

4/2/66

COLLEGES DESCRIBE THEIR STUDENTS: IRPHE'S FIRST YEAR*

Last year I spoke to this convention, making some predictions for the future directions of higher education. Generally speaking, predicting in education is a fairly safe thing to do -- not because the predictions come true, but because we're so busy coping with the present, that few recall what was predicted for the future.

I made a passing reference, in my talk last year, to the fact that research about students and colleges has now developed to the point where it is quite practical to think of busy personnel administrators being actively engaged in certain kinds of research. Your program committee has asked me to follow up on this phase and to describe how personnel administrators can do research with a minimum of time and technical staff, and what they have found out. I'm certainly not the first convention speaker to urge research upon you, and I won't be the last -- but my claim is, I'm the most realistic. Having retired from the frantic life of Dean of Students to the frantic life of educational researcher, I am not about to propose that you double your frenetic activity by combining deaning and researching. I am proposing that student personnel administrators live up to the reputation they have as capable administrators, and take advantage of the skills of researchers which are rapidly becoming available, -- albeit for a price.

For the moment let me assume that you do not question the assertion that the personnel dean can assume a leadership role in research about students. I'll describe how this can be done later. But I want first to talk briefly about why personnel workers should dive into the murky waters of research. Let me assure you that it is not a publish or perish motive -- there are many simpler ways for deans to perish. Nor indeed is it an academic-respectability motive which leads

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me to advocate research involvement. I simply think that the time has come when student personnel administrators must establish themselves as full partners in the planning of the total educational program for students. It seems to me shortsighted and limiting for the profession of student personnel to seek their major identification as the experts in running residence halls, or operating the fraternity system, or administering loans and scholarships, or even, indeed, as the experts in the student organizations and services. Such services are clearly part of the responsibility of the personnel dean, but as important as these services are -- even to the extent of making education possible for some students -- they are not education; and the individual responsible only for student services is not an educator.

Up until the present time, the personnel worker has had a quite reasonable claim that he and his staff had easier access than anyone else to all kinds of information about students -- from the personal problems and reactions seen by the counseling staff to the leadership experiences observed by those working with student organizations. I submit, however, that the day when anyone can make a claim that he "knows students" is gone. It is gone primarily for two reasons: Firstly; the size and complexity of the average campus, combined with the diversity of today's student bodies, makes it naive to assume that we can accurately assess student reactions to their education by talking with the "selective sample" that any one person on campus will see -- be he the professor who is the local spokesman for the ACLU, or the faculty advisor to the Inter-
varsity Christian Fellowship, or the residence hall counselor, or the Dean of Students. Secondly; research about students had reached the point where it can furnish highly valuable objective information about student backgrounds, interests, attitudes, aspirations, abilities, etc. We can also describe

objectively the college environment in which the student's out-of-class learning takes place.

Research will be the new source of information about students, and there is little doubt that it has already replaced subjective impressions as a source of information for educational planning. It has been of considerable interest to me to note who on the college staff is furnishing the research information about students. Last year, Educational Testing Service announced the launching of a new non-profit research service to colleges and universities -- the Institutional Research Program for Higher Education. Essentially, the Institutional Research Program for Higher Education provides three services; it selects, or develops, appropriate research instruments; it handles the scoring and analysis of data; and it provides professional consulting help, if needed. Its purpose is to help colleges conduct self-study programs of their students in their distinctive college environment. If there is anything we really do know from all the research on students done over the past decade, it is that campuses and the students on those campuses differ greatly. National and regional studies offer promising hypotheses and comparative data, but they are not necessarily appropriate to the planning for a given institution. Harvard University has different students, a different campus climate, and quite different purposes than X-County Community College, and wise planning will take account of such differences.

In the first year of the Institutional Research Program for Higher Education, the leadership for the local research on the non-academic characteristics of students and campus environments appears to be coming from the academicians on the campus. Of college staff responsible for initiating any part of the Institutional Research Program, 21 were academic deans, 21 were faculty members,

19 were directors of counseling bureaus, 18 were deans of students, 15 were directors of institutional research or testing, and 6 were admissions officers or registrars. If we group the academic deans and faculty into an academic category, they lead the personnel category of combined Deans of Students and counseling bureaus by 42 to 37. Let us assume for the moment that both the professors and the counseling bureaus are using the research instruments more for basic research than for institutional planning. We still have 21 academic deans to 19 student personnel deans assuming campus leadership for collecting information about primarily non-academic student and campus characteristics. One can, I suppose, take the position that we should be grateful that so many colleges -- and perhaps especially academic deans -- are taking a serious interest in the student as well as his mind and on campus, as well as the classroom. It does seem to me, however, that the experience of the personnel worker would enrich the research data, and v. v. -- that the objective descriptions of student characteristics would be of considerable value in the practice of personnel work.

All this is by way of describing who is making use of research on student and campus characteristics through the new Institutional Research Program. I'd like to spend the remainder of the time describing some of the highlights of what they found out.

I'd like to talk first about descriptions of the college environment. The instrument used for this in the Institutional Research Program is the College and University Environment Scales developed by Dr. Robert Pace of U.C.L.A. The concept of the instrument is simple. Dr. Pace operates on the premise that what students perceive as characteristic of their college, serves as a learning stimulus. Pace describes it as complex stimulus consisting of

professors, books, laboratories, and students, a network of interpersonal relationships of social and public events, of student organizations and extracurricular activities, of housing and feeding, of counseling and curricula, and other conditions which impinge upon the awareness of students. CUES attempts to describe major features of this complex environment as a whole."

CUES consists of 150 questions about college life; students are asked to say whether the statement is true or false about their college. If 2/3 of the students agree that the item is characteristic of their campus, then this agreement defines that aspect of the campus, as the students see it. The 150 statements form five dimensions of environmental press which are entitled Scholarship, Awareness, Community, Propriety, and Practicality. The questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to administer, and institutions receive an institutional score on each of the five dimensions, as well as an analysis of the way in which each of the 150 questions was answered.

The profile shown in Figure 1 illustrates the differences to be found on three private, liberal arts colleges for women. All of these colleges are high on the scholarship scale, as one might expect from their policy of selective admissions. A high score on the environmental press for scholarship would consist of students agreeing on statements such as:

"Most courses require intensive study and preparation out of class"

"People around here seem to thrive on difficulties -- the tougher things get, the harder they work"

"A lecture by an outstanding scientist would be well attended"

Although all of these colleges are high on awareness, Randolph-Macon is somewhat lower than Bennington and Vassar, which means that Bennington students, for example, perceived more of the following type of characteristics on their

on their campus that did Randolph-Macon students:

"There is a lot of interest here in poetry, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc."

"Students are actively concerned about national and international affairs"

"A controversial speaker always stirs up a lot of student discussion"

Although both Vassar and Bennington are relatively small colleges, the sense of community felt by the students is somewhat below average, while Randolph-Macon is very high on both community and propriety. A sense of community in the environment is illustrated by high student agreement on statements such as:

"Most people here seem to be especially considerate of others"

"Many upperclassmen play an active role in helping new students adjust to campus life"

"This school has a reputation for being very friendly"

Propriety would be indicated by student observations that:

"Students are conscientious about taking good care of school property"

"Student publications never lampoon dignified people or institutions"

"Dormitory raids, water fights and other student pranks would be unthinkable here"

All of these colleges are low on practicality, and this is rather typical for women's colleges. Practicality tends to emphasize order, practical benefits, etc. as illustrated by items such as:

"There is a recognized group of student leaders on this campus" and

"Many courses stress the concrete and tangible rather than the speculative or abstract"

While CUES describes the characteristics of the college, fellow students also determine the environment in which a college student learns; and colleges and universities can be described in terms of the characteristics of their student bodies. Students and the various subculture groups of students to be found on college campuses varies considerably.

The instrument used in IRPHE to describe student characteristics is the College Student Questionnaire developed by Dr. Richard Peterson of ETS. CSQ consists of two questionnaires -- one to describe the background, achievements, aspirations, attitudes, etc. of the entering freshmen and a second, administered to on-campus undergraduates, to describe the students after they have had experience on the campus, including their perceptions and satisfactions as students at the college.

In my opinion the CSQ is one of the most promising research instruments for the student personnel workers, and perhaps the best way to talk about its use is to start at the end and to describe some of the results.

Figure 3 illustrates three different kinds of colleges and the differences to be found in some characteristics of their entering classes as determined by the scales of the CSQ-1. SE is a scale on Family Social Status, and the results are not especially surprising, i. e. we might expect that women attending a selective liberal arts college for women would tend to come from the homes of well educated, high income, professional parents. F.I. stands for Family Independence; P.I. for Peer Independence; L. for Liberalism; S.C. for Social Conscience, i.e., the extent to which the student indicates concern about poverty, civil rights, graft in government and so forth; and C.S. stands for Cultural Sophistication, or the extent to which the student has been exposed to, and enjoys, music, art, good books, foreign films, etc.

Although one would not necessarily expect the extremely high cultural sophistication score and the dip on Family Independence for a selective liberal arts college for women, these score scales may reflect the high proportion of urban Jewish students and the proximity to New York cultural activities of this particular women's college.

The M.G. to the left hand side of the chart stands for a new scale, Motivation for Grades, and we are just beginning to collect comparative information on this scale. A preliminary study based on 22 colleges gave a rank order correlation of .72 between self-reported high school grade average and the mean M.G. scores by college.

All of these CSQ Part 1 scales except those for M.G. and F.S. are repeated in Part 2 of CSQ which is for enrolled undergraduates. This design enables one to conduct useful longitudinal studies of the impact of the college experience. One might, for example, wish to know whether students become more culturally sophisticated as they proceed from freshmen to sophomores or seniors.

Figure 4 illustrates the scales in CSQ Part 2. There you will notice that the last five scales to the right of the page are repeats of the CSQ-1 scales.

Before describing the CSQ-2 scales, let me talk about the Clark-Trow typology of student subcultures which is also seen in Figure 4.

Clark and Trow, sociologists from the University of California, Berkeley, have suggested that students tend to identify with education along two dimensions -- they may be involved with the ideas of education, or they may be identified with their college as it represents education to them. The classification, which like any typology is recognized as a useful oversimplification, would locate four subcultures as depicted in

the chart below.

		<u>Involvement with ideas</u>	
		+	-
<u>Identification</u> <u>with</u> <u>College</u>	+	Academic	Collegiate
	-	Non-Conformist	Vocational

In the CSQ, Dr. Peterson has adapted the Clark-Trow typology to your paragraphs descriptive of personal philosophies of education or perhaps more accurately, orientations to education. The student "types" himself by indicating which of four statements most nearly describes his purposes and goals while at college.

The statement for the academic orientation emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge, involvement with ideas, and knowledge for knowledge sake. Students are involved in course work and likely to study beyond the requirements. The selective liberal arts colleges are most likely to have a large number of students with this orientation. In a study involving 23 colleges and universities, less than 20% of the students at a variety of institutions ascribed these motivations as primary in their college attendance.

The collegiate description appeared most appropriate to the goals and purposes of a majority of the students in Dr. Peterson's study. Slightly over half emphasized the importance of extra curricular life at college, stating that living-group functions, social life, college traditions, etc. were a necessary part of one's college experience. While not excluding the academic or vocational aspects of college training, these students feel that many

of the activities which we call "collegiate" are necessary for the cultivation of the well-rounded person.

The non-conformists are better-known to personnel deans and their actual numbers would appear to warrant. Only 4% of the sample typed themselves as non-conformists. They place emphasis on individualistic interests and styles, concern for personal identity, and often contempt for many aspects of organized society. These students claim little interest in careers and often consciously reject the organized extra-curricular activities of the college.

The vocationally oriented description was selected by over one-fourth of the students who regarded their education as primarily a preparation for an occupational future. This group of students tends to be especially prominent in some of the technical institutions and in the urban university with large numbers of adult and commuting students.

Figure 6 illustrates the variations which can exist in the Clark-Trow typology from campus to campus.

Figure 4 shows the relationship between the four self-selected student types and the scales of CSQ-2. Scale titles are as follows:

- SF = Satisfaction with Faculty
- SA = Satisfaction with Administration
- SM = Satisfaction with Major
- SS = Satisfaction with Students
- SH = Study Habits
- EI = Extra-curricular Involvement

In addition to the scales and the typology of CSQ, there are also a large number of individual items which yield instant statistical summaries,

such as -- how many students hold scholarships and what is the source? What proportion of the freshmen plan to work and how many hours per week? How many students plan to go to graduate school and what fields do they plan to enter?

Figure 5 represents an analysis of the Trow typology by the use of one of the factual questions -- how do sorority-fraternity members view their orientation to college.

This type of use -- the study of the characteristics of groups of students -- is one of the real strengths of the CSQ as a research instrument for personnel workers. One might, for instance, be interested in high achievers vs low achievers, dormitory residents vs commuters, working students vs full-time students, or any of the variety of breakdowns. If there are questions of strictly local interest, there is room for that too in the CSQ. You simply write out the question, the student grids his answer on the CSQ answer sheet, and ETS reports a tabulation of the answers.

Had I had a CSQ when I was a Dean of Students, I can see endless hours of committee discussion eliminated upon the factual presentation of the data. I think I should also have made it known to the various faculty committees that the Dean of Students office was a repository for vast amounts of tabulated data on student characteristics and that relationships bearing on a great variety of educational questions could be established in 15 minutes with an IBM sorter.

There is every reason to believe that research instruments and efficient tabulating procedures will be increasingly available and useful to the field of personnel. I hope that personnel workers will make it their business to keep up with the developments in research about students.

Figure 1

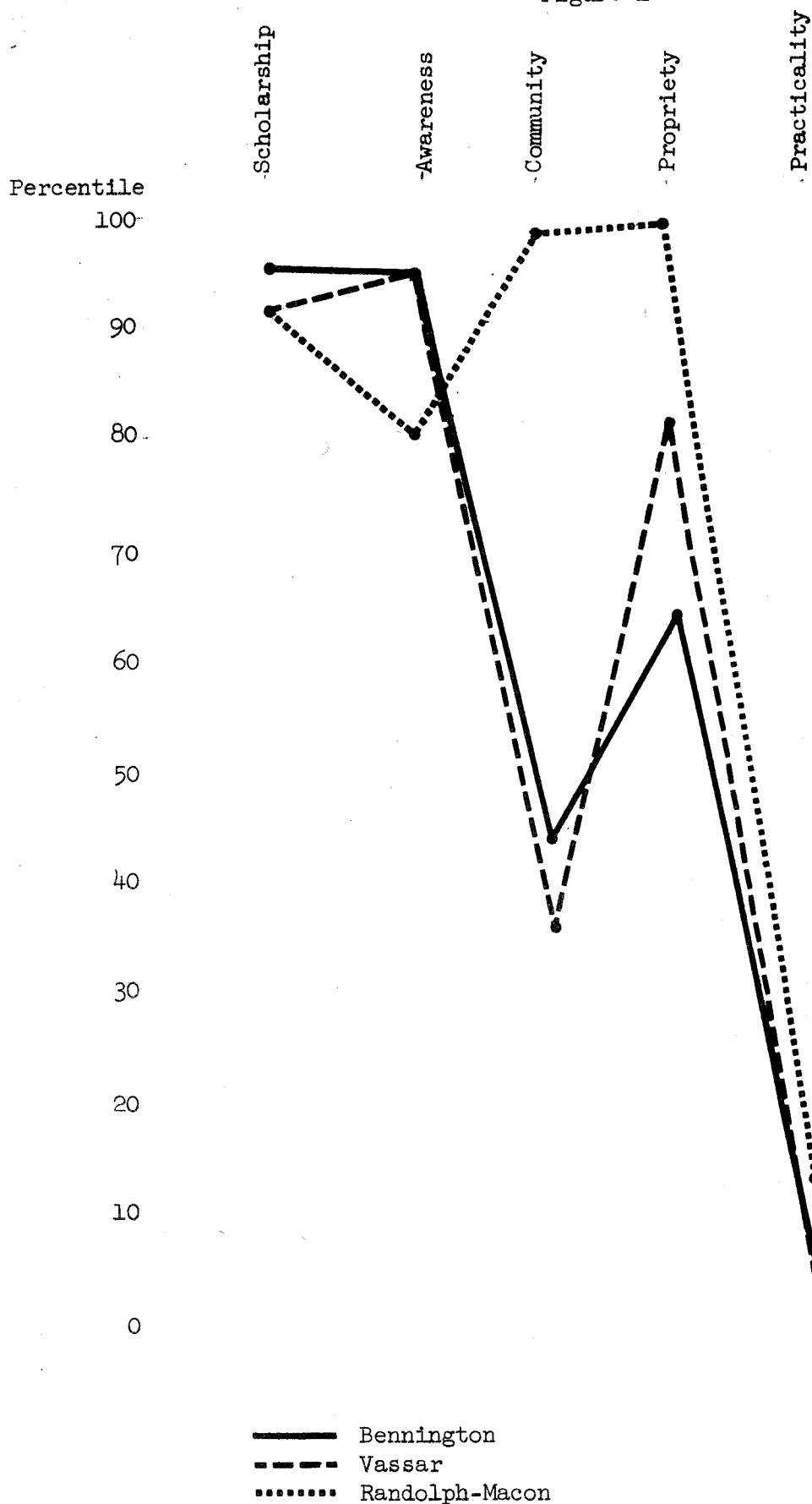
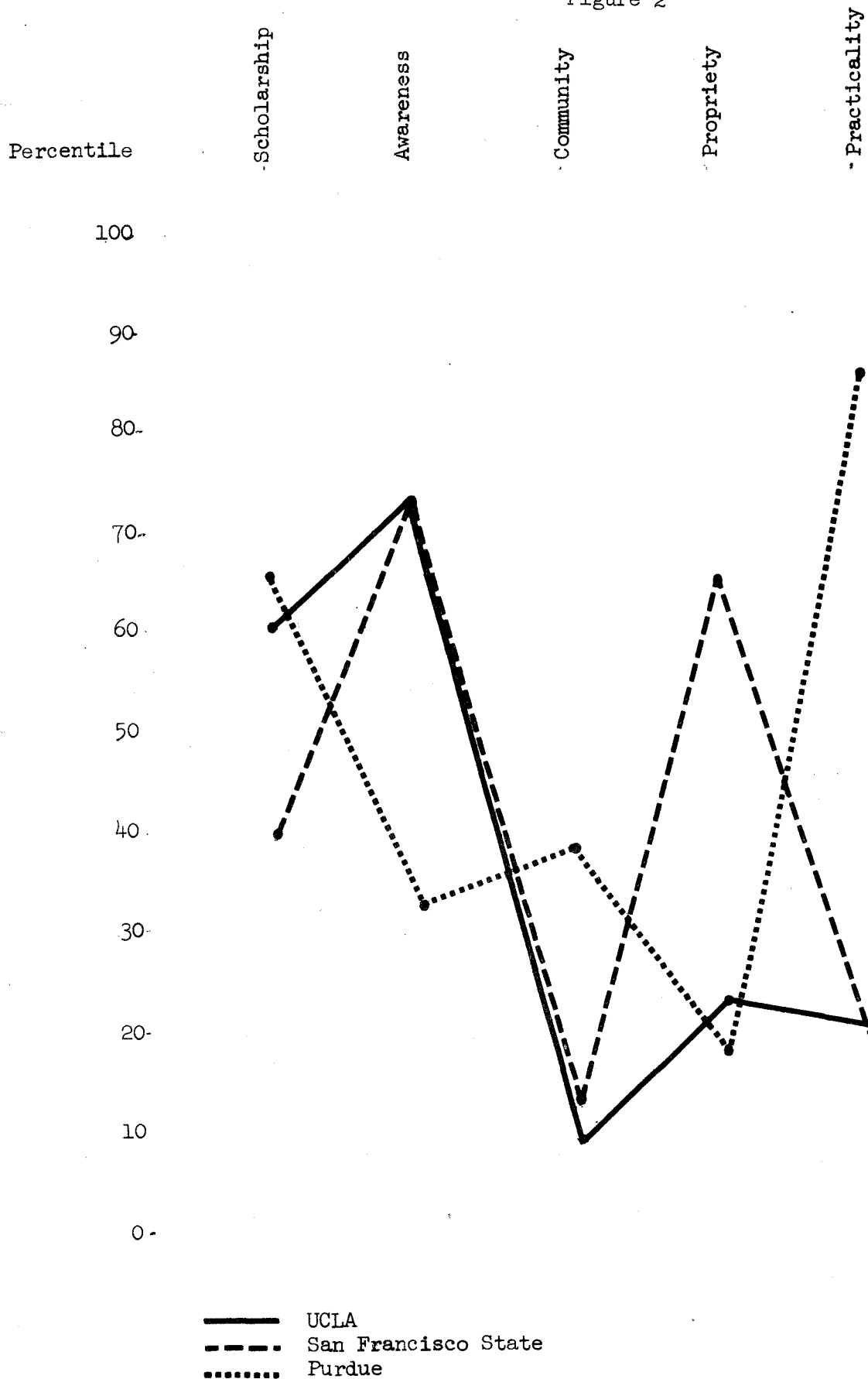
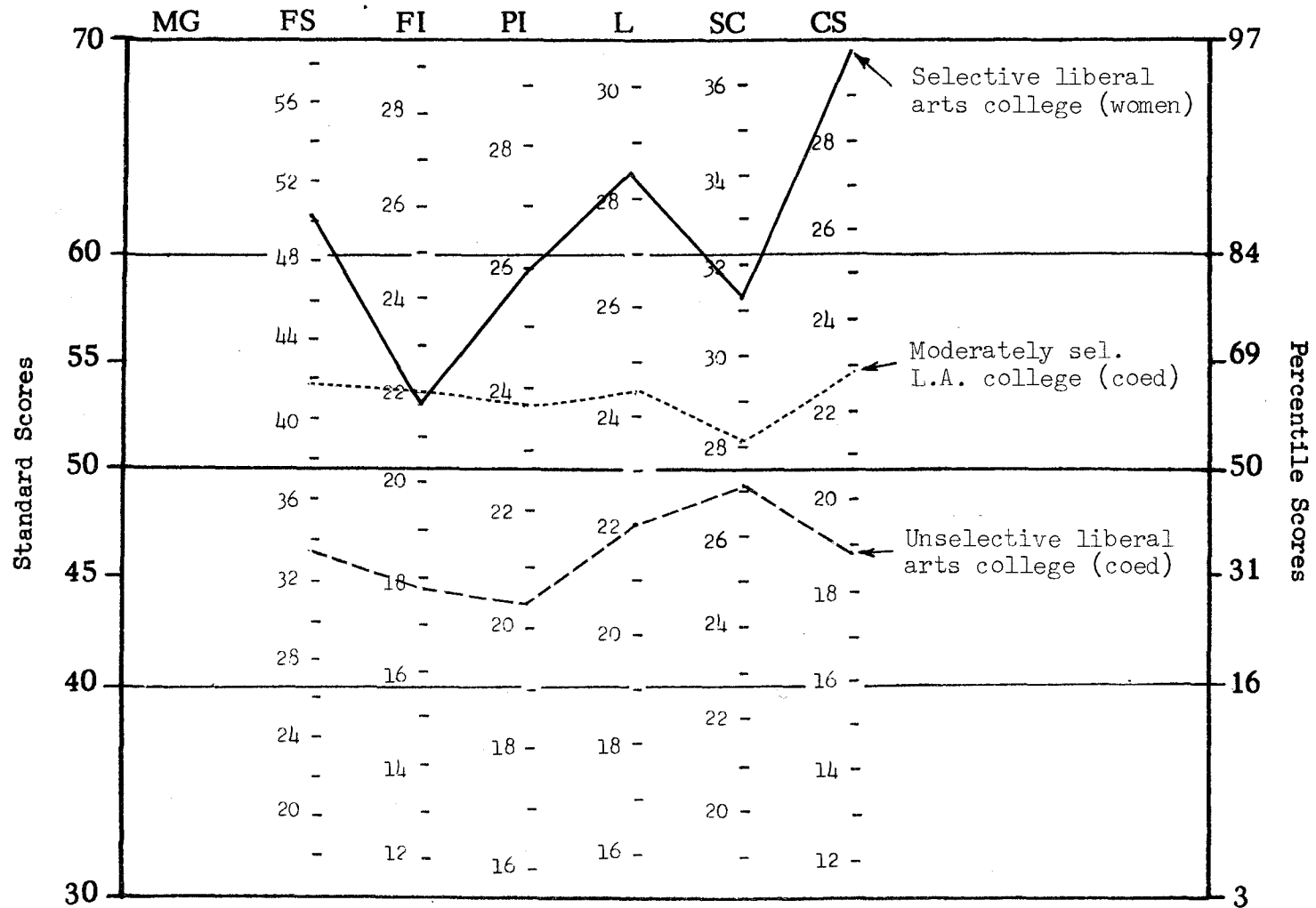


Figure 2



From: Pace, C. R., Preliminary Technical Manual College and University Environment Scales, 1963.

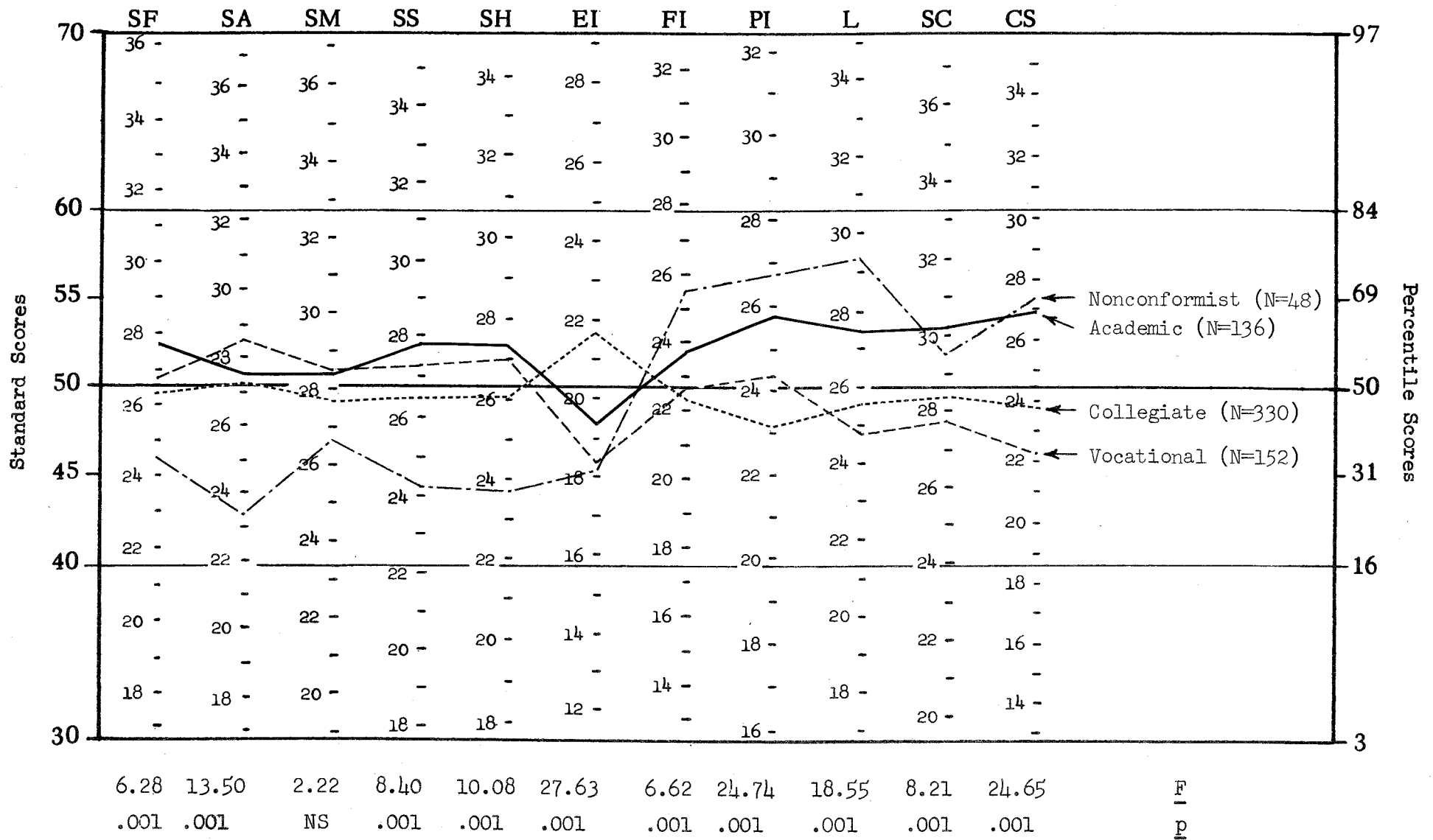
Figure 3



From: Peterson, R. E., Technical Manual for College Student Questionnaires, Educational Testing Service, 1965.

Figure 4

Sample divided according to a typology of student subcultures proposed by Burton Clark and Martin Trow.



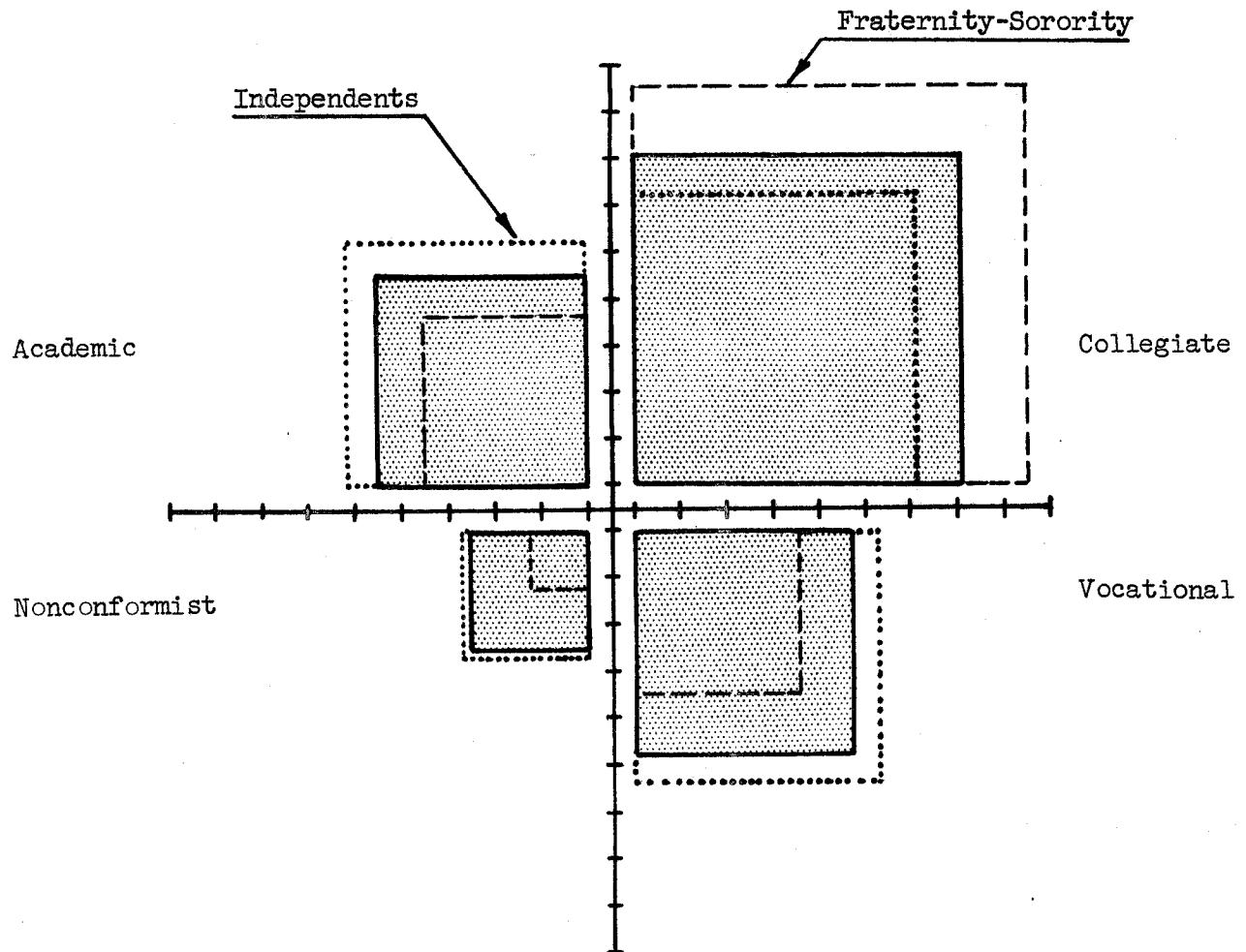
From: Peterson, R. E., Technical Manual College Student Questionnaires, Educational Testing Service, 1965.

College Student Questionnaires

Figure 5

CSQ-2

Individual "norms" shaded



Type	Indiv. "Norms"		Independents		Fraternity Sorority		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Vocational	152	23	69	28	16	13	
Academic	136	20	64	26	16	13	
Collegiate	330	50	96	39	87	71	
Nonconformist	48	7	20	8	3	2	

Independents (N=249)

Fraternity-sorority members (N=122)

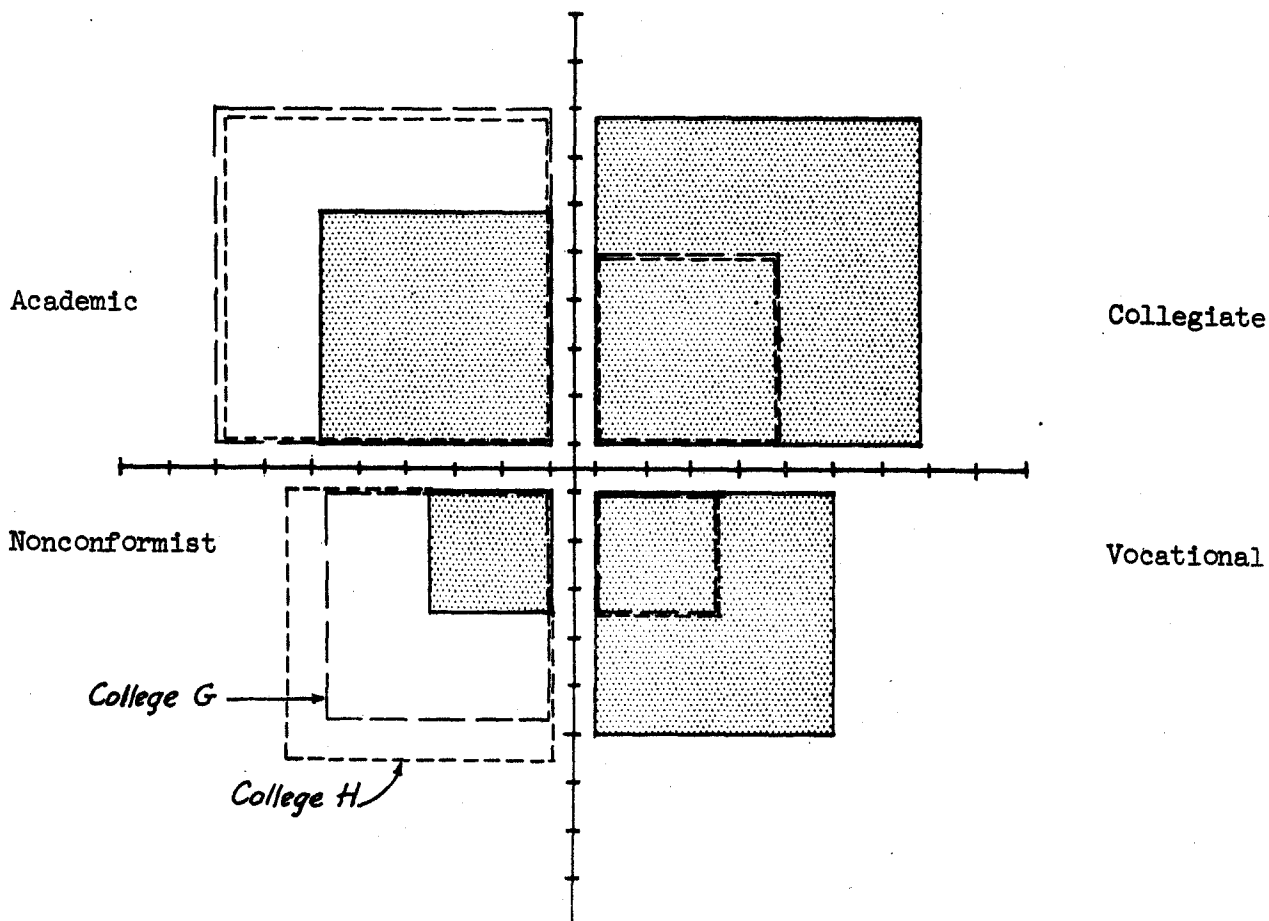
From: Peterson, Richard E., On a Typology of College Students, Research Bulletin; Educational Testing Service, 1965.

College Student Questionnaires

Figure 6

CSQ-1

Institutional "norms" shaded



Type	Indiv. "Norms"		Instit. "Norms"		College G	College H
	N	%	N	$\bar{x}\%$		
Vocational	3428	26.5	23	25.2	7.0	7.3
Academic	2396	18.5	23	21.8	48.9	47.3
Collegiate	6574	50.8	23	46.6	14.7	14.5
Nonconformist	493	3.8	23	5.6	23.3	30.9

College G: Independent liberal arts college. Freshmen: all women; upper middle-class (mainly professional); mathematics and sciences (3%), social sciences (23%), humanities and fine arts (44%). Selection ratio: about .25.

College H: Independent liberal arts college. Freshmen: all women; upper middle-class (mainly professional); mathematics and sciences (11%), social sciences (25%), humanities and fine arts (47%). Selection ratio: about .40.

From: Peterson, Richard E., On a Typology of College Students, Research Bulletin; Educational Testing Service, 1965.