

**STUDENT**  
**EQUITY**  
**PROGRAMS**

**FINAL REPORT**

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One of seven non-cognitive variables found to be related to the success of minority college students on predominately white campuses is their ability to understand and deal with racism (Sedlacek, 1987). This variable has not been shown to be related to the success of white students. Indeed, many white students, faculty, staff and administrators are aware of racism only in times of crisis or conflict. The Black student on a white campus may confront racism on a daily basis.

Other -isms reside in society and on college campuses, - ageism, sexism and ableism chief among these. In the last few years, the University of Minnesota has made concrete efforts to confront these issues and promote diversity on its campus. From the Taborn Committee Report to the creation of the Office of the Associate provost and Associate Vice President with special responsibility for minority affairs to the hiring of Dr. Cross to fill that position, the University is well on its way to establishing "new standards of excellence for dealing with diversity" (Hasselmo, 1989).

In all the recent actions, there seems to be an implicit assumption that initiatives in Minneapolis will somehow impact equally on campuses in the entire university system. While this may be true in the long run, UMD has yet to gain substantial benefit from the many efforts in the Twin Cities. UMD has to make its own substantial initiatives in the quest for excellence in diversity.

UMD has made an important movement towards that goal in the creation of the Achievement Center. The stated goal of the Achievement Center is to "provide academic support services that empower students to participate actively in the academic community and achieve academic success." (Achievement Center brochure) The Achievement Center offers a wide variety of academic support services (Supportive Services, Access Center, Career and Placement, Orientation, Leadership, and Academic Advising). Dr. Belote, Director of the Achievement Center, commissioned a consultation to "review the concept

and assess the feasibility and viability of a Student Equity Program." The Student Equity Program would be directed by a person who would have multiple duties (manage, coordinate, plan, direct, write proposals, seek funding, assist in recruitment and retention, advise and make recommendations to the Director of the Achievement Center) and report to the Achievement Center Director.

The initial stage of the consultation included the consultant's participation in a diversity workshop presented at UMD by Dr. Charles Taylor (an excellent workshop but very poorly attended by the UMD community), attendance at part of an Achievement Center staff meeting, an introduction to Achievement Center staff and directors and various campus administrators. In addition, members of the Achievement Center staff were interviewed.

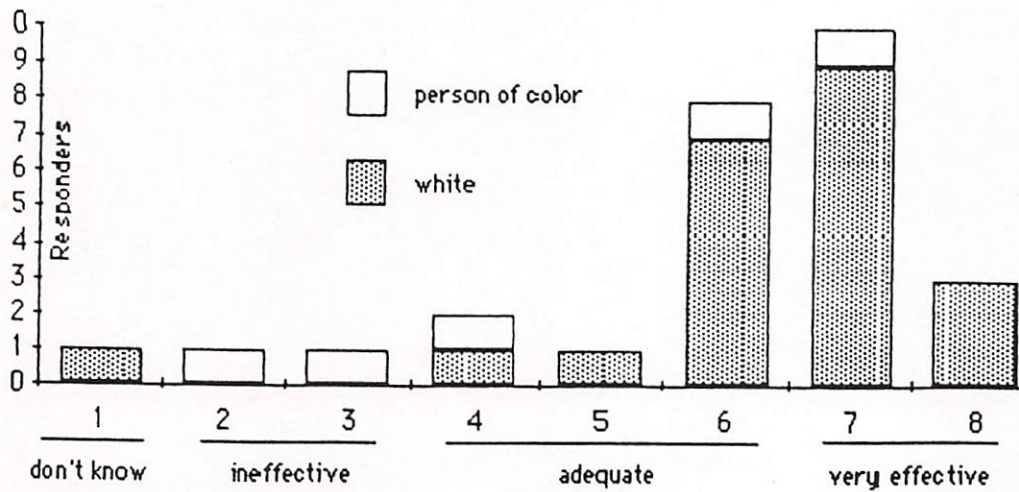
The next stage of the consultation involved assimilation of the information gathered and adaptation of the Minority Student Services Self-evaluation instrument (Taylor, 1989) for use in the next stage of the process. The Self-evaluation instrument includes items derived from the research literature that have been shown to be important in the recruitment and retention of minority and other special students.

The assessment phase included interviews with thirty-four members of the university community. Twenty-seven of those interviewed completed and returned the rather lengthy survey. The survey assessed perceptions of the university in fourteen areas: pre-collegiate activity; *recruitment*; admissions; matriculation; *orientation, freshman year*; financial aid; *academic advising*, counseling and career placement; *achievement center*; faculty involvement; student incentives; *social factors*; and *affirmative action*. Highlighted areas were chosen for analysis because of their relevance to the Achievement Center equity program. Following are results of selected multiple choice items.

1. Orientation

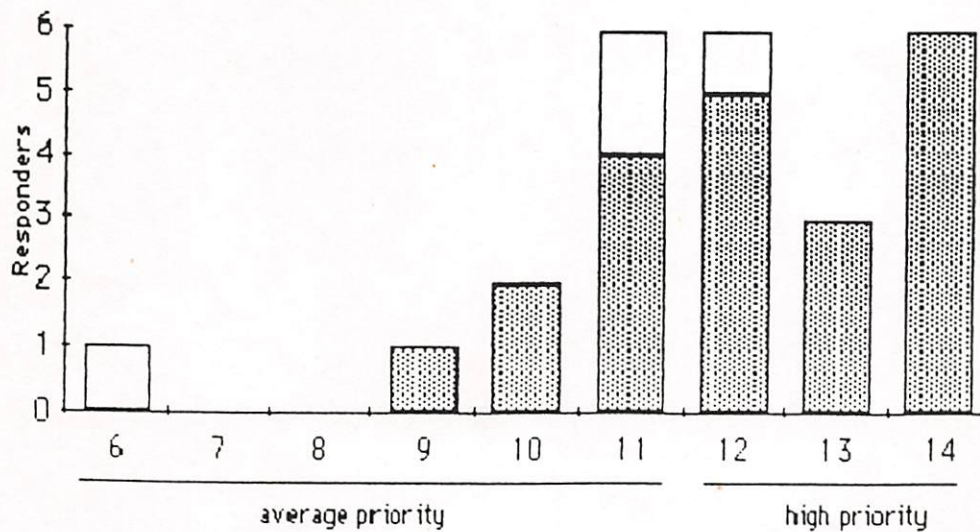
A

How effective are UMD's current orientation efforts?



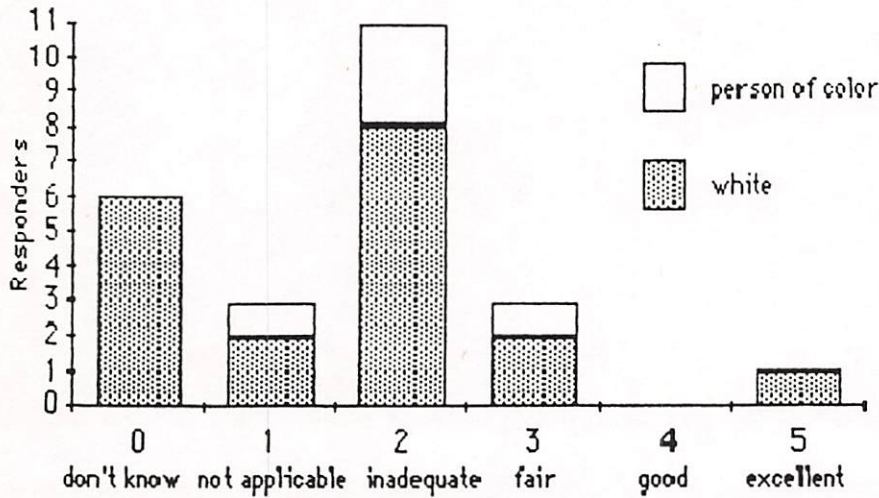
B

In terms of priority/resource issues, how important are orientation efforts to UMD's overall special students' programs?



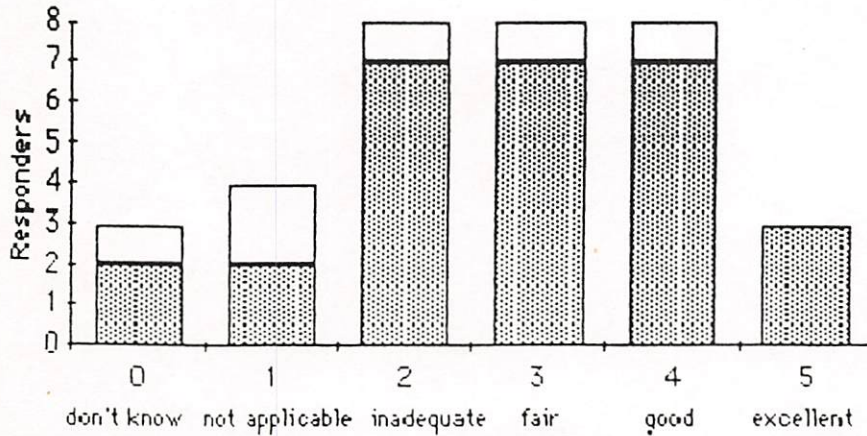
## 2. Freshman Year A

Creative scheduling used so that minority students aren't isolated in classrooms



## B

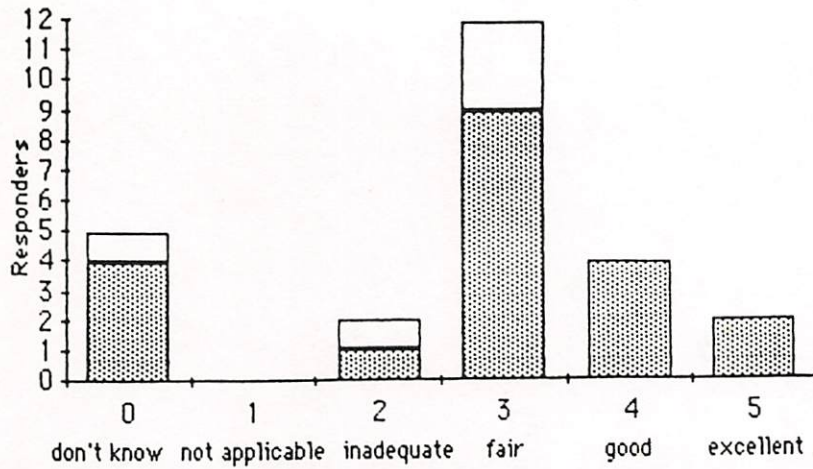
Freshman year targeted for special activities



## C

C

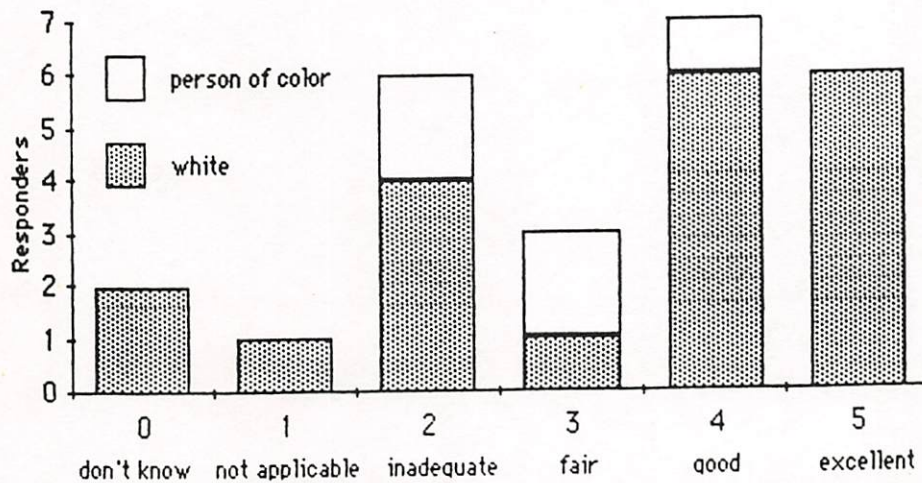
## Freshman made to feel part of a community



## 2. Freshman Year

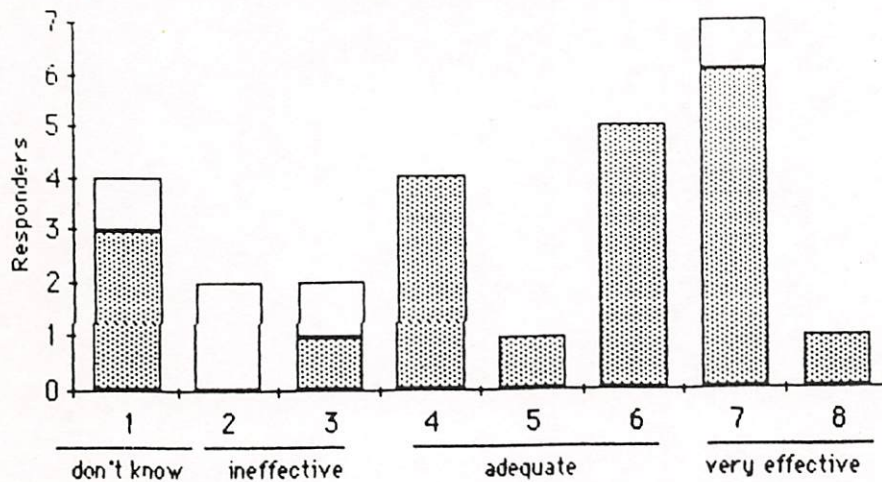
D

## Freshman course offered in study skills, team building, cultural acclimatization and self-esteem



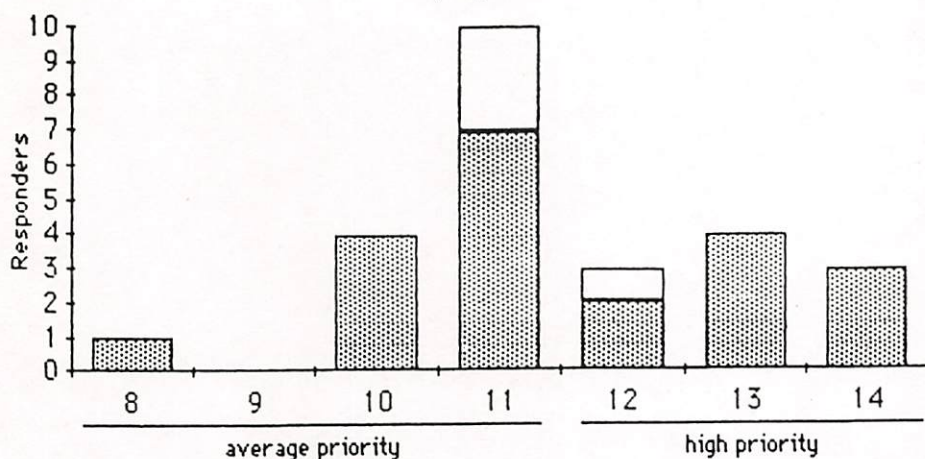
E

## How effective are UMD's current freshman year efforts?



F

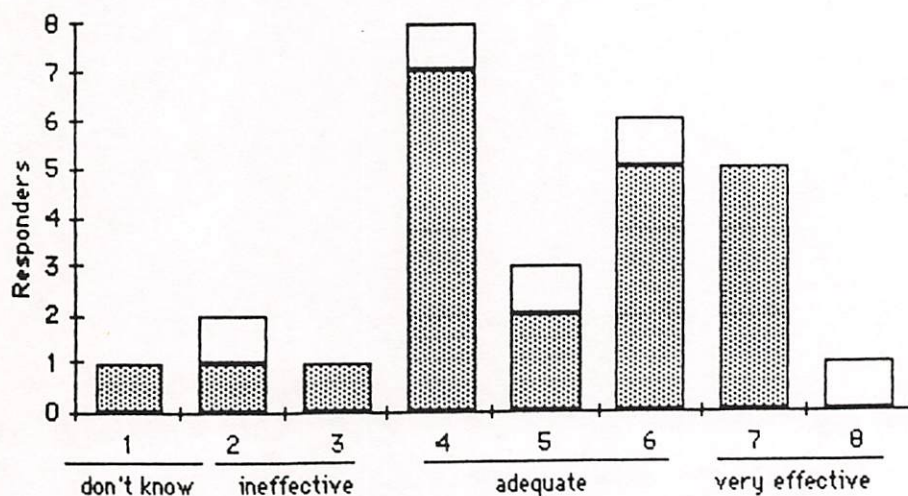
In terms of priority/resource issues, how important are freshman year efforts to UMD's overall special students' programs?



3. Academic Advising

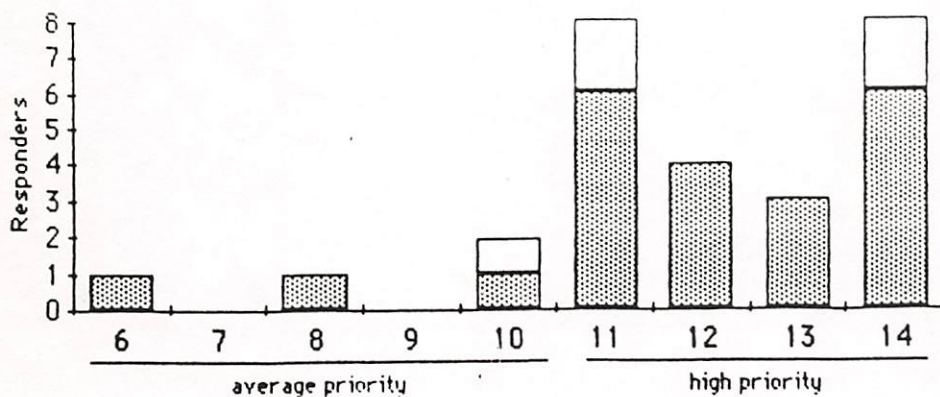
A

How effective are UMD's current academic advising efforts?



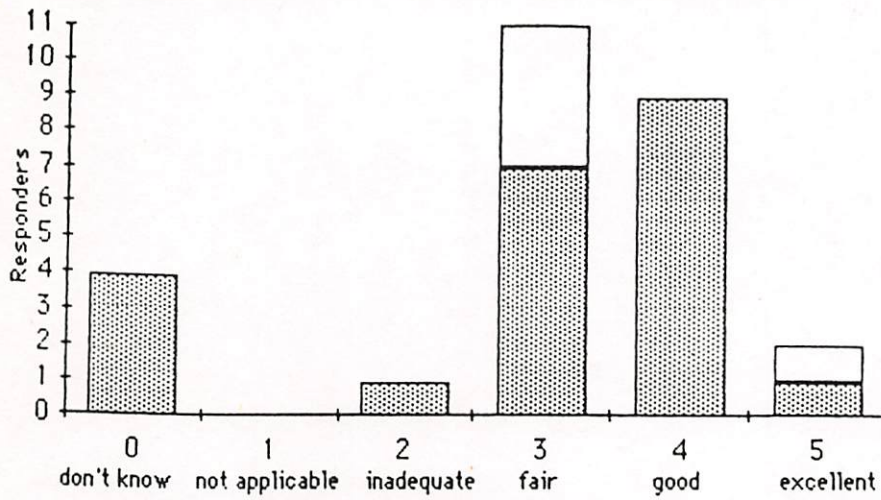
B

In terms of priority/resource issues, how important are academic advising efforts to UMD's overall special students' programs?



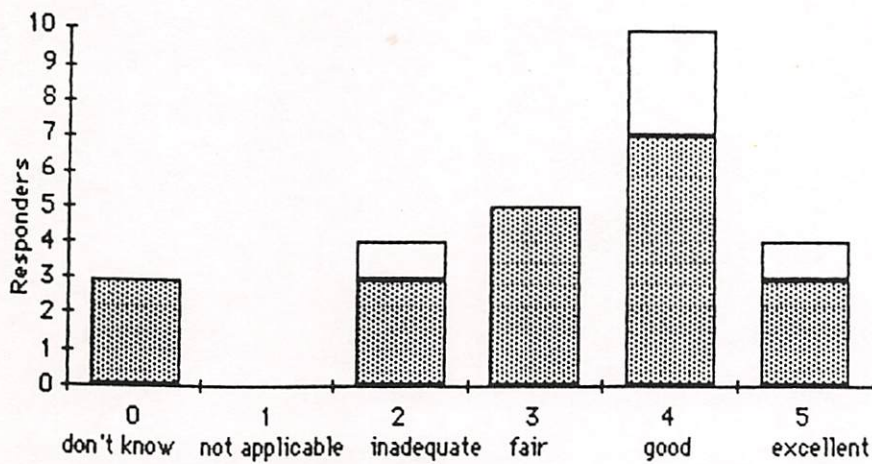
#### 4. Achievement Center A

Achievement Center: Academic difficulties diagnosed early



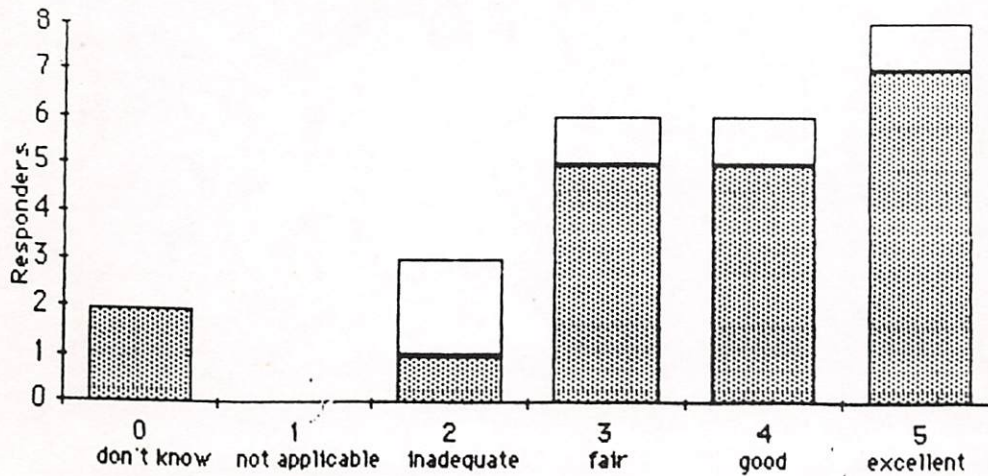
B

Achievement Center: Linkages established with faculty and academic departments

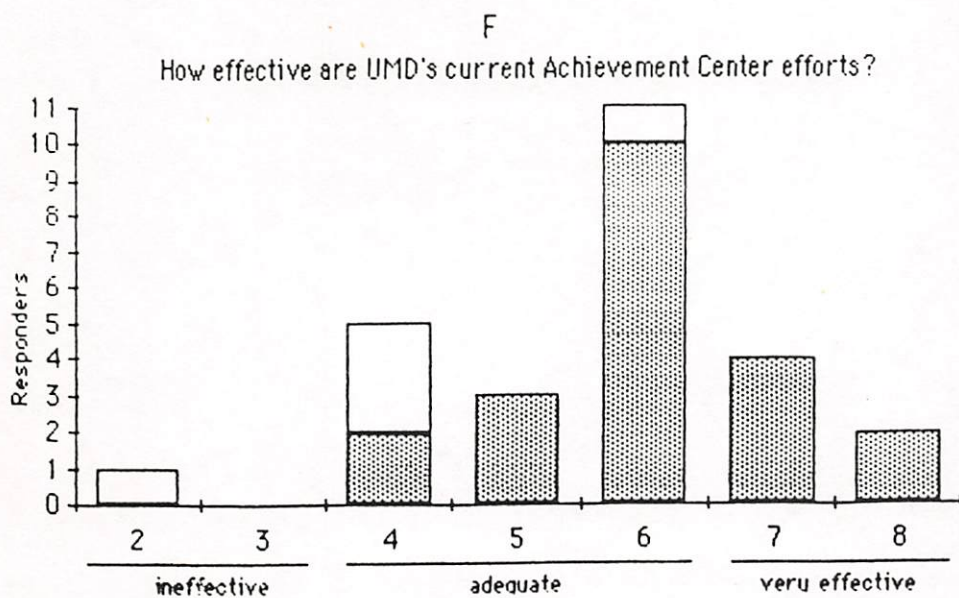
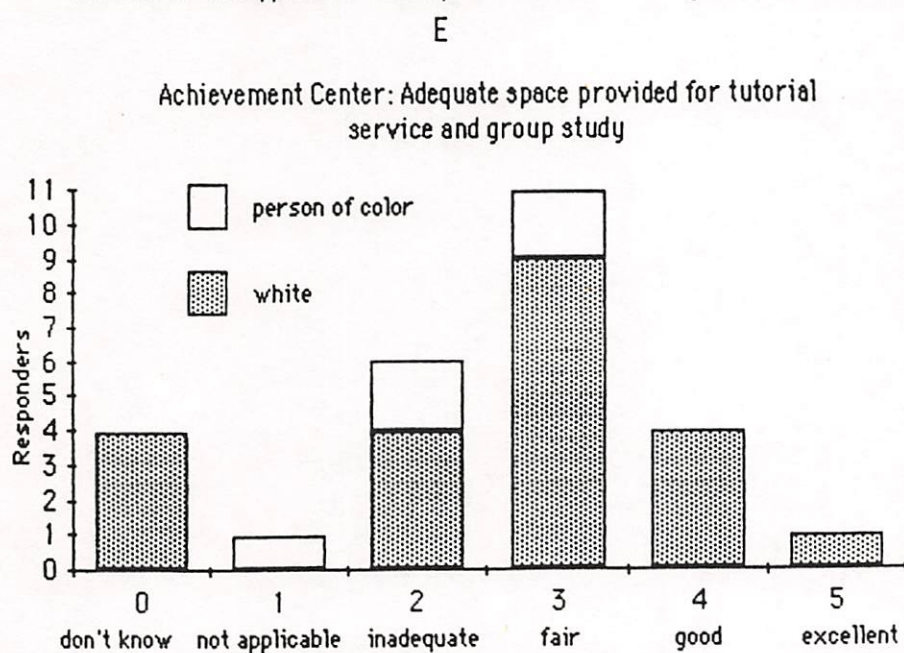
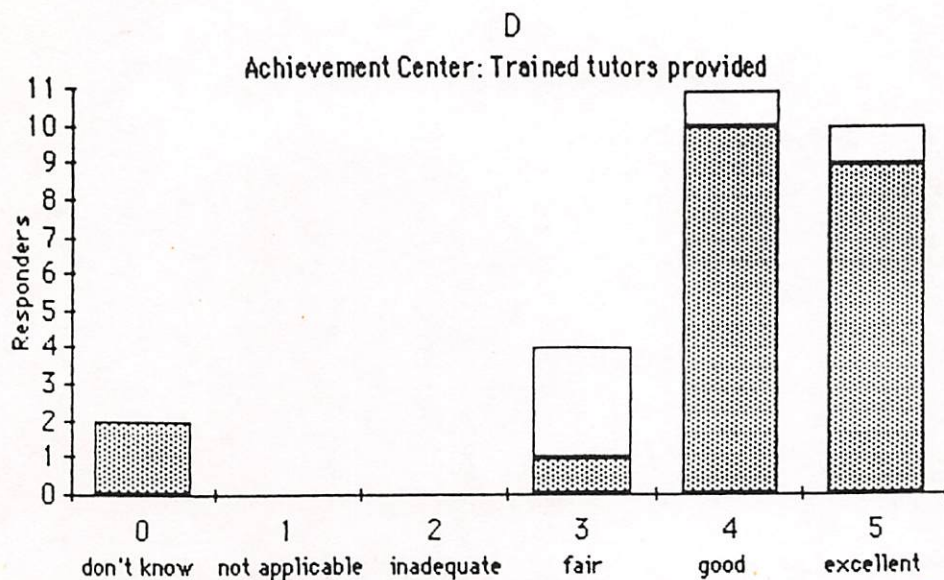


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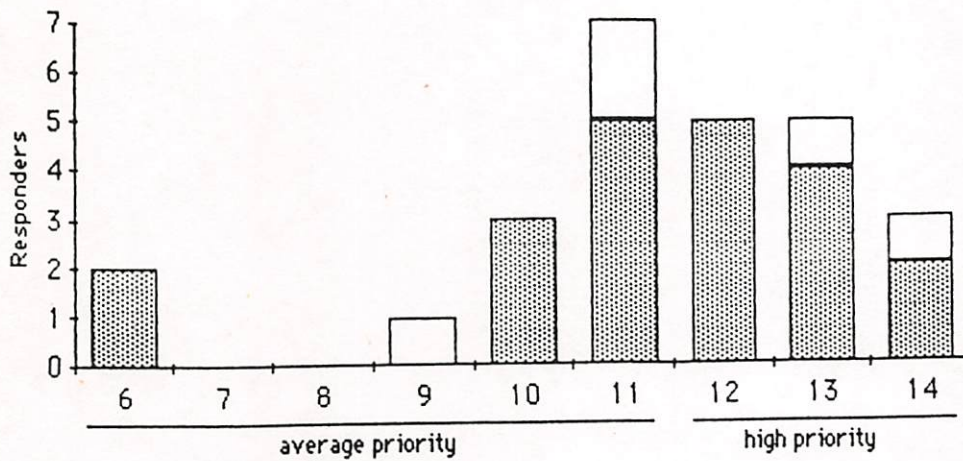
Achievement Center: Remedial help provided in a non-stigmatized environment







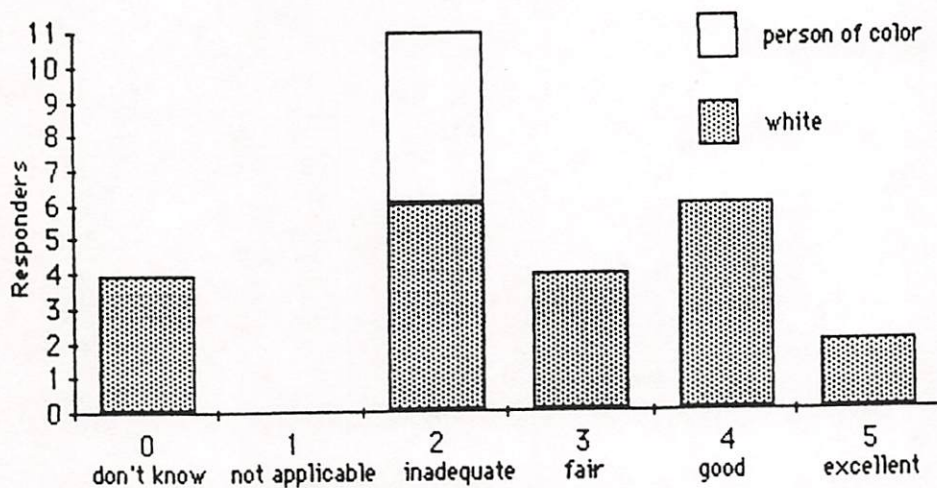
In terms of priority/resource issues, how important are Achievement Center efforts to UMD's overall special students' programs?



### 5. Social Factors

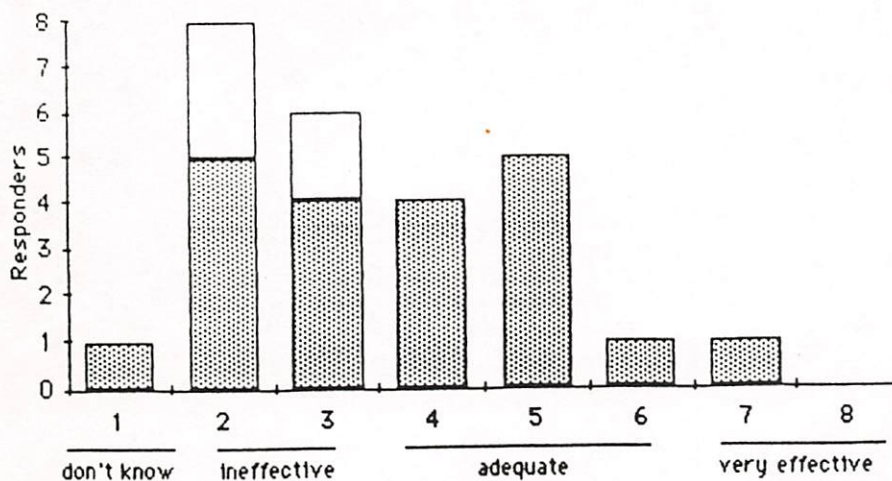
A

University policies have been evaluated in terms of institutional racism.



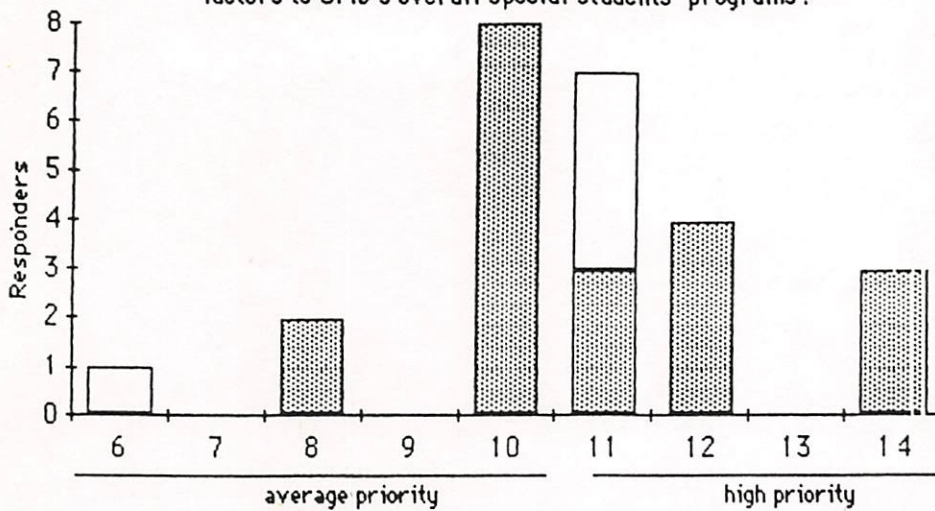
B

How effective are UMD's current efforts to address social issues?



C

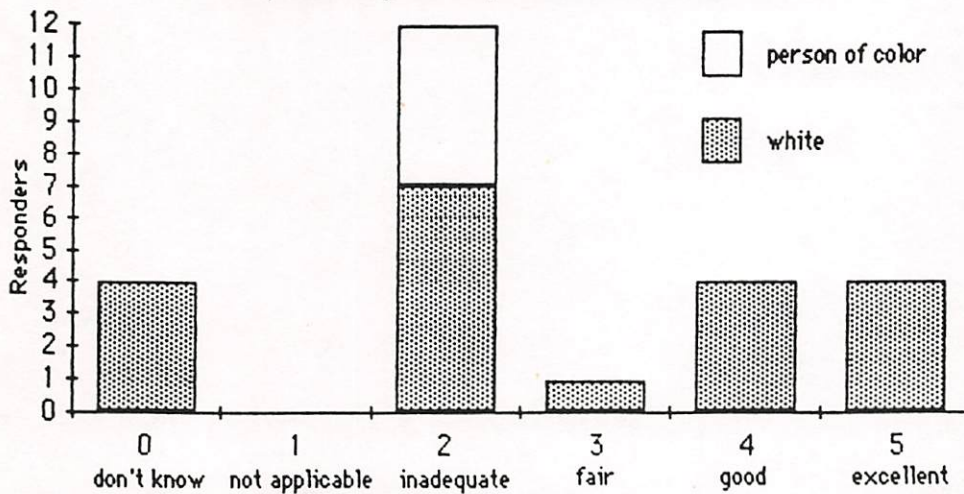
In terms of priority/resource issues, how important are social factors to UMD's overall special students' programs?



6. Affirmative Action

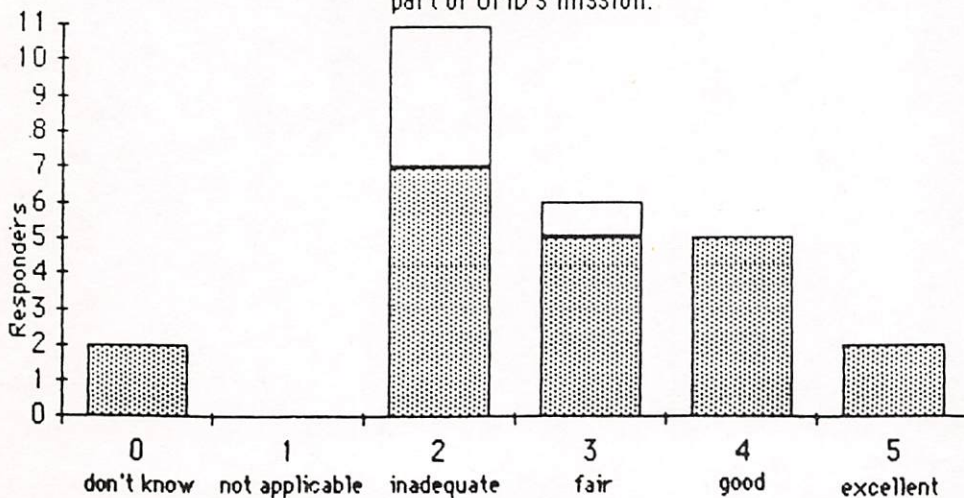
A

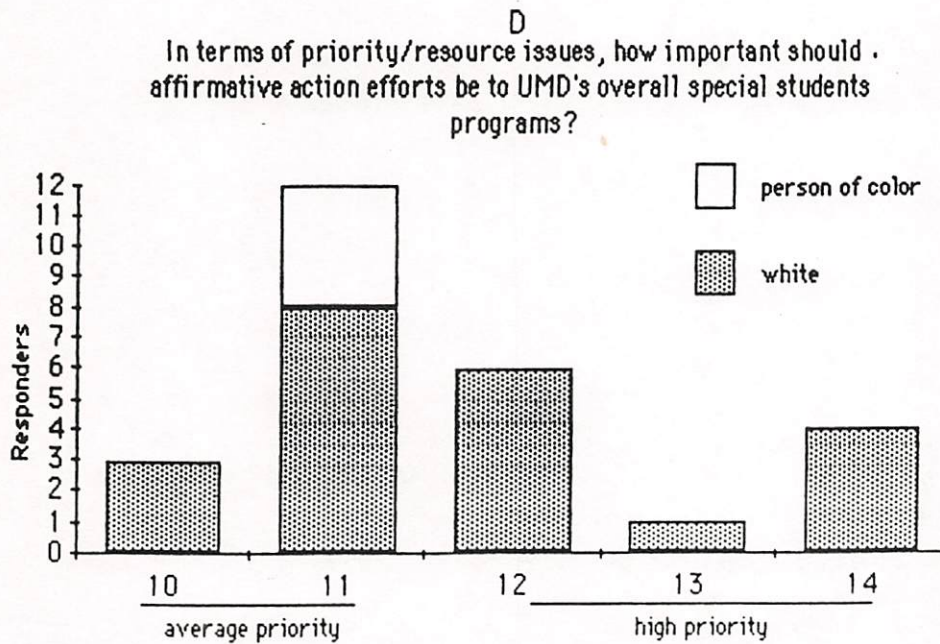
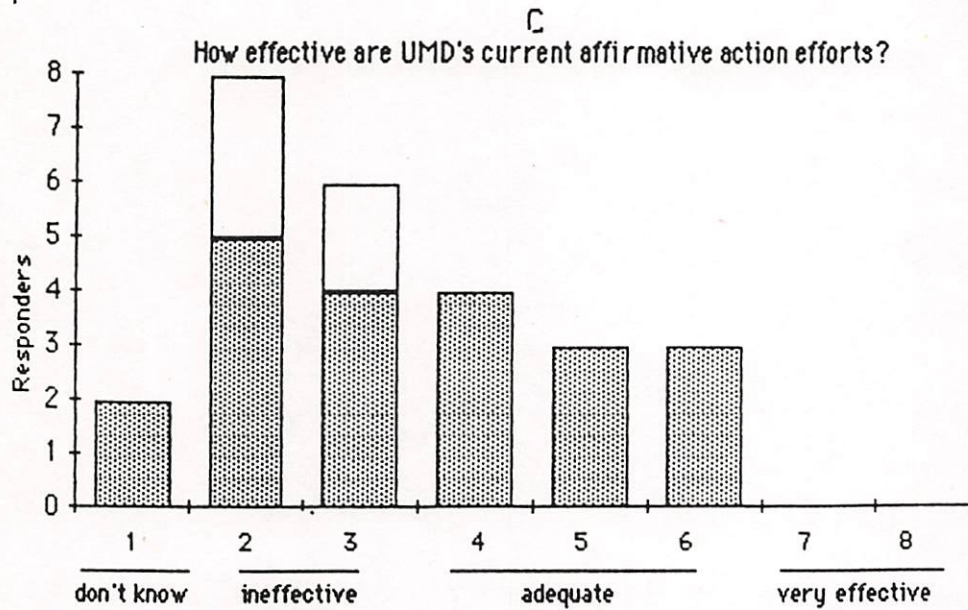
Entire campus informed that retention is everyone's responsibility via campus wide retention committee.



B

Affirmative action policy enforced and a pluralistic staff stated as part of UMD's mission.





## Discussion of Results

The major activities conducted by the Achievement Center (in sections Orientation, Freshman Year, and Achievement Center) received consistently positive ratings. Still, areas that need improvement are evident from responses of persons of color and others (feeling part of a community [2-C], creative scheduling [2-A], non-stigmatized remedial help [4-C], and tutors [4-D]).

Two major problem areas are evident: institutional racism [5-A] and affirmative action [6A-D]. No person of color believed that UMD's policies had been evaluated in terms of institutional racism. They were joined in their belief by an equal number of white persons. Clearly, this area needs further attention.

Equally inadequate are the the affirmative action efforts. More people (including all people of color) rated UMD's affirmative action efforts as ineffective than persons who rated the efforts as effective. It is quite possible that UMD needs and deserves more than a half-time affirmative action officer.

### Findings from Selected, Open-ended Survey Items

(1) How is the entire university involved with recruitment?

<i>Perceived level of involvement</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
Very involved	6	0
Involved	4	1
Not very involved	4	3
Noticeably uninvolved	3	0
Don't know	1	0

#### Selected Comments:

"Quite extensive via collegiate units and special program advisors." (high level administrator)

"Minimally." (person of color)

(2) How has the university prepared to receive minority and other special students?

<i>Perceived level of activity</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
Active, observable efforts	5	0
Some attempts made	7	1
Limited, insufficient efforts	2	1
No noticeable efforts	1	2
Don't know	2	0

Selected Comments:

"Excellent orientation services are available - but since faculty and upper class students (4 and 5) who help are rarely minority, services aren't as effective with special students as they should be." (administrator)

"No special effort to help the student understand the system." (person of color)

(3) Do minority students have sufficient minority role models in positions that demonstrate success and authority?

	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
Yes	4	0
No	16	5
Don't know	1	0

Selected Comments:

"The minority students are better off for advising than regular students." (student)

"No - and this is crucial to the success of student diversity." (faculty member)

(4) What is the campus perception of the Achievement Center?

	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
Very positive	5	0
Positive	15	2
Negative	0	1
Very negative	0	1

Selected Comments:

"It serves students effectively even with limited resources." (administrator)

"It is not for minority students. A lot of students have problems with the tutors. It's almost like they speak a different language." (person of color)

(5) How are social problems like racism, alienation and cultural conflict dealt with at UMD?

<i>Perceived activity</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
Effective	1	0
Limited need, some positive efforts	8	1
Limited, inadequate efforts	3	1
Problems ignored and/or denied	3	3

Selected Comments:

"So far there has been a very limited amount of conflict, so no real experience base to comment on."  
 (high level administrator)  
 "Ignored or denied." (faculty)

- (6) What is UMD's financial commitment in terms of soft money and hard money in funding minority student services?

	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
Some Knowledge of amounts	2	1
Adequate and/or fair	4	0
Minimal, not enough	5	1
Inadequate	0	3
Don't know	5	1

Selected Comments:

"Not adequate in absolute terms but probably fair in terms of overall budget constraints." (administrator)  
 "The hard money that is and was sought by minorities is controlled by whites." (person of color)

- (7) What is the next step UMD should take to continue and improve current services to all its special students?

<i>Content of suggested action</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Persons of Color</i>
More money, financial support	7	1
Multicultural education for all	6	1
Minority role models	3	2
Reflect, assess, plan	4	0
Increased student, faculty involvement	5	2
High level commitment to action	2	0
High level minority hire	2	0
Enhance affirmative action	2	0
Coordinate, integrate programs	2	0

Selected Comments:

"Establish an equity position at the assistant vice-chancellor level with experience and academic credentials commensurate with the position." (administrator)  
 "Better planning, outreach, faculty involvement." (administrator)  
 "Make a financial commitment to service provision and genuine effort to recruit minority individuals to the university community." (faculty)  
 "Role models in programs in hard sciences, behavioral sciences and administration - not just in programs for 'people of color'." (person of color)

Discussion

On items 2 (reception of minorities), 5 (social problems), and 6 (financial commitment), the perceptions of the majority of persons of color were quite different from the perceptions of white respondents. This may be due in part to the minority person's need and ability to "recognize and understand racism".

Question seven was designed specifically to assess the perceived need of an equity program in the Achievement Center. Each person who completed the survey was told why the project was being done and specifically informed of the coordinating function of the equity program director position. Even with this knowledge, only two people mentioned coordination or integration of programs in their response.

The most frequent response involved financial issues.

The most relevant responses endorsed the need for role models in high level positions. Maddox-Wiley, in her 1986 report on Black student programs at UMD, referenced research that found

that having more Blacks in lower and middle level "Black positions" does not mean that colleges have succeeded in affirmative action. The few minority staff who are hired are employed on "soft money" or special grants and are given small resources for accomplishing large tasks, and few of them are in key decision-making roles (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1976). (pp. 60-61)

This, unfortunately, is an accurate description of the position of Equity Program Director as presented by Dr. Belote (see attached job description). This similarity is undoubtedly inadvertant, as Dr. Belote's commitment to diversity at UMD is unquestionable. Her hiring of an outside person to evaluate her proposal is an example of the type of attention and risk-taking that others at UMD would do well to emulate to further the quest for diversity.

At this time, UMD cannot afford to hire another powerless, middle-level minority person. Even though sometime in the future an equity program director might be a wise hire, the next minority hire at UMD should be a high level administrator or full-time, tenure-track faculty. This is consistent with several of the suggestions from question seven in the survey.

In addition, the following possibility might be considered. The hiring of a high-level assistant to Dr. Cross who would be paid by the main campus and housed in Duluth



would have several advantages: close liaison with Twin Cities prevents duplication of services and allows better communication; the budget at UMD would not be affected; reflect a long-term commitment to diversity in the entire university system.

Still another possibility would be to aggressively search for a minority person to fill recently vacated high-level administrative positions at UMD.

None of these suggestions are exclusive.

A high-level administrative person at UMD would do much to improve recruitment of minority faculty and perhaps allow students of color to concentrate less on the effects of racism and more on the joy and fulfillment of the education UMD has to offer.

Thank you all for your cooperation.

## References

Maddox-Wiley, C. (1986). *Black Students and Programs at the University of Minnesota-Duluth: The Need for Change*. Master's Thesis, University of Minnesota, Duluth.

Hasselmo, N. (July 6, 1989). Letter to University Administrators.

Sedlacek, W.E. (1987). Black Students on White Campuses: 20 Years of Research. Journal of College Student Personnel. November.

Sedlacek, W.E. and Brooks, G.C. (1976). Racism in American Education: A Model for Change. Chicago, Nelson-Hall.

Taylor, C. (1989). Minority Student Services Self-evaluation Instrument. Praxis Publications.