	11	2	3.695
20 There will be a friendly atmosphere in most classes	18	113	40	3		3.839
21 My adviser will be willing to help me make decisions I must make	33	111	29			4.023

Responses to posttest items were generally higher, reflecting more positive feelings about the environment at UNI after attending "Preview UNI." Table 6 shows posttest responses.

Table 6  
Posttest Responses

Item	Strongly	A	N	D	Strongly	Mean
	A				D	
1 Attending UNI will make me a more successful adult	70	98	5			4.375
2 UNI will be a friendly supportive community	57	111	6			4.293
3 I will broaden my cultural horizons while at UNI	53	108	12	1		3.649
4 Channels for filing grievances are readily accessible	21	91	59	2		3.757
5 A challenging course will be a popular course	17	71	75	10	1	3.534

Table 6 (continued)

Item	Strongly Agree S A	Agree A	Neutral N	Disagree D	Strongly Disagree S D	Mean
6 There will be a lot of group spirit at UNI	45	104	25			4.114
7 Professors will require me to apply what I learn	51	105	16	2		3.603
8 UNI will be a place for me to develop leadership skills	42	117	14	1		4.149
9 Everyone will have a feeling of belonging here	25	83	52	13	1	3.678
10 UNI students will be concerned about the world around them	26	94	52	2		3.827
11 Students will learn quickly what is done and what is not done here	26	89	57	2		3.798
12 Students will eagerly pursue their coursework	11	85	73	5		3.586
13 I will fit in with students at UNI	36	128	8			4.162
14 Most courses will challenge the majority of students enrolled	45	103	26			4.109
15 College will prepare me for my vocation (career)	100	69	5			4.545
16 Planned university activities will help me to make friends	70	98	6			4.367
17 Not everyone at UNI will believe as I do	81	81	11	1		4.390
18 Students at UNI will do things the right way	6	68	92	7		3.408
19 Good grades will be difficult to earn	18	106	38	9	3	3.729
20 There will be a friendly atmosphere in most classes	22	133	18	1		4.011
21 My adviser will be willing to help me make decisions I must make	36	124	13	1		4.114

There was a more positive score on all seven posttest areas than on the seven pretest areas. Students' responses were not significantly

different (.01 level) on the awareness, quality of teaching or practicality scales although mean scores did increase. Analysis by demographic data did not show significant differences based on sex, distance of hometown from campus, number of previous visits to campus, number of friends/family associated with UNI, nor nights spent in residence halls.

The practicality scale was not significantly different at the .01 level. The awareness scale showed the least change with the practicality scale showing the next smallest change, pretest to posttest.

Table 7  
Practicality Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	12.93	1.65	.453	0.655 (not significant)
Posttest	12.97	1.63		

Feelings of community were significantly higher for "Preview UNI" participants after their on-campus experience. Establishment of a feeling of being in community with the institution is a stated goal of the program and this study would evidence that the goal is being reached for most students.

Table 8  
Community Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	11.79	1.78	4.734	0.00 (significant at .01 level)
Posttest	12.27	1.74		

Students rated awareness and practicality (see Table 7) relatively high on the pretest. The awareness scale, like the practicality scale, did not show significant differences. The mean scores of the awareness scale were surpassed only by the scores on the practicality scale.

Table 9  
Awareness Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	12.36	1.47	.129	0.866 (not significant)
Posttest	12.37	1.62		

The propriety scale was given the lowest scores on both the pretest and the posttest but this scale showed the greatest amount of change over the course of the two-day "Preview UNI" program.

Table 10  
Propriety Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	10.32	1.73	5.200	0.00 (significant at .01 level)
Posttest	10.88	1.75		

Students indicated a relatively low expectation that the UNI campus would be characterized by students who rigorously pursued academic knowledge as evidenced by the scholarship scale. The scholarly environment was ranked second lowest on both the pretest and posttest. The "Preview UNI" sessions appear to have caused significant changes in the way in which new freshmen students perceive the importance of high scholarship to students attending UNI. Scholarship and the value of a college degree are subjects that are dealt with by members of the S.O.S. as well as Academic Advising personnel during the 12:45 p.m. session that is required for all participants. The content of this session would seem to promote a respect for the scholarly environment.

Table 11  
Scholarship Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	10.50	1.81	2.899	.004 (significant at .01 level)
Posttest	10.79	1.76		

Students had a more positive feeling about the campus morale after spending time on campus during the "Preview UNI" program. An opportunity to talk with currently enrolled students who are satisfied with their UNI degree programs (S.O.S. members) is assumed to fulfill the goal of helping new students to begin to establish friendships. Contacts with other new students during social and recreational times also would be expected to compliment the new students' feelings about the campus morale.

Table 12  
Campus Morale Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	11.77	1.55	4.923	0.00 (significant at .01 level)
Posttest	12.27	1.62		

The seventh scale, quality of teaching, was the third area that did not show significant changes although the posttest scores were some higher than the pretest scores. Not unlike the awareness scale and the propriety scale, students rated the quality of teaching relatively high on both the pretest and the posttest.

Table 13  
Quality of Teaching Scale

Instrument	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	2-Tail Probability
Pretest	12.22	1.59	1.164	0.244 (not significant)
Posttest	12.33	1.63		

In summary, new students' perceptions of four environmental areas were significantly changed during the two days the students participated in "Preview UNI." The four areas that changed significantly were community, propriety, scholarship and campus morale. These four areas received lower ratings on both the pretest and the posttest than did the three areas (practicality, awareness and quality of teaching) that were not significantly changed by attendance at "Preview UNI."

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATIONS

According to Sagaria and Higginson (1980), students who are in harmony with their institution's environment are more likely to persist in college. Black (1964) said that an on-campus orientation experience is one way of helping students to know themselves and their institution's environment better. Because students come to a campus with expectations of the environment of that campus, this study looked at changes in the new students' expectations following a two-day summer orientation program.

Participants in one of the eight 1981 "Preview UNI" sessions were sent a "UNI New Student Inventory" prior to attending summer orientation. "Your Expectations of the Environment at UNI" was the section of the inventory that was used as the study pretest. A post-test, "Preview UNI Evaluation," contained the same 21 items and was administered at the end of the two-day program. Of the 215 participants, 175 completed both the pretest and posttest during the June 18-19 session of "Preview UNI."

Items on the instruments were patterned after C. Robert Pace's College and University Environmental Scales (CUES). The seven facets of the environment that the instruments measured were practicality, community, awareness, propriety, scholarship, campus morale and quality of teaching.

All "Preview UNI" participants attend one two-hour-and-fifteen minute required session to learn to formulate a schedule to fulfill a

degree program. Every student also spent some time with a faculty freshman adviser. A full schedule of optional activities were available for students to learn about residence halls, financial aids, learning skills opportunities and other student services.

Students did show changes in their expectations of the campus environment following attendance at "Preview UNI." There were more positive perceptions of all seven components of the environment following "Preview UNI." Findings in the study include:

1. Students felt significantly more positive about the areas of community, propriety, scholarship and campus morale following their on-campus orientation experience.
2. Students reported more positive feelings about the quality of teaching, practicality and awareness but the changes were not significantly more positive.
3. Differences based on sex, location of hometown from campus, number of previous visits to campus, nights spent in UNI residence halls and number of friends or family members who have or are currently attending UNI, were not significant.
4. The three areas that did not change significantly were rated most positively by students on the pretest.

This study served as a pilot study to initiate the use of the environmental scales instruments. It appears that "Preview UNI" is a successful means of creating positive perceptions of the environment. The continued use of the "Your Expectations of the Environment at UNI" instrument will provide information about how accurately "Preview UNI" is conveying the environment and will measure how lasting the effects of attending "Preview UNI."

The initial use of the "UNI New Student Inventory," "Your Expectations of the UNI Environment," proved to be an interesting and informative evaluation of the "Preview UNI" program. Students were found to feel generally more positive about the environment at UNI following the two-day orientation experience.

Students indicated stronger agreement with positive statements about aspects of the UNI environment on nearly all of the 21 posttest items than they had on the 21 pretest items. Because each of the 175 students in the sample may have had some different experiences while on campus the positive feelings must be related to the entire on-campus experience rather than any specific aspect of the scheduled program.

The four items that did not score higher on the posttest were items measuring the three areas that did not show significant changes, awareness, practicality and quality of teaching. It should be mentioned here that these four areas did have high mean scores on the pretest and the failure to show significant change may be due to the strong feelings toward these areas based on prior knowledge of the environment.

The fact that students rated propriety and scholarship as the two lowest areas would suggest that information and impressions given to the students as prospective UNI students may not be adequate in these areas or it may not be presented to the students in a positive manner. Because this is a pilot study and there are no norms based on currently-enrolled students' perceptions of the actual environment it can only be asserted that the "Preview UNI" program is not causing new students to feel significantly more positive about the areas of practicality, awareness and the quality of teaching. Continued use of the instrument will allow a judgement to be made concerning the accuracy of conveying infor-

mation about these areas. Currently-enrolled students may, in fact, not feel that UNI is strong in all seven areas although the "Preview UNI" program is striving to give this impression.

It may be wise for the Admissions and Public Information personnel at UNI to consider that students who are admitted to UNI rate the areas of propriety and scholarship relatively low based on their expectations of the environment prior to attending UNI. It is possible that students are not given adequate information on these areas to develop strong feelings for them or that the information that they receive is not of a positive nature relative to propriety and scholarship. The greatest gain in positive feelings was in the area of propriety. The "Preview UNI" program was an effective way of instilling feelings that the UNI campus has a polite, cautious and thoughtful environment.

It is the researcher's opinion that consistently positive feelings about the environment should not be accepted as proof of a successful on-campus orientation program. The importance of a good "fit" between students and their institution's environment would suggest that it is more important that the orientation program honestly represents the campus environment rather than positively represents all aspects of the campus environment. Student personnel professionals will have their own impressions of the actual environment but the students who are currently enrolled should be looked to for information about the existing state of the environment. It is for this reason that I propose to continue the use of the environmental assessment instrument at UNI.

Results of this study cannot be generalized to a large population. The data reflect expectations and impressions of students entering one institution during one semester. Information concerning an institution's environment is unique to the institution and is likely to change some from year to year. It is for this reason that the locally-made instrument, which can be modified to measure ever-changing aspects of an environment, will continue to be a useful tool in assessing students' expectations of the UNI environment and their perceptions of that environment following their "Preview UNI" experience.

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## APPENDIX A

### UNI NEW STUDENT INVENTORY

To UNI Students: Your responses to the items in this inventory are confidential and will be summarized in a group profile of UNI students. The information will also be used to help in planning programs for new students at UNI.

Fill in the blanks or circle the approximate number following the item

Distance of hometown from campus \_\_\_\_\_ miles

Number of times you have visited the UNI campus prior to today  
0 1 2-4 5-9 10 or more

Number of nights you have spent in the UNI residence halls  
0 1 2-4 5-9 10 or more

Number of personal contacts you have had with UNI faculty/staff members either on or off campus. Include professors, department heads, admissions personnel  
0 1 2 3 4 or more

Number of close friends or family members who are attending or have attended UNI  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Number of informational publications you have received telling about UNI  
0 1 2 3 4 or more

### YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AT UNI

Circle the letter (SD, D, N, A, SA) which indicates your degree of agreement with the following statements

- |    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral, equally divided between agree and disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |   |
|----|-------------------|----------|---|-------|----------------|---|
|    | ↓                 | ↓        | ↓   | ↓     | ↓              |   |
| 1. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | Attending UNI will make me a more successful adult        |
| 2. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | UNI will be a friendly, supportive community              |
| 3. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | I will broaden my cultural horizons while at UNI          |
| 4. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | Channels for filing grievances will be readily accessible |
| 5. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | A challenging course will be a popular course             |
| 6. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | There will be a lot of group spirit at UNI                |
| 7. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | Professors will require me to apply what I learn          |
| 8. | SD                | D        | N   | A     | SA             | UNI will be a place for me to develop leadership skills   |

9. SD D N A SA Everyone will have a feeling of belonging here  
 10. SD D N A SA UNI students will be concerned about the world  
 around them  
 11. SD D N A SA Students will learn quickly what is done and what  
 is not done here  
 12. SD D N A SA Students will eagerly pursue their coursework  
 13. SD D N A SA I will fit in with students at UNI  
 14. SD D N A SA Most courses will challenge the majority of  
 students enrolled  
 15. SD D N A SA College will prepare me for my vocation (career)  
 16. SD D N A SA Planned university activities will help me to  
 make friends  
 17. SD D N A SA Not everyone at UNI will believe as I do  
 18. SD D N A SA Students at UNI will do things the right way  
 19. SD D N A SA Good grades will be difficult to earn  
 20. SD D N A SA There will be a friendly atmosphere in most classes  
 21. SD D N A SA My adviser will be willing to help me with  
 decisions I must make

Where will you live your first year at UNI? (Check one)

In UNI Residence Hall                       In UNI Family Housing  
 Off Campus with Parents or Relatives     Off Campus (Room or apartment)  
 Other (indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Check the time you made your decision to attend UNI

Grade 8 or before                       After being employed for \_\_\_\_\_ (years)  
 Grade 9, 10, 11                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have a car on campus?  Yes  No

(SEE OTHER SIDE)

6/1981 OSR/PCK/CWB

UNI NEW STUDENT INVENTORY

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last First Middle

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tele. No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street or RFD City State Zip

Single \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Prospective Major \_\_\_\_\_  
 Be specific

Sex \_\_\_ Age \_\_\_ Do you plan to teach? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Circle the number of years you plan to attend UNI 1 2 3 4 5 or more

What is your educational goal at UNI? (Check one and fill in blanks)

\_\_\_ Remain at UNI until I receive a degree

\_\_\_ Leave UNI before receiving a degree (Check the reason below)

\_\_\_ Transfer to \_\_\_\_\_ major in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of school

\_\_\_ Take preprofessional courses in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Take some specific courses in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Take a few courses to help me determine what I want to do

\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Check the grade point average you expect to receive your first semester at UNI (A = 4.00, B = 3.00, C = 2.00, etc.)

\_\_\_ (B+/A) 3.33 - 4.00 \_\_\_ (B-/B) 2.67 - 3.32 \_\_\_ (C/C+) 2.00 - 2.66

\_\_\_ (D+/C-) 1.33 - 1.99 \_\_\_ (D-/D) 0.67 - 1.32

Circle the highest grade completed by each of your parents:

	Elementary	High School	Tech or College	Grad School
Mother:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20+
Father:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20+

Father's Occupation (Be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Occupation (Be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

Check any family members who have attended/UNI

\_\_\_ mother \_\_\_ father \_\_\_ brother(s) \_\_\_ sister(s)

FUTURE PREDICTIONS

Circle the letter (V, S, N) which indicates your best guess that, while attending UNI, you will:

Very Good Chance

↓ Some Chance  
↓  
↓ No Chance

V S N Find the program or major I want

V S N Change academic major

V S N Change career plans

V S N Find the coursework too difficult

V S N Achieve academic honors

V S N Participate in extra-curricular activities

V S N Have difficulty adapting to UNI

V S N Receive a quality education at UNI

Very Good Chance

↓ Some Chance  
↓  
↓ No Chance

V S N Drop out temporarily and then return

V S N Drop out permanently (not transfer)

V S N Join a social fraternity or sorority

V S N Get a job to help pay expenses

V S N Be elected to a student office

V S N Get married while in college

V S N Find a challenging job after college

V S N Be satisfied I attended UNI

(SEE OTHER SIDE)

6/1981 Office of Student Research/PCK/CWB

APPENDIX B  
INSTRUCTIONS TO NEW STUDENTS FOR  
COMPLETING THE UNI NEW STUDENT INVENTORY

The UNI New Student Inventory will be collected as you check into Campbell Hall. You are encouraged to mark your responses on the attached pink sheet before you arrive on campus. Thank you for providing this information.

APPENDIX C  
GOALS OF "PREVIEW UNI"

- I. Bring new students into UNI who are able to successfully live and work in the University community.
  - A. Students will be made aware of services available to support them during their stay at UNI.
  - B. Students will know the University's academic expectations of them.
  - C. Students will be acquainted with the physical setting of the campus.
- II. Promote a partnership between parents, students and the University.
  - A. Parents/Students will better understand the responsibility of the University to provide opportunity while the students assume obligation to seek and benefit from the opportunity.
  - B. Parents will have a feeling of being a part of the student's education and personal development without having control over either.
  - C. Parents and students will understand a change that will take place in their relationship and begin to see it as a positive change.
- III. Develop a positive attitude toward the college experience as a whole.
  - A. Students will increase their confidence about their ability to succeed academically, socially and culturally.

- B. Students and parents will feel satisfaction in knowing the "workings" of the University, i.e., housing regulations, gpa requirements, advising and the registration process.
  - C. Students will be aware of students services and begin to develop confidence in the services, i.e., Student Counseling and Health Service, Learning Skills Center, IMPACT Program.
- IV. Establish the concept of the University as a mini-community.
- A. Students will note a relationship between educational, social, cultural and spiritual opportunities available at UNI.
  - B. Students will begin to recognize choices and decisions that will be faced while pursuing academic goals.

APPENDIX D  
STUDENT "PREVIEW UNI" SCHEDULE

First Day

- 7:30 Check in a Campbell Hall
- 8:00 CLEP Information Session
- 10:30 Welcome by Orientation Staff
- 10:45 Financial Aids Presentation
- 11:30 General Announcements
- 12:00 Lunch in Commons Dining Center
- 12:45 Understanding the Degree Program - required of all participants
- 1:30 Scheduling Help with S.O.S. - required of all participants
- 3:00 Residence Hall Life - What's It all About?
- 4:00 Campus Tour
- 4:45 Social Hour in Maucker Union - See the Facility, Meet the Staff
- 5:30 Dinner in Commons Dining Center
- 6:30 Select a Program of Interest
  - Campus Ministries
  - Learning Skills Center
  - Student Activities/Student Programs
- 7:45 Fun and Games with the S.O.S.
- 9:00 Campus Ministries Open Houses and Volleyball

Second Day

- 8:00- Meet with a freshman student adviser and register for fall
- 12:00 semester classes
- 1:00 Check out of Campbell Hall

APPENDIX E

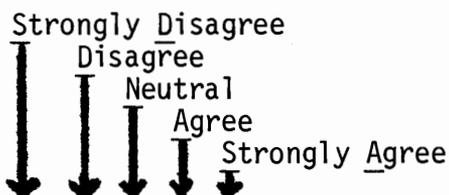
PREVIEW UNI EVALUATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_ - -

Session Date \_\_\_\_\_

To UNI students: Your responses to the items in this evaluation are confidential and will be used to help in planning future programs for new UNI students.

Having attended Preview UNI, circle the letter (SD, D, N, A, SA) which indicates your degree of agreement with the following statements



- |     |    |   |   |   |    |  |
|-----|----|---|---|---|----|--|
| 1.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | Attending UNI will make me a more successful adult                 |
| 2.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | UNI will be a friendly, supportive community                       |
| 3.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | I will broaden my cultural horizons while at UNI                   |
| 4.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | Channels for filing grievances will be readily accessible          |
| 5.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | A challenging course will be a popular course                      |
| 6.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | There will be a lot of group spirit at UNI                         |
| 7.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | Professors will require me to apply what I learn                   |
| 8.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | UNI will be a place for me to develop leadership skills            |
| 9.  | SD | D | N | A | SA | Everyone will have a feeling of belonging here                     |
| 10. | SD | D | N | A | SA | UNI students will be concerned about the world around them         |
| 11. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Students will learn quickly what is done and what is not done here |
| 12. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Students will eagerly pursue their coursework                      |
| 13. | SD | D | N | A | SA | I will fit in with students at UNI                                 |
| 14. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Most courses will challenge the majority of students enrolled      |
| 15. | SD | D | N | A | SA | College will prepare me for my vocation (career)                   |
| 16. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Planned university activities will help me to make friends         |
| 17. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Not everyone at UNI will believe as I do                           |
| 18. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Students at UNI will do things the right way                       |
| 19. | SD | D | N | A | SA | Good grades will be difficult to earn                              |
| 20. | SD | D | N | A | SA | There will be a friendly atmosphere in most classes                |
| 21. | SD | D | N | A | SA | My adviser will be willing to help me with decisions I must make   |

SD D N A SA Information I received in the mail concerning  
 Preview UNI was sufficient  
 SD D N A SA Check-in at Campbell Hall went smoothly  
 SD D N A SA I have the answer to all questions I had about  
 Financial Aid  
 SD D N A SA I understand the scheduling and course selection  
 process at UNI  
 SD D N A SA The program on Residence Hall Life was informative  
 SD D N A SA My tour guide for the campus tour was knowledgeable  
 SD D N A SA I was pleased with the UNI dining facilities

Please indicate the program you attended from 6:30 to 7:30 and rate it from 1 to 5 with 1 being very disappointing to 5 being very worthwhile and interesting.

Program \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for your comments. Have a safe trip home.