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## SCHOLASTIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS ENTERING THE IOWA STATE COLLEGE WITH LOW HIGH SCHOOL AVERAGES

JOHN L. HOLMES

In the fall quarters of 1939 and 1940 students entering the Iowa State College directly from high school with averages below 1.51<sup>1</sup> were grouped together in a "pre-admission guidance" program. In the two years considered, ninety-six students with high school averages below 1.51 entered the Iowa State College.

The program was the same for both years. The students included in the program were asked to be on the campus two days before regular freshman week began. During these two days they were given tests of scholastic ability, silent reading skills, English and mathematics achievement.

Fall quarter class schedules were made out for the students based largely upon the test results and the students' interests. The number of hours carried ranged from 11-14 hours. In no case were the students permitted to carry a normal load of 15-17 hours of class work. Nor were they given freshman mathematics and chemistry the first quarter.

A special counselor who had no teaching duties and who could devote more time to counseling than is usually expected of the Iowa State College counselors, was assigned to the group. During the fall quarter this counselor devoted approximately twenty hours per week to individual counseling with the pre-admission students. He also met the group during the fall quarter for one hour twice a week in a combined study methods and remedial reading course.

The tables that follow show the pre-admission students' educational background, scholastic aptitude, and achievement in college.

In Table 1 are the high school averages for the ninety-six students included in the program. Seventy per cent of them had high school averages between 1.20 and 1.49.

Table 1.—High School Averages

High School Average	Number (N 96)
1.40	24
1.30	23
1.20	24
1.10	7
1.00	7
0.90	5
0.80	1
0.70	3
0.60	2

<sup>1</sup>Based on a grading plan in which an "A"=4, a "B"=3, a "C"=2, "D"=1, "F"=0.

In Table 2 is shown the group's scholastic aptitude, as measured by the American Council on Education Psychological Examination, 1938 Edition. The decile scores are based on scores made by the new entrants each year. Sixty per cent of the pre-admission students made scores in the lowest decile of the students entering the Iowa State College the year they did; eighty per cent were in the lowest three deciles. However, eleven per cent made scores as high as or higher than fifty per cent of the new entrants.

Table 2.—ACE Psychological Test Scores

Decile	Number (N 96)
10	0
9	1
8	5
7	2
6	3
5	3
4	7
3	9
2	10
1	56

Table 3 shows the scores made by the pre-admission students on the English Placement Test for Iowa Colleges and Universities, Forms G and H. Sixty per cent of them scored in the lowest decile.

Table 3.—English Placement Test Scores

Decile	Number (N 94)
10	0
9	1
8	0
7	3
6	7
5	2
4	13
3	8
2	21
1	39

The fall quarter (1939, 1940) grades made by the group are presented in Table 4. Only seven per cent made averages of 2.00 or higher, which is the grade point average necessary for graduation. Because of their poor high school records the entire group was placed on probation at the time of entrance. At the end of the fall quarter only twenty per cent made grades high enough to be taken off probation.

Table 4.—Grade Point Average

(1st Qtr. Average)	Number (N 90)
2.5	1
2.4	0
2.3	1
2.2	0
2.1	1
2.0	3

1.9	1
1.8	3
1.7	2
1.6	4
1.5	3
1.4	6
1.3	5
1.2	9
1.1	3
1.0	6
0.9	4
0.8	2
0.7	5
0.6	5
0.5	7
0.4	1
0.3	7
0.2	2
0.1	3
0.0	5

Table 5 shows the cumulative grade point averages. Of the students whose cumulative grade point averages were 2.00 or higher, the one who made 2.10 was in college six quarters; the one who made 2.00 was in college only one quarter. The one student who made 1.90 was in college ten quarters but his average was never high enough to permit him to go from the junior college to the senior college. The student whose average was in the 1.80-1.89 category was in college nine quarters—all spent in the junior college.

The grades made by this group are significantly low when they are compared with the all-freshman average of 1.90 and with the all-college average of 2.20.

Table 5.—Cumulative Grade Point Averages

Cum. G. P. A.	Number (N 90)
2.1	1
2.0	1
1.9	1
1.8	1
1.7	4
1.6	4
1.5	2
1.4	5
1.3	10
1.2	8
1.1	3
1.0	4
0.9	7
0.8	6
0.7	4
0.6	7
0.5	4
0.4	6
0.3	1
0.1	3
0.2	2
0.0	6

At the Iowa State College students are dropped from college because of low grades by the action of the Scholarship Committee, which meets at the close of each quarter. Table 6 shows the number of pre-admission students dropped from college by the action of this committee.

Table 6.—Scholarship Committee Action

Action	Number (N 90)
Dropped at least once	56
Not dropped	34

Sixty per cent of these students, sometime during their college careers, were dropped from college because of low grades. Normally about thirteen per cent of a freshman class are dropped sometime from college because of low grades.

As shown by Table 7, most of the pre-admission students (seventy per cent) remained in college only one year. Eleven students stayed two years, and three were in college at the end of three years.

Table 7.—Number of Quarters of College Work Completed

Number of Quarters	Number (N 90)
10	1
9	2
8	1
7	3
6	4
5	5
4	6
3	23
2	24
1	21

In Table 8 are shown the grades made by pre-admission students in various courses taken during their first quarter in college. Of the ninety students enrolled in freshman English, twenty per cent made "C"s. About thirty per cent made "D"s (lowest passing grade). Fifty per cent received failing grades. Fourteen per cent of twenty-nine students failed their first animal husbandry course. Ten girls were enrolled in the beginning textiles and clothing course; three failed the course. Twenty-eight students took the first engineering drawing course. Four made failing grades, seven made "D"s; about half made satisfactory drawing grades.

Table 8.—Grades in Various Courses Taken the 1st Quarter in College

Course Grade	English	Animal Husb.	Textiles and Clothing	Engr. Drawing
A	0	0	0	2
B	0	1	0	5
C	17	10	5	10
D	25	14	2	7
F	48	4	3	4

Despite the special attention given the pre-admission students, their progress in college was decidedly unsatisfactory.

1. Ninety per cent of them made scores on the psychological examination lower than the average scores made by new entrants.
2. Eighty per cent made less than 1.50 their first quarter in college; eighty per cent made less than 1.50 in all of their college work. Only two students made cumulative averages of 2.00 or better.
3. Seventy per cent were enrolled three quarters or less.
4. Seventy per cent terminated their college work by action of the Scholarship Committee.

The special counseling, the light schedules, the special remedial study and reading course and the vocational guidance apparently did not give these students who were admitted to regular college curriculums the amount and the kind of help needed.

There are many and complex reasons why they did unsatisfactory college work. Some of them did not possess the necessary amount of mental ability. Some of them had the mental ability but either did not want to or could not make use of it. Some may have been handicapped by illness or physical disabilities. There were some who were held back because of poor study habits. But all of them were unprepared to do the work expected of average freshmen.

For colleges that have high school graduation as their chief entrance requirement, some method is needed of bridging the gap between the point the student reaches at the end of the twelfth grade and the point at which the college expects him to be. Too, a plan is needed whereby the educational and vocational problems of the potential failures are early recognized and dealt with by the college and by the student.

This plan must involve some practical vocational guidance early in the potential failures' college career, for such students are really vocational guidance cases. The majority of them need to reorganize completely their vocational plans.

This plan, at the present time, may well involve the offering of pre-college training in basic subjects as English, arithmetic, chemistry, and history. Admission to regular college curriculums would then be permitted only to those students who, during this probation period, showed they were capable and ready to carry regular college work. Too, the probation period may provide a more appropriate setting in which to motivate the students in a reorganization of their vocational goals.

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