

OSA Research Bulletin
Office for Student Affairs

University of Minnesota

Volume 24

Number 2

Date 2/3/84



THE FALL 1983 UNIVERSITY POLL
STUDENT SERVICES AND FEES

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SERVICES

The Fall 1983 University Poll: Student Services and Fees

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Executive Summary

Four hundred and seventy-six students, 95% of a random sample of Twin Cities campus students were surveyed by telephone on their opinions of student services and the Student Services Fee. Key findings included:

Attitudes Toward the Student Services Fee

A majority of respondents were willing to pay in order to maintain current levels of service. However, the number taking this position dropped off sharply from 1982 to 1983. Fifty-four percent, compared with 72% in 1982, said that the Student Services Fee should be increased enough to keep up with inflation or to expand student services.

A majority also continued to prefer a fee system with a lower mandatory fee and more user fees (72% in 1983 and 77% in 1982) over the current larger mandatory fee.

Student Finances

Students' descriptions of their ability to pay their college expenses were virtually the same in 1983 as in 1982. Forty two percent (vs 41% in 1982) said that they were doing OK, paying their expenses without too much difficulty, 44% said that they were coping with their expenses, but making some definite sacrifices to do it, and 15% (14% in 1982) said that they were just barely able to meet their expenses by making large sacrifices.

Student Service Priorities

Students assigned the highest priority for fee funding to services that help students with problems at the University (66%), high priority, the Student Health Service (58%) and Student Unions (54%).

Lowest priorities were given to the University debate team, student television training, and student magazines. The biggest shifts in ratings from 1982 were an increase in ratings of the student unions (up 18% in the high category) and decreases in legal aid for students (down 15%) and student government (down 9%).

Recreational Sports Programs

This year's data showed increased support for new recreational sports facilities. Compared to 1982, more students said there was a need for new recreational sports facilities on campus (54% in 1983 vs. 42% in 1982). Somewhat more students (51% vs. 49%) also said that fee money should be used to help pay for them.

MPIRG

Students were last surveyed about MPIRG in 1979. Compared with data from that survey, data from the 1983 survey showed that fewer students supported the continuation of the present MPIRG fee system (54% compared with 75% in 1979). The numbers wanting the fee discontinued rose 6% in 1979 to 10% in 1983; the number advocating continuing the fee in some other form went from 15% to 20%, while the number offering no opinion rose from 4% to 17%.

Data from questions about satisfaction with MPIRG suggest that the shift in attitudes toward the MPIRG fee are due as much to lack of knowledge about the organization, as to dissatisfaction with it. Forty-two percent of the respondents said that they were somewhat or very satisfied with MPIRG, while 27% said that they were dissatisfied, and 31% had no opinion (Satisfaction was not asked in 1979).

Basic Services

Students were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of positive statements about advising, registration, student activities, and fee payment. In general, students had a positive view of these basic services. More students agreed than disagreed with positive statements in each of these areas. Agreement was strongest (90%) with the statement that there are many opportunities for involvement in campus activities and that the information provided their adviser is usually accurate (81%) and that registration staff are generally efficient and helpful (80%). Agreement was lowest with the statements that the faculty is concerned about individual students and that academic advisers are readily available for consultation (70%).

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Background and Content of the Study

This is a report of the Fall 1983 University Poll survey. The University Poll is a periodic telephone survey of random samples of University of Minnesota students. The Fall 1983 survey examined student attitudes toward student services and the fees for these services. The survey was commissioned by the Student Services Fees Committee, the University Task Force on the Student Experience, and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The Student Services Fees Committee is a student-faculty committee charged with making recommendations about the use of the student services fee charged of full time students each quarter. The Committee has commissioned an annual survey to determine student opinion about the fee. The Task Force on the Student Experience is a special task force charged with analyzing the quality of student life at the University. This group's interest in the survey was to gain some overall impressions of student satisfaction with student services. The questions for the Vice President for Student Affairs dealt with a single issue-- student opinion about where U of M football should be played, the Metrodome or Memorial Stadium.

This report gives the responses to the questions about the student services fee and student services. It does not include data on student opinion about the football location. These data were forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs for inclusion in a separate report.

The majority of the survey items were on student fees. One of these questions concerned the size of the fee, which has been steadily increased over the past few years. Of concern is whether students are willing to continue these increases. Perhaps they would prefer to cut service levels in order to hold down the fee size. This issue was posed directly to students in a question which asked what they thought should be done with the fee in the future: Should it be raised enough to expand services? Raised just enough to keep up with inflation? Frozen at its present size? (meaning a gradual erosion of service) Or should it be reduced? (meaning an immediate cutback in services).

Three other questions focused on general financial issues. The first asked about the concept of user fees: Would students prefer the current system with a single general fee and few user fees, or would they prefer a system with a lower general fee and more user fees. This same question was also asked specifically about the charge for Boynton Health Service, the recipient of the largest part of the Student Services Fee. The last general financial question asked students to characterize their ability to pay their college expenses as "OK, paying expenses without too much trouble"; "Coping, paying expenses, but making some definite sacrifices to do it"; or "Just barely meeting expenses by making some large sacrifices."

Attitudes toward individual services were probed first in a series of questions about student priorities. These questions asked students to say whether each of several types of services should have a high, medium, or low priority for student fee funding.

Besides these priority questions about the whole range of services, the survey also included some other items on services of special interest this year. One of these services is MPIRG, the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group. MPIRG is a student-run organization designed to represent student opinion on consumer and environmental issues. It collects funds from University students through a \$2.00 per quarter fee charged at registration. The fee is separate from the regular Student Services Fee, and a student may choose not to pay it or receive a refund later. At issue is the method by which this fee is collected. Currently it is collected through a "negative checkoff" system. The student is charged the fee unless he or she actively requests that it not be charged. Critics charge that this method is unfair. Some argue that the fee should not be charged unless the student actively requests that it be (a "positive checkoff"), while others argue that MPIRG should not be a separate fee at all. The survey asked whether the fee should be continued in its present form, discontinued, or continued in another form. Also asked was the question of how satisfied students are with MPIRG's activities. Both the fee and satisfaction questions were asked only of those who had previously heard of MPIRG.

A second service singled out for attention was the Recreational Sports Program. For several years discussions have been held about the possibility of building new recreational sports facilities. The survey asked students what they thought of the present facilities, whether they saw a need for new ones, and whether they thought student fee money should be used to help fund them.

The questions for the Task Force on the Student Experience asked students how much they agreed or disagreed with statements about the quality of some basic student services--registration, admissions, advising, and other programs.

The football questions asked students whether they had attended Gopher football games in the Metrodome and Memorial Stadium and which stadium they preferred as a site for Gopher football games, as well as their interest in Gopher football.

Many of the questions in the present survey were repeated from a similar survey conducted in the Fall of 1982 for the Student Services Fees Committee. Whenever possible, this report compares the 1983 data with the 1982 data. In the case of the MPIRG questions, comparisons are made with a 1979 study. A complete copy of the questionnaire used in this study is appended to this report.

Survey Procedures

Survey items were developed by Data and Reporting Services in consultation with those commissioning the study. The data were gathered by telephone by Koser Surveys, Inc., a professional surveying firm, between November 22 and December 15, 1983. A random sample of 500 students was selected from all domestic students enrolled in day school at the University for the Fall 1983 quarter. Foreign students were not included in the sample because previous telephone surveys have encountered language difficulties among this group. Interviewing involved up to 10 call-backs to reach students. Interviews were completed with 476 of the 500 students, for a response rate of 96.4%.

Margin of error

The data in this study are subject to two kinds of error: sampling, and non-sampling. Sampling error varies with the number of persons surveyed, the nature of the question, and proportion of respondents answering in a given way. The average sampling error in this study is approximately 5% (i.e., a given percentage might be up to 5% higher or lower if all University students were surveyed).

The non-sampling error in the study cannot be estimated. Errors of this type include keypunching and coding errors, unclear question wording, and respondent duplicity. Careful survey procedures can minimize such errors, but cannot eliminate them entirely.

Data Analysis/Report Format

Data and Reporting Services analyzed the study data and prepared this report. The remainder of the report presents the response percentages for each item, along with significant subgroup comparisons.

Results

General Attitudes Toward Fees

On the general question of taxation versus reduced services, student responses showed a change from 1982. In 1983 the proportion supporting fee increases for maintaining or expanding services dropped from 72% to 54% (Table 1).

Interestingly, however, support for the concept of user fees also dropped somewhat from the previous year. A majority (72%) said that they would prefer a system with a lower mandatory fee and more user fees, but this percentage was down somewhat from the 1982 figure of 77% (Table 2). General College students were less supportive of a user fee based system than other students (58% supported an increased user fee system, 42% wanted the mandatory fee system continued). Further complicating the issue is the finding that students were more supportive of a high mandatory fee for the Boynton Health Service, 45%, than they were of all fees. This finding is noteworthy because Boynton is the service with the most user fees at the present (Table 3). Non-commuters appear more willing to have the Student Services Fee increased (64% vs. 50% for commuters) and to maintain the current health service fee system (54% vs. 41%).

Adding further to this rather complex picture of students' attitudes toward fees are their responses to the question about how well they were doing in being able to pay for their college expenses (Table 4). The responses showed virtually no change from 1982. Eighty-five percent of the respondents said that they were at least coping with their expenses. In addition, the preference for the current fees system or increased use of user fees appears to be independent of the student's ability to handle their college expenses. Those struggling to meet expenses, however, were more likely to want overall student service fees reduced than those "coping" or "doing OK" (25% vs. 15%).

TABLE 1

In the future do you think the \$79.40¹ fee should be increased enough to expand services, increased just enough to keep up with inflation, held at its present level, or reduced?²

	Percent	
	1982 (n=476)	1983 (n=476)
Increased enough to expand services	10.1	5.3
Increased enough to keep up with inflation	62.1	49.2
Held at its current level	18.3	23.7
Reduced	9.5	17.0
No opinion	0.2	4.8

¹ 1982 fee was \$74.57.

² The question was prefaced with the following introduction: "We would like to know your views about the future of the Student Services Fee. Because of inflation the fee will have to be gradually raised over the next few years to maintain current services. If services are expanded, the fee will need to be raised more. If the fee is held at its current level, inflation will cause services to be gradually reduced. If the fee is cut, services will be reduced more."

TABLE 2

Under the current system students who pay the required fees can use most services without paying additional costs. An alternative system would lower the required fees and would charge additional user fees to those who use a service.

In general which system would you prefer-- the current system or one with lower required fees and more user fees?

	Percent	
	1982 (n=476)	1983 (n=476)
Current system	21.5	26.7
User fees	77.1	71.6
Not sure	1.5	1.7

TABLE 3

Currently, students paying the Boynton Health Service Fee can use most of its services without extra charge. There are some additional user fees for services like x-rays and dental work.

In general, which system would you prefer for the Health Service--the current system or one with lower required fees and more user fees?

	Percent
	1983 (n=476)
Current system	45.2
User fees	52.5
Not sure	2.3

TABLE 4

Overall, how well are you doing in paying college expenses?
 Would you say you are doing:

- 1) OK - Paying your expenses without much difficulty;
- 2) COPING - paying your expenses, but making some definite sacrifices to do it;
- 3) ARE YOU JUST BARELY - meeting your expenses by making large sacrifices.

	Percent	
	1982 (n=476)	1983
OK	41.9	41.2
Coping	44.0	43.9
Just barely meeting expenses	14.1	14.9

Student Priorities

When compared with the 1982 data, student ratings of the priorities of services for fee funding show some definite gainers and losers (Table 5).

The biggest gainers were the student unions (up in the high priority category by 18%) and child care for students' children (up almost 10%). The biggest losers were legal aid for students (down 15%) and student government (down about 10%). Other services registering lower numbers in the high priority category were student health service and the Minnesota Daily (both down about 5%). The remaining services showed gains or losses of less than 5%. Services that help students with problems with the University (e.g., Student Ombudsman Service) persisted as the service with the highest priority for funding from student fees.

Even with the shifts noted above the basic tiers of student priorities remained similar. In the top tier are services widely used by students (Unions, Health Service, Daily), and those designed to assist in practical problem-solving (e.g., Student Ombudsman Service, Legal Aid, and child care). Falling into the lowest tier are specialized educational services appealing to smaller numbers of students (e.g., debate, television, magazines). Occupying the middle tier are services designed for larger subgroups (e.g., women, minorities, and parents) and educational services having a wider appeal.

TABLE 5
Student Priorities for Fee Funding¹

		Percent		
		<u>High Priority</u>	<u>Medium Priority</u>	<u>Low Priority</u>
Student Health Service ²	1982	63.4	30.3	6.3
	1983	57.9	31.3	10.8
Services that help students with problems with the University	1982	65.3	29.2	5.5
	1983	66.2	28.3	5.5
Student Unions	1982	35.7	47.7	16.6
	1983	53.6	38.0	8.4
Minnesota Daily	1982	42.1	40.6	17.3
	1983	36.5	38.2	25.3
Legal aid for students	1982	48.9	37.4	13.7
	1983	33.8	46.7	19.5
Recreational sports programs	1982	31.7	46.8	21.4
	1983	28.5	51.2	20.3
Student government	1982	39.4	42.2	17.9
	1983	30.0	51.6	18.4
University band and music programs	1982	22.3	55.5	22.3
	1983	23.1	52.5	24.4
Child care for students' children	1982	26.7	43.9	29.4
	1983	36.4	43.6	20.1
Programs on minority student issues	1982	25.5	52.2	22.3
	1983	26.8	54.2	19.0
Student exchange programs with foreign and domestic universities	1982	33.8	42.2	23.9
	1983	34.7	44.6	20.7
Programs on foreign student issues	1982	14.9	50.0	35.1
	1983	12.5	51.8	35.7
Student television training and production	1982	5.3	37.9	56.8
	1983	7.2	32.6	60.2
University debate team	1982	5.1	36.5	58.4
	1983	4.7	36.8	58.5

(continued)

TABLE 5 (continued)

Student Priorities for Fee Funding¹

			Percent	

		<u>High</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Low</u>
		<u>Priority</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Student magazines	1982	8.3	38.9	52.8
	1983	7.3	30.7	62.0
Services and programs for women students	1982	21.2	59.0	19.7
	1983	24.9	58.4	16.7
Lobbying and legal action to express student views on consumer and environmental issues ³	1983	24.3	42.9	32.8
Campus radio ⁴	1983	11.0	46.2	42.8

¹Question was introduced with the statement: "I am going to read a list of services. For each one, please tell me if you think it should be a high, medium, or low priority for funding from the Student Fee."

²The order in which items were presented was changed in half the questionnaires to compensate for possible order effects.

³Not asked in 1982.

⁴Not asked in 1982.

For the most part, the priority rankings of services were quite stable across various subgroups of students (sex, college, class and commuter status). However, some differences did emerge, particularly in top tier services. The dramatic increase in support for student unions was especially strong among those in General College and in units on the St. Paul campus--64% of General College respondents, and 66% of St. Paul respondents gave unions a high funding priority (vs. 54% of all students). Student Health Service was generally given a high priority, although women felt it to be a higher priority than did men (64% vs. 52%).

Although the Minnesota Daily is still among the high priority services, its support has eroded in the past year and was particularly low among students on the St. Paul campus--only 24% of these students listed the Daily as a high priority

and 34% of them thought it was a low priority for student funding. Smaller units on the Minneapolis campus, such as Management, Education, and Nursing, gave an even lower priority to the Daily (45% assigned it a low priority).

Legal aid also saw a noticeable drop in priority support, with considerable variation among subgroups. Women were more likely than men to view legal services as a high funding priority (39% vs. 28%), as were graduate and professional students (41% vs. 31% for undergraduates). In addition, only 15% of St. Paul campus students thought legal aid was a high priority (vs. 34% for all students).

An interesting finding is that men and women did not differ in their priority ranking of services for women--approximately 60% of each group thought such services should be a medium priority for funding and another 25% thought they were high priority. In addition, women placed only a slightly higher priority on child care than did men (38% vs. 34%), although men were more likely to give child care services a low priority (24% vs. 15%).

The decrease in funding support for student government was most evident among graduate and professional students, only 22% of whom thought this should be a high priority (vs. 32% of undergraduates). An even higher proportion of graduate and professional students thought student government should be a low priority (23% vs. 17% for undergraduates).

Approximately half of all students rated recreational sports programs as a medium priority for funding. Men were more likely than women to give it high priority (35% vs. 20%) as were students living on campus (36% vs. 24% for commuter students). This priority rating is reflected in the other recreational sports issues considered in this survey.

Recreational Sports

For several years discussions have been held regarding the possibility of building new recreational sports facilities on campus (either a new building or renovation of current ones). Compared to the 1982 data, the 1983 show a sizeable increase in the number of students who see a need for new recreational sports facilities and believe that fee money should be used to pay for them (Table 6). In 1983 the majority of students said that new facilities were needed and that student fee money should be used to pay for them. Even among those who did not think new facilities were needed, almost 25% were willing to fund new them from their Student Services Fees.

This year's survey did not ask about the individual's participation in recreational sports activities, but previous surveys have found that those who had participated in recreational sports were considerably more convinced of the need for new facilities and willing to pay for them than were those who had not participated.

This year's survey did ask students to rate the recreational sports facilities available at the University (Table 7). The relatively low rating (midway between fair and good) accorded the present facilities agrees with the perceived need for new facilities.

TABLE 6

Do you think there is a need for new recreational sports facilities?¹

	Percent	
	1982 (n=476)	1983 (n=476)
Yes	41.8	53.8
No	42.2	34.7
Don't know	16.0	11.6

Do you think that part of the required Student Services Fee should be used to help pay for them?

	Percent	
	1982 (n=476)	1983 (n=476)
Yes	48.6	50.6
No	47.2	46.2
Don't know	4.2	3.2

¹ The question was introduced with: "A proposal has been made to build new recreational sports facilities on campus. These would be for most indoor sports, and would include a gymnasium, swimming pool, and racquetball courts."

TABLE 7

From what you know, how would you rate the facilities for recreational sports at the "U"?--poor, fair, good, or excellent.

	Percent
	(n=476)
Poor	15.1
Fair	23.3
Good	38.2
Excellent	5.0
Don't know	18.3

Support for new recreational sports facilities increased considerably from 1982 to 1983 (54% in 1983 vs. 42% in 1982 agreed that there was a need for new facilities). Those that gave rec sports programs a higher funding priority (men and non-commuters) were also more likely to see a need for new facilities and to be willing to pay for them from their Student Services Fee. Sixty percent of men (vs. forty-seven percent of women) recognized a need for new rec sports facilities. Accordingly, only 44% of women were willing to pay for new facilities from their Student Services Fee, whereas 56% of men were willing to do so. A similar pattern is seen between campus residents (those living in dorms or fraternity or sorority houses) and commuter students--61% of non-commuters and 50% of commuters agree that new facilities are needed; 60% of non-commuters and only 46% of commuters are willing to fund new facilities through Student Services Fees. Students in General College also agreed that improved rec sports facilities should be paid for from Student Services Fees (73% vs. 49% for all students).

The support for improved facilities and their funding probably reflects the usage pattern of these groups (men and campus residents are more likely to use the facilities than women and commuters). Likewise, men were much more likely than women to have rated the rec sports facilities as "poor" (21% vs. 9%), perhaps because they are more familiar with them. Naturally, those that gave the facilities a low rating saw the need for new facilities and were most likely to be willing to dedicate student fees to fund them (72% of "poor" and 50% of "fair" agreed to this funding mechanism). It is noteworthy that approximately 25% of both women and commuter students did not have an opinion on the present condition of the facilities, while less than 10% of men and non-commuters did not express an opinion.

MPIRG

The survey asked three questions about MPIRG, the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group. First, students were asked whether they had previously heard of MPIRG. If they had heard of MPIRG, they were asked how satisfied they were with the organization's performance and how MPIRG should be funded. The awareness and fee questions were repeated from a 1979 survey.

The results indicated stability in the basic level of awareness of MPIRG--over 80% having at least heard of the organization (Table 8). Only in General College was there widespread lack of awareness of MPIRG's existence (48% of General College respondents said they had not previously heard of the organization). On the other hand, almost all graduate and professional students and seniors had heard of MPIRG (93% and 94%, respectively). However, the responses to the satisfaction and fees items suggest that many students may not be well informed of MPIRG's activities (Tables 9 and 10). Support for continuation of the present MPIRG fee system went down by some 12% from 1982, although a majority (54%) still support the current MPIRG funding system. At the same time, there were increases in the numbers wanting the fee discontinued or continued in some other form, but there was a quadrupling of the number who didn't have an opinion on the topic.

That the increase in no opinion responses to the fee question is due to the lack of information is suggested by the responses to the satisfaction question.

Nearly a third of the respondents said that they couldn't answer the question of how satisfied they were with MPIRG, even though they had heard of the organization.

TABLE 8

Before now, had you heard of MPIRG?

	Percent	
	1979 (n=571)	1983 (n=476)
Yes	82.0	83.6
No	18.0	16.4

TABLE 9

Based on your knowledge of MPIRG's activities, how satisfied are you with their program?--very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.

	Percent
	1983 (n=476)
Very satisfied	7.1
Somewhat satisfied	35.1
Somewhat dissatisfied	18.5
Very dissatisfied	8.2
No opinion	31.1

TABLE 10

When students register, they pay a \$2 per quarter fee for MPIRG unless they indicate they do not want to pay. If they do pay, they may get a refund later.

Do you think the MPIRG fee should be continued as it is, continued in some other form, or discontinued?

	Percent	
	1979 (n=571)	1983 (n=476)
Continued as it is	75.0	53.6
Continued in some other form	15.0	19.7
Discontinued	6.0	9.9
No opinion	4.0	16.8

As might be expected, those who expressed satisfaction with MPIRG's activities advocated that funding be continued in its present form. More surprisingly, perhaps, almost 60% of those without an opinion on the satisfaction question also suggest leaving the funding mechanism unchanged. Only those "very dissatisfied" with MPIRG's program thought funding should be discontinued altogether (of those "very dissatisfied" 46% wanted to discontinue funding altogether, 36% wanted funding continued but in a different form, and 18% were willing to continue the present funding system).

IT students expressed the greatest dissatisfaction (45%) with MPIRG's activities and were also the least likely to support continuation of the present form of MPIRG funding; 20% of IT respondents thought funding should be discontinued completely. Women, CLA students, and those in graduate or professional programs were the most likely to express satisfaction with MPIRG's activities (58%, 54%, and 58%, respectively, vs. 42% for all students, expressed satisfaction). Similarly, 73% of women wanted to continue MPIRG funding in its present form.

Basic Services

The survey asked students how much they agreed or disagreed with eight positive statements about the quality of basic services on campus. The general trend for each one was positive--more respondents agreed with the statements than disagreed (Table 11).

Within this overall positive trend, however, there were differences among responses to individual services. The responses confirm what one might believe about a very large campus like Minnesota. Agreement was strongest with the statement that "There are many opportunities for involvement in campus activities" and weakest with the statement "The faculty is concerned about individual students." Despite the perception that students complain about registration, over 80% of the respondents agreed with the statement that "University registration staff are generally efficient and helpful" and almost 74% agreed that "Registration procedures are clear and well publicized."

TABLE 11

Now we would like your opinion of some of the University's services. For each of the following statements, indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

	Percent ----- (n=476)				
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
My academic adviser is readily available for consultation.	32.6	37.2	19.3	7.1	3.8
The information provided by my academic adviser is generally accurate.	42.9	38.9	11.6	2.5	4.2
University registration staff are generally efficient and helpful.	33.2	47.1	13.4	5.5	.8
When I register, I can usually get into the courses I need.	35.5	31.3	18.9	12.0	2.3
Fee payment procedures are clear and well publicized.	45.8	33.6	15.3	4.6	.6
The faculty is concerned about individual students.	18.5	43.9	26.7	10.3	.6
There are many opportunities at the University for involvement in campus activities.	52.1	37.6	6.5	2.1	1.7
Registration procedures are clear and well publicized.	34.0	39.7	20.0	6.1	.2

For some services, students gave different responses depending on the college they register in. Fewer students in IT (60%) and CLA (62%) agreed that their academic advisers are usually available (vs. 70% of all respondents). In addition, IT students were more likely to disagree that their advisers provided them with accurate information (22% vs. 14% of all students). Students on the St. Paul campus were the most likely to agree that registration staff are generally helpful and efficient (89%), while only 72% of those in graduate and professional schools agreed with this statement (80% of all students agreed). St. Paul undergraduate and graduate and professional students also agreed that they can get into the courses they want (79% and 84%, vs. 67% for all students), and were the most likely to agree that faculty are concerned with individual students (73% for grads and professionals, 71% for St. Paul undergraduates, and 62% for all students).

More graduate and professional respondents disagreed with the statement that payment procedures are clear and well publicized (28% vs. 20% of all respondents). While most units agreed that registration procedures are clear and well publicized, smaller units on the Minneapolis campus, such as Management, Education, and Nursing, were considerably less likely to do so (only 56% of this group agreed with the statement, 74% of all students agreed). This appears to be due primarily to the 16 respondents from the School of Management, almost half of whom (49%) disagreed with the statement.

Discussion

In discussing the results of the 1982 fees survey, we concluded that the predominant theme in the data was moderation. Students generally seemed willing to support the status quo and to be taxed to maintain current levels of student services, or in some cases to expand them.

The 1983 data suggest that student opinion may be somewhat less moderate. In particular, students may be more concerned about the size of the mandatory student services fee. The percentage willing to have the fee increase to maintain current service levels or expand them dropped from 72% to 54%. At the same time, support for the concept of user fees remained strong.

Explanations for the drop in support for funding services with the mandatory fee are not obvious. Economic conditions have been improving, and most students continue to report that they are not having serious difficulties in paying their college expenses.

Opinions toward the funding priority for individual services also showed some noteworthy shifts not falling into a consistent pattern. Some of those services that have traditionally been ranked high in student priorities, such as student legal services, the Minnesota Daily, and the Health Service, lost ground. On the other hand, there was increased support for student unions and child care.

Belief in the need for new recreational sports facilities increased sharply from 1982, and was especially strong among men and non-commuter students. Half of

all respondents (a slight increase over 1982) indicated a willingness to use the required Student Services Fee to pay for new facilities.

The results of this survey suggest that, although most students have heard of the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG), many are uninformed about its activities and programs. Lobbying and legal action to express student views on consumer and environmental issues (MPIRG's mandate) is solidly in the middle tier of student funding priorities. While considerably more students were satisfied with MPIRG's activities than were dissatisfied, almost one third of the respondents who had heard of MPIRG did not give an opinion concerning their satisfaction with the organization.

The decline in support for the MPIRG fee appears to be attributable more to lack of knowledge of the organization than to actual dissatisfaction with it. Although the majority of students were still willing to continue MPIRG funding in its present form, support for this funding mechanism declined substantially from 1979. In the 1983 survey, close to 20% of all respondents aware of MPIRG's existence did not venture an opinion on how it should be funded.

There was a general positive assessment of the perceived quality of eight basic services on campus. Overall, graduate and professional students and undergraduates on the St. Paul campus were the most positive about academic services--the availability of their advisers, quality of the information provided by their advisers, ability to register for needed courses, and the perception of faculty concern for individual students. Students in CLA and IT, the largest undergraduate colleges, on the other hand, seem to find their advisers less readily available. Despite some students problems with registration, the vast majority agreed that the University registration staff are generally helpful and efficient--this was especially true among St. Paul students. In addition, most students felt that registration and fee payment procedures were clear and well publicized, although graduate and professional students were less positive about payment procedures, and those in some smaller Minneapolis colleges were skeptical of registration procedures.

If one were to try to isolate a general theme from the 1983 survey, it might be a show-me attitude. Students appear less willing to be taxed for services they don't know much about. The drop in support for the MPIRG fee is a clear indication of this sentiment. Decline in support for the health service and legal service and increases in support for unions and recreational sports may also be indicative of this viewpoint. The implication for student services is that they cannot take student support for granted. Students continue to have a positive view of most services they know about. However, services will need to maintain and increase their efforts to inform students or their support may drop off quickly.

Hello, I'm _____ from the University of Minnesota Opinion Poll. We're doing a short survey on the \$79.40 in Student Services Fess charged each quarter.

1. How many credits are you registered for at the "U" this Fall Quarter?

- IF NOT REGISTERED, TERMINATE <<< NONE, NOT REGISTERED ___ 1 (12)
 - NONE, THESIS ONLY OR CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION ___ 2
 - 1 TO 5 CREDITS ___ 3
 - 6 OR MORE CREDITS ___ 4
-

2. Do you consider yourself a commuter student?

- YES ___ 1 (14)
 - NO ___ 2
-

3. Have you looked at or read a list of the services and organizations funded from the student services fees?

- YES ___ 1 (15)
 - NO ___ 2
 - DON'T KNOW ___ 3
-

4. We would like to know your views about the future of the student services fees. Because of inflation the fees will have to be gradually raised over the next few years to maintain current services. If services are expanded, the fee will need to be raised more. If the fee is held at its current level, inflation will cause services to be gradually reduced. If the fee is cut, services will be reduced more.

In the future, do you think the \$79.40 fee should be increase enough to expand services, increased just enough to keep up with inflation, held at its present level, or reduced?

INCREASE ENOUGH TO EXPAND SERVICES ___1 (16)
INCREASE ENOUGH TO KEEP UP WITH INFLATION ___2
HELD AT ITS CURRENT LEVEL ___3
REDUCED ___4
(Don't Offer) NO OPINION ___5

5. Under the current system students who pay the required fees can use most services without paying additional costs.

An alternate system would lower the required fees and would charge additional user fees to those who use a service.

In general which system would you prefer--the current system or one with lower required fees and MORE user fees?

CURRENT SYSTEM ___1 (17)
USER FEES ___2
(Don't Offer) NOT SURE ___3

6. Currently, student paying the Boynton Health Service Fee can use most of its services without extra charge. There are some additional user fees for services like x-rays and dental work.

In general which system would you prefer for the Health Service--the current system or one with lower required fees and MORE user fees?

CURRENT SYSTEM ___1 (19)
USER FEES ___2
(Don't Offer) NOT SURE ___3

7. From what you know, how would you rate the facilities for recreational sports at the "U"? --poor, fair, good, or excellent-

POOR ___ 1 (20)
FAIR ___ 2
GOOD ___ 3
EXCELLENT ___ 4
DON'T KNOW ___ 5

A proposal has been made to build new recreational sports facilities on both the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses. These would be for most indoor sports, and would include a gymnasium, swimming pool, and racquetball courts.

Do you think there is a need for new recreational sports facilities?

YES ___ 1 (21)
NO ___ 2
DON'T KNOW ___ 3

Do you think that part of the required Student Services Fees should be used to help pay for them?

YES ___ 1 (22)
NO ___ 2
DON'T KNOW ___ 3

8. Next, I am going to read a list of services. For each one please tell me if you think it should be a high, medium, or low priority for funding from the student fee.

	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>LOW</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>	
a. Legal aid for students	___1	___2	___3	___4	(23)
b. Student television training and production . . .	___1	___2	___3	___4	(24)
c. Child care for students' children	___1	___2	___3	___4	(25)
d. Programs on minority student issues	___1	___2	___3	___4	
e. Services and programs for women students	___1	___2	___3	___4	
f. University band and music programs	___1	___2	___3	___4	
g. Recreational sports programs	___1	___2	___3	___4	
h. The Minnesota Daily	___1	___2	___3	___4	(30)
i. Lobbying and legal action to express student views on consumer and environmental issues . . .	___1	___2	___3	___4	
j. Programs on foreign student issues	___1	___2	___3	___4	
k. Campus radio	___1	___2	___3	___4	
l. Student magazines	___1	___2	___3	___4	
m. Student exchange programs with foreign and domestic universities	___1	___2	___3	___4	(35)
n. Student unions such as Coffman	___1	___2	___3	___4	
o. Services to help students deal with problems with the University	___1	___2	___3	___4	
p. Student government	___1	___2	___3	___4	
q. Student health service	___1	___2	___3	___4	
r. University debate team	___1	___2	___3	___4	(40)

Now--a question about college in general

9. Overall, how well are you doing in paying college expenses? Would you say you are doing:

1. OK--paying your expenses without too much difficulty
2. COPING--paying your expenses, but making some definite sacrifices to do it
3. ARE YOU JUST BARELY--meeting your expenses by making large sacrifices

OK ___1 (41)

COPING ___2

JUST BARELY MEETING EXPENSES ___3

10. The next few questions are about MPIRG ("empurg"), the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group.

Before now, had you heard of MPIRG?

YES ___1 (42)

(go to next page) <<< NO ___2

11. Based on your knowledge of MPIRG's activities, how satisfied are you with their program? --Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, or Very Dissatisfied.

VERY SATISFIED ___1 (43)

SOMEWHAT SATISFIED ___2

SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED ___3

VERY DISSATISFIED ___4

DON'T KNOW ___5

12. When students register, they pay a \$2 per quarter fee for MPIRG unless they indicate they do not want to pay. If they do pay, they may get a refund later.

Do you think the MPIRG fee should be continued as it is, continued in some other form, or discontinued?

CONTINUED AS IT IS ___1 (44)

CONTINUED IN SOME OTHER FORM ___2

DISCONTINUED ___3

NO OPINION ___4

Now we would like your opinion of some of the University's services. For each of the following statements, indicate if you Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO OPINION	
13. My academic adviser is readily available for consultation.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(45)
14. The information provided by my academic adviser is generally accurate.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(46)
15. University registration staff are generally efficient and helpful.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(47)
16. When I register, I can usually get into the courses I need.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(48)
17. Fee payment procedures are clear and well publicized.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(49)
18. The faculty is concerned about individual students.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(50)
19. There are many opportunities at the University for involvement in campus activities.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(51)
20. Registration procedures are clear and well publicized.	___1	___2	___3	___4	___5	(52)

Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about Gopher football.

21. Two years ago, Gopher football games were moved from Memorial Stadium on campus to the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

Do you think that Gopher football games should continue to be played in the Dome, or should they be moved back to Memorial Stadium?

DOME ___1 (53)

MEMORIAL ___2

DON'T KNOW ___3

DON'T CARE ___4

22. Would a move back to Memorial Stadium make you more likely to attend future games, less likely, or would it have no effect on your attendance?

MORE LIKELY ___1 (54)

LESS LIKELY ___2

WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ___3

DON'T KNOW ___4

23. Did you attend a Gopher football game this past season?

YES ___1 (55)

NO ___2

24. Did you attend a Gopher football game last year?

YES ___1 (56)

NO ___2

25. Did you attend a game during the 1981 season in Memorial Stadium?

YES ___1 (57)

NO ___2

DON'T REMEMBER ___3

26. In general, how would you rate your interest in Gopher football--Are you very interested, moderately, slightly, or not at all interested?

VERY INTERESTED ___1 (58)

MODERATELY INTERESTED ___2

SLIGHTLY INTERESTED ___3

NOT AT ALL INTERESTED ___4

27. And just one last question.

This survey was sponsored by the Student Services Fees Committee. Before now had you read or heard anything about the Student Services Fee Committee?

YES 1 (59)

NO 2

DON'T KNOW 3

THANK YOU!

OSA Research Bulletin
Office for Student Affairs

University of Minnesota

Volume 24

Number 3

Date 4/4/84

OSA

HIGH ABILITY SHOWS AND NO-SHOWS:
KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA APPLICANTS

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**High Ability Shows and No-Shows:
Key Findings from a Survey of University of Minnesota Applicants**

Ron Matross and Katherine Hannaford
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This is a summary of key findings of a survey of high ability applicants to the University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts (CLA) and Institute of Technology (IT). The University's Propective Student Services Office commissioned Data and Reporting Services to conduct the survey to help guide recruitment strategies, target publications content, and test program concepts to attract high ability students.

METHOD

A sample of 451 Fall 1983 freshman applicants to CLA and IT who had graduated in the top 10% of their high school classes were surveyed by telephone in November and December of 1983. The sample included 148 shows--applicants who enrolled at the U of M in the Fall, and 301 no-shows--applicants who did not enroll. The proportion of shows to no-shows in the sample was approximately the inverse of actual proportions; about two thirds of high-ability CLA applicants and three quarters of high-ability IT applicants choose to attend. No-shows were over-sampled because there was greater interest in their responses.

Four-hundred-forty of the 451 applicants were contacted, for a response rate of 98%. Among the shows, 81 wre CLA applicants and 67 were IT applicants. Among the no-shows, 192 were CLA applicants and 100 were IT applicants.

QUESTIONS

The survey sought to answer the following questions:

- . Where do no-shows go?
- . Why do no-shows choose other schools over the U of M?
- . Why do shows choose the U of M over other schools?
- . What are the strengths and weaknesses of the U of M compared to other schools?
- . What would be the impact of new U of M high ability student programs in financial aid, housing, study abroad, honors seminars, and applications processing?

FINDINGS

The survey results supply some general answers to the questions posed above.

Where do U of M no-shows go?

The majority of no-shows stay in the Upper Midwest (Table 1). Twenty-seven percent were attending Minnesota private colleges; 27% were attending schools in Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa; and 13% were attending Minnesota State Universities, U of M coordinate campuses, community colleges, and vo-tech institutes. Less than a third, 29%, were attending schools outside of the five-state region. About 5% were not attending any school at the time they were interviewed.

Among the individual schools attracting U of M no-shows, the University of Wisconsin at Madison gains the largest share, 9% (Table 2). Private colleges in Minnesota also attract a significant share of no-shows: St. Olaf (6%), St. Thomas (6%), Carleton (3%), St. John (3%), and St. Benedict (2%). In addition, 3% of CLA and IT no-show respondents chose to attend UMD. The U.S. Air Force Academy, Northwestern, and Purdue are the only schools outside of the five-state region attended by 2% or more of no-shows.

Why do no-shows choose other schools?

Applicants were asked to specify reasons for attending or not attending the University of Minnesota. The open-ended responses were then coded into broad categories.

The size and perceived impersonality of the University of Minnesota was mentioned by 42% of no-shows as the primary reason for attending another institution (Table 3). This factor was clearly dominant for those choosing Minnesota private colleges. Cost and financial aid issues were also an important reason, especially for no-shows choosing schools in the surrounding states. Those in Wisconsin, Iowa, and North and South Dakota also cited location as an important factor in their school choice. Program quality or availability only appears to be an important primary reason for those attending out-of-region schools.

Why do shows choose the University of Minnesota?

The quality and availability of academic programs ranked as the single most important reason for choosing the University of Minnesota over other schools (Table 4). The location of the Twin Cities campus and its size and diversity were also frequently cited.

TABLE 1

WHERE DO HIGH-ABILITY NO-SHOWS GO?

	Percent (N = 289)
Out of region schools	28.5
MN private colleges	27.1
WI, IA, ND, SD colleges	26.5
MN state universities	5.2
UM coordinate campuses	4.8
MN 2-year schools	3.4
Not attending school	4.5

TABLE 2

SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY FIVE OR MORE NO-SHOWS

	No-shows (N = 289)	Percent
UW-Madison	25	8.6
St. Olaf	16	5.5
St. Thomas	16	5.5
UM-Duluth	10	3.4
Carlton	8	2.7
St. John	8	2.7
St. Benedict	6	2.1
St. Cloud State	6	2.1
UW-Eau Claire	6	2.1
US Air Force Academy	5	1.7
Northwestern	5	1.7
Purdue	5	1.7
Iowa State	5	1.7
Macalester	5	1.7
St. Catherine	5	1.7
North Dakota State	5	1.7
Marquette	5	1.7
UW-LaCrosse	5	1.7
Not attending school	13	4.5

TABLE 3

MAIN REASONS WHY HIGH ABILITY
NO-SHOWS DO NOT ATTEND U OF M

	NO-SHOWS ATTENDING			
	No Shows Total (N = 268)	MN Private College (N = 77)	WI,IA,ND, SD colleges (N = 75)	Out of Region Schools (N = 78)
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Size/Impersonality	42.2	72.7	26.7	25.6
Cost/Financial Aid	23.1	18.2	25.3	19.2
Program Quality/ Availability	12.7	6.5	17.3	20.5
Location	12.3	0	24.0	15.4
Specific Event	4.8	2.6	4.0	9.0
Other	4.8	0	2.7	10.3

TABLE 4

MAIN REASONS WHY HIGH ABILITY
SHOWS DO ATTEND U OF M

	SHOWS (N = 148)
	Percent
Program Quality/Availability	45.3
Location	23.0
Size/Diversity	18.9
Cost/Financial Aid	9.5
Other	3.4
Specific Event	0

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the University of Minnesota?

Respondents were asked to rate the University of Minnesota and an alternate school on eleven dimensions. No-shows rated the school they were attending; shows rated the alternate school they were likely to have attended. The ratings were then compared and are presented in a series of balance sheets (Table 5 through Table 9) listing the percentages of respondents rating Minnesota as inferior, superior, or the same as the alternate school.

The majority of shows rated the U of M as superior to their alternative choice on the availability of majors and on cost issues (Table 5). The atmosphere of the Twin Cities campus and brochures and catalogs directed to prospective students were also generally rated well. Class size and attention paid to individual students, on the other hand, were perceived as weak areas in comparison with their alternative school. Admissions procedures and the availability of housing for the Twin Cities campus were also viewed as problem areas for the University of Minnesota. Respondents were about equally divided on the dimension of academic quality at the U of M versus that at their alternative school.

The same general pattern of strengths and weaknesses holds for ratings by the no-shows (Table 6), but the ratings are generally less positive. Program availability and the cost of tuition, room and board were rated superior for Minnesota. The total cost of attending the University (including financial aid), however, was not rated as highly by no-shows as by shows. The University of Minnesota was rated as inferior on class size and student attention by most no-shows. Many also rated academic quality, the availability of housing and campus atmosphere as inferior to that of the school they were attending.

The University of Minnesota appears to compare very favorably to private colleges in Minnesota on program availability, cost issues and the prestige of a degree (Table 7). However, the academic quality of the University was rated as inferior by over 72% of the respondents, and almost every respondent rated Minnesota inferior on the size of classes and the attention given to individual students. Availability of housing, campus atmosphere, and admissions procedures were also perceived as weaknesses compared to private colleges.

Differences between the University of Minnesota and schools in Wisconsin, Iowa, and North and South Dakota were not as great as those with private colleges (Table 8). The availability of majors was the only dimension on which the University of Minnesota appears strongly superior to applicants' present school. Class size, student attention, housing, and campus atmosphere were again cited as weaknesses of the University, although not as strongly as private college attendees. Students in surrounding states perceive cost issues differently than Minnesota private college students--the University is rated as inferior on both cost dimensions, especially the total cost of attending. Since most of this group attend public institutions (one third attend UW-Madison) reciprocity tuition arrangements may have a considerable impact on cost issues.

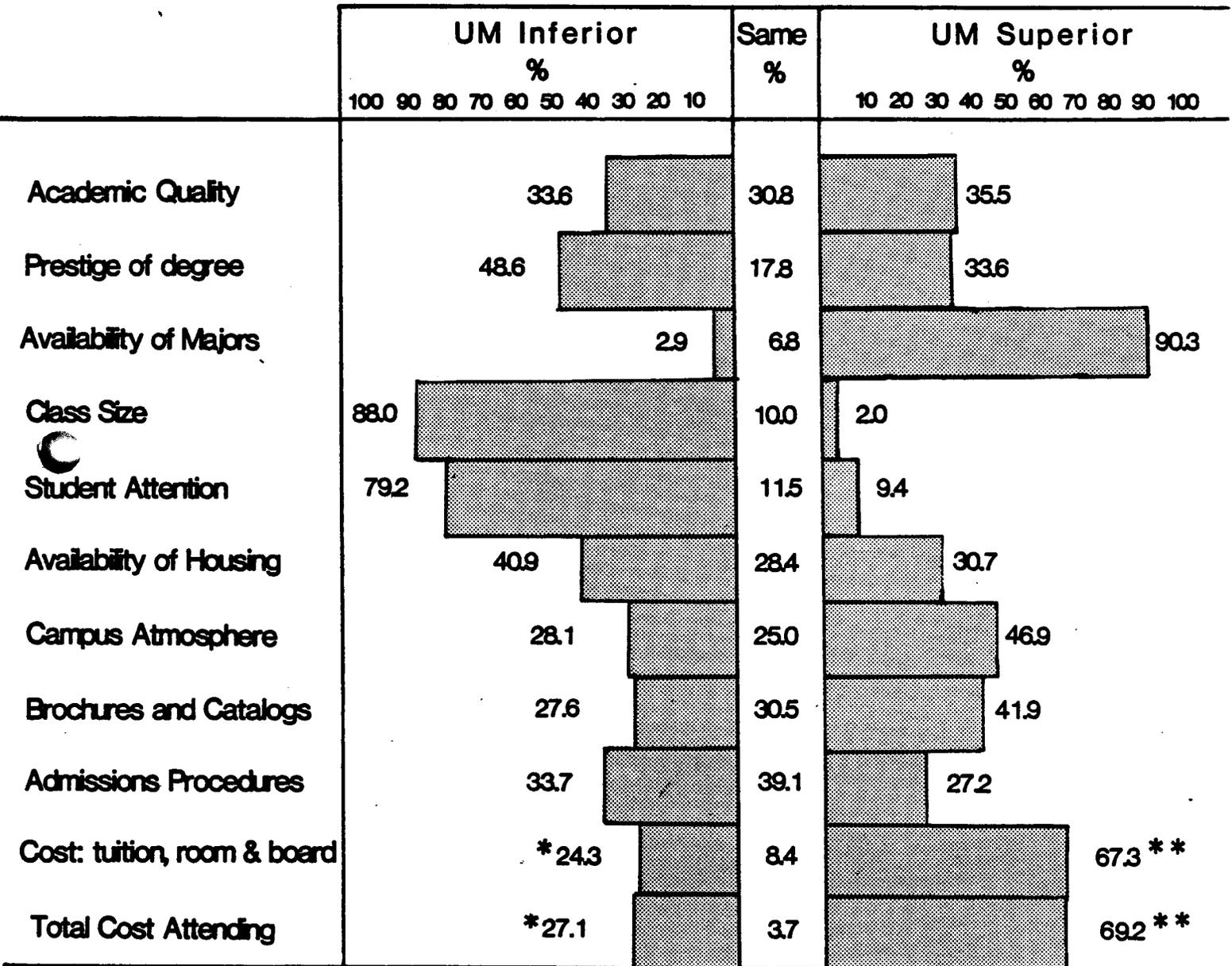
Students attending colleges outside of the five-state region rate academic quality inferior at the University of Minnesota almost as often as those at Minnesota private colleges (Table 9). Cost issues and program availability were rated as strengths of the University. As with the other groups, the size of classes, attention given to individual students, housing, and campus atmosphere were perceived as weaknesses of the University of Minnesota.

COLLEGE ATTENDING: University of Minnesota
 Applicants to UM CLA or IT

TABLE 5

BALANCE SHEET

Rating of UM vs. Present or Alternative School



* UM more expensive

** UM less expensive

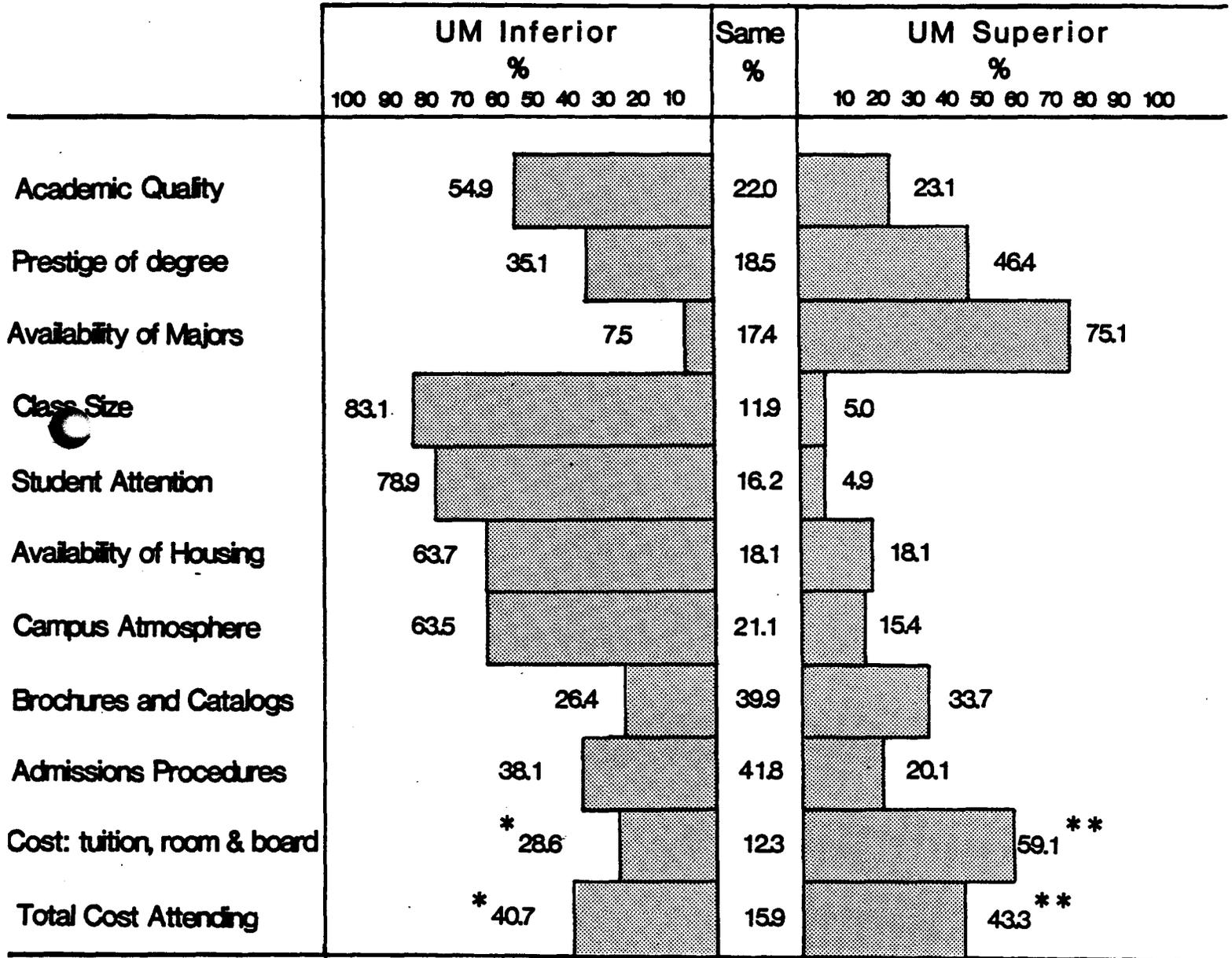
COLLEGE ATTENDING: No Shows Total

Applicants to UM CLA or IT

TABLE 6

BALANCE SHEET

Rating of UM vs. Present or Alternative School



* UM more expensive

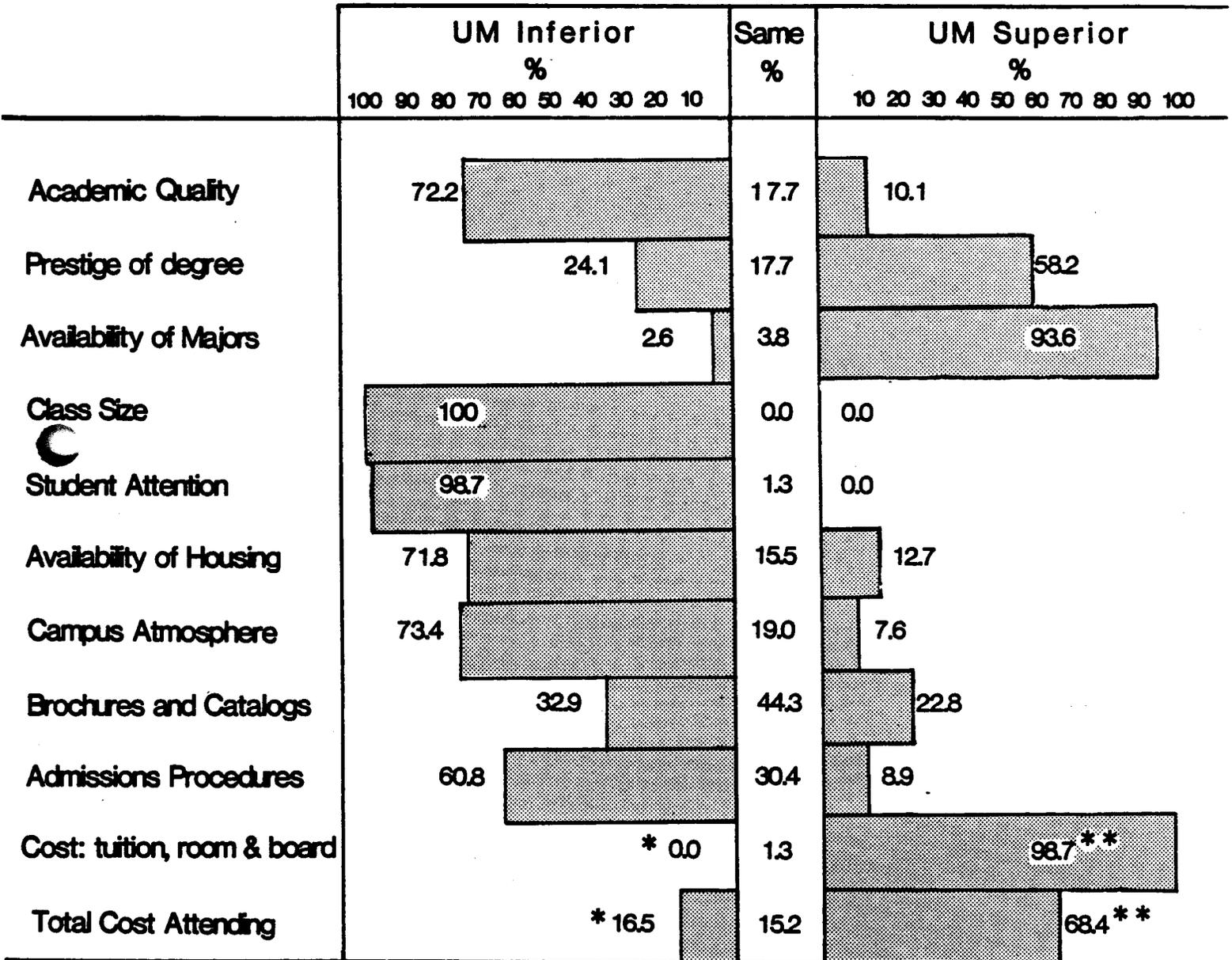
** UM less expensive

COLLEGE ATTENDING: Minnesota Private College
Applicants to UM CLA or IT

TABLE 7

BALANCE SHEET

Rating of UM vs. Present or Alternative School



* UM more expensive

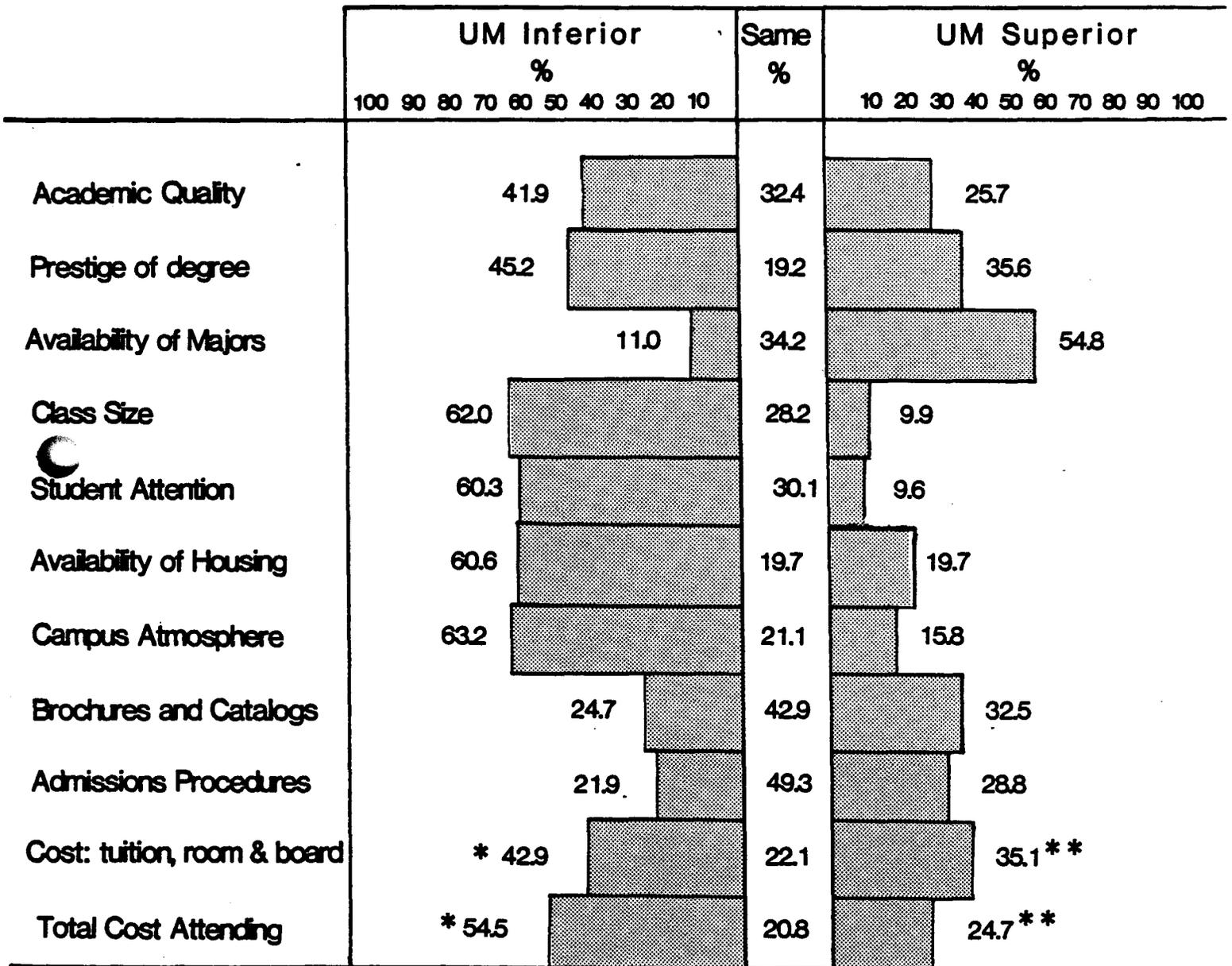
** UM less expensive

COLLEGE ATTENDING: College in WI, IA, ND or SD
 Applicants to UM CLA or iT

TABLE 8

BALANCE SHEET

Rating of UM vs. Present or Alternative School



* UM more expensive

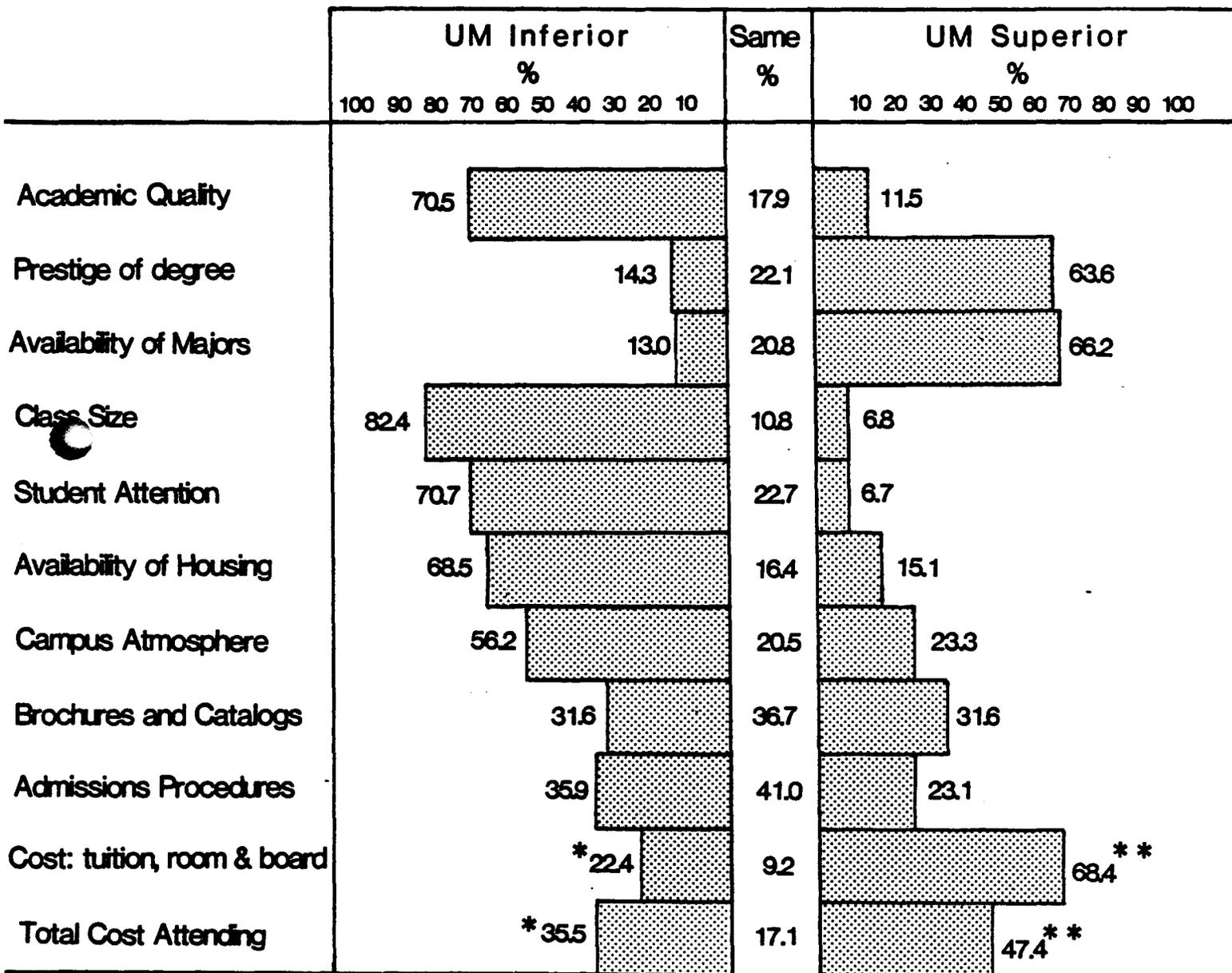
** UM less expensive

COLLEGE ATTENDING: Out of Region College
 Applicants to UM CLA or IT

TABLE 9

BALANCE SHEET

Rating of UM vs. Present or Alternative School



* UM more expensive

** UM less expensive

WHAT WOULD ATTRACT HIGH ABILITY STUDENTS TO THE U of M?

Several programs directed toward high ability students have recently been proposed at the University of Minnesota. These include merit-based financial aid (regardless of need), special on-campus housing, honors seminars, special study-abroad programs, and streamlined admissions procedures. A proposed honors center would include all of these features. To test the possible impact of these proposals on attendance decisions, no-shows were asked what effect, if any, the various options would have had on their decision to attend the University of Minnesota (response categories ranged from "not at all" to "a great deal").

Financial Aid

Since financial aid seemed to be a particularly important aspect, all applicants were asked if they had received financial aid offers from the University and/or from their alternative (or present) school. When financial aid offers are compared for shows and no-shows an important difference emerges (Table 10). While slightly more shows received aid offers from the University than from their alternative school (31% vs. 24%), almost three times as many no-shows received offers from their present school as did from the University. This pattern of aid offers holds across all the no-show subgroups, but is especially strong for those attending private colleges in Minnesota or schools outside of the five-state region. This suggests that financial aid offers by the University of Minnesota might be an effective way to attract high ability students. And indeed, over half of no-shows said that \$1000 per year of merit-based aid would have made "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of difference in their decision to attend the University of Minnesota (Table 11). This response was given by 65% of no-shows attending schools in surrounding states and about 45% of those in Minnesota private colleges and out-of-region schools. Lesser amounts of aid, for instance \$500 per year, do not seem to have a large impact on attendance decisions.

Other Options

Another idea being considered is special on-campus housing for high-ability students. Honors students would be guaranteed space in a residence hall with special study and computer facilities. This option did not appear as attractive as financial aid to no-show applicants--about one quarter of out-of-state students thought it might make "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of difference, but only 18% of those in Minnesota private colleges thought so. In addition, many respondents indicated that they did not even approve of this idea.

A series of informal honors seminars with well-known faculty might be attractive to Minnesota private college students (29%) but appears less so to others.

No-shows, especially those attending schools in the surrounding states, indicated interest in opportunities to study abroad for credit. Thirty percent of all no-shows indicated such a program might have affected their decision to attend the University.

Another concept being considered is streamlined applications procedures for high ability students. Students would fill out only one application form for admissions, financial aid, and housing, and would be given early notification of decisions on all of these things. Again, this idea appeared attractive to students in Wisconsin, Iowa, and North and South Dakota, and, to lesser extent, those attending out-of-region schools. Those in Minnesota private colleges were less impressed with this idea.

Honors Center

When all of these ideas are combined into a special honors center, almost 60% of no-shows responded that it would have made "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of difference in their attendance decision. Again, the strongest effect seems to be with out-of-state students.

Overall, \$1000 per year merit-based aid awards appear to be the single factor most likely to attract high-ability applicants to the University of Minnesota. When incorporated into an honors center, a somewhat larger proportion of no-shows indicated that they might have attended the University. Students attending private colleges in Minnesota, however, appear to be less responsive than others to most of the options investigated here. For these students, class size and individual attention (or their perception of these factors) may be more important. Options that suggest personal attention, such as honors seminars do seem to be appealing to these students.

TABLE 10

FINANCIAL AID OFFERS BY
U OF M AND OTHER SCHOOLS

	NO-SHOWS ATTENDING				
	Shows Total (N = 144)	No Shows Total (N = 289)	MN Private Colleges (N = 79)	Colleges in WI, IA, ND, SD (N = 77)	Out of Region Colleges (N = 94)
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Offered Aid by UM	31.1	23.9	29.1	22.1	23.4
Offered Aid by current/ alternative school	24.3	68.5	82.1	51.9	73.1

TABLE 11

WHAT MIGHT ATTRACT HIGH ABILITY NO-SHOWS?*

Program	NO-SHOWS ATTENDING			
	No Shows Total (N = 272)	MN Private Colleges (N = 79)	Schools in WI, IA, ND, SD (N = 77)	Out of Region Colleges (N = 79)
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
\$500 Merit-based aid	22.4	10.1	32.5	15.2
\$1000 Merit-based aid	54.8	45.6	65.2	44.8
Special Housing	23.2	17.7	24.7	24.0
Honors Seminars	21.6	29.2	14.3	21.5
Study-abroad	30.1	29.1	35.1	25.4
All-in-one application**	26.9	19.0	33.8	25.3
Honors Center	58.8	49.3	67.6	54.4

*Percentages of no-show respondents who said that the program would have made quite a bit or a great deal of difference in their decision about the U of M.

**Combined application for admission, financial aid, and housing with early notification.

IMPLICATIONS

The data have a number of possible implications for designing programs and publications to attract high ability students. One way to discuss these implications is in terms of approaches which might be effective in attracting all high ability students and those which might be especially effective in attracting particular subgroups. Several themes emerge from this study.

A General Theme: Money Talks

The responses suggest that financial aid programs might be a key factor in attracting all groups of no-shows. Among all groups of no-shows, many more were offered financial aid by their present school than were offered aid by the University of Minnesota. The pattern is particularly striking for no-shows attending private colleges but it cuts across all school types. Among shows, the opposite pattern was the case: More shows were offered aid by Minnesota than were offered aid by their alternative school. Minnesota appears to win high ability students primarily when it outdoes other schools in offering some aid. When Minnesota does not come through with an aid offer of some sort, the individual goes elsewhere.

The balance sheets confirm the findings. When compared to private schools, Minnesota wins in terms of the cost of tuition and fees, but its advantage is considerably decreased when net costs are considered, taking into account financial aid offers. Compared with other schools in the Upper Midwest and elsewhere, the University has little or no advantage in perceptions of either tuition costs or net costs.

If money talks, then \$500 a year only whispers. Majorities of all no-show groups said that a \$1000 a year merit aid offer might have made quite a bit or a great deal of difference in their decision about attending Minnesota. Considerably fewer said that \$500 would have made a difference.

Attracting Students from Minnesota Private Colleges: Dealing with the "Zoo of M" Image.

In looking at why the University loses students to the Minnesota private colleges, the perceived size and impersonality of the University is a dominant factor. Nearly three in four of the students attending private colleges said that the size and impersonality of the University was the main reason for their not attending. The private school attenders were virtually unanimous in rating the University worse than their present school in class size and attention to the individual student. It is likely that in their minds small class size and personal attention is equated with quality.

To make serious inroads into the numbers of students lost to Minnesota private colleges, the University will need to address both the image and the substance of its size. To some extent the image of the University as the "Zoo of M" is exaggerated. Actively refuting the exaggerations of the University's class and program size may help persuade some students that the size is not as bad as it seems.

At the same time the University combats the exaggerated impersonality of the institution, it should also recognize the extent to which the impersonality is a fact. Special programs designed to give high-ability students a more personalized educational experience, such as special seminars and an honors center, might help recover students from the Minnesota private colleges. However, basic services should not be neglected. Campus atmosphere, housing, and applications procedures were rated lower at the University than at competing schools by no-shows. Some students even mentioned specific incidents of poor treatment at the University and the "old and dingy" appearance of campus buildings.

No matter what it does, the University will not fool anyone into thinking it has the same atmosphere as a small liberal arts college. However, finding ways to personalize the institution for certain students and at the same time being more responsive to all students in terms of basic service, could translate into gains in the number of students who would choose the University.

Attracting Students from Schools in the Upper Midwest: A Special Place in the Right Place

No-shows now attending schools in Iowa and reciprocity states are in some ways a diverse lot, and need to be analyzed further as smaller subgroups. These applicants were not nearly so concerned about the size and impersonality of the University (especially since many of them are attending UW-Madison). However, location was much more of a concern. It is likely that the group includes both students from Minnesota because they want to leave home and students from the adjacent states who decided to stay closer to home. The University has to do something to convince one group to stay while convincing the other group to leave.

To accomplish both objectives, the University needs to convince students that the University is an exciting, special place for high-ability students, while convincing their parents that the costs of attending Minnesota are favorable. The honors center program, involving a range of both financial and academic programs, received the strongest endorsement from students who chose schools in the neighboring states.

The students who go to adjacent states are a particularly good subgroup target for intensified recruiting efforts because the probabilities for success with them are potentially higher than among those who go to Minnesota private schools and schools outside the region. The University may not be able to change its impersonal image (and reality) overnight, but it may be able to capitalize on its natural strengths--diversity and cost advantages--among those who do not care so much about its inherent weaknesses.

Attracting Students from Out-of-State Schools: Quality Counts

In many ways the persons who go out of the Upper Midwest to attend college are like those who go to schools in the reciprocity states. They do so because the cost/quality/location equation tilts in favor of an out of state school. They need a compelling reason for staying in Minnesota or making the effort to leave their home to come to the Twin Cities.

For these persons, the quality part of the equation may be especially important. More students in this group than in other groups said that academic program quality was the main reason why they did not attend. To penetrate the national market, the University will need to portray a stronger image of its quality, talking about its true strengths in a wide variety of academic fields. The University will need to convince the talented student that it holds its own in the company of the finest universities in a given field. Additionally, speaking about the special attractions of the Twin Cities area may also be productive.

A General Theme: The University as "Big Apple"

In many ways the University is like a large city. It can be a very cold, intimidating, and impersonal place, but it can also be an exciting and diverse place, rich with challenge and opportunity. The diversity of the University does come through to prospective students but it may need to be portrayed more forcefully. The fact that a student can study virtually any academic area he or she wishes, or get involved in a vast array of co-curricular activities may outweigh the drawbacks of size.

Besides emphasizing the strengths of size the University could also emphasize the "neighborhood" concept. Those who live in large cities know that finding a neighborhood of people who care about the same things and look out for each other can be the key to making life in a large place bearable. The University can't change its size but it can help its students, particularly its brightest ones, to find their neighborhood on campus.

A General Theme: Educational Value

Another general theme emerging from the data is that the University is seen by those who do decide to attend as a good compromise among educational quality, cost, location, and opportunity. An advertising theme centered on a "pretty good university at a pretty good price" is not very exciting, but this does seem to be the perception of the University by most applicants. Even those who go elsewhere, and who rate the University as worse than their present school, do not see it as a place where students get a bad education. Any strategy which shows the University as a good value, and capitalizes on this pre-existing perception, is likely to be well-received.

A General Theme: Where's the Prestige?

The ratings of the prestige of a degree from the University of Minnesota and alternative schools are puzzling because they are the opposite of what might be expected. Shows and no-shows attending schools in the surrounding states tended to rate the University as lower in the prestige of its degrees. On the other hand, no-shows in Minnesota private colleges and out-of-region schools tended to rate the U of M higher than their present schools. Apparently, students who chose to go to private colleges thought they sacrificed prestige for quality, while those who chose the U of M thought the same thing.

One explanation for these findings is that the question had different meanings for different people. For some the term "prestige" may have meant the practical value of the degree for career advancement, while for others it may have had connotations of exclusivity or elitism.

The findings may also be indicative of the "clout" of a U of M degree in Minnesota (but not in adjacent states). The public, including prospective students, may see the U of M degree as aiding a career in Minnesota, because the U of M is the flagship of the state's higher education system. Capitalizing on this perception may be a useful way to make the University attractive to students who might go elsewhere, especially to surrounding states. U of M literature might talk about the placement and career successes of its graduates, especially those who have stayed in Minnesota to make their mark.

A General Theme: Special Attention but Not Elitism

Other studies have found that large public universities are attractive to some high ability students because they are seen as more democratic or less elitist than private colleges. There was some indication of this viewpoint in the present study. For instance, when asked about the possibility of special housing for high ability students, over a quarter of shows, and over a third of no-shows, said that they disapproved of the idea of guaranteed special housing for high-ability students. Several specifically commented on the unappealing snob-bishness of this idea.

The University needs to be cautious about the nature of the special programs developed for high ability students. Programs which seem too elitist may alienate the bright student who chooses the University for the diversity of its student body, and the equality of its opportunities.