

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

ADDRESSING THE NEW MAJORITY:
THE ADULT EVENING PROGRAM AT
COLUMBIA UNION COLLEGE

by

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Adult Evening Program
Columbia Union College
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The New Majority

The majority of college students in the United States today are adults aged 25 years or older. Most of these hold full-time jobs while enrolled in college part-time. This relatively new and rapidly growing constituency affords exciting opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities to extend their outreach as well as generate additional revenue to help pay the cost of educating traditional SDA students.

Several Seventh-day Adventist institutions are taking advantage of this phenomena. Home Study International is a pioneer in distance learning for adults, and Atlantic Union College, Southwestern Adventist College, and Columbia Union College offer structured adult programs. La Sierra and Andrews universities, as well as other Adventist institutions, provide selected courses and programs.

This paper offers some preliminary reflections on how adult education programs may impact a traditional Seventh-day Adventist college. Consideration will be given to key issues which need to be addressed by administrators and faculty interested in inaugurating or expanding adult education, including concerns which must be resolved before entering this highly competitive market.

The focus is on the Adult Evening Program at Columbia Union College, located in Takoma Park, Maryland, a part of the metroplex of Washington, DC. Special attention will be given to how this program, which brings on campus about one-third of the total student population of CUC, fits into the mission of the college, and how it can be refined to further enhance the transmission of the Adventist worldview to these students who come with extremely diverse backgrounds. Since the writer is the present program director, the reader should be wary of bias. This paper is a candid view of adult education at CUC from the inside, bringing all the strengths and weaknesses of this perspective.

The Columbia Union College Experience

The Adult Evening Program (AEP) has had a profound and dramatically positive impact on Columbia Union College. During

1992 AEP enrolled some 350 students and graduated 196 with bachelors degrees. Revenue exceeded \$1,300,00, with a net contribution to college overhead of more than \$700,000 after deducting all direct expenses.¹ Since AEP students pay cash in advance and are not eligible for college-funded scholarships, the positive effect on cash flow is striking. This is particularly true during the summer when AEP classes continue while the number of traditional course offerings and students is greatly reduced.

However, AEP's most important contribution is a broadened mission which carries Seventh-day Adventist education to large population segments of greater Washington, DC, previously untouched by Columbia Union College. Although most AEP students arrive with little or no previous contact with Seventh-day Adventists, they leave CUC enthusiastic and appreciative of their educational experience. They state they understand and support the mission of this SDA college,² and they are proud to claim CUC as their alma mater. Many tell how their lives have been literally transformed. They have a renewed sense of personal accomplishment and self worth, receive job promotions, and successfully pursue graduate or professional degrees, all as a result of completing their college program.³

Introducing an Adult Program

The success of CUC's experience may prompt other SDA colleges, both in the United States and elsewhere, to consider offering adult programs. Before embarking on such a venture, there are a number of issues which must be evaluated objectively and dispassionately.

The first task is for the faculty and Board of Trustees to ask honestly if an adult education program is compatible with the mission of the college.⁴ It is crucial to take appropriate time to process thoroughly all the ramifications of adding this new constituency to the college, recognizing that most adult students probably will be non-Adventists. The nature and structure of the proposed program must be evaluated to determine how it will effect

resource allocation including administrators, teachers, finances, physical facilities, support services, etc.

In what ways will adding such a program likely draw off or increase resources available for the traditional college? Clearly, if adult education is delivered on the campus primarily by traditional faculty, it will present far different challenges and opportunities than if courses are offered off campus at various locations by adjunct teachers. The variety of adult programs appears almost infinite, and a specific model must be chosen with care to fit the mission and resources of the college.

If the preliminary findings are promising, a marketing and feasibility study should be commissioned. In most cases, money spent for an experienced consultant is a wise investment. The market must be assessed with no preconceptions to determine if it can support and how it will respond to adult offerings. Location as well as the competition in the target area are key ingredients in this analysis. It is imperative to pay particular attention to the projected financial impact of this venture, both short and long term. Also, the receptiveness of accrediting bodies must be explored. Major college groups, particularly faculty and administration, must know exactly what is expected and needed from them to make the program succeed, and they must commit to the project.

If the indicators are favorable, the college is ready to prepare a detailed proposed plan of action. This must include precise dates for implementing all phases of the project, including projections which must be met at various key points if the venture is to continue. A strong, intelligent management team must be in place or appointed. While it is essential that the faculty maintain full control over academic integrity, the adult program must be given sufficient autonomy to respond quickly to rapid changes in the marketplace without needing to wait for a ponderous faculty committee structure to make decisions. Administration must at once commit adequate resources to make the program successful and have the courage to abort without hesitation if projections are

not realized. Only when the administration and faculty have thoroughly processed and approved a detailed proposal, is it ready for submission to the Board of Trustees for authorization and implementation.

The CUC Adult Evening Program

Columbia Union College initiated the Adult Evening Program in 1984. Its success during eight years has been remarkable. A total of more than 600 students have graduated with AEP bachelors degrees. A well trained and experienced corps of some 40 teachers is in place working with a dedicated and competent management and support staff of six. Carefully crafted curricula are meeting academic objectives, and the program has a solid financial track record. Enrollment remains stable at about 350, despite sharply increasing competition from a number of area colleges and universities including giants such as Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland which are aggressively pursuing the adult market.

The program is designed for working adults who present transfer credits totaling 60 semester hours or more and wish to complete a bachelor of science degree in either Business Administration, Organizational Management, or Health Care Administration. They apply for admission to Columbia Union College and must meet the same criteria as traditional transfer students; but in addition must be at least 23 years old and show evidence of substantial work experience.⁵

Each student must complete a major comprised of a structured sequence of 12 courses, each awarded 3 semester hours credit, plus a non-credit, work related independent research project based on at least 250 hours of documented field experience.⁶ To complete the B.S., the student must meet all CUC graduation requirements, including specified general education courses and a total of 120 semester credits.

The major or "core" courses are scheduled one night a week from 6-10:10 pm, and can be completed in 18 months. Classes run 48

weeks per year, with time off only during the first two weeks of August and the weeks of Christmas and New Year's. The program does not follow traditional academic terms, as new groups begin throughout the calendar year. Presently, 12 new classes are scheduled each year.

General education and elective courses needed for graduation are offered evenings and Sundays, and students may receive up to 24 hours credit based on challenge tests or credit for prior learning awarded on a course by course basis.⁷ Detailed documentation validating all credit for prior learning is microfilmed and kept on permanent record by Columbia Union College.

Broadening the Mission

Since AEP is not in crisis, this seems a good time to pause and reflect on how well it enhances the mission of Columbia Union College and what improvements might be implemented to enrich its contribution.

The official Statement of Mission declares that CUC "is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning" which "attempts to provide students--both traditional and nontraditional--the best opportunities for developing a well rounded Christian character and endeavors to equip them for work in the service of the church, community, and larger society."⁸

It should be noted that approximately 85%⁹ of AEP students come to CUC with little or no prior contact with Seventh-day Adventists. Since all classes are conducted on the CUC campus, AEP students immediately confront a variety of SDA practices and values. For instance, they obey the campus-wide no smoking policy, discover there are no Friday evening or Saturday classes, eat at least one meal each week in the college cafeteria, and mingle with the all-SDA advising and office staff.

The Adult Evening Program is not designed to convert students to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. However, it does seek to acquaint students with a clearly Christian and more particularly Seventh-day Adventist worldview, and to provide a positive witness

which is at once spiritual, intelligent, and attractive to learning adults with a variety of faith backgrounds.

Accomplishing the Mission

In a number of general but extremely important ways, AEP appears to be accomplishing this positive Adventist witness. In March 1991 all CUC students, traditional and AEP, participated in a 93 item survey prepared by American Testing Company (ACT) containing both nationally normed and CUC specific questions. Responses provide clear statistical evidence that AEP students not only understand the mission of CUC, but that they are extremely pleased with the quality of academic counseling they receive from AEP advisors, they greatly appreciate the concern consistently shown by the staff, they consider campus policies appropriate, and they even like the vegetarian food served in the college cafeteria.¹⁰

Anecdotal evidence emphatically supports the conclusion that AEP students are fully aware that they are attending a Seventh-day Adventist college, and they are enthusiastic about their experience. A very close personal relationship develops between students and AEP staff, all of whom are active Adventists. Adult students say exactly what they think without timidity. Overwhelmingly, they speak well of CUC personnel, especially citing the helpful and caring attitude of advisors and office staff. They often comment that they are treated differently here than at other schools because CUC is a Christian college.

Throughout the year and a half or more they spend on the CUC campus, AEP students are reminded regularly that they are part of a Seventh-day Adventist college. During the application process, all AEP students are told up front of CUC's church affiliation. This is reinforced during the orientation program which initiates each group of about 20 students. At the conclusion of their program, they elect AEP officers for the senior class and participate with traditional students in the full range of graduation weekend services. These include Consecration,

Baccalaureate, and Commencement, all held in the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Columbia Union College campus. Baccalaureate is particularly impressive since on average some 300-400 non-Adventist graduates and friends attend a Seventh-day Adventist church on Sabbath morning, most for the first time. The weekend speakers are reminded of the congregation mix and have a rare opportunity to share the Good News with this receptive audience.

The Challenge of a Focused Worldview

Acquainting each AEP student with a Christian, and more particularly Adventist worldview is a formidable task. The program director must recognize this as a primary responsibility which requires creativity and constant monitoring. Since most AEP students are professionals, 30 years or older, who earn in excess of \$30,000 per year and continue full-time employment while attending CUC,¹¹ they are in sharp contrast to traditional CUC students who are sorting out and forming their worldview as they attend college. Adults already have experienced much of life, and therefore generally have a quite firmly established personal philosophy and practice.

Most AEP students have attended several colleges over a number of years before enrolling at CUC. As products of traditional higher education, they have been taught a secular viewpoint¹² and probably have never thought systematically about their worldview from a Christian perspective. The Adult Evening Program has the opportunity and obligation to infuse a Christian perspective as a fundamental part of the education delivered at Columbia Union College.

The required curriculum of each major includes the courses "Issues in Religion and Culture" and "Ethics in Modern Society." Because the other ten courses which comprise the content of the academic major are taught by a variety of teachers whose philosophies and perspectives vary, these two core courses play a crucial role in conveying CUC's worldview and values to AEP students.

Choosing Instructors

The program director assigns the instructor for each class. He must give special attention to select for these courses only professors who clearly understand and share the Adventist worldview and are exceptionally skilled in teaching these values with force, yet winsome tact and openness. The teacher reacting with adult students in frank discussion is the pivot of the class. Here the rich variety of experiences these students bring with them can be explored, probed, and refined in a highly intelligent and reverent atmosphere. There are few greater challenges for the Adventist Christian teacher--and few richer potential rewards.

The task of finding such professors is formidable since each of these classes is offered 12 times each year. Happily, a number of outstanding Adventist scholars with specialized graduate education in these subjects reside in the Washington, DC area. An excellent group of teachers is in place, but new applicants regularly must be carefully interviewed and thoroughly oriented to assure a pool of high quality instructors for these crucial and sensitive courses.

Students evaluate the teacher at the end of each course using a standardized instrument which features primarily questions on teaching skill and interpersonal relations, while also encouraging open-ended comments.¹³ Although students generally give AEP teachers high marks, the evaluations of these two religion type courses consistently are noticeably positive.¹⁴ It is comforting to find that students who represent a wide variety of faiths think these classes are well taught and appreciate them. However, it might be useful to add a question or two to discover specifically how students react to the integration of faith and learning and the Christian worldview expressed in these courses.

Refining Course Content

The assigned reading is extremely important in all courses. Because the program is integrated and highly structured, AEP determines the required texts for each class. Choosing books

involves teachers who have successfully taught the course several times, the major department chair, and the AEP program director. Assigned reading for "Issues in Religion and Culture" and "Ethics in Modern Society" is supervised by the CUC Religion Department chair.

Special attention needs to be given to selecting materials for these courses which clearly teach the integration of faith and learning and explain how to address fundamental issues from a Christian viewpoint. Students should be introduced to the contemporary debate regarding challenges to the dominant scientific paradigm, and should explore current thought regarding the new post-modern synthesis and its implications for a revised worldview.¹⁵ Selected readings and discussions should require students to wrestle with social and political issues from a Christian perspective, thus opening their eyes to ideas many probably have never glimpsed before.

Presently, these classes are scattered somewhat haphazardly in the sequence of courses in each major. The AEP director should initiate discussion to determine where these courses should be placed for maximum impact. A starting point might be to schedule "Issues in Religion and Culture," which focuses on world religions, near the beginning of the program, thus introducing significant issues which can be integrated with the major content courses which follow. The instructor should point out to students on the last evening of this class that the final course in the program will be "Ethics in Modern Society." This course should be the capstone designed to synthesize what has been learned within a comprehensive worldview integrating faith and learning.

This structure would insure that each student knows without doubt that the Columbia Union College Adult Evening Program provides not only rigorous academic quality in the major discipline, but also systematically introduces values which are uniquely Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Thus the integration of faith and learning would be spotlighted near the beginning and at the end as the central theme of education at CUC.

An Opportunity and a Challenge

Adult and continuing education is the way of the future for American higher education. The market is there. Someone will take advantage of it and reap rich benefits.

Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities must always remember that their core business is educating Adventist young people during a crucial time in their personal development. SDA constituents should not be expected to provide financial support to programs for non-Adventist adults, but in many cases SDA colleges can offer to the community adult programs which will more than pay their own way. This can be a powerful winning combination.

Adult education may enlarge and enrich an SDA college's mission, but the impact must be carefully weighed. The entire college must participate in determining precisely what, if any, adult programs are feasible and compatible with the goals and objectives of the particular institution. If an adult program is inaugurated, it must be designed carefully to maximize its positive Adventist witness as well as provide quality academic instruction. All students must understand clearly that they are attending a Seventh-day Adventist college, and should graduate proud of that fact.

The Columbia Union College experience may prove instructive regarding how a Seventh-day Adventist liberal arts college can address the needs of a secular community while in no way compromising its principles. In fact, a well conceived adult program may well enhance the mission while broadening and intensifying its witness.

ENDNOTES

1. See financial, enrollment, and graduation reports of Columbia Union College for fiscal years 1991-92 and calendar year 1992.
2. See report of ACT Survey of CUC students, both traditional and AEP, conducted by the Vice President for Student Services in March 1991.
3. The evidence that AEP graduates are extremely successful on the job and in graduate work at a number of well recognized universities is clear and abundant, but primarily anecdotal at present. Statistical studies of AEP graduates are planned for the near future.
4. A review of the bulletins of Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in North America suggest only Atlantic Union and Columbia Union colleges specifically include adult education in their Statement of Mission.
5. See Columbia Union College Bulletin 1992-93, pp. 18, 19, 58, and 59.
6. See listing of AEP courses by major, Appendix A.
7. CUC Bulletin, 1992-93, pp. 36-39.
8. Ibid, p. 11.
9. This percentage has remained remarkably constant the past three years during which this data has been monitored by the AEP director.
10. See graphs of ACT Survey results, Appendix B.
11. Marketing reports providing these data are available from the Director, CUC Adult Evening Program.
12. For discussion and critiques of this secular worldview, see Arthur DeJong, Reclaiming a Mission, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990; and Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton, The Transforming Vision, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1984.
13. See Appendix C.
14. A copy of each evaluation is sent to the teacher and AEP major department chair, and one is kept on permanent file in the AEP Director's office.
15. See DeJong, pp. 97-126, and Walsh and Middleton.

33
APPENDIX A

LIST OF ADULT EVENING PROGRAM COURSES BY MAJOR

Business Administration

MGMT 335: Management Structures in the Business Organization
MGMT 380: Managerial Skills Assessment
ECON 370: Economic Concepts and Applications
MGMT 430: Concepts and Applications of Personnel Management
BUAD 485: Statistics and Research
ACCT 304: Principles of Cost Accounting
FIN 335: Principles of Business Finance
INTD 327: Issues in Religion and Culture
BJAD 320: Principles of Business Law
MKTG 375: Marketing Concepts and Applications
INTD 315: Ethics in Modern Society
MGMT 490: Business Policy
BUAD 495: Guided Independent Research Project

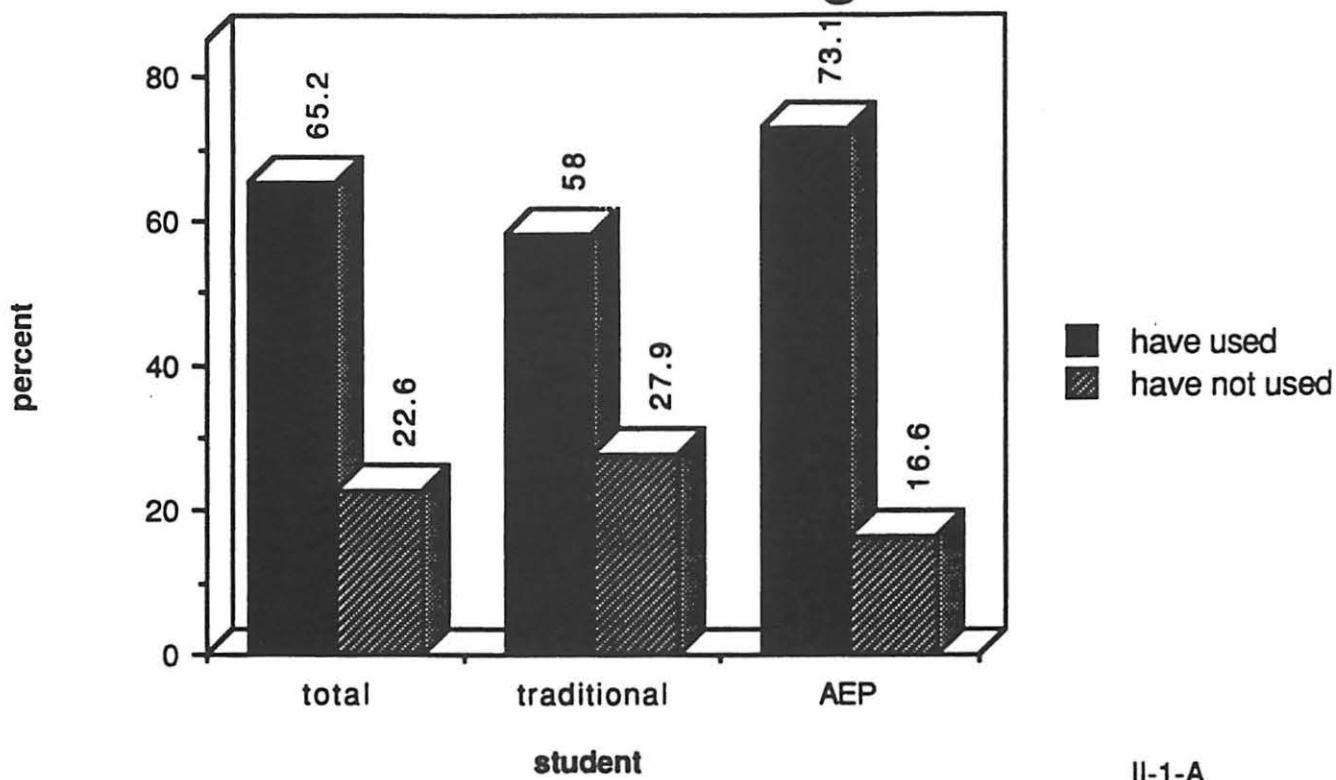
Organizational Management

SOSC 315: Systems Management and Organizational Behavior
SOSC 330: Career Assessment and Planning
SOSC 350: Statistical Methods
SOSC 349: Research Methods
SOSC 355: Communication Management
SOSC 375: Effective Interpersonal Relationships
SOSC 415: Dynamics of Group and Organizational Behavior
INTD 327: Issues in Religion and Culture
SOSC 420: Multicultural Dimensions
SOSC 425: Management Techniques and Supervision
INTD 315: Ethics in Modern Society
SOSC 430: Human Resources Administration
SOSC 495: Guided Independent Research Project

Health Care Administration

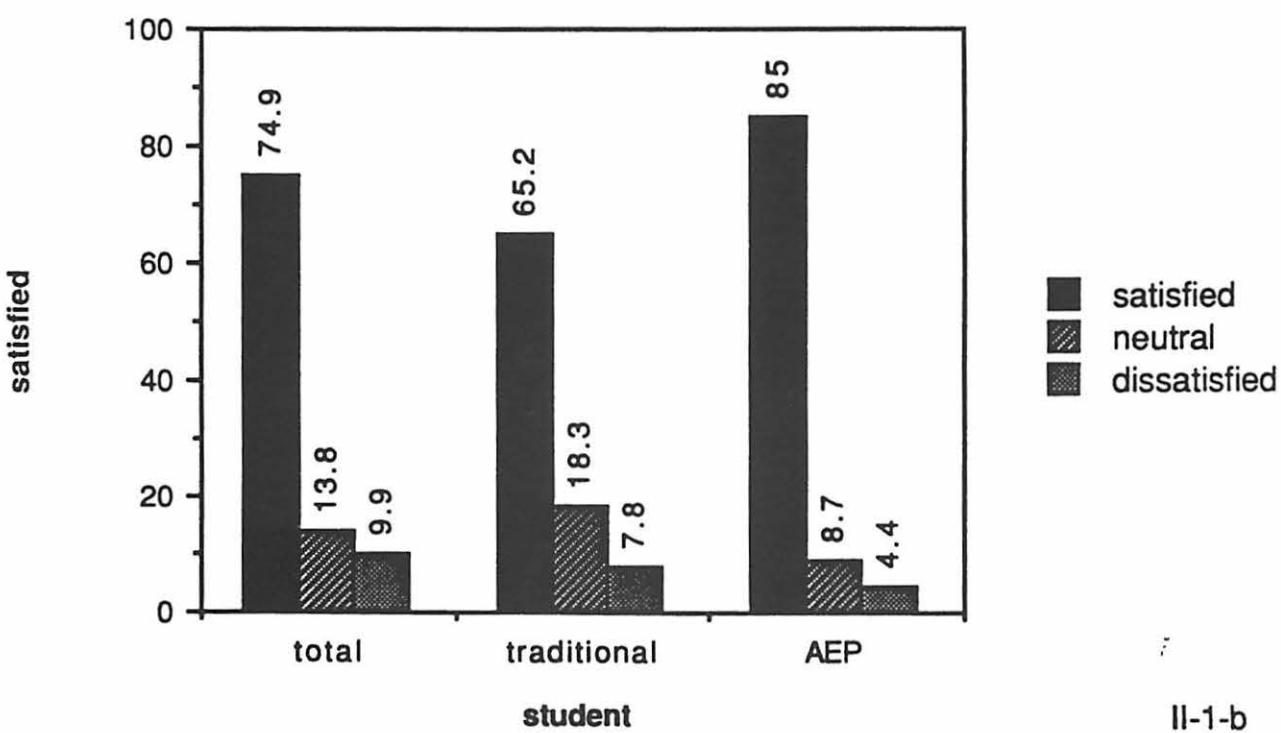
HCAD 300: Health Care Organization Theory and Management Practice
HCAD 310: Management Skills Assessment
HCAD 320: Research Methods and Statistics
HCAD 340: Personnel Management
HCAD 350: Health Care Information Systems Management
HCAD 380: Business Data Analysis
INTD 327: Issues in Religion and Culture
HCAD 400: Planning in Health Care
HCAD 410: Managerial Economics
HCAD 420: Health Care Finance
HCAD 430: Legal Issues and Public Policy in Health Care
INTD 315: Ethics in Modern Society
HCAD 495: Guided Independent Research Project

Use of Academic Advising Services



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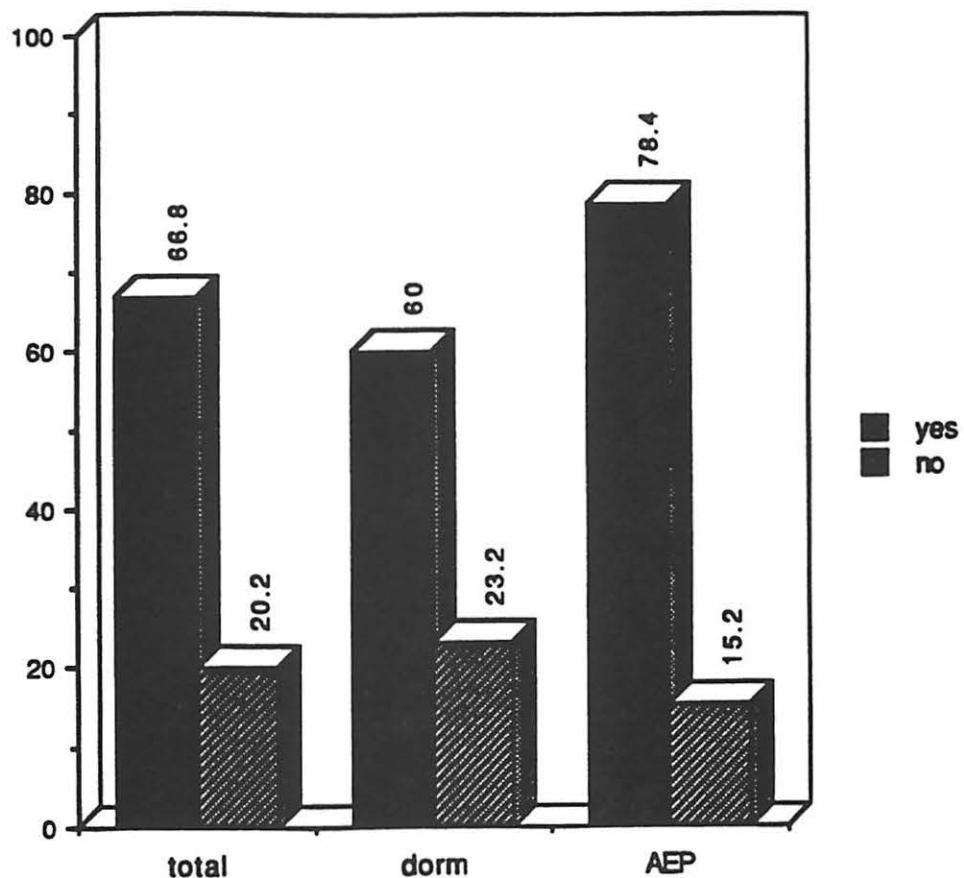
Satisfaction with Academic Advising Services



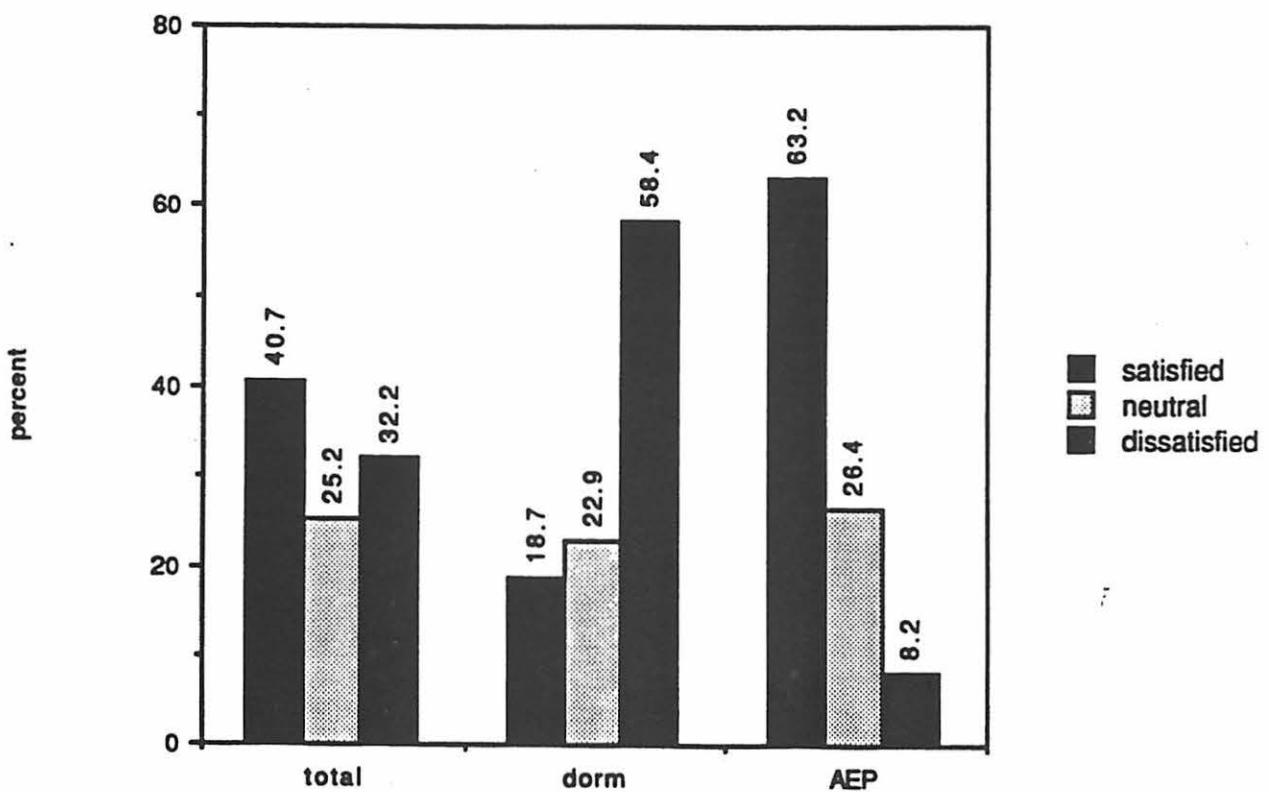
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"I understand mission & goals of the college."



Satisfaction with Food Service



36
APPENDIX C

**COLUMBIA UNION COLLEGE
ADULT EVENING PROGRAM**

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTOR AND COURSE

Instructor Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

Directions: Please give your honest opinion of both the instructor and the course.

WHAT WENT WELL?

WHAT COULD HAVE GONE BETTER?

37
A. STUDENT'S RATING SCALE OF AN INSTRUCTOR

Instructor's name (Please print) _____ Course _____ Date _____

Each of the qualities listed below is divided into three sections. Each section is divided into three degrees and numbered accordingly from 1 to 9, 1 being the highest degree and 9 the lowest. In rating, draw a circle around the number which best describes your instructor.

Your fair and honest opinion is what really counts. Your instructor desires this rating for his own self-improvement.

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Well organized; shows thoughtful planning.	Some organization but not always clear.	Lacks organization; planning seems vague.
PREPARATION FOR EACH CLASS	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Shows definite evidence of careful preparation.	Shows some preparation; average knowledge of course.	Not well prepared; knowledge inaccurate at times.
TEACHING SKILL	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Produces steady interest in subject; creates real desire; keeps things moving.	Teaching procedure seldom changes; student interest moderate.	Classes tend to be dry and uninteresting; class period drags.
ENTHUSIASM AND INTEREST IN COURSE	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Keeps up steady interest and enthusiasm. Inspires interest in subject.	Appears to be reasonably interested.	Seems to teach course without enthusiasm.
ASSIGNMENTS	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Students understand the tasks of each new assignment. Students know what is desired.	Sometimes rather indefinite; without clear planning.	Usually hurriedly given; rather vague; sometimes very unreasonable.
JUDGMENT OF VALUES	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Usually selects important ideals; broadens student viewpoints.	Sometimes overlooks important points, spending time on insignificant details.	Frequently misses important ideas; overemphasizes trivial details.
CLASS DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Questions challenging; demand sound thinking; discussions interesting and stimulating.	Questions rather easy and simple; memorized facts emphasized.	Discussion sometimes without purpose; discussions frequently ramble.
POISE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Well poised; sure of himself; not easily upset.	Seems embarrassed at times; fairly self-confident.	Easily upset; uncertain as to procedure; lacks confidence.
EXAMINATIONS	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Questions thought-provoking; carefully selected; clear.	Questions usually factual; require little thinking.	Examinations poorly planned and managed.
SCHOLARSHIP	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Excellent mastery of subject; has broad interests.	Knowledge fair but without depth.	Knowledge frequently inadequate. Instructor seems vague.
ABILITY TO CREATE STUDENT INTEREST	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Usually keeps steady interest in subject; stimulates thinking.	Students have average amount of interest.	Classes drag and students are indifferent.
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Efficient management; students orderly and attentive.	Satisfactory organization; few disciplinary problems.	Poor organization; many disciplinary problems.
SPEECH	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Voice pleasant; speaks distinctly, fluently.	Speaks reasonably well.	Enunciation poor; makes frequent errors in speech.
TOLERANCE	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Encourages students to express opinions even though they differ with the instructor's ideas.	At times appears to be disturbed and impatient when students oppose instructor's views.	Resents opposition; intolerant.
SENSE OF HUMOR	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Possesses keen sense of humor.	Moderately humorous at times.	Shows little or no sense of humor; quite sober and serious.
PERSONAL APPEARANCE	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Neatly and appropriately dressed; well groomed.	Appearance fair; makes average impression.	Careless in dress; untidy.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTOR	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
	Attitude of friendliness; feeling of mutual interest; easily approached.	Neither ill-will nor friendliness prevails; attitude somewhat indifferent.	Considerable spirit of antagonism between students and instructor.

PRINT your criticisms of the course. These will be very helpful for your instructor's self-improvement. Do not sign your name.
On the back of this form PRINT any annoying mannerisms your instructor has developed which should be corrected.