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PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT
on the
CAREER ORIENTATION
in
PREPARATION for EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM



THE
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CAREER ORIENTATION
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SEPTEMBER

1992

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & PLANNING

SUMMARY

The COPE Evaluation Committee concluded that the data and positive feedback collected from students, faculty and the Ministry of Social Services testify to the COPE Program's success. The program appears to address the urgent and perennial social problem of the cycle of unemployment and social assistance dependency among women by fostering positive attitudes and skills such as self-esteem, communication, parenting, stress management, goal setting and career planning. Attendance and success rates are extremely high. As well, the referral rate is higher than available program space. Both these points indicate that a community need is being met and that the program succeeds in offering positive alternatives to its clients.

A priority for the COPE program is an increase in its base funded FTEs from 9 to 16 in order to ensure its full-time status. The disruptiveness of part-year funding militates against curriculum and professional development by the program's instructor.

The program has changed over time, necessitating a re-evaluation of its objectives so as to permit a fuller understanding of its role and direction. One strong recommendation is that the College determine the function of COPE in relation to the fast growing range of other developmental programs.

The Evaluation Committee also recommends that COPE must raise its profile to faculty, students and the community at large. This should be done by developing a clearer calendar description, producing brochures in conjunction with Public Relations, liaising with community agencies and introducing more frequent exchanges between COPE faculty and those of adjunct areas to familiarize the students with post-COPE alternatives.

As the COPE Program is largely developmental, the Committee also suggests that the employment of the Learning and Studies Strategies Inventory (LASSI), a diagnostic/prescriptive instrument, may be appropriate, as well as personality tests for information and reference purposes.

Finally, in its deliberations the Committee noted that there was considerable overlap and some duplication of effort among a number of learning assistance programs and services in the College, and recommends that a Task Force be struck to examine the relationship between these services and the instructional programs which use or relate to them.

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COPE PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the Career Orientation In Preparation For Education/Employment Program (COPE) was begun on March 13, 1992, with a preliminary meeting with Reg McNamara, Chairperson, College Access Programs. A subsequent meeting on questionnaire design was conducted on April 8 between the Office of Institutional Research and Susan MacGregor, COPE instructor. Questionnaires were mailed to the following stakeholders on the following dates: former students (1989-92) on April 21; faculty on April 24; receiving faculty on May 1 and former students (1987-89) on May 21. The April COPE intake was surveyed in class on April 28.

Follow-up letters were sent to former students (1989-92) on May 21; receiving faculty on May 28, and former students (1987-89) on June 5. Telephonic contact with non-returnees was undertaken between June 18 and July 10. The cut-off date for all responses was July 14. The Evaluation Committee met to examine and analyze the summarized data on August 24, 1992.

BACKGROUND

The COPE Program has been offered at the University College of the Cariboo since 1980. COPE focuses on personal development, goal setting and decision making skills. All of the applicants are women, most of whom are sponsored by the Ministry of Social Services. The program's duration has traditionally been 12 weeks, allowing for three sessions per year. However, in September, 1992, it will increase to 14 weeks to fit into the regular semester system. Also, the intake will be increased from 12 to 16.

COPE appears to be very successful in preparing women for reentry into the educational system and the workforce by offering them the necessary tools for self development and showing them what opportunities are available to them. The UCC program is the first of its kind and provided the model for a similar program started at Okanagan College in 1991.

ADMISSIONS DATA AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Admissions Requirements:

CAT 18--Grade 10 level in English skills (vocabulary, comprehension, etc.)

Applicants are pre-screened by the Ministry of Social Services.

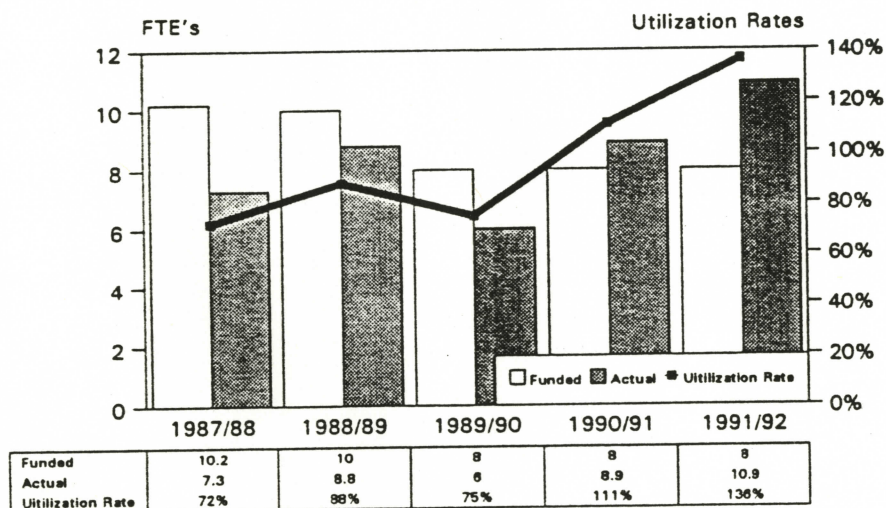
Program Capacity:

Program Capacity: 12 per intake (1980-1992)
16 per intake (Sept. 1992)

Program Demand:

According to the Ministry of Social Services, there are 20-30 applicants per COPE session. The demand has been great since COPE began with the program always filled to capacity except for one time.

FTE Utilization Rates: COPE Program 1987/88 - 1990/91



Data source: MAETT Annual FTE Report, 1991
PDC = 6123 (BEST/BJRT until 1988/89, ABE EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION from 1989/90 on)

Graduation Rates (1989-92):

Average: 33 per year = 92%

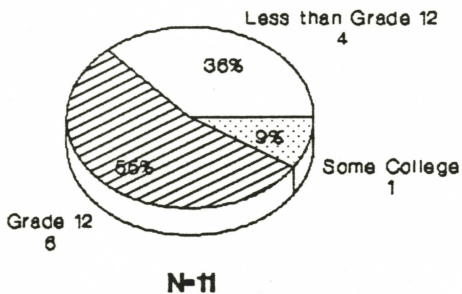
Students withdraw, typically, before week 4 for several reasons: lack of preparation, poor time management skills, substance abuse, and unhealthy relationships.

Prior Education of COPE Students:

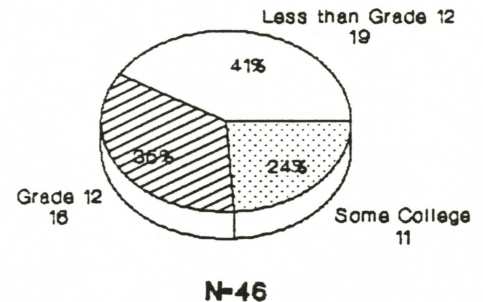
Of the 46 former student respondents (1989-92), 19 (41%) reported that they had less than Grade 12; 16 (35%) had completed Grade 12 and 11 (24%) had attended some college.

Of the 11 current student respondents (1992), 4 (36%) reported that they had less than Grade 12; 6 (55%) had completed Grade 12 and 1 (9%) had attended some college.

**EDUCATION PRIOR TO PROGRAM
CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY (1992)**



**EDUCATION PRIOR TO PROGRAM
FORMER STUDENT SURVEY (1989-1992)**



Of the 60 former student respondents (1987-89), 3 (23%) reported that they had less than Grade 12; 3 (23%) had completed Grade 12 and 7 (54%) had attended some college.

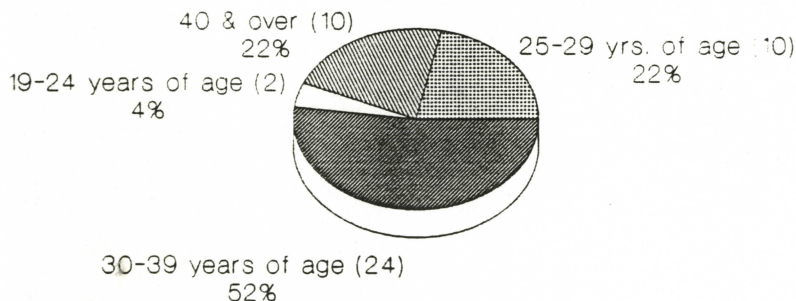
Age Distribution:

Of 46 former students (1989-92) surveyed, 2 (4%) were 19-24 years of age; 10 (22%) were 25-29 years of age; 24 (52%) were 30-39 years of age and 10 (22%) were over 40 years of age.

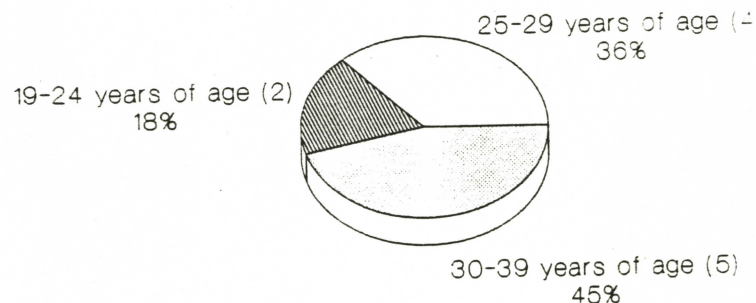
Of 13 former students (1987-1989) surveyed, 6 (46%) were 25-29 years of age; 5 (39%) were 30-39 years of age and 2 (15%) were over 40.

Of 11 current students (April, 1992) surveyed, 2 (19%) were 19-24 years of age; 4 (36%) were 25-29 years of age and 5 (45%) were 30-39 years of age.

AGE OF FORMER STUDENTS (1989-1992)



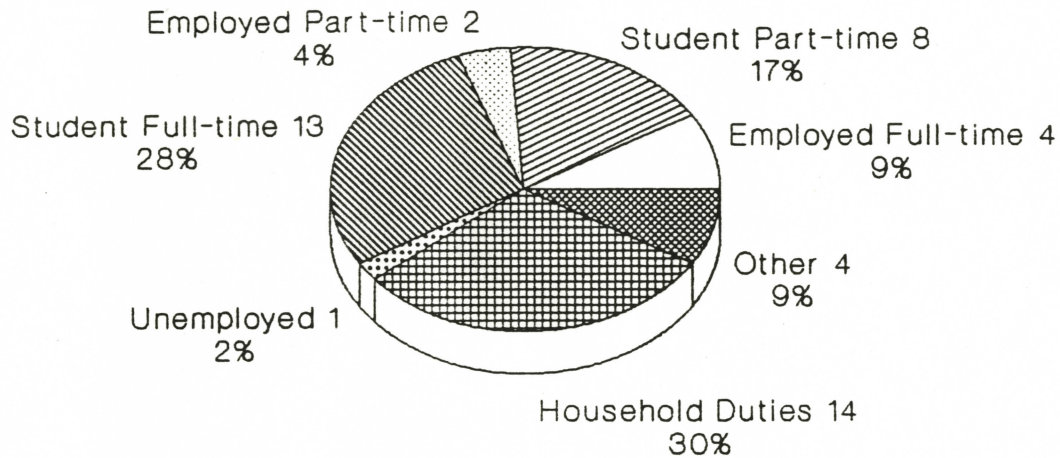
AGE OF CURRENT STUDENTS



Present Main Activity of Former COPE Students (1989-92):

Of the 46 former student respondents (1989-92), 14 (30%) reported that their present main activity was domestic duties; 13 (28%) reported being engaged in full-time studies; 8 (17%) reported being engaged in part-time studies; 4 (9%) were employed full-time; 2 (4%) were employed part-time and 1 (2%) was unemployed.

**FORMER STUDENT (1989-92) ACTIVITIES
AS IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS**

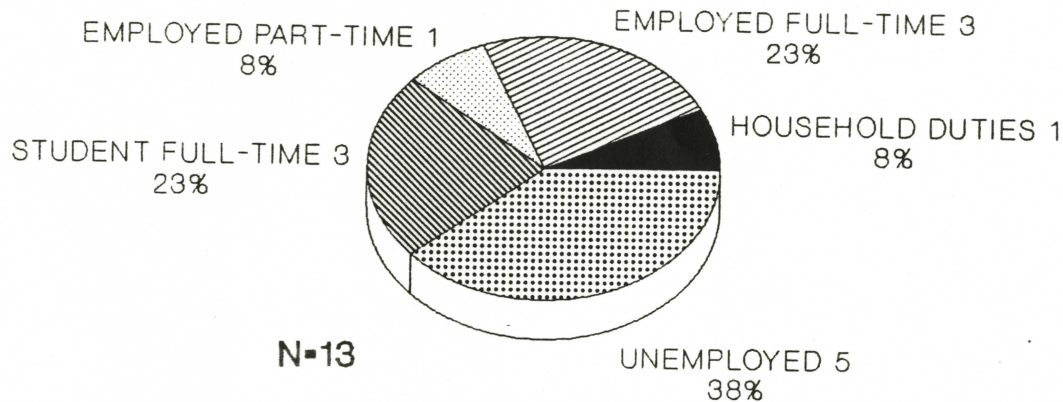


N=46

Present Main Activity of Former COPE Students (1987-89) (cont.):

Of the 13 former student respondents (1987-89), 1 (8%) reported that their present main activity was domestic duties; 3 (23%) reported being engaged in full-time studies; 3 (23%) were employed full-time; 1 (8%) was employed part-time and 5 (38%) were unemployed.

**COPE FORMER STUDENTS (1987-1989)
PRESENT MAIN ACTIVITY**

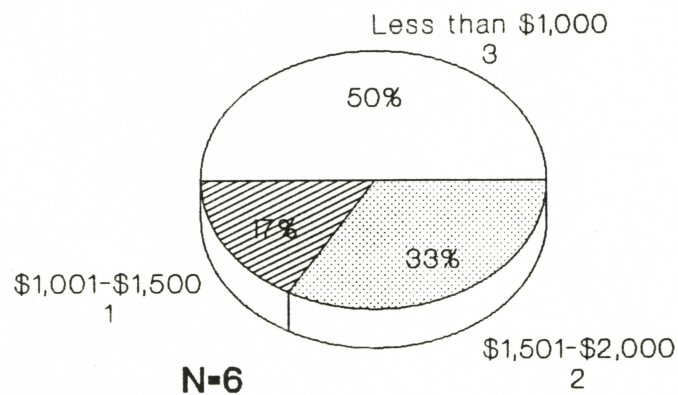


The low response rate (22%) from this group renders the data statistically suspect.

Current Salaries:

Of the 6 former COPE students (1989-92) who divulged information about their current salary, 3 (50%) were earning less than \$1,000 per month, 1 (16.6%) was earning \$1,01-\$1,500 and 2 (33.4%) were earning \$1,501-\$2,000 per month.

FORMER STUDENT (1989-92) SALARIES

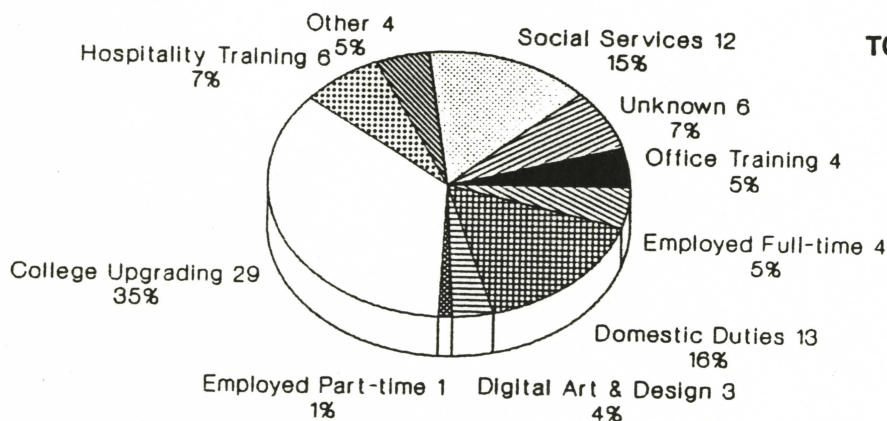


MAIN ACTIVITIES OF FORMER STUDENTS
Sept. 1989 - Mar. 1992
(as identified by instructor)

College upgrading: 28
 Unknown: 6
 Business Admin: 1
 Social Service Worker: 5
 Comm. Service Worker: 5
 Med Lab: 2
 Digital Art & Design: 3
 Meat: 2
 Domestic Duties: 13
 OAD (Word proc.): 1
 OAD (Bookkeeping): 1
 OAD: 1

KamEd: 1
 Hospital Employee: 2
 Long Term Care: 1
 Sexual Assault Centre: 1
 Cook: 2
 Tourism: 1
 BSW: 1
 Recreation Man.: 1
 SFU (B. Comm.): 1
 UCC: 1
 Canada Post: 1
 Employed part-time: 1

TOTAL 82



N=82

COPE PROGRAM

TABULAR SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATES

The categories and quantities of responses are tabled below:

Recipient	# Sent	# Completed and Returned	% Return
Receiving Faculty	15	12	80%
Faculty	3	3	100%
Students: Current (April)	12	11	92%
Former (1989-92)	82	46	56%
SUBTOTAL	112	72	64%
Former (1987-1989)	60	13	22%
TOTAL	172	85	49%

Former Students

Returned by Post Office: 1987-89: 38 (63%)
1989-92: 18 (22%)

Former Students Non-Respondents:

1987-89: 9 (15%)
1989-92: 18 (22%)

Adjusted response rate (excluding non-contactables):

Former Students 1987-89: 72% (adjusted)
Former Students 1989-92: 59% (adjusted)

Adjusted percentage response (all categories): 73% (adjusted)

As at July 14, 1992

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The following trends were detected in the questionnaire responses:

Faculty:

Three faculty members were surveyed. All of them responded for a return rate of 100%. Concerns expressed were:

- content 'gaps' in the program
- unavailability of resources for curriculum development for the program
- unavailability of time for faculty to participate in required program curriculum development
- a need to work on articulation and liaison within the college and with other colleges offering similar programs (at present, only Okanagan College offers COPE)
- a need to measure clients' acquisition of social, personal and life skills in the course of the program

The faculty expressed satisfaction with:

- the low attrition rate and high percentage of graduates going on to further training and education, and attributed this to the dedication of the instructors
- the appropriateness of career planning skills within the program.

Receiving Faculty :

"Receiving faculty" is defined as faculty teaching in other University College of the Cariboo programs to which COPE graduates have historically gravitated. Of 15 receiving faculty surveyed, 12 responded for a response rate of 80%. The three faculty who did not respond felt that they could not identify the COPE students in their classes and therefore could not reply.

The main concerns were with perceived deficiencies with math and computational skills, apparent lack of stress/time management, and insufficient word-processing/computer lab time.

Receiving faculty suggested the need for a single-parent fathers' program, more systematic exposure of COPE students to other programs ("a day in the life of a student" approach), and utilization of the "Math Blaster" computer program to refresh basic math skills.

They were pleased with the following graduate attributes:

- willingness to learn
- willingness to accept responsibility
- social skills
- oral communications skills
- dependability

In general, the receiving faculty were very satisfied with the program and its graduates, commenting that the COPE program is "excellent", affording a "window of opportunity and esteem building...".

Current Students:

Eleven students of the April COPE intake were surveyed on April 28. One student was not present, which determined the response rate of 92%. They expressed concerns about the following:

- the lack of program information in the College Calendar
- the overall workload
- the facilities, in particular the lack of proper ventilation and cleanliness in the smoke-room and washroom, as well as the need for more computers
- the shortness of the program.

However, respondents were very satisfied with the effectiveness of the program in developing positive attitudes and promoting verbal and written communication skills. Many commended the instructor for her support and expertise.

Former Students:

1987-1989

Of 60 former COPE students who took the program during this period, 13 responded for a return rate of 22%.

These students indicated that their objectives have been met to some degree and that they were still using specific skills and attributes acquired through the COPE program, such as communication, assertion skills and goal planning/setting. They expressed some concerns with:

- overall workload*
- effectiveness of program as employment preparation
- inadequate career counseling (job opportunity advising)
- smoke-room facilities**
- lack of computers and lab

Student comments indicated satisfaction with the program and recommended it to other single mothers.

*** extension of the program from 12 to 14 weeks should address this problem**

**** implementation of a total on-campus no-smoking policy has effectively dealt with this problem.**

1989-1992

Of 82 former COPE students who took the program during this period, 46 responded for a return rate of 56%. Students again indicated that they were still using the skills and attributes acquired through the COPE program. The ratings and comments revealed a high level of satisfaction with the program effectiveness and content. They did suggest the following:

- lengthen the program in order to get more practical experience*
- better washroom maintenance; lack of toilet paper and pungent stink were mentioned by several students
- improvement of ventilation in the smoke-room**
- more computers and computer time
- more academic advising
- less handouts
- use of visual aids to accommodate visual learners
- a program for men***

This group of former students felt that the program challenged them and gave them "hope for the future", allowing them to "grow and change for the better". Once again, commendations were many for the instructor as a positive role model and effective teacher.

* Program extended to 14 weeks as of September, 1992.

** Smoke-room is no more.

*** A COPE Program for men has been approved for January, 1993.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

The following strengths may be identified in the COPE Program:

1. **Social function:** the COPE Program addresses an identifiable social need by effecting a radical paradigm shift in its clientele, and in doing so, in many cases ends the generational cycle of unemployment and dependency.
2. **Success rates:** that the program achieves tangible results is evidenced by the preponderance of success stories reported by students, faculty and agencies, and by the high proportion of COPE graduates who report having used the program as a stepping stone to further post-secondary education. (See Table and Chart, p. 6). The program fosters positive, measurable changes in the students' attitudes, self-esteem, motivation, and communication skills, although the caveat should be added that assimilation and integration of the skills taught in this program often extend far beyond the actual instructional period, causing "delayed learning" that does not impact fully on the student's life for sometimes two to three years after the program.
3. **Instructional quality:** the instructor's strengths and expertise are referred to in the testimony of former and current students.
4. **Institutional benefit:** the program acts as an initial point of contact with post-secondary education for many students who would otherwise be lost to the system; it provides a source of recruitment for other UCC programs, principal of which are College Preparation, Human Service Worker, and Hospitality training. For example, of 82 registrants between September, 1989 and March, 1992, a total of 52 (63%) continued their education in other UCC programs after graduating from COPE.
5. **Program demand:** the referral rate from the Ministry of Social Services is always higher than the number of seats available (20-30 referrals for every intake of 16). The utilization rate of 120% of funded FTE's reflects this demand.
6. **Program length:** the extension of program length from 12 to 14 weeks and the lengthening of the work day may address the complaints from former and current students about the demanding workload and lack of time for integration of skills and material.

AREAS WHICH CAN BE IMPROVED
(WITH RECOMMENDATIONS)

1. FUNDING:

Comments by faculty and representatives of the Ministry of Social Services raised concerns about the following:

- a) threat of loss of program funding;
- b) lack of time for curriculum and professional development.

The COPE Program is currently funded through an allocation of 9 FTE base funded units. This is sufficient to cover two intakes. Until 1990, the third intake was fully funded through a contract with the Ministry of Social Services. In 1991 and 1992, the budget for the third intake was supplied jointly by MSS and UCC. UCC's share came from the Developmental and Regional Programs Division's margin from contracts. This latter arrangement annually places COPE in jeopardy in that either withdrawal of MSS funding or failure of DRP to generate enough overhead dollars from its contract activity would lead to discontinuance of the third intake. Stabilization of funding by including COPE in the UCC program profile, on the other hand, would remove the annual uncertainty about its future. Since the program has no equipment overheads and very low operating costs, for the price of one instructional salary and attendant benefits, UCC could provide COPE and its clients with educational continuity, and ensure that curriculum and professional development are undertaken systematically. Currently, because the instructor is on a series of temporary contracts, no such activities are taking place, and with the program in its twelfth year and a pilot COPE Program for males scheduled for 1993, the need for curriculum overhaul is becoming urgent.

In recognition of the above, the COPE Evaluation Committee recommends that:

- a) **the Vice President, Instruction, allocate additional FTE funding units to the program to bring its total from 9 to 16.**

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Because the emphasis of the program has evolved from a pilot project for single parent women into a goal setting program for women (and men) in general, the Committee recommends that:

- a) **the COPE instructor undertake a systematic identification and clarification of program objectives, perhaps using Krathwohl et al's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: the Affective Domain as a starting point.**

3. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

Comments from faculty and students indicate a lack of public and on-campus awareness of the program. For general improvement of program communications and visibility, the Evaluation Committee recommends that:

- a) the COPE instructor immediately develop a course outline in accordance with UCC policy;
- b) the COPE instructor revise and update the COPE Program description for the 1993/94 UCC Calendar (by October, 1992);
- c) the COPE instructor and the Chairperson, College Access, make efforts to increase inter-program liaison by inviting representatives from other programs to address COPE students;
- d) the COPE instructor and the Chairperson, College Access, increase liaison with such external agencies such as Kamloops Women's Resource Centre and Ministry of Social Services;
- e) the COPE instructor and the Chairperson, College Access, in conjunction with the Public Relations Department, design a COPE brochure for promotional purposes.

4. CLIENT ASSESSMENT:

To achieve better measurement of student progress, the COPE Program Evaluation Committee recommends that:

- a) the COPE instructor explore the integration of the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and other personality inventories into the COPE Program for information and reference purposes.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW:

In 1990, the Division of Developmental and Regional Programs reorganized into four departments, two of which--College Access and College Preparation--deal with upgrading. This program evaluation revealed the need for clearer articulation between the programs in these two Departments. In particular, the relationship between COPE and First Steps and the other upgrading programs in the Division needs to be explored and clarified.

The COPE Evaluation Committee recommends that:

- a) the Dean, Developmental and Regional Programs, explore and implement a plan to increase the level of articulation between COPE and other appropriate courses and programs in the Division.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW (cont.):

In addition, in its deliberations the Program Evaluation Committee noted that there are several learning assistance functions and activities in the institution which overlap to some extent. They also duplicate some instructional activities (including the COPE Program and other developmental programs in DRP). For example, the Student Success seminars, while being administered in the Division of Science and Health Sciences, touch on most programs in the institution. Also, the Assessment Centre provides service to many programs, even though at the same time programs such as COPE have their own assessment tools in place. Duplication of effort is also found in peer tutoring, which is offered in several academic departments and through the Division of Student Services. Finally, a discussion paper is circulating in the institution which calls for the creation of a comprehensive Learning Centre.

The COPE Program Evaluation Committee recommends that:

- b) the Vice-President, Instruction, consider striking a task force to review the current range of offerings in the area of learning assistance and to make recommendations on the systemization of these activities. If such a Task Force is to be struck, it should table its recommendations by the end of the 1992/93 academic year.**

6. FACILITIES:

In response to many critical comments from former and current COPE students and faculty, the Committee recommends that:

- a) the Dean, Developmental and Regional Programs, request the Assistant Director, Facilities Services, to investigate and remedy the inadequacies of the toilet facilities on the 2nd floor of B-Block with regard to toilet paper, cleanliness, and ventilation.**

7. STUDENT INTEGRATION:

To help COPE students overcome anxiety about furthering their education, the Evaluation Committee recommends that:

- a) the COPE instructor arrange for COPE students to attend other UCC programs so as to experience "a day in the life of a student" in those programs.**

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

The data were collected in the following ways:

- 1) Standard questionnaires were administered to COPE former students, receiving faculty, faculty, and current students. All data were processed with an SPSSX software program to achieve mean, median, and standard deviation responses. Verbal comments for each group were recorded separately and anonymously.
- 2) "Descriptive Data" on the COPE Program's history, description, objectives, budget, etc. were solicited from, via the standard "Data Required from Dean/Chairperson/ Program Co-ordinator" form, along with course outlines.
- 3) Statistical data on annual graduation rates, age distribution of former and current students, present main activity of former students, prior education of former and current students and salary range of those employed were provided by the Office of Institutional Research.
- 4) Several discussions were conducted with Susan MacGregor, the COPE Instructor, on the design of the questionnaires.

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