University of Alberta

Student Outcomes Assessment in Canadian Bible Colleges

by

Ian Christopher Elford

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Administration

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1996

ISBN 0-612-18034-4

Canada

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all those who seek to increase the effectiveness with which Bible colleges equip their students to serve others. May this study help them in fulfilling their calling.

Abstract

Postsecondary institutions are increasingly required to demonstrate that they are achieving their objectives. Student outcomes assessment (SOA) is one technique that institutions can use to ascertain the extent to which students are attaining the program goals of the institution and the personal goals of the individual student. This study investigated the use of SOA activities in Canadian Bible Colleges. Particular attention was given to the nature of the activities that are employed and the use of the information obtained in institutional planning.

The population of the study included the member colleges of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges. Data were gathered in three ways: (a) a questionnaire was completed by the presidents of 31 colleges to obtain data with respect to the kinds of SOA activities, institutional characteristics, administrative structure of SOA, and use of SOA information in planning; (b) a questionnaire was completed by 66 faculty members and 74 administrators from 30 colleges with respect to involvement of faculty members in the administration of SOA activities, use of SOA activities, and use of SOA information in institutional planning; and (c) 22 interviews were conducted with 10 presidents, 8 academic administrators, 3 faculty members, and 1 other person from 10 colleges with respect to the organization of SOA, use of SOA activities, and use of SOA information in institutional planning.

The major findings were as follows: (a) there was considerable support for SOA within Canadian Bible colleges, (b) several colleges employed well-designed SOA programs, (c) some participants were unclear about what constitutes SOA, (d) much of what was considered SOA was actually student evaluations of the facilities and services of the college, (e) minimal attention was given to assessing the ministry readiness of students, and (f) personnel in the colleges desired increased use of SOA activities and information.

A conceptual model for the use of SOA in planning, based on Astin's (1991) Input - Environment - Outcome model and Provus's (1971) discrepancy evaluation model was developed. Specific recommendations for practice and further research are included.

Acknowledgements

The completion of a project like this requires the assistance of many people. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge, with thanks, the contributions of all those who have helped me to bring this life-long dream to completion.

Ted Holdaway, my advisor, has provided invaluable assistance. His detailed editorial input, incredible speed of response, timely encouragement, and insightful and provocative comments established him as an advisor par excellence. Thanks, Ted.

Mike Andrews, who, in addition to being on my committee, filled in as advisor during the critical two months during which I pulled together all the loose ends and developed the conclusions, has not only assisted me to clarify my thinking but has also been a friend.

I thank the other members of my committee, Don Richards, Dave Collett, and Dave Sande, for their assistance and critical analysis of my work which served to make it better.

I am grateful for the time and effort expended by Dr J B Cousins, the External Reader, to assess and critique this thesis.

In addition, I want to acknowledge the contribution to this thesis provided by each of the members of the faculty who have taught me courses and/or interacted with me over various issues over the last two years.

I am grateful for the support and encouragement provided by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, especially that received from Dr Randall Bell, the Executive Director, and the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges. I also want to acknowledge, with gratitude, the substantial financial support provided by the University of Alberta and the Government of Alberta.

The greatest contributors to this achievement have been my family: my wife, Kim, and my children, Ian, Michelle, and Shauna. I love them all and appreciate their willingness to keep being uprooted so "Dad could go back to

school, again!" Their sacrifices have not gone unnoticed. Their encouragement and love have sustained me many times.

Lastly, I acknowledge that all of this is only possible because of the gifts and abilities entrusted to me by God. I am convinced He made me able to accomplish this task, and brought all these people and resources together to assist me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Major Purpose of the Study	2
	Specific Research Questions	2
	SOA Practices	2
	Use of SOA Information in Institutional Planning	3
	Significance of the Study	3
	Terminology	6
	Assumptions	7
	Limitations	8
	Delimitations	8
	Organization of the Thesis	9
2	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	11
	Bible Colleges in Canada	11
	History of Bible Colleges	11
	Nature of Bible Colleges in Canada	14
	Research Literature Related to Bible Colleges	16
	Student Outcomes Assessment	18
	Theory and Definition	19
	SOA in the United States	22
	SOA in Canada	23
	SOA in Christian Higher Education	24
	Use of SOA Information in Planning	26
	Kinds of Uses	26
	Principles for Effective Use of SOA	30
	Examples of Uses of SOA Information	38
	Conceptual Framework	38
	Summary	44
3	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD	46
	The Population	46
	Research Method	46
	Questionnaires	47
	Pilot Studies	48

CHAPTER PAGE

Timeline 48
Interviews 50
Data Analysis 51
Validity 51
Reliability 52
Justification for the Selected Method 52
Ethical Considerations 53
Summary 53

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONDENTS 54
Characteristics of the Colleges in the Study 54
Distribution of Colleges by Year Founded 54
Distribution of Colleges by Type of Institution 55
Distribution of Colleges by Size 55
Distribution of Colleges by Location 55
Distribution of Colleges by Affiliation With the AABC 56
Characteristics of Individual Respondents 56
Institutional Affiliation of Individual Respondents 57
Positions of Individual Respondents 57
Organization of SOA 57
Administration of SOA 57
Primary Administrative Responsibility 58
Offices Responsible for SOA 58
Responsibilities of SOA Offices 59
Status of SOA 60
Patterns for Conducting SOA 61
Summary 65

5 METHODS FOR GATHERING AND REPORTING SOA DATA 66
Methods for Gathering SOA Data 66
Current Use of SOA Activities 66
General Findings 67
Ministry Readiness Activities 71
Academic Development Activities 73

CHAPTER PAGE

Student Satisfaction Activities 76
Other SOA Activities 82
Characteristics of Colleges Using SOA Activities 85
Differences in the Number of SOA Activities Used 85
Differences in the Kinds of SOA Activities Used 87
Intended Use of SOA Activities 92
Methods for Reporting SOA Information 95
Summary 97
Methods Used to Gather SOA Data 97
Differences Between Questionnaire and Interview Responses 97
Confusion With SOA 98
Anecdotal Data 99
Effective Use of SOA 99
Differences in the Use of SOA Activities 100
Size 100
Affiliation With a Denomination 100
Affiliation With the AABC 101
Reporting of SOA Information 101
Conclusion 101

6 SATISFACTION WITH SOA ADMINISTRATION AND ACTIVITIES 102
Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA 102
Degree of Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA 103
Satisfaction of Faculty Members With Faculty Involvement 103
Satisfaction of Administrators With Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA 105
Satisfaction of Faculty Members and Administrators With Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA 107
Satisfaction With SOA Activities 107
Analysis of Satisfaction Means 108

CHAPTER PAGE

Satisfaction Means for All Respondents 108
Satisfaction Means Classified by Position of Respondent 108
Satisfaction Means Classified by Size of College 111
Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With a Denomination 113
Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With the AABC 115
Analysis of Means for Ideal and Current Use 115
Means for Current Use 115
Means for Ideal Use 118
Difference of Means for Ideal and Current Use 121
Summary 126
Satisfaction With Faculty Member Involvement in SOA Administration 126
Satisfaction With the Use of SOA Activities 126
Satisfaction Means for All Respondents 126
Satisfaction Means Classified by Position of Respondent 127
Satisfaction Means Classified by Size of College 127
Satisfaction Means Classified by Denominational Status 128
Satisfaction Means Classified by AABC Status 128
Current Use of SOA Activities 128
Ideal Use of SOA Activities 129
Difference of Ideal and Current Use of SOA Activities 129
Conclusion 129

7 USE OF SOA INFORMATION IN PLANNING 130
Use of SOA Information in Institutional Planning 130
Unusable Responses 130
Usable Responses 132
Academic Planning 134
Program/Curriculum Planning 134

CHAPTER PAGE

Instructional Planning 135
Personnel Planning 136
Tenure/Promotion Decisions 136
Staff Recruitment 138
Resource Allocation Planning 139
Donor/Alumni Relations 139
Operating Budget/Resource Allocation 141
Capital Projects 142
Use of SOA Information in Strategic Planning 143
Student Planning 144
Student Advising 144
Student Recruitment 146
Student Retention 148
Planning for Accreditation 149
Summary 150
Data Quality 151
Unusable Data 151
Confusion With SOA 151
Brief Responses 152
Uses of SOA Information in Planning 153

8 SATISFACTION WITH USE OF SOA INFORMATION IN PLANNING 154
Analysis of Satisfaction Means 154
Satisfaction Means for All Respondents 154
Satisfaction Means Classified by Position of Respondent 156
Satisfaction Means Classified by Size of College 156
Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With a Denomination 160
Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With the AABC 160
Analysis of Means for Ideal and Current Use 163
Means for Current Use 163
All Respondents 163

CHAPTER PAGE

Classified by Position of Respondent 163
Means for Ideal Use 166
All Respondents 166
Classified by Position of Respondent 166
Differences of Means for Ideal and Current Use 166
All Respondents 169
Comparison With Analysis of Satisfaction Means 169
Classified by Position of Respondent 172
Current Use and Satisfaction With Use of SOA Information 174
All Respondents 174
Classified by Position of Respondent 174
Classified by Size of Institution 175
Classified by Denominational Affiliation 175
Classified by AABC Affiliation 178
Current Use of SOA Information and Use of SOA Activities 180
Summary 182
Satisfaction Means for the Use of SOA Information in Planning 182
Current Use Means for the Use of SOA Information in Planning 183
Ideal Use Means for the Use of SOA Information in Planning 184
Differences Between Current Use and Ideal Use Means 184
Relationship of Satisfaction With and Use of SOA Information in Planning 185

9 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 187
Overview of the Study 187
Summary of Findings 188
SOA Methods 188
Use of SOA Information in Planning 192

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Additional Findings	195
	Conclusions	196
	Discussion	198
	Understanding of SOA	198
	Use of SOA Activities	199
	Organization and Administration of SOA	202
	Reporting of SOA Information	205
	Use of SOA Information in Planning	206
	Satisfaction With the Use of SOA Activities and Information	206
	Implications and Recommendations	207
	Implications for Theory	207
	Recommendations for Practice	211
	Recommendations for Further Research	213
	Personal Reflections	214
REFERENCES		219
APPENDIX A	General College Information Form Questionnaire	228
APPENDIX B	Individual Personnel Form Questionnaire	235
APPENDIX C	General Cover Letter and Instruction Sheet	239
APPENDIX D	General College Information Form Cover Letter	243
APPENDIX E	Individual Personnel Form Cover Letter	245
APPENDIX F	Interview Schedule for Presidents	247
APPENDIX G	Interview Schedule for Individual Directly Responsible for Student Outcomes Assessment	249
APPENDIX H	List of Colleges Which Participated in the Questionnaire Surveys and Interviews	252
APPENDIX I	Letters of Endorsement	254

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
2.1	Barriers to the Use of Research and Evaluation Information in Organizational Planning	29
2.2	Factors Affecting the Use of SOA Information	36
3.1	Positions of Interview Participants	50
4.1	Distribution of Colleges, Classified by Year Founded	54
4.2	Distribution of Colleges, Classified by Location	56
4.3	Frequency of Individual Respondents, Classified by Institution Size	57
4.4	Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Positions of Individual Respondents	58
4.5	Frequency of Primary Administrative Responsibility for SOA, Classified by Position Held	59
4.6	Frequency of Responsibilities of Offices Responsible for SOA	59
4.7	Frequency of Requirement to Perform SOA, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination	61
4.8	Frequency of Requirement to Perform SOA, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC	61
4.9	Frequency of Procedural Patterns for Conducting SOA for All Colleges	62
4.10	Frequency of Procedural Patterns for Conducting SOA, Classified by Size of College	63
4.11	Frequency of Procedural Patterns for Conducting SOA, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC	64
5.1	Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Current and Past Use of SOA Activities	69
5.2	Frequency of Use of SOA Activities by Colleges Where Interviews Were Conducted	70
5.3	Frequency and Percentage Frequency of the Number of SOA Activities Used by Colleges in 1994/95, Classified by Size of College	86
5.4	Frequency and Percentage Frequency of the Number of SOA Activities Used by Colleges in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination	86

TABLE PAGE

5.5 Frequency and Percentage Frequency of the Number of SOA Activities Used by Colleges in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC 87

5.6 Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Use of SOA Activities in 1994/95, Classified by Size of College 88

5.7 Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Use of SOA Activities in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination 90

5.8 Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Use of SOA Activities in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC 91

5.9 Frequency of Intended Use of SOA Activities 93

5.10 Frequency of Intended, Current, and Past Use of SOA Activities 94

5.11 Frequency of Internal Reporting Methods for Information From SOA Activities 96

6.1 Frequency of Current and Desired Faculty Involvement in Aspects of Administration of SOA, Classified by Position of Respondent 104

6.2 Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities for All Respondents 109

6.3 Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent 110

6.4 Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Size of Institution 112

6.5 Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination 114

6.6 Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC 116

6.7 Means for Current Use of SOA Activities 117

6.8 Means for Current Use of SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent 119

6.9 Means for Ideal Use of SOA Activities for All Respondents 120

6.10 Means for Ideal Use of SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent 122

6.11 Differences Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Activities 123

TABLE PAGE

6.12 Differences Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent 125

7.1 Characteristics of Colleges of Respondents Providing Usable Responses to Question About Use of SOA Information 133

8.1 Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information 155

8.2 Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent 157

8.3 Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Size of Institution 158

8.4 Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination 161

8.5 Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC 162

8.6 Means for Current Use of SOA Information 164

8.7 Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent 165

8.8 Means for Ideal Use of SOA Information 167

8.9 Means for Ideal Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent 168

8.10 Difference Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Information 170

8.11 Comparison of Results of the Analysis of Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Information With the Analysis of Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information 171

8.12 Differences Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent 173

8.13 Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Size of Institution 176

8.14 Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination 177

8.15 Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC 179

8.16 Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Frequency of Use of SOA Activities 181

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
2.1.	Interaction of Factors Affecting the Use of Research and Evaluation Information in Decision-Making	37
2.2.	Conceptual Framework for Using SOA in Institutional Planning	41
2.3.	Relationship Between Intended and Actual Student Outcomes, Student Outcomes Assessment, and Planning	42
2.4.	Conceptual Framework for the Use of SOA in Institutional Planning	43
9.1.	Model for the Use of SOA in Planning in Canadian Bible Colleges	208

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which student outcomes are assessed in Canadian Bible colleges and the extent to which information obtained from student outcomes assessment (SOA) is used in planning in Canadian Bible colleges.

In the political and social environment of the 1990s, higher education institutions are being required to measure and report their accomplishments. Various stakeholders, each with a vested interest in seeing that colleges and universities are accomplishing their goals and objectives, are demanding accountability. Governments are interested because they provide the majority of the funding for public institutions. Parents are making demands that postsecondary institutions demonstrate they are providing quality instruction because they often provide a major share of the tuition and other costs and are concerned for the future of their children. Employers want to ensure that prospective workers have the necessary abilities for the workplace. Members of the general public are involved because they ultimately provide the taxes which are used to fund public higher education and because higher education has always played an important role in setting directions for the future through the impact it has on the future leaders of society. Students, whose interests should be paramount, want to know that the education they receive at an institution is appropriate to their personal goals and needs.

In addition to external demands for accountability, institutions have internal motives for assessing student learning. Institutions regularly make plans to accomplish certain goals and to strive to fulfill their mission. In order to assess their progress they require information on student performance. SOA is often used to provide such information.

In the private education sector, where funding is limited to donors and tuition, the same concerns of similar kinds of stakeholders are present.

Therefore, private colleges must consider donors and students as important stakeholders. Donors, like governments with respect to public institutions, are concerned with demonstrated value for their contributions. Canadian Bible colleges, as private higher education institutions, need to demonstrate they are accomplishing their missions in order to attract students and donors.

Major Purpose of the Study

The major purposes of this study were to determine these two aspects: (a) the methods used in Canadian Bible colleges to gather and report data on student outcomes and (b) how information from SOA is used in institutional planning.

Specific Research Questions

The specific research questions were divided into two sections. One set of questions dealt with the SOA methods employed in Canadian Bible colleges and the level of satisfaction with such practices among faculty members and administrators. The second set of questions addressed the use of SOA information in institutional planning and the levels of satisfaction with that use among faculty members and administrators in Canadian Bible colleges.

SOA Practices

The specific research questions were as follows:

1. How are SOA data gathered in Canadian Bible colleges?
2. What methods are used to report SOA data in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 2.1 How are SOA data reported internally in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 2.2 To what external agencies are SOA data reported by Canadian Bible colleges?
3. What relationships exist between selected institutional characteristics of Canadian Bible colleges and the methods used to gather SOA data?
4. To what extent are college administrators and faculty members of Canadian Bible colleges satisfied with how SOA data are gathered in their respective colleges?

Use of SOA Information in Institutional Planning

The specific research questions with respect to the use of SOA information in institutional planning were as listed below:

5. How is SOA information used in institutional planning decisions in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 5.1 How is SOA information used in resource allocation planning in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 5.2 How is SOA information used in academic planning in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 5.3 How is SOA information used in personnel planning in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 5.4 How is SOA information used in strategic planning in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 5.5 How is SOA information used in student planning in Canadian Bible colleges?
   - 5.6 How is SOA information used in planning for accreditation (including re-accreditation) in Canadian Bible colleges?
6. To what extent are college administrators and faculty members of Canadian Bible colleges satisfied with the extent of the use of SOA information in institutional planning in their respective colleges?

Significance of the Study

The need for this study was established by the lack of existing research on the topic, recommendations from related research, and the growing need for Canadian Bible colleges to perform SOA and to use the information gained from that in planning.

A review of the literature did not identify any previous studies of the nature and use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges. However, other studies in related topics or jurisdictions indicated a need for research into the nature and use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges.

Sawchenko (1991) investigated the nature and extent of institutional research in Canadian Bible colleges. His study did not include any mention of SOA as one aspect of institutional research, but he recommended that additional research was needed to determine the impact of changing demands by constituents on the nature of institutional research and the best forms of institutional research for affecting institutional decision-making. This study incorporated Sawchenko's recommendation by exploring the impact on Canadian Bible colleges of the demands for SOA and the use of SOA information in institutional decision-making with respect to planning.

A study similar to this thesis research was conducted by Easley (1987) with respect to Canadian and American Bible colleges accredited by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC; formerly the American Association of Bible Colleges). Part of Easley's research explored the nature of Bible colleges' attempts to gather SOA information. Easley also attempted to identify the perceptions of the college faculty and administration with respect to the adequacy of the SOA practices of their respective colleges. Three key differences occurred between Easley's study and this study: (a) Easley made no attempt to differentiate between Bible colleges in Canada from those in the United States, (b) his research did not address the use of SOA information in institutional planning, and (c) his population included only Bible colleges accredited by the AABC. This thesis research, on the other hand, investigated the extent to which personnel in accredited and unaccredited Canadian Bible colleges were satisfied with their college's use of SOA activities and SOA information in institutional planning.

An important difference between Easley's (1987) study and this project was that when Easley was gathering his data in the spring of 1986, the AABC was just beginning the process of considering requiring SOA as a criterion for accreditation. According to criterion A.4.1 of the Criteria for Accreditation of the AABC, an accredited Bible college or one seeking accreditation "must

provide outcomes data that will show it to be achieving the objectives specific to each program, major, concentration, and emphasis offered" (AABC, 1994, p. 17). For these Bible colleges, conducting SOA is mandatory. Furthermore, the AABC accreditation procedures require that institutions submit "an institutional planning document" (AABC, 1994, p. 85) along with their self-study report. Thus, for the 18 Canadian Bible colleges (AABC, 1995) that are seeking or have received AABC accreditation, SOA and institutional planning are required.

SOA is generally viewed as a tool for providing input to enhance planning. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a need for Canadian Bible colleges to perform SOA and to make effective use of the resulting information in their planning. Thus, this study investigated the use of SOA information in the planning processes of Canadian Bible colleges. Whether or not Bible colleges are involved with the AABC there are still compelling reasons to implement SOA procedures and utilize the information obtained from those activities.

Within the general postsecondary sector in Canada there is increasing expectation to use SOA to verify that students are achieving what is expected. For example, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development in its October, 1994, White Paper, entitled *New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta*, indicated its intention to require all institutions receiving public funding or program accreditation through the Private Colleges Accreditation Board to demonstrate they are meeting acceptable standards through the use of performance indicators. With the increased use of SOA in higher education, whether in the form of performance indicators or otherwise, Canadian Bible colleges will likely be expected to provide potential students with the same kind of information on the degree to which their students attain their intended educational outcomes. As Banta, Lund, Black, and Oblander (1996) observed there is increasing pressure not just from accrediting agencies and governments

but also "from students and parents and from trustees and employers . . . to convince academics that they need to provide tangible, systematic evidence of what students know and can do as a result of their collective college experiences" (p. xvii).

This study explored the nature and extent of the use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges. By so doing, this study has provided information about whether these colleges are responding to the changing expectations for postsecondary educational institutions.

Terminology

"Bible college" is used in this study to refer to a postsecondary institution in which there is a core of biblical studies, an emphasis on Christian living, a Christian service component, and a curriculum which is predominantly oriented to preparation for vocational ministry.

The term "student outcomes assessment" (SOA), as used in this study, refers to actions taken by the institution, or a section/department of the institution, to attempt to assess the degree to which students, collectively, attain the general and professional educational goals of the college as well as student development goals.

"Senior academic administrator" is used to identify those respondents who responded to the question about their current position on the Individual Personnel Form as either "President" or "Academic administrator (Dean, Associate Dean)."

"Other administrator" refers to those respondents who indicated on the Individual Personnel Form that their current position was "Institutional research officer," "Student life/affairs administrator," "Librarian," "Registrar," "Non-academic administrator," or "Recruitment/enrolment administrator."

"Administrator" is used to refer generally to any and all personnel holding administrative offices.

The use of the term "faculty member(s)" with reference to respondent(s) in the study is limited to those who marked their current position on the Individual Personnel Form as "Teaching faculty member."

"Ministry readiness activities" is the term applied in this study to those SOA activities included on the questionnaire which were deemed to focus on assessing professional competence of students. The SOA activities included in this category were Christian service reports, field placement reports, employer surveys, and doctrinal defenses.

"Academic development activities" includes those SOA activities considered to be used to measure academic skills and knowledge gains or goal attainment. SOA activities classified as academic development activities were pre- and post-tests, standardized Bible content examinations, comprehensive examinations, portfolios of student work, theses/projects, standardized tests, and locally produced subject examinations.

"Student satisfaction activities" refers to those SOA activities which could be used to assess current and former students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the college's programs in attaining its goals or those of the students. Student satisfaction activities were locally produced alumni surveys, commercially produced alumni surveys, locally produced student surveys, commercially produced student surveys, graduating student surveys, and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys.

Assumptions

Several assumptions needed to be made for this research project to be accomplished:

1. Canadian Bible college administrators and faculty members knew and understood what was happening within their respective college with respect to SOA.

2. The literature related to SOA and institutional planning was applicable to Canadian Bible colleges.

3. The respondents openly, honestly, and accurately provided responses to the questions asked.

4. The five-point scales used in the questionnaire are interval scales.

Limitations

Several limitations were inherent within the design of this study.

1. The results obtained in the study were limited by the nature of the methodology. Because the study used questionnaires, interviews, and documentation only, other kinds of data available through alternative methodologies were not included.

2. The interviews were limited to the period of January and February, 1996, and by the intention of gathering additional insight into the methods being employed in SOA and the nature of the use of the information resulting from SOA in institutional decision-making.

3. The lack of similar research limited the comparability of the findings of this study.

4. The perceptions of the respondents, possibly because of lack of awareness and bias in their roles as administrators and faculty members within Canadian Bible colleges, limited the generalizability of the findings of this study.

5. The decision to limit the study to Canadian Bible colleges which were members of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges (ACBC) meant the findings were not generalizable to other Canadian non-ACBC member institutions nor to other Bible colleges outside of Canada.

6. The focus of the study on Bible colleges meant the findings were not generalizable to other postsecondary institutions in Canada.

Delimitations

The study had several delimitations which were imposed in order to enable the study to adequately examine the nature and use of SOA information in Canadian Bible colleges.

1. Only Bible colleges which were members of the ACBC were included in the study. While other Bible colleges operate within Canada, identification of them is difficult. For this reason including all Canadian Bible colleges was not possible. Therefore, in order to survey the entire population chosen for the study, only members of the ACBC were included.

2. The study focused on the kinds of activities used in SOA and the use of SOA information in institutional planning. The study did not address (a) the nature of the student outcomes, (b) the level to which Bible college students attained intended outcomes, nor (c) the nature of the educational program and activities (process variables).

3. Data on perceptions of faculty members of the Bible colleges were limited to that received from four randomly selected respondents per institution.

4. The study obtained perceptions of administrators and faculty members regarding the adequacy of the utilization of information obtained from SOA in institutional decision-making. However, other stakeholders are involved in the decision-making processes of the institutions and planning is only one application of such information.

5. The study was limited to data gathered between August 1995 and February 1996.

6. Interview data and document analysis were only used to provide additional insight to the data gathered by the questionnaire.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, significance of the study, definition of terms, assumptions of the study, limitations of the study, and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature related to Bible colleges in Canada, SOA, and the use of SOA information in planning. In addition, chapter 2 provides the conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology including an overview of the population studied, instruments used, and timeline followed. Additionally, the analytical procedures used and the issues of reliability, validity, and ethical considerations are discussed. Chapter 4 gives the characteristics of the respondents and the colleges from which they came. Colleges are described in terms of location, age, affiliation with a denomination, affiliation with the AABC, and size. Individuals are described by position held and institutional affiliation. Chapter 4 also outlines the organization of SOA procedures in terms of administrative responsibility, status, and procedural patterns. Chapter 5 furnishes the findings of the study with respect to the methods used for gathering and reporting SOA data in the responding colleges. Chapter 6 provides the findings of the study with respect to satisfaction of administrators and faculty members with the SOA administration and activities. Chapter 7 presents the findings of the study with respect to the uses of SOA information in planning. Aspects of planning considered included academic, personnel, resource allocation, strategic, student, and planning for accreditation. Chapter 8 outlines the study's findings concerning satisfaction with the use of SOA information in planning. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with an overview of the study, summary of findings, conclusions, discussion, and implications.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study addressed the use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges. In the social and political climate of the 1990s, postsecondary institutions are expected to demonstrate that their students are attaining the expected outcomes. Therefore, an understanding of the relevant literature on Bible colleges and SOA is important. This literature review focuses on three topics: Bible colleges in Canada, SOA, and the use of SOA information in planning in higher education. This chapter concludes with an explanation of the conceptual framework which guided this study.

Bible Colleges in Canada

This section of the literature review deals with these three topics: (a) the history of Bible colleges, (b) the nature of Bible colleges, and (c) research on Bible colleges with a focus on the literature that relates to Canadian Bible colleges.

History of Bible Colleges

Witmer (1962) reported that the first Bible college, initially called The Missionary Training College for Home and Foreign Missionaries and Evangelists and today named Nyack College, was established in New York in 1882 by A. B. Simpson, an expatriate Canadian. Witmer identified Ontario Bible College, established in 1894, as the first Bible college in Canada. Brereton (1990) concluded that the early Bible colleges, which she noted generally referred to themselves as Bible or missionary training schools or institutes, were distinguished by these five characteristics: (a) brevity of program—usually under two years in order to get trained workers into service quickly, (b) practicality—such that every program included a substantial field component, (c) efficiency—which meant that only those elements deemed essential were dealt with, (d) accessibility—because many of the students lacked financial resources customarily associated with higher education at the

time, and (e) anti-classicism in educational content and methodology—because "it was not appropriate for recruits to the mission fields; it took too long and sometimes dulled their zeal" (p. 62). The forerunners of today's Bible colleges did not attempt to be equivalent to secular higher education institutions. Brereton also identified these four characteristics which also set the Bible training schools apart from the other religious higher education institutions: (a) worker training, (b) bibliocentric as opposed to philosophic in approach, (c) inclusive of women, and (d) inclusive of laity. The latter two elements were, according to Brereton, motivating factors in the early schools. In the first instance, few, if any, women were admitted into most seminaries nor were they generally eligible for ordination. Regarding the second characteristic, those who did not want to seek ordination but still sought to serve in religious vocations were not eligible for admission to seminaries because ordination was the basic objective of seminary preparation.

Further, Brereton (1990) outlined the transition of Bible colleges from lay-oriented, non-academic institutions to accredited, degree-granting institutions of higher education with a professional preparation focus. She recorded that the institutions which eventually became Bible colleges experienced enrollment increases, as well as program expansion and lengthening, between 1915 and 1930 as the institutions became more permanent and developed substantial support bases. After 1930, Brereton argued, conservative institutions developed into Bible colleges and began to seek academic credibility. At the same time, she asserted, the missionary training institutes and the more liberal Bible training institutions lost their unique roles as seminaries began admitting women, enrolling men who did not seek ordination, and broadening their program offerings. The surviving institutions, Brereton maintained, continued to emphasize practically oriented, lay ministry training and to admit more women than men. Brereton noted that during the 1940s many of these institutions began offering baccalaureate degrees, raising their entrance

requirements, increasing their library holdings, encouraging faculty members to pursue advanced degrees, broadening their curriculum to include more liberal arts offerings, and seeking some form of accreditation. In 1947 the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges was established to meet this need (AABC, 1994). In 1957 the Association dropped "Bible Institute" from its title. In 1973 it was changed to the American Association of Bible Colleges, and finally in 1994 it reverted to the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC, 1994). Some Bible colleges in the United States also sought accreditation from the regional accrediting agencies there.

Several of the accredited Canadian Bible colleges have negotiated affiliation and/or transfer agreements with Canadian universities. However, by and large, accreditation by the AABC has not benefited Canadian Bible colleges in terms of recognition of their degrees, diplomas, certificates, and courses to the same extent as it has their sister institutions in the United States. One reason for this is because the AABC is recognized in the United States by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation, and by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation before that. A second reason is the virtual absence of accrediting agencies in Canada. A third factor is the long tradition of private postsecondary educational institutions in the United States. AABC accreditation has allowed United States' Bible colleges to be recognized as legitimate institutions of higher education.

According to Sawchenko (1991) the ACBC was formed in 1968 to promote the interchange of ideas and research results among Canadian Bible colleges. The *1994/95 Association of Canadian Bible Colleges Directory* (ACBC, 1994) listed 40 member institutions. In addition, three member colleges were not included in the directory (C. Bates, personal communication, August, 1995). (By summer 1995, one college had ceased operations.) Of these 43 institutions 14 were accredited, 3 were candidates for accreditation, and 1 was an applicant with the AABC, according to the *1995/96 AABC Directory* (AABC, 1995).

Nature of Bible Colleges in Canada

The nature of a Bible college appears to have changed over the last 15 years. In 1980 Gazard affirmed the definition articulated in the early 1960s by Witmer (1962) that a Bible college is a postsecondary institution focusing on preparing students for vocations with churches or other ministry related organizations "through a program of Biblical and practical education" (Witmer, p. 26). At about the same time, Rose (1981) adopted the then current AABC definition which referred to Bible colleges as postsecondary institutions offering baccalaureate degrees intended for people preparing for vocations within Christian churches or ministries. However, Dr. Randall Bell, Executive Director of the AABC, related that during the 1980s the role of Bible colleges was reexamined by the AABC (R. Bell, personal communication, June 1996). In 1990, he noted, the AABC revised its manual and modified its definition to say a Bible college is "an institution of higher education in which the Bible is central" (AABC, 1994, p. 16). The revised definition added that a Bible college also has as a primary mission "the development of Christian life and ministry" (p. 16) in its students. For the AABC the distinguishing characteristics of a Bible college are that every program includes (a) a core of Bible courses such that every student has at least a minor in biblical studies, (b) a general studies component which focuses "upon key concepts and philosophical issues. . . . which form the basis of the worldviews held by those to whom [students] are called to minister" (p. 38), and (c) a Christian-service component. Furthermore, the AABC declared that all learning experiences of Bible college students ought to integrate "a biblical worldview with life and learning" (p. 16). The revision demonstrated that, for the AABC, the definition of Bible college has become somewhat broader.

Millard (1995) argued that some Bible colleges began expanding their curricular offerings as early as the 1950s. He noted that some Bible colleges converted to seminaries, liberal arts colleges, and universities at that time. In

his recent study of changes in the role of Bible colleges affiliated with the AABC, he identified these three types of colleges: (a) "traditional" Bible colleges (approximately 25% of his respondents) which have maintained a church-related vocational focus, (b) "evolving" colleges (15%) which have expanded their curricular offerings and are becoming increasingly diverse institutions, and (c) "progressive" Bible colleges (60%) which have maintained the characteristics of a Bible college while expanding into other non-church-related vocational programs. Millard concluded that the continued expansion of curriculum offerings threatens to change the fundamental nature of the "progressive" colleges.

Despite these changes, studies of Canadian Bible colleges in the 1990s have continued to emphasize the professional preparation orientation. Sawchenko, in 1991, affirmed Witmer's (1962) definition of a Bible college. In his 1993 study, Penner first defined a Bible college as "a postsecondary institution with a program of studies in which Bible and Bible-related subjects form the core of the curriculum" (p. 9) which appeared to allow for a broadening in the curricular offerings. However, he went on to adopt Gazard's (1980) definition which relied on Witmer's definition. In the same manner, Wallace (1994) defined Bible colleges as "small, privately-funded, Christian colleges which prepare students for Christian ministry" (p. 1).

Every Bible college, it seems reasonable to conclude, is expected to offer programs designed to prepare individuals for professional ministry. At the same time, the AABC (1994) has recognized a broader scope to the legitimate curriculum offerings by authorizing Bible colleges to "offer programs to prepare students for various forms of employment" (p. 35). Even the modified AABC definition maintains an employment orientation. The lack of reference to the modification of the scope of Bible college curriculum in recent studies of Canadian Bible colleges may be reflective of the differences between the United States and Canada in the abilities of private postsecondary institutions to offer

programs in such fields as business, education, or social work. Alternatively, it may be because Canadian Bible colleges have maintained their traditional focus in distinction to liberal arts colleges and Christian university colleges. On the other hand, Sawchenko's (1991) study was based on research conducted in 1986 and Penner (1993) collected his data in 1989, so they may have been simply using the definition in their studies that was current at the time of data collection.

In light of the foregoing discussion, for the purposes of this study, a Bible college was defined as a postsecondary institution in which there is a core of biblical studies, an emphasis on Christian living, a Christian service component, and a curriculum which is predominantly oriented to preparation for vocational ministry.

Research Literature Related to Bible Colleges

There is a growing body of research literature with respect to Canadian Bible colleges. A search of *Dissertation Abstracts International* since 1985, the University of Alberta library holdings, and a Bible college library catalog resulted in finding 15 theses completed in the past 17 years which used Canadian Bible colleges as the population. The earliest study was Weinhauer's (1979) thesis on the relationships between Bible colleges in Canada and other postsecondary institutions. About the same time, a study of credit transfer agreements with public institutions was conducted by Gazard (1980), and Rose (1981) reported on the development of the role of the board of trustees in the governance of a Canadian Bible college. In the middle of the 1980s, Thiessen (1985) considered the attitudes of personnel in Bible colleges affiliated with the AABC toward different categories of music instruction and Kinvig (1987) explored methods used by Canadian Bible college instructors to integrate life experiences of students with classroom-based learning. In 1991, Howard completed his thesis in which he looked at the role of the academic dean in Bible colleges affiliated with the ACBC. During the same year, Sawchenko

(1991) defended his study of the status of institutional research in Canadian Bible colleges, and Schneider (1991) reported his findings on how autonomous Bible college students were in making moral judgments. In addition, a sociological study of the beliefs, attitudes, and values of students entering Canadian Bible colleges was conducted by Bredfeldt (1991). Bredfeldt compared his findings with what faculty perceived the students' beliefs, attitudes, and values were and with what a larger study had found about the beliefs, attitudes, and values of Canadian youth in general. In 1992, Palfreyman defended his doctoral thesis on the extent to which key leaders of colleges affiliated with the ACBC were mentoring other leaders. In a separate study which also investigated issues related to leadership in Canadian Bible colleges Penner (1993) addressed the roles and attitudes with respect to presidential leadership. Two comparative studies were completed in the same year. In one, Hiebert (1993) studied the impact of enrollment in a Bible college, as opposed to a public university, on faith development, while Gust (1993) compared choral music programs and attitudes of choral directors in Canadian and American Bible colleges. One year later, Gibson (1994) reported on his exploration of the attitudes towards aboriginal students in three Canadian Bible colleges, and Wallace (1994) wrote on her study of the impact of learning strategies of first year students on academic attainment. However, none of these studies addressed the use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges.

Two studies have been conducted in the last 10 years with respect to SOA in Bible colleges in the United States: Easley (1987) and Enlow (1988). Easley investigated the perceptions of various stakeholders of Bible colleges with respect to the importance and attainment of 55 specific student outcomes. In addition, he obtained data regarding the kinds of assessment instruments and activities used by these Bible colleges. Easley surveyed the academic deans of all 86 Bible colleges accredited by the AABC in 1986 in the United States and Canada as well as a sample of 32 student deans from 30 selected Bible colleges,

130 faculty members from 10 Bible colleges, and 184 alumni from the same 10 Bible colleges. He found that spiritual commitment was the outcome considered most important and most attained, while academic knowledge was viewed as least important and least attained. His study also identified that the instruments used most often by Bible colleges accredited by the AABC to measure student outcomes were student and alumni surveys, Bible content tests, the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and the College Level Examination Program.

Enlow (1988) studied the achievement of students from three Bible colleges in the United States in general education through the use of the College Outcomes Measures Project instruments. He compared the results of Bible college students with those from students in five Christian liberal arts colleges and United States national norms. He found that the Bible College students compared favorably with the other two groups of students. His study focused on specific outcomes and the determination of whether a sample of Bible college students were able to achieve as well as non-Bible college students. As such it was not comparable with this study.

This section of the literature review has dealt with the history, nature, and research literature related to Canadian Bible colleges.

Student Outcomes Assessment

Another key aspect of this study which warrants a review of related literature is student outcomes assessment (SOA). A search of the ERIC database of entries between 1984 and March 1996 using the descriptor "assessment" resulted in 26,092 citations. Narrowing it down with the descriptor "outcomes assessment" still produced 331 citations. Adding the descriptor "student outcomes assessment" produced 63 citations. When additional resources and other descriptors such as "self-study," "quality assurance," "performance evaluation," and "performance indicators" are considered, there is clearly a large body of relevant literature. A review of such a large body of literature

was beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this literature review focuses on key resources dealing with the theory and definition of SOA, its development and use in the United States and Canada, and its use in Christian higher education.

Theory and Definition

The concept of measuring and evaluating the student outcomes of higher education has been part of the nature of such institutions since they began. Yet, after nearly two decades of promotion by institutional researchers, state legislatures, and accrediting agencies, Banta et al. (1996) concluded that "it is a fact that *most* faculty still have not considered the assessment of student outcomes seriously" (p. xvii; emphasis original).

While noting that reputational ranking of universities began as early as 1910, Cave, Hanney, and Kogan (1991) argued that these rankings lack systematic application. Similarly, Borden and Bottrill (1994) believed that systematic rankings systems of higher education institutions began with the Gourman Report of 1933, and they also attacked the use of ranking systems saying they are based on an inadequate conceptual basis. They maintained that early reputation ranking systems were biased in favor of the established institutions while later systems based on peer comparisons and resource allocation were inadequate because they failed to provide data that could demonstrate whether or not the institutions were affecting students positively. They claimed that these studies could not determine whether other factors such as maturation or selectivity at entrance contributed more to the nature of the student outcomes than did the actions of the institution. Astin (1987) also discounted the value of reputational and resource-based assessment because the former is really just a "popularity contest" (p. 90) and the latter measures only the inputs of the institutions. He noted that

> the research on student development indicates that having a great reputation and abundant resources does not necessarily guarantee excellence in the educational program; indeed, some of the most effective

> undergraduate education occurs at institutions with very modest reputations and resources. (p. 90)

With the exception of the popular press, current literature does not support evaluation of institutional effectiveness based on reputation or resources alone. *Maclean's* (1995, November 20) special issue on university rankings for 1995, for example, used 20 to 22 measures in ranking Canadian universities. Only two of the elements in their model, and those only worth 2% and 3% of the total, were related to outcomes (graduation rates of second year students "within one year of the expected time period" (p. 31) and success of students in winning national academic awards). The remaining measures were based on resources or reputation.

The current literature supports two views of assessment. Halpern (1987) exemplified one view when she said that assessment refers "to the outcomes of higher education and can be used to reflect educational gains when appropriate comparisons are made between freshmen and seniors" (p. 6). Astin (1987) coined the term "talent-development" to refer to this kind of assessment which attempts to measure the value-added by involvement of students in college. Astin said talent-development assessment is of greatest interest to educational institutions because it provides the data necessary to make program improvement decisions. Likewise, Bogue and Saunders (1992) emphasized the fact that student outcomes

> center on student growth—on changes in knowledge, in skill, in attitudes, and in values. The question is whether there are differences in knowledge, skill, attitudes, and values from college entry to college exit. This is the "value-added" question of quality assurance. (p. 161)

The second view of assessment was defended by Erwin (1991) who focused attention on the degree to which students attain the performance or competency levels desired. Astin (1987) called this "outcomes" assessment. He maintained that this is the only concern of employers. He observed that employers are not interested in whether the student has made substantial gains

toward the desired objectives. Rather, he argued, their only concern is whether a student has acquired the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge for the work regardless of where or when they acquired them. Erwin explained that this approach is relevant in the current social and political environment because it focuses on accountability. Governments endorse this approach when they propose performance indicators systems to hold postsecondary institutions accountable. Nedwek and Neal (1994) were critical of this lack of concern with where the gains occurred. They argued that most assessment programs do not adequately assess the process aspect. In fact, they stated,

> one of the major leaps of faith in the field of outcomes assessment is the often untested assumption that the academic program, institution, or organizational culture was in fact responsible for, or explains variations in, student outcomes and performance. (p. 83)

In effect, the value-added approach is more formative and the outcomes perspective is more summative.

Students are probably interested in the results of both types of assessment. However, in a pragmatic sense, when their reasons for entering a college relate to preparing for employment, their primary concern would be for an outcomes approach.

McLeod and Atwell (1993) maintained that measuring student outcomes is "probably the key essential in institutional effectiveness measurement" (p. 37). Similarly, Borden and Bottrill (1994) concluded that outcomes assessment has the ability to provide information that may lead to conclusions about the effectiveness of an institution, or a unit of an institution, in attaining its objectives.

Notably for this study, Easley (1987) clarified what is meant by assessment within a Bible college when he defined it as "the process of locating evidence to show that specific or general outcomes have been achieved by the students" (p. 10). Clearly, he adopted the outcomes assessment model. Because of the predominance of professional preparation programs in Canadian Bible

colleges and the use of the outcomes approach by the AABC, the term "student outcomes assessment," as used in this study, refers to actions taken by the institution, or a section/department of the institution, to attempt to assess the degree to which students, collectively, attain the general and professional educational goals of the college as well as student development goals. This definition is not intended to deny the talent-development approach. Instead, it was considered important to first address whether outcomes were being assessed at all, before investigating whether Bible colleges in Canada area attempting to measure the value-added by the college experience.

SOA in the United States

SOA appears to be an accepted, if imposed, practice in the United States. As a result of a 1993 survey, El-Khawas (1993, as cited in Banta, 1993) reported that 97% of American colleges and universities were or planned to be conducting outcomes assessment activities. Hutchings and Marchese (1990) noted that by 1990 nearly 40 states had mandated SOA. The prevailing mood in the United States has been to hold postsecondary institutions accountable for public and private money that they spend. The tradition of private and public institutions having to demonstrate effectiveness and stability through regional accreditation procedures may have created a climate of acceptance for SOA.

Neal (1995) stated that the SOA movement originated in the United States "in the 1980s with discussions focusing on campus-level educational quality, undergraduate instruction, and assessment of teaching and learning. The resulting assessment strategies were internally focused, institutionally developed, and largely voluntary in nature" (p. 6). Neal went on to say that

> the call for accountability in the 1990s has changed tone, however. Public policy makers, for example, seem less interested in the issue of instructional quality and more concerned with issues of productivity and efficiency. In addition, earlier assessment initiatives based on voluntary participation have given way to mandated systems of institutional reporting. (p. 6)

Furthermore, he observed that

> independent colleges and universities in the United States are also facing new demands for accountability through increased governmental regulations such as State Postsecondary Review Entities and expanded assessment demands by accrediting agencies. Concurrently, most private institutions have developed strong boards of trustees composed primarily of corporate executives. These corporate executive officers often bring a different management philosophy to their academic institutions, with greater focus and emphasis on reviewing quantitative data, productivity ratios, and a concern with institutional efficiency. (p. 7)

These observations demonstrate that a shift occurred from a talent-development approach to an outcomes approach in assessment as government mandating of assessment systems increased. Government devised systems supplanted the faculty developed approaches which focused on talent-development.

SOA in Canada

In Canada, calls for SOA have not had the same force as in the United States because of the absence of a unified national voice from government on education issues and the absence of accrediting agencies. In addition, research on student outcomes does not seem to fit within the Canadian higher education context. For example, Evers and Gilbert (1991) noted that despite the vast amount of research that occurs in Canadian universities, very little research has been conducted by these universities on the characteristics and progress of their students. They observed that "apart from the type of university degree and the final grade point average, universities know little about other specific outcomes of education such as cognitive and affective consequences" (p. 54). Also, Nadeau (1992) reported that the study of "quality and excellence in Canadian college and universities . . . is practically non-existent in Canada" (p. 2).

Nevertheless, there are demands for accountability and the use of SOA in institutional planning. For example, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development's (1994) White Paper, *New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta*, indicated the Alberta government will "require providers to measure and

report on performance through an accountability framework to advise Albertans of results achieved in publicly funded learning opportunities" (p. 17). The document indicated that performance indicators will be used to facilitate this reporting. McLeod and Atwell (1993) distinguished between outcomes and indicators by clarifying that outcomes are results of a process and whereas indicators are data that can be used to demonstrate whether an outcome has been achieved. The use of performance indicators will focus attention on assessment of outcomes as opposed to the talent developed. In addition, the White Paper stated that "providers will be expected to demonstrate how information from these indicators is used to improve the future quality and availability of learning opportunities" (p.16).

A second example of increased interest in SOA in Canada is found in the detailed follow-up studies of former college and technical institute students in British Columbia conducted since 1988 (e.g., Strategic Information Research Institute, 1994; GDA, 1996). These studies provided data from former students approximately one year after leaving the college or institute with respect to their perceptions of the adequacy and appropriateness of the programs they had taken as well as the gains in skills they had acquired in the program. In addition, the surveys obtained data with respect to employment, salary, and/or further education of the former students.

While Bible colleges in Canada are not directly accountable to the government for public money, as a result of government initiatives such as those described above, their stakeholders will come to expect postsecondary institutions to perform, use, and report on SOA as standard operating procedure.

SOA in Christian Higher Education

Within Christian higher education, the literature on SOA is developing. One important work is *Assessment in Christian higher Education* edited by Lee and Stronks (1994). The essays in this volume provide both theoretical and

historical perspectives as well as the results of research projects conducted within Christian liberal arts colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Stronks and Lee (1994) noted that assessment has been motivated in part by accreditation requirements but argued "it also arises from an honest attempt to determine the extent to which the stated or implied goals for student learning and development are being met" (Introduction, n.p.). While the student outcome goals of Christian colleges and universities are different from Bible colleges, the two types of institutions are alike in their claims "that they help students think about how their Christian faith relates to every area of life" and "that their brand of higher education leads to changed lives" as Stronks and Lee said (Introduction, n.p.).

Brandt (1994) put forward a stewardship argument as a philosophical basis for conducting SOA in Christian colleges and universities. He said that Christian institutions "need to know what [they] are doing and regularly evaluate it to make sure that [they] are effective as God's agents in the world" (p.5). He contended that because of the affective goals and claims to achieve them, SOA in Christian colleges and universities is necessarily more complicated but also more necessary than it is in secular institutions.

Since 1990, AABC accreditation requirements have included the need for the development and execution of SOA procedures and the use of SOA information (R. Bell, personal communication, June, 1996). The AABC manual adopted in 1990, the criteria of which were still in effect at the time of this study, required SOA to be conducted as stated in these two criteria:

> A.3.1. Outcomes relating to institutional goals
>
> A college must provide outcomes data that will show it to be achieving its institutional goals.
>
> A.4.1. Outcomes relating to objectives
>
> A college must provide outcomes data that will show it to be achieving the objectives specific to each program, major, concentration, and emphasis offered at the college. . . .

> The means of assessing educational effectiveness must be broadly and accurately publicized. These means should include activities such as a review of student portfolios, graduate or professional school test results and placements, placement rates in program-related employment, and employer evaluations, and, specifically for colleges in the United States, evaluation of senior theses and standardized test results. (AABC, 1994, p. 17)

In addition, SOA information was required to be included in the annual institutional plan submitted by all candidate and accredited colleges.

In summary, there are two kinds of assessment supported by current literature: talent-development and outcomes. Talent-development assessment concentrates on determining the gains made by students as a result of attending college while outcomes assessment focuses on validating that students have attained the intended objectives. Both are useful for providing feedback on the effects of a college on its students. Both are necessary to understand the impact of a college on its students. However, for the reasons stated above it was the outcomes approach of assessment which this study investigated.

This section has surveyed the literature with respect to the definition of SOA and the development of SOA practices in the United States, Canada, and Christian higher education. The two dominant views of assessment were explained and a working definition developed. As well, the review has surveyed the factors affecting the development of current practice.

Use of SOA Information in Planning

This section of the literature review deals with the use of SOA information in planning in higher education. The section begins with a review of literature about the kinds of use for SOA information, then deals with principles for effective use of SOA, and concludes with examples of specific uses of SOA information.

Kinds of Uses

In their discussion of the uses of SOA, Ewell and Jones (1994) argued that "information about performance makes little sense in the abstract. To be useful,

it must be embedded directly in a visible management or decision-making process" (p. 27). Halpern (1987) distinguished between SOA programs on the basis of the use of the information. She identified three categories: (a) program improvement, (b) gatekeeping, and (c) budget decisions and accountability. In each of these types of uses SOA information is used in decision-making and clearly, in at least the first and last of Halpern's types, it is used as a planning aid by providing information about the state of effectiveness of the educational enterprise. Ewell (1983) also pointed out that assessment as developed in the last 30 years is viewed "as part of the process of rational resource allocation and program decision making" (p. 4).

Nichols (1991) perceived the basic value of SOA "as a means for refinement of the educational process" (p. 2). Jacobi, Astin, and Ayala (1987) referred to the key benefit of conducting SOA as being to "point to directions for improvement" (p. 1). The value-added approach, they rightly maintained, is necessary for program development. As they pointed out, outcomes assessment does not identify the effects of the educational processes so does not provide the kind of data necessary to guide corrective actions.

Jacobi et al. (1987) also argued that SOA needs to be more than a response to mandated accountability. They identified four areas in which SOA can aid institutional managers: (a) program development, (b) student services delivery, (c) goal setting, and (d) strategic planning. Gray (1989) agreed that the function of SOA must be broader than responding to accountability demands. He argued that such a perspective is too narrow because it does not adequately deal with the diverse issues in higher educational institutions, is limited methodologically, and places undue limits on institutional autonomy. He maintained that the primary purpose of SOA information ought to be providing input for institutional decision-making.

Stufflebeam and Webster (1981) classified evaluation studies into three major classes with eleven sub-categories. Elford (1996) identified Stufflebeam

and Webster's objectives-based studies, accountability studies, management information systems, and accreditation/certification studies with SOA. For Stufflebeam and Webster the purpose of objectives-based studies "is to determine whether the objectives have been achieved" (p. 73); for accountability studies it is to demonstrate that some externally set criteria of quality are being met; for management information systems it is to provide "information that managers need to implement their management responsibilities" (p. 75); and for accreditation/certification studies it is to ask whether "institutions, programs, and personnel are meeting minimum standards, and how can their performance be improved" (p. 76).

While distinguishing between data and information, Ewell and Jones (1994) observed that SOA information can be useful in decision-making in so far as it is meets these three tests: (a) it is appropriate to the particular needs of a decision-making situation; (b) it possesses face validity from the perspective of the decision-maker which, in their opinion, often precludes sample-based studies and those using statistical manipulation; and (c) it suggests a course of action that will improve performance. For example, they suggested that information about the time students spent on specific activities "may be of far greater decisional utility than generic test scores" (p. 27).

McLaughlin and McLaughlin (1989) used a matrix model to identify barriers to the use of information from research and evaluation work in institutional decision-making. On one axis they identified these five information support activities through which information from research and evaluation can be used to influence planning: (a) selection—determining what data to use, (b) capture—collecting and storing data, (c) manipulation—analyzing data and producing information from it, (d) delivery—the actual presentation of the information, and (e) influence—the value placed on the information by the recipients. On the other axis, they placed these three levels of organizational planning: (a) strategic—planning which addresses the overall

focus of the institution, (b) managerial—planning of resource allocations so as to attain institutional goals, and (c) operational—planning related to operating and monitoring institutional processes. An adaptation of their conceptual framework is presented in Table 2.1. In their model they identified representative barriers for each of the five activities involved in bringing research and evaluation information to bear on each of the three types of decisions. In so far as SOA is a form of evaluation research, these barriers are applicable to the use of SOA information.

Table 2.1
Barriers to the Use of Research and Evaluation Information in Organizational Planning

Information support activities	Types of planning		
	Strategic	Managerial	Operational
Selection	Shifting goals	Communication gaps	Inadequate measures
Capture	Governance and politics	Interdepartmental competition	Technology and standards
Manipulation	Inappropriate frame of reference	Mismatch between user needs and analyst	Lack of technical skills and resources
Delivery	Structural rejection	Technology apprehension	Inappropriate timing
Influence	Conflicting purposes	Unethical uses	Powerlessness

Note. Adapted from McLaughlin & McLaughlin, 1989

Ewell (1989a) outlined these four ways in which SOA information can be used in institutional decision-making:

1. Identifying problems. Ewell (1989a) argued that discrepancy evaluation can be used to determine the degree to which an institution is achieving its goals.

2. Develop a context for a decision. This is the same concept as environmental scanning as used in many strategic planning models. Ewell (1989a) maintained that evaluation information indicates limits within which decisions can be made and illustrates interrelationships of and impacts on the various aspects of an organization.

3. Induce closure. Patton (1978) concluded that decision makers often reach their conclusions early on and then seek for justification or verification of the decision. Ewell (1989a) believed that concrete information may give them confidence in their planning and induce closure. The information should also be presented in a timely and appropriate manner.

4. Promotion or selling of a decision. Ewell (1989a) also contended that information can be used in selling a future course of action.

Principles for Effective Use of SOA

Astin et al. (1993), with the sponsorship of the American Association for Higher Education's (AAHE) Assessment Forum, developed nine "Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning." Based on their own experience and a knowledge of the literature, the 12 authors articulated these principles which can guide both how to effectively implement a SOA program and how to maximize the use of SOA information in planning. These nine principles are used as a framework for outlining the main themes of the literature on effective use of SOA.

1. "The assessment of student learning begins with educational values" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 1). In other words SOA targets and methodologies ought to be institution-specific within the framework of each institution's mission. This requires, according to Banta et al. (1996), a clearly articulated shared understanding of "what the institution is, what it values, and what it aspires to be" (p. 4). They observed that many institutional mission statements are too general to provide effective guidance to SOA. However, Brandt (1994) found that small church-affiliated colleges often demonstrate a clear understanding of

their mission, a finding which Banta et al. suggested reveals that "these colleges know why they exist and what impact they hope to have on students, especially with respect to intellectual, spiritual, and psychological learning" (p. 4). For Astin et al. and Banta et al., as well as Ewell (1985), Pace (1979), and Wolff (1992), what matters most in any postsecondary institution relative to SOA is student learning. And, clearly, to Banta et al., this is what ought to matter most to students, parents, faculty members, administrators, trustees, donors, and governments.

2. "Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 1). Therefore, Astin et al. concluded that SOA must employ a variety of methodologies for acquiring data upon which to make assessment judgments. The same position has been put forward by Banta et al. (1996) and Krueger and Heisserer (1987). Astin et al. suggested that such methods need to include "actual performance" (p. 1) of students. All three sets of authors maintained that this principle requires SOA to take place in various settings and at various times throughout students' enrollment in an institution. Banta (1992) said

> any comprehensive approach to outcomes assessment should include multiple sources of information, since no single indicator has sufficient reliability and validity to serve as the sole source for decision making about individuals or programs. While most current faculty activity is concentrated on developing and improving measures of student achievement in general education and major fields, student satisfaction and perceptions of their own growth should also be measured as part of a comprehensive approach. (p. 1691)

3. "Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 1). The AAHE group included this principle in order to point out the importance of a statement of rationale and philosophy for SOA. Arguing that SOA is a process by which observed outcomes are compared with intended outcomes which are derived from the mission of the institution, the authors of the principles proposed that

SOA can provide the impetus to develop clear aims and standards as well as to identify when, where, and how specific intended outcomes will be addressed in the scope and sequence of a college's curriculum. Similarly, Krueger and Heisserer (1987) recommended that "when building an assessment program, a university needs to build a program uniquely adapted to its own mission and goals" (p. 46). Implicit in that statement is the necessity of explicitly stated outcomes.

4. "Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 1). Astin et al., as well as Banta et al. (1996), believed that SOA is only useful for program improvement purposes when appropriate data on the nature of the instructional processes and student experiences are also available and relationships between the process and outcomes are identified. Astin (1985) proposed a model to explain differential changes in students on the basis of the degree of their involvement in the various aspects of the college experience, which he summarized by saying: *"students learn by becoming involved"* (p. 133, emphasis original). His model suggested that differences in the quality and quantity of student involvement, because of both student abilities and attitudes and institutional opportunities, explain differences in student outcomes. He maintained that the appropriate institutional actions were to create opportunities for student involvement.

Banta et al. (1996) pointed to the "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" developed by Chickering and Gamson (1987) as examples of research-based processes which can enhance student learning. Sorcinelli (1991) provided additional research support for the efficacy of these principles. The seven principles said that

> good practice in undergraduate education:
>
> 1. Encourages contact between students and faculty.
> 2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
> 3. Uses active learning techniques.
> 4. Gives prompt feedback.

5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Banta et al. proposed that measuring the degree of use of such processes should be a focus of institutional research activities and that the data obtained should be related to the outcomes observed.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) provided an exhaustive compendium of the findings of over 2,400 research projects on the effects of college on students. They concluded that college attendance has a relatively strong positive effect on certain academic skills, attitudes, values, and psychosocial development. While between-college (i.e., between different types of postsecondary institutions) effects based on differences in structures, resources, or qualitative variables were not as substantial as the impact of simply attending college, Pascarella and Terenzini still argued that the effect of differences in the college environments on student learning is substantial on the basis of within-college (i.e., inter-departmental) differences in the changes in students.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) also concluded that the research they reviewed supported these six instructional behaviors as improving student learning of the subject material: (a) having a good understanding of the content and presenting it with enthusiasm, (b) clearly explaining concepts, (c) structuring and organizing class time well, (d) presenting clear learning stimuli such as examples or analogies, (e) avoiding vagueness and convoluted language, and (f) developing rapport by being open to student opinions and encouraging discussion. In addition, they argued that the body of correlational research they synthesized strongly supported the idea that the quality of students' interaction with the learning opportunities provided, being tutored, having to teach material to others, and student self-perception as affected by social and academic interactions within the college are also important factors in the degree to which students attain desired outcomes.

Other recent research has also pointed to the importance of the college processes, setting, and culture on the impact of college on students. Two examples of research supporting the impact of different college experiences are Terenzini, Yaeger, Pascarella, and Nora's (1996) study of the impact of work-study participation on cognitive development and Sax and Astin's (1996) study of the impact of college on volunteerism. Both studies found that the nature of the college experiences affected students' post-college behavior and attitudes.

5. "Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 1). The impact of SOA on improving an institution is far greater, Astin et al. said, when it "entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time" (p. 1) rather than as isolated research or evaluation projects. This view essentially sees SOA as a means of providing formative feedback in on-going institutional development. As Banta et al. (1996) pointed out it would also provide the necessary input for what Total Quality Management proponents call continuous improvement. Yet, they concluded that "assessment and institutional improvement are often perceived as exercises to be implemented in order to meet an urgent need" (p. 30). Similarly, Wolff (1992) observed that SOA is too often considered only when institutions are conducting a self-study or accreditation renewal. As Banta et al. remarked,

> effective assessment programs become embedded in the institutional culture. They are acknowledged, discussed, deliberated, reviewed, and refined. Effective assessment is perceived as an integral part of the overall educational mission. And it focuses, very simply, on learning. The questions important to address in assessment concern: What should be learned? How will this learning occur? And what will be done with that which has been learned? (p. 30)

When used in this way, Banta et al. believed, an institution becomes what Senge (1990) called a "learning organization."

6. "Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved" (Astin et al., 1993, pp. 1-2). The emphasis in this principle is on the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible in the design of a SOA program so as to enhance the quality and

breadth of the data. A second implication is that involvement is necessary for implementation of a program, based on the premise that change will only take place as people are aware of the need. Banta et al. (1996) insisted that the key stakeholders to involve are faculty members:

> Successful assessment programs create an atmosphere in which faculty not only learn about but take ownership of institutional assessment efforts. However, . . . many faculty members are simply not well prepared to assume the difficult tasks of assessment. Accordingly, institutional resources must be devoted to faculty development. (p. 36)

Chaffe-Stengel (1992), based on her experience at California State University, Fresno, echoed this same reminder but noted that faculty involvement is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the success of SOA programs.

Banta et al. (1996) listed these four benefits of increased involvement in SOA: (a) reduced resistance to change because the need for it is clear, (b) improved communication and collaboration among key stakeholders, (c) greater faculty enthusiasm about their teaching role, and (d) increased support for SOA. Banta (1992) also argued that

> the process of bringing faculty together to discuss the goals for education, the supporting curriculum and methods of instruction, the quality of student learning, and means of improving all of the foregoing, constitutes the single greatest benefit to be derived from assessing outcomes. (p. 1688)

7. "Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 2). Astin et al. also said that information from SOA must be perceived as "credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made" (p. 2). Banta et al. (1996) pointed out that data must be turned into information by tying them to specific, important issues and by ensuring that the data provided are appropriate. Jacobi et al. (1987) and Ewell and Jones (1994) pointed out that policy makers must consider the data valid and reliable if they are to make use of them.

Ewell (1989b) provided these four guidelines to enhance linking information to planning: (a) provide information in a manner suitable for the audience considering the perceptual style, sophistication, and position of the audience; (b) tailor the information to the level, phase, and significance of the decision and the necessity of further manipulation of the data; (c) choose the medium for presentation with attention to the need for credibility, accessibility, and interpretation; and (d) maintain a view to the next steps in the decision process, the inherent costs, and potential additional information needs.

Kinnick (1985) discussed an extensive list of technical and organizational factors which she considered as potential impediments to the use of SOA information. These are presented in Table 2.2. She also recommended that information be made accessible to planners by using these four presentation strategies: "disaggregating the unit of analysis, using comparative formats, using graphics and short reports focused on a particular issue, and integrating student outcomes information with other data sets" (p. 101).

Table 2.2
Factors Affecting the Use of SOA Information

Technical	Organizational
Readability; a focus on findings	Access to the information
Organizing data around problems, issues, institutional processes	Linkage between data users and data developers and managers
Data integrity	Incentives
Face validity	Organizational structure
Timeliness	
Interpretability	
Excessive bulk	
Organizing data around reports	

Note. Adapted from Kinnick (1985, p. 95).

8. "Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 2). The

conditions Astin et al. envisaged included strong leadership which values effective teaching and learning and the centrality of improved student outcomes in the "institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions" (p. 2). Banta et al. (1996) said that "assessment and decision making should go hand in hand. . . . Linking the two may very well be the most crucial aspect of successful assessment practice" (p. 50). This point is echoed by Ewell and Jones (1994) and Astin (1985). However, Ewell (1989b) added a cautionary note when he said that "good analysis and good decisions are not necessarily related, and the seemingly straightforward process of providing sound information for decision makers is layered with complexity" (p. 85).

In order to maximize the use of SOA information, Kinnick (1985) suggested that such information be "incorporated into an ongoing institutional process or procedure, such as program review or strategic planning and budgeting, or . . . [be] focused on a particular problem such as student recruitment or retention" (p.98). Ewell (1989a) argued that organizational, researcher, decision-maker, and information characteristics influence the utilization of information in planning. The interaction of these four factors is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

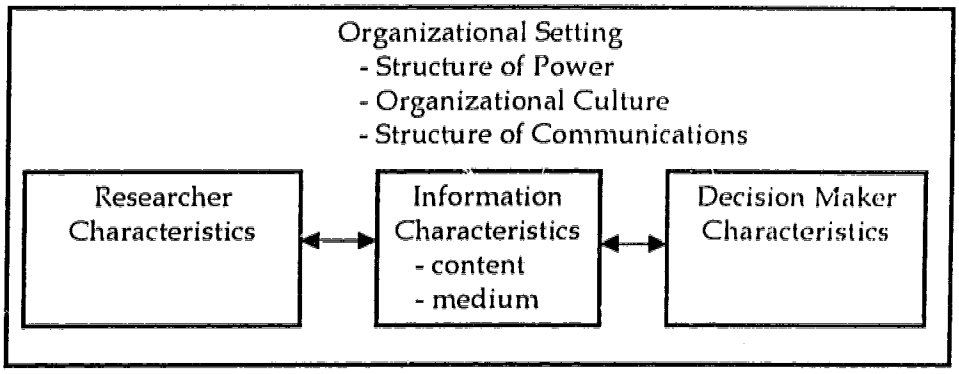

Figure 2.1. Interaction of Factors Affecting the Use of Research and Evaluation Information in Decision-Making (Adapted from Ewell, 1989a)

9. "Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public" (Astin et al., 1993, p. 2). Astin et al. viewed public higher

education institutions as accountable to society for its outcomes because of what they saw as the "compelling public stake" (p. 3) in those outcomes. Therefore, they considered reporting on SOA a legitimate demand on such institutions.

Examples of Uses of SOA Information

The literature contains many examples of the uses of SOA information. Banta et al. (1996), for example, presented 165 short case study examples which outlined 46 kinds of assessment activities in 33 subject areas, 11 program areas, and 26 student development areas. The publications noted here are representative of many more. Gentemann, Fletcher, and Potter (1994) and Barak and Sweeney (1995) discussed the use of SOA information for academic program review. Ewell (1988) indicated that "there has been an increasing tendency to formally incorporate information on student outcomes into decision making. For example, . . . budget making and program review" (p. 55). Banta, Rudolph, Van Dyke, and Fisher (1996) noted that the universities and colleges in Tennessee have used SOA information in planning for institutional improvement, accreditation, and student retention because of state mandated incentive funding being tied to such use. Krueger and Heisserer (1987) wrote about SOA information use as a strategic planning tool to provide on-going feedback by which to evaluate the achievement of strategic goals. They also identified the use of SOA information as an input in capital budget plans. Banta and Moffett (1987) mentioned most of the aspects of planning above as having been affected by SOA information and added donor development and service improvement. Ewell (1983) identified student recruitment as another aspect for which SOA information is used.

Conceptual Framework

From this review of the literature the following conceptual framework was developed to guide this study.

Astin (1991) developed the Input - Environment - Output (I-E-O) model based on systems theory. The I-E-O model attempts to explain the connections

between college inputs and outputs. According to the model there are many instances in which students are changed through interaction with the college environment. In other instances, outcomes are attained by students without any impact of the college environment. The latter would be an example of maturation or times when the student arrives at the college with the desired outcome already achieved.

In line with this model, several authors (e.g., Nedwek & Neal, 1994; Banta et al., 1996; Astin et al., 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) have identified the need for SOA to focus not just on the outcomes, as the name implies, nor on the inputs as most of the reputational assessments have done, but to include the nature of the learning experiences, both within and outside of the classroom, in the assessment of an institution's effectiveness in achieving its mission. In this regard Astin's (1991) concept of environment can be seen to include not only the situational factors of a college such as the location, facilities, and class schedule, but also the learning processes which affect the students. Astin's purpose was to draw attention to the impact of the postsecondary environment on the learning of students as well as input factors such as student ability, background, and attitude as opposed to a narrow focus on the events within the classroom, the planned learning activities assigned as part of a course, or the inputs of the institution such as library resources, faculty credentials, or endowments. He referred to assessment of the impact of the total college experience on students as "value-added" or "talent-development" assessment (p. 34).

One potential weakness in the I-E-O model is the possibility of reducing the complexity of student learning over the course of a postsecondary program to the equivalent of an industrial process. However, the elegance of the model should not be confused with simplicity or reductionism. Other models have been suggested which can be understood as expansions, with different emphases or from different perspectives, of the three basic elements of Astin's (1991) model. Inputs would include pre-college background traits ,

characteristics, experiences, intentions, and commitments of the student emphasized by Pascarella's (1985) general causal model, Weidman's (1989) model of undergraduate socialization, and Tinto's (1987) theory of student departure. Astin's environment construct is similar to Pascarella's structural/ organizational characteristics of institutions, interaction with agents of socialization, and quality of student effort; Weidman's collegiate experience plus parental socialization and non-college reference groups (environment is not limited to the on-campus setting); and Tinto's academic system and integration, social system and integration, intentions, and commitments. Likewise, outputs can be identified with Pascarella's learning and cognitive development, Weidman's socialization outcomes, and Tinto's departure decision. However, none of these three conceptual frameworks was as useful in the present study because none was as elegant as Astin's I-E-O model and each dealt with other (or more limited) aspects of college experience than SOA—Pascarella's with the impact of different environments, Weidman's with socialization, and Tinto's with early leavers.

Bottrill and Borden (1994) used the general sense of the I-E-O model when they provided an extensive list of performance indicators which they found in the literature. They categorized them into 21 groups and identified whether they were indicators of inputs, processes, or outputs.

Another example of a similar model was provided by Cave et al. (1991) when they described higher education in terms of "transforming inputs (notably of students' time, academics' time, consumables and equipment and buildings) into outputs" (p. 24) within a larger social framework. They divided outputs into three categories: (a) direct consumption benefits (e.g., a skill or knowledge gain), (b) intermediate outputs which become inputs into other social systems (e.g., trained personnel for industry), and (c) long-term or indirect outputs (e.g., consumer products derived, ultimately, from initial basic research at a university). These categories of outputs provide different points at

which SOA becomes relevant. Cave et al. argued that performance indicators derived from SOA are appropriate to provide feedback as to the suitability of the student outcomes of higher education at any and all of these points.

Astin's (1991) I-E-O model was adapted in three ways, as shown in Figure 2.2, in order to provide a basis for the conceptual framework for this study. The first adaptation was the emphasis on planning decisions because this study focused on the use of SOA information in institutional planning. Furthermore, Astin's reference to the "environment" included aspects of students' experiences which are beyond the scope of institutional planning. For this reason, the conceptual framework limited the "environment" to planning decisions with respect to processes, setting, and cultural aspects of institutions. These three aspects refer to various kinds of institutional decisions affecting all students experiences (curricular and co-curricular) which are under the control of the college. The third change was to include feedback linkages from outcomes to planning decisions about process, setting, and culture and about inputs and resources.

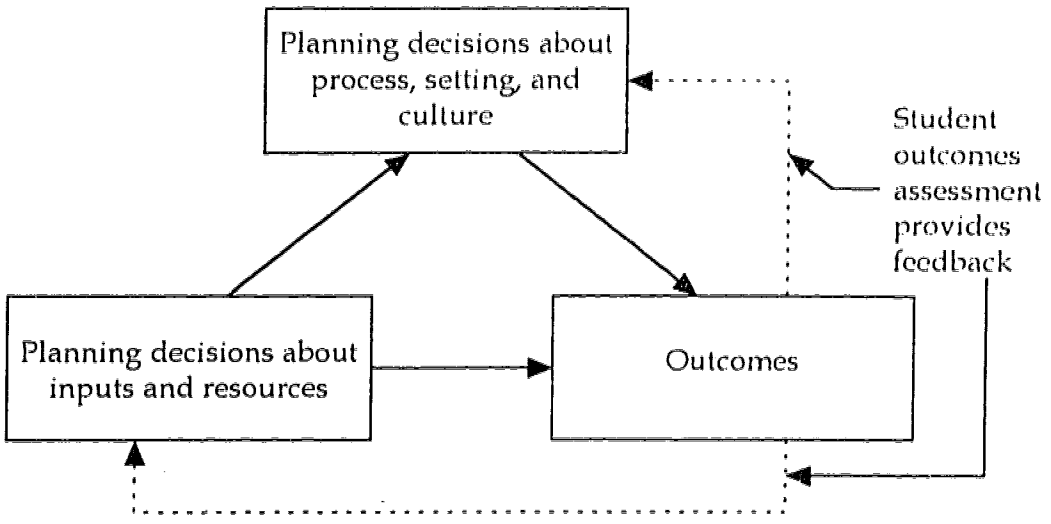

Figure 2.2. Conceptual Framework for Using SOA in Institutional Planning (Adapted from Astin, 1991)

The transformation of SOA data into information also entails decisions made about the appropriateness of the outcomes. For this purpose Provus's (1971) discrepancy evaluation model was adopted (Figure 2.3). By applying this model, SOA can be understood to be the process of determining the discrepancy between intended and actual student outcomes. The decisions made as to appropriateness then provide the feedback to guide planning decisions.

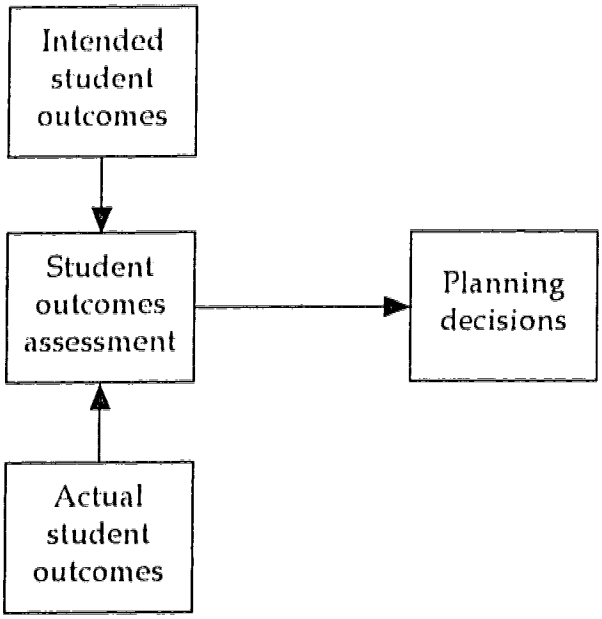

Figure 2.3. Relationship Between Intended and Actual Student Outcomes, Student Outcomes Assessment, and Planning (Adapted from Provus, 1971)

The conceptual framework developed for this study combined the elements from these two models. This framework is shown in Figure 2.4. The model indicates that institutions need to determine intended student outcomes, and then, taking into account the inputs and resources available, plan curricular and instructional/process activities designed to achieve those outcomes. SOA is used to evaluate the degree of attainment of those outcomes. Feedback, in the form of SOA information, is then used in institutional planning for revision of

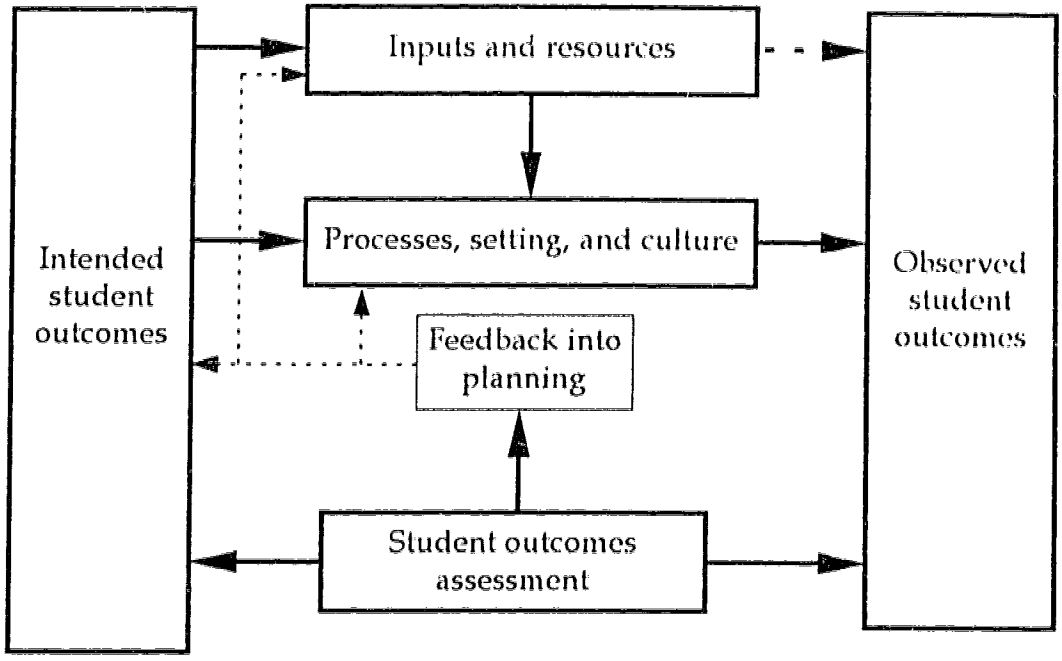

Figure 2.4. Conceptual Framework for the Use of Student Outcomes Assessment in Institutional Planning

the intended inputs, processes, and outcomes. The interpretation of SOA data involves determining the degree of congruence between intended student outcomes and actual student outcomes. The framework indicates that the criteria for judging the adequacy of the inputs and processes are the intended student outcomes. Used in this way, SOA information provides feedback to policy-makers and practitioners on the degree to which the actions of the institutions are effective in attaining its desired ends. Specifically, SOA provides feedback with respect to the degree to which (a) the inputs and resources, both directly and as mediated by the processes, setting, and culture, and (b) the processes, setting, and culture independently contribute to the desired outcomes.

Summary

The literature reviewed for this study provided an understanding of the institutions involved and the concept and use of SOA.

Bible colleges are postsecondary institutions which have developed out of missionary training and Bible institutes of the last century. At the end of this century their mandate has been called into question, and they are adapting to changes in student enrollment patterns, vocational interests, and constituent support. Despite variations in missions and curricular offerings, an emphasis remains on preparation of students for vocational church ministry. The need to verify that students are appropriately prepared for this vocation, together with the general trend toward accountability in society, have made the assessment of student outcomes imperative for Canadian Bible colleges.

Institutional assessment has taken several forms in this century, but two forms appear worthy of continued support: value-added and outcomes. Value-added assessment provides data on the degree of growth that occurs during students' attendance at college, while outcomes assessment focuses on the degree to which students have attained anticipated objectives. From the perspective of employers or graduate educational institutions, outcomes

assessment is more important. However, if the desired outcomes are not attained, such information by itself is meaningless. Therefore, value-added assessment information, which includes data on the processes, is a necessary tool in institutional development.

The literature furnished a considerable resource of case studies and handbooks that give practical guidance in developing SOA programs. Banta et al. (1996), for example, provided case studies describing 46 separate assessment activities.

The conceptual framework developed was based on Astin's (1991) application of general systems theory and Provus's (1971) discrepancy model of evaluation. The conceptual framework identified SOA as the process of comparing anticipated outcomes with observed outcomes so as to provide feedback to institutional planning.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This chapter identifies the population and research design and methodology of this study. This study was what Borg and Gall (1983) termed descriptive in that it attempted to identify current practices and attitudes of personnel in Canadian Bible colleges with respect to SOA.

The Population

The population for the study was all the member institutions of the ACBC. The *1994/95 Association of Canadian Bible Colleges Directory* (1994) listed 40 member institutions. The secretary-treasurer of the association stated that three colleges were omitted from the directory (C. Bates, personal communication, August, 1995). In addition, one of the colleges included in the *Directory* ceased operation at the end of the 1994/95 academic year. This college was not included in any aspect of the data collection. As a result of a follow-up phone call in October 1995, the president of another institution included in the 1994/95 directory informed the researcher that his institution was no longer a Bible college. This institution was then removed from the data-collection process. For these reasons, neither of these institutions was included in the final population. Of the 41 colleges in the population, 14 were accredited, 3 were candidates for accreditation, and 1 was an applicant for accreditation with the AABC during the 1995/96 academic year, according to the *1995/96 AABC directory* (AABC, 1995), and 23 were not affiliated.

Research Method

The study was conducted using questionnaires sent to the entire population of Canadian Bible colleges and interviews with selected personnel from those Bible colleges which report substantial use of SOA activities. Borg and Gall (1983) maintained that questionnaires are an appropriate means to "collect descriptive data" (p. 354).

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were developed in order to identify current SOA practices and attitudes of college administrators and faculty members in ACBC-member Canadian Bible colleges. The literature identifies many techniques for gathering data on student outcomes. For example, Underwood (1991) used a questionnaire to identify the extent to which 25 SOA activities were being used at New Mexico State University. In the questionnaire that Easley (1987) used in his study of SOA in AABC-member Bible colleges, he asked respondents to identify which SOA instruments were used from among 11 commercially produced SOA instruments and eight locally produced instruments. He also included four spaces where respondents could name other kinds of instruments used.

Two questionnaires were developed for this study taking into account the nature of the institutions being studied and the types of SOA methods suggested in the literature (Appendices A and B). The first questionnaire, the General College Information Form, was designed to identify the kinds of data being gathered about student outcomes, institutional characteristics, and methods for internal reporting of SOA information. In addition, this questionnaire was designed to identify practices with respect to the use of SOA information in institutional planning. Twelve aspects of planning were given, and respondents were asked to describe ways that information from SOA was used in planning for each aspect. The 12 planning aspects were program/curriculum, strategic planning, planning for accreditation, instruction, advising of students, recruiting of students, retention of students, alumni/donor relations, tenure/promotion of staff, recruiting of staff, operating budget/resource allocation, and capital projects.

The second questionnaire, the Individual Personnel Form, was developed to identify perceptions of individuals with respect to their agreement with the current use of SOA activities and of the information from SOA in

planning. In addition, measures of current and ideal use were included in order to determine the perceptions of respondents with respect to the adequacy of current practices for gathering and using SOA.

Pilot Studies

Pilot testing of the questionnaires was conducted with 14 administrators and faculty members from five institutions: a non-ACBC and non-AABC member Canadian Bible college, an AABC member U. S. Bible college, a Canadian Christian Liberal Arts college, and two Canadian seminaries. None of the participants' institutions were members of the population but they were of sufficiently similar nature to provide for face validity and content appropriateness. Several grammatical and wording suggestions were received and modifications were made to the cover letters and questionnaires. Other, more substantial modifications were made as a result of feedback from the pilot study participants: (a) clarifying the administrative participants to include vice-presidential level administrators, (b) adding "No opinion," "Do not know," and "Not applicable" options, (c) revising of response labels to provide for clearer distinction, (d) clarifying of student and faculty count procedures (the AABC definitions were adopted to provide uniformity with other data), (e) adding "Theses," "Written/oral doctrinal statement/defense," "Christian service reports," and "Field placement reports" as SOA activities, (f) deleting SOA activities deemed not applicable, and (g) clarifying the definition of SOA by adding the word "collectively" and using a bold typeface.

Timeline

Packages containing the questionnaires were sent in August 1995 to each president of the 42 Bible colleges which were considered members of the ACBC as of August, 1995. One General College Information Form was provided to each college. A general cover letter and instruction sheet (Appendix C) were included in each package. The cover letter asked each of the presidents to complete the General College Information Form and one of the Individual

Personnel Forms and to distribute the remaining Individual Personnel questionnaires to all academic administrators (i.e., vice-presidents (academic), provosts, academic deans, associate/assistant academic deans, department chairs, etc.), other vice-presidential level administrators, and four randomly selected faculty members. The instruction sheet was provided to guide presidents in selecting the four faculty members from an alphabetical list of the full-time faculty members by using a list of random numbers. Each General College Information Form also had an accompanying cover letter (Appendix D).

Individual Personnel Form recipients were provided with an envelope and a cover letter (Appendix E) which asked them to place completed questionnaires in the envelope, seal it, and return it to their president. The presidents were asked to return all questionnaires from their institutions using a pre-paid, pre-addressed envelope.

Follow-up phone calls were made to the presidents of non-responding colleges starting in October 1995. By January 1996 the General College Information Form was received from 31 colleges for an institutional participation rate of 75.6% (31 out of 41).

Usable Individual Personnel Form questionnaires were received from 146 individuals from 29 colleges. The number of potential returns could not be determined because of the variability in the number of administrators and faculty members in the population. Two colleges returned only the General College Information Form. In one case, the president was sick during much of the data-collection period and the forms remained in his in-basket. Upon his return, there was not time to distribute the other forms. In the other case, the president reported that because there were no full-time faculty members and the part-time people were off-campus, he had chosen to only submit the General College Information Form.

Interviews

Twenty-two follow-up interviews were conducted with selected personnel from selected colleges where the questionnaires indicated extensive use of SOA. Colleges were selected for inclusion in the interview phase of the study on the basis of having conducted eight or more SOA activities in the 12 months up to August 1995. This represented approximately the one-third of the respondent colleges (11 out of 31) which were most active in SOA in 1994/95. Participants in the interviews were from 10 colleges. Interviews were held in January and February 1996 with all 10 presidents (See Appendix F for interview schedule) and with 12 other individuals who were identified on the General College Information Form, or in a pre-interview discussion with the college president, as having primary responsibility for conducting SOA in the college (See Appendix G for interview schedule). Two colleges reported a shared responsibility. In those colleges interviews were conducted with both individuals. Eighteen interviews were conducted on-site at the colleges and the remainder were conducted by telephone. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of positions of the interview participants. All interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed for analysis purposes.

Table 3.1
Positions of Interview Participants
n=22

Position type	f
President	10
Senior academic administrator	8
Faculty member	3
Administrative assistant	1

The purpose of the interviews was to explore more fully the nature of the SOA practices and the use of SOA information within those colleges. Some quotations from the interviews have been included to illustrate aspects

addressed in the questionnaires. Some of these quotations have been slightly paraphrased in order to improve readability, without affecting their meaning.

During the interviews participants were asked to supply any documents which may provide evidence of the nature and use of SOA information. These documents were examined to gain understanding of the nature of SOA activities and the context in which SOA information is gathered and used within the institutions. Documents were provided by participants in eight colleges. Documents received included surveys, interview schedules, instruction manuals, college catalogs, tests, reports, policy statements, and SOA program rationales.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine frequencies and means for all respondents and as classified by position of respondent, institutional affiliation with a denomination, institutional affiliation with the AABC, and institutional size. Interview data were content-analyzed to provide explanation, corroboration, and expansion of the questionnaire findings.

Validity

The validity of a research instrument is concerned with whether the instrument actually measures what it claims to measure. Therefore, the validity of descriptive research is concerned with the degree to which the record of observations and descriptions actually correspond to the reality observed. Fox (1969) argued that content validity is the key issue for questionnaire and interview data collection instruments. Mouly (1978) maintained that establishing content validity requires that each question on an instrument must be related to the problem, that the questions taken together provided a broad coverage of the issues, and that there be a clear definition of the terms and clear wording of the questions. Each question on the questionnaires and interview schedules was related to one of the specific

research questions. Existing instruments and the literature were reviewed to ensure that appropriate SOA activities were included. Existing instruments reviewed included Underwood's (1991) survey of SOA activities at Eastern New Mexico State University; Johnson, Prus, Andersen, and El-Khawas' (1991) survey of student assessment programs in colleges and universities in the United States for the American Council on Education; Gill's (1993, June) outcomes assessment survey of institutions in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; and Easley's (1987) survey of SOA in Bible colleges in the United States and Canada. In addition, the pilot study provided a check on the breadth and clarity of the questionnaire instruments.

Reliability

Reliability has to do with the degree to which the research can be repeated to yield the same findings. Reliability of a instrument used in an exploratory study can be established by several methods. Thorndike (1982/1988) stated that reliability can be established through the use of equivalent forms, retests, or internal consistency. However, Mouly (1978) argued that sufficient reliability was established through dependence on earlier research, use of a pilot study, and review by experts such that "ensuring validity might be a better investment of one's time and energy" (p. 195). The problems inherent with Thorndike's procedures and the nature of exploratory questionnaire research made additional reliability checks unproductive.

Justification for the Selected Method

The research methodology appeared suitable for the research questions for the following reasons:

1. A broadly based questionnaire should provide data to indicate the perceptions of a wide variety of stakeholders on the nature, adequacy, and use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges.

2. Interviews provided corroboration and/or further understanding as to the nature of the methods of SOA and the use of information obtained by SOA in institutional planning.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University of Alberta. The research was approved by the executive of the ACBC and a letter of support was provided by the 1995/96 president of the ACBC, Dr. Larry McKinney. The AABC committee on Professional Development reviewed the research proposal and endorsed the study. A letter of support was provided by the Executive Director of the AABC, Dr. Randall Bell. Copies of both Dr. McKinney's and Dr. Bell's letters (Appendix I) were included with the questionnaire packages sent to the presidents of the colleges in the study.

Summary

This chapter defined the population of the study and outlined the methodology used in the study to address the specific research questions. The population consisted of 41 operational Bible colleges which were members of the ACBC in the fall of 1995. Two questionnaires were developed to gather data: a General College Information Form and an Individual Personnel Form. Usable General College Information Forms were returned by 31 colleges, and 146 usable Individual Personnel Forms were received from personnel from 29 colleges. Interviews were conducted with 10 presidents and 12 other individuals from 10 colleges which indicated using eight or more SOA activities in the 1994/95 academic year. The interviews were used to provide illustrative and confirmatory data to complement the questionnaire data. Descriptive analysis procedures were used with the quantitative data from the questionnaires. Content analysis techniques were employed with the open-ended and interview data.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

This chapter describes (a) the characteristics of the responding Bible colleges, (b) the characteristics of the individual respondents, and (c) the organization of SOA activities in the responding Bible colleges. The institutional characteristics and organization of SOA activities were identified on the General College Information Form. Also, some information on institutional characteristics was gathered from the *Association of Canadian Bible Colleges Directory 1994-1995* (1994) and the *Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges 1995-96 Directory* (1995). Information about characteristics of the individual respondents was obtained on the Individual Personnel Form.

Characteristics of the Colleges in the Study

The following characteristics were used to classify the respondents: (a) date institution was established, (b) type of institution, (c) size of student body, (d) size of faculty, (e) location, and (f) relationship with the AABC.

Distribution of Colleges by Year Founded

The distribution of the Bible Colleges in the study by year founded is given in Table 4.1. Over three-quarters (77.4%) of the colleges were established before 1950. Only two of the colleges were established during the 1950s and 1960s, whereas 18 were established during the decades which included the Great Depression and World War II.

Table 4.1
Distribution of Colleges, Classified by Year Founded
(n=31)

Year founded	f	%f
Before 1930	6	19.4
1931 - 1950	18	58.1
1951 - 1970	2	6.5
1971 - present	5	16.1

Distribution of Colleges by Type of Institution

Colleges in this study were categorized into one of two types for this study: (a) those denominationally sponsored and (b) those which are inter- or non-denominational. Most (19 = 61.3%) colleges were sponsored by a denomination.

Distribution of Colleges by Size

The size of the institutions was categorized both by full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment and by faculty member FTE. All of the colleges in this study were small by comparison with the typical public postsecondary institutions in Canada. The largest college had a student FTE of 673. The quartile break points were 241, 98, and 42.1 FTE students. The 31 institutions had a total of 4,978.5 FTE students.

Faculty sizes were small. Many university departments have more faculty members than do the majority of Canadian Bible colleges. The largest faculty FTE reported was 31.1. The quartile break points were 14.3, 8.2, and 6.1 FTE faculty members.

The small size of Bible colleges in Canada has implications for SOA practices. On the one hand, there are fewer students to assess which makes population-based studies viable. In addition, techniques such as graduating student interviews may be more manageable than in larger institutions. On the other hand, resource limitations due to size may make the implementation of a multi-faceted SOA program difficult. Certainly, there are fewer personnel to share the workload than would be the case in larger institutions.

Distribution of Colleges by Location

Bible colleges in this study were located in eight provinces from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of colleges classified by location. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the colleges are located in the prairie provinces. Despite having the majority of Canada's population, the provinces of Ontario and Quebec account for only 13% of the institutions.

However, the proportion of the total student FTE attending colleges in Ontario (22.6%) was higher than its proportion of colleges included in the study (9.7%).

Table 4.2
Distribution of Colleges, Classified by Location
(n=31)

Province	f	%f	%total FTE students
Alberta	10	32.3	26.6
British Columbia	2	6.5	5.7
Manitoba	5	16.1	11.8
Ontario	3	9.7	22.6
Quebec and Maritime Provinces	3	9.7	4.0
Saskatchewan	8	25.8	29.3

Distribution of Colleges by Affiliation With the AABC

The *1995/96 AABC Directory* (AABC, 1995) listed 18 Canadian Bible colleges as accredited, candidates for accreditation, or applicants for accreditation as of the 1994/95 academic year. Of these 18, 14 (77.8%) participated in this study (12 were accredited, one was an applicant for accreditation, and one was a candidate for accreditation). Two other colleges were considering entering into affiliation with AABC during the 1994/95 academic year. Of the 41 institutions included in the population, 43.9% were affiliated with the AABC as compared with 45.2% of the institutions from which responses were received. Most (17 = 54.8%) of the colleges were not affiliated with the AABC.

Characteristics of Individual Respondents

The institutional affiliations and positions of the individual respondents are reported here as identified on the Individual Personnel Form.

Institutional Affiliation of Individual Respondents

Responses to the Individual Personnel Form were received from 146 individuals. Two colleges did not participate in the Individual Personnel portion of the study. Table 4.3 shows the frequency of individual respondents participating in the study classified by the FTE number of students in their institution. The mean number of respondents in each participating college was 5.0. Larger institutions had more respondents than smaller institutions.

Table 4.3
Frequency of Individual Respondents, Classified by Institution Size

Size of institution (FTE students)		n	Frequency of respondents	Mean of respondents
< 42.1	Small	8	29	3.6
42.1 - 98	Medium-small	7	31	4.4
98.1 - 241	Medium-large	7	31	4.4
> 241	Large	7	55	7.9
Total		29	146	5.0

Positions of Individual Respondents

The frequency of positions reported by respondents to the Individual Personnel Form is given in Table 4.4. Faculty members constituted the largest group of respondents (47.1%), followed by academic administrators (12.1%) and presidents (10.0%).

Organization of SOA

This section outlines the findings of the study with respect to the administration of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges. Administrative responsibility, status, and procedural patterns for SOA as reported by respondents are given.

Administration of SOA

This section reports the findings of the study with respect to primary administrative responsibility, presence of an office responsible for SOA, and responsibilities of such an office where one exists.

Table 4.4
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Positions of Individual Respondents (n=140)

Position title	f	%f
Faculty	66	47.1
Institutional research officer	1	0.7
President	14	10.0
Student life administrator	12	8.6
Librarian	7	5.0
Registrar	7	5.0
Non-academic administrator	10	7.1
Academic administrator	17	12.1
Recruitment/enrollment administrator	2	1.4
Other	4	2.9

Primary Administrative Responsibility

In the Bible colleges in this study the primary administrative responsibility for SOA was generally given to a high level administrator. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of administrative responsibility for SOA. The president and vice-president (academic) were the positions most frequently identified as having sole primary responsibility for SOA. Eight colleges reported that the academic dean had primary responsibility although in three of those colleges that responsibility was shared with either the student dean or enrollment manager.

Offices Responsible for SOA

Respondents in eight colleges reported their college had an office designated as responsible for SOA. Two respondents named the academic dean's office, and there was one response each for main office, field education, administrative assistant, office of institutional research, and president. One respondent did not identify the title of the individual responsible for SOA.

Table 4.5
Frequency of Primary Administrative Responsibility for SOA, Classified by Position Held
(n=27)

Position held	f
President	7
Vice-president (Academic)	7
Academic Dean	5
Academic and Student Deans	2
Academic Dean and Enrollment Manager	1
Director of Institutional Research	1
Field Education Coordinator	1
Faculty member	1
All faculty	1
Administrative assistant	1

Responsibilities of SOA Offices

Table 4.6 shows the responsibilities of the SOA offices. Four of the eight respondents indicated the offices coordinated, planned, conducted, and provided technical assistance for SOA activities. The other four respondents reported from one to three responsibilities regarding SOA activities. In all eight cases the office was responsible for coordinating SOA activities.

Table 4.6
Frequency of Responsibilities of Offices Responsible for SOA
(n=8)

Responsibilities	f
Plans student outcomes assessment activities	6
Coordinates student outcomes assessment activities	8
Provides technical assistance for student outcomes assessment activities	6
Conducts student outcomes assessment activities	5

Note. Multiple responses were allowed.

Status of SOA

The status of SOA refers to whether Bible colleges are required to perform SOA by some external or internal policy directive. Twelve (38.7%) of the respondents reported that their college was required to implement procedures to assess student outcomes. Of these 12 colleges, 9 were required to do so by external agencies, 1 by internal policy, and 2 by both.

Table 4.7 shows the distribution of colleges which respondents reported were required to perform SOA, classified by the college's denominational status. A greater proportion of colleges with denominational affiliation (47.4%) were reported as being required to implement SOA procedures than were colleges with no denominational affiliation (25.0%). Denominational colleges may have been more likely to have an external agency (i.e., the supporting denomination) requiring them to demonstrate effectiveness through SOA procedures than non-denominational Bible colleges which lack this form of external accountability. On the other hand, non-denominational Bible colleges may have been more likely to have internal requirements to conduct SOA in order to provide prospective students and donors with evidence of effectiveness. However, respondents in only three of the nine denominational colleges which were required to assess student outcomes stated that their sponsoring denominations required their college to implement SOA procedures, and respondents in only one of the three colleges not affiliated with a denomination which were required to assess student outcomes reported that their college had internal policy requirements for SOA.

Table 4.8 shows the frequency of responses indicating whether institutions were required to implement SOA procedures, classified by status with the AABC. Respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC (64.3%) reported their college was required to perform SOA more frequently than did respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC (17.6%). That respondents in 35.7% of the colleges affiliated with the AABC reported no requirement to

perform SOA was an unexpected finding in light of sections A.4.1 of the AABC (1994) criteria for accreditation which required each college to "provide outcomes data that will show it to be achieving the objectives specific to each program, major, concentration, and emphasis offered at the college" (p.17). In addition, the annual report that was required to be submitted from all colleges affiliated with the AABC included a section asking for a report of newly implemented means of assessing whether institutional academic, affective, or psychomotor goals have been attained.

Table 4.7
Frequency of Requirement to Perform SOA, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination
(n=31)

SOA required	Affiliated with a denomination			
	Yes		No	
	f	%f	f	%f
No	10	52.6	9	75.0
Yes	9	47.4	3	25.0

Table 4.8
Frequency of Requirement to Perform SOA, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC
(n=31)

SOA required	Affiliated with the AABC			
	Yes		No	
	f	%f	f	%f
No	5	35.7	14	82.4
Yes	9	64.3	3	17.6

Patterns for Conducting SOA

Respondents were asked about procedural patterns for conducting SOA on their campuses. Table 4.9 shows the frequency of procedural patterns for conducting SOA activities among the institutions in this study. There was great

variability in the SOA procedures both between and within institutions. Respondents from 12 institutions reported that "Assessment is conducted across campus but in different ways in different sections/departments," 9 indicated that "Assessment varies from year to year in approach and extent," and 6 said that "Assessment is conducted as a units in some sections/departments but not in others." In 8 colleges there was a common approach to assessment.

Table 4.9
Frequency of Procedural Patterns for Conducting SOA for All Colleges (n=29)

Procedural patterns	Frequency
Assessment is conducted across campus using a common approach	8
Assessment is conducted across campus but in different ways in different sections/departments	12
Assessment is conducted as a units in some sections/departments but not in others	6
Assessment varies from year to year in approach and extent	9
There is no assessment of student outcomes	3
Other	4

Note. Multiple responses were allowed.

Table 4.10 shows the distribution of responses regarding procedural patterns for conducting SOA classified by size of institution. Respondents in larger Bible colleges reported less variability in procedural patterns from year to year while those from smaller colleges indicated less likelihood of a common approach to SOA.

Table 4.11 shows the distribution of responses regarding procedural patterns for conducting SOA procedures classified by the college's relationship with the AABC. The reported use of a common approach to SOA was substantially greater in colleges affiliated with the AABC than in Bible colleges not affiliated with the AABC. On the other hand respondents in colleges not

Table 4.10
Frequency of Procedural Patterns for Conducting SOA, Classified by Size of College
(n=29)

Procedural pattern	Frequency			
	Small colleges (n=8)	Medium small colleges (n=7)	Medium large colleges (n=8)	Large colleges (n=6)
Assessment is conducted across campus using a common approach	0	2	3	3
Assessment is conducted across campus but in different ways in different sections/departments	4	2	3	3
Assessment is conducted as a units in some sections/departments but not in others	2	3	1	0
Assessment varies from year to year in approach and extent	4	3	0	2
There is no assessment of student outcomes	0	1	2	0
Other	3	0	1	0

Notes. Multiple responses were allowed.
Small colleges = < 42.1 FTE students
Medium small colleges = 42.1-98 FTE students
Medium large colleges = 98.1-241 FTE students
Large colleges = > 241 FTE students

Table 4.11
Frequency of Procedural Patterns for Conducting SOA, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC
(n=29)

Procedural pattern	Affiliated with the AABC	
	Yes (n=13)	No (n=16)
	f	f
Assessment is conducted across campus using a common approach	7	1
Assessment is conducted across campus but in different ways in different sections/departments	4	7
Assessment is conducted as a units in some sections/departments but not in others	2	4
Assessment varies from year to year in approach and extent	2	6
There is no assessment of student outcomes	1	2
Other	1	3

Note. Multiple responses were allowed.

affiliated with the AABC reported more variability both with respect to inter-department or inter-unit variations but less variability with respect to year-to-year changes than did respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC.

Summary

The Bible colleges in this study were small postsecondary institutions concentrated in number in the prairie provinces. Most of the colleges have been operating since the 1930s or 1940s. The majority were sponsored by a denomination, and many were related to the AABC.

The individual respondents represented a broad cross-section of institutional roles with the largest group being faculty members. Respondents in larger institutions out-numbered those from smaller institutions both in absolute and proportional terms.

The primary responsibility to ensure that SOA is carried out was given to senior administrators in most colleges. Few institutions had a specific office responsible for SOA. In those that did have such an office, the office typically planned, coordinated, and conducted SOA and provided technical assistance to other offices performing SOA.

Most of the colleges had no internal or external policy requiring them to implement SOA. The majority of respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC reported such a requirement, although a sizable minority did not seem to be aware of the AABC requirements. Few non-denominational colleges or colleges not affiliated with the AABC reported being required to conduct SOA.

The Bible colleges included in this study showed a high degree of variability in the procedural patterns for conducting SOA. Larger colleges and colleges affiliated with the AABC reported greater use of a common approach to SOA across their campuses. Smaller colleges and colleges not affiliated with the AABC indicated more year-to-year and intra-campus variation in procedures for SOA activities.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS FOR GATHERING AND REPORTING SOA DATA

This chapter presents findings of the study with respect to the methods that were being used to (a) gather SOA data and (b) report SOA data in the responding Canadian Bible colleges as indicated on the General College Information Form. Illustrative statements from interviews are also included.

Methods for Gathering SOA Data

The uses of various kinds of SOA activities were identified on the General College Information Form. The frequency of use and frequency of intended use of SOA activities are reported here.

SOA activities were classified into these categories: (a) ministry readiness (those which evaluate ministry skills to determine the degree to which students attained the professional goals of the college), (b) academic development (those which attempt to measure academic skills and knowledge gains or goal attainment), and (c) student satisfaction (those which assess current and former students perceptions of the effectiveness of the college's programs in attaining its goals or those of the students). SOA activities classified as ministry readiness activities were Christian service reports, field placement reports, employer surveys, and doctrinal defenses. Academic development activities included pre- and post-tests, standardized Bible content examinations, comprehensive examinations, portfolios of student work, theses/projects, standardized tests, and locally produced subject examinations. Student satisfaction activities were locally produced alumni surveys, commercially produced alumni surveys, locally produced student surveys, commercially produced student surveys, graduating student surveys, and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys.

Current Use of SOA Activities

This section outlines the findings of the study with respect to the current use of SOA activities. General findings are presented first followed by findings

with respect to the three categories of SOA activities included on the General College Information Form: (a) ministry readiness, (b) academic development, and (c) student satisfaction. The section concludes with findings related to SOA activities identified only in the interviews.

General Findings

Respondents were asked to report whether their college had procedures to assess student outcomes. Of the 31 responses, respondents in 20 colleges (64.5%) reported that their Bible college had SOA procedures, one (3.2%) said procedures would be implemented in the 1995/96 academic year, and six (19.4%) indicated plans were being discussed but no firm date for implementation had been set. Therefore, a total of 87.1% of the colleges had or planned to have SOA procedures. Three (9.7%) reported their college had no plans. One respondent (3.2%) did not complete this question.

The General College Information Form also asked respondents about the use of specific SOA activities. Response categories given were "Do not use," "Used in last 12 months," and "Have used but no longer use." Frequencies for responses that indicated SOA activities had been "Used in last 12 months" (i.e., in the 1994/95 academic year) are given here. The range of SOA activities performed in the 1994/95 academic year was from 2 to 14 activities. There were 29 usable responses with respect to the use of SOA activities. Twenty-three respondents (79.3%) reported their college had performed five or more SOA activities in 1994/95. Respondents in 11 colleges (37.9%) indicated their college had conducted eight or more SOA activities. Of these 11 responses, four (13.8%) said their college conducted 10 or more SOA activities.

In the interviews, respondents were asked about the motivation for initiating SOA. In 9 of the 10 colleges where interviews were conducted, one or more of the respondents indicated that the college was motivated, at least in part, to conduct SOA because of the AABC requirement. This was true even in three of the four colleges where interviews were conducted which were not

affiliated with the AABC in 1994/95. In each case they were motivated to conduct SOA during a time when they were considering applying to the AABC. This comment by an academic dean was typical:

> *We did a survey around 1991 that was partially instigated by the constituencies question whether we should pursue accreditation, and so it was more of an accreditation survey. That was the big question of the survey.*

Another academic dean said his college felt

> *we had to do it, if we were going to be in the accreditation process. So we decided, let's do it. And that meant there was a flurry of activity for about two years. I do not think we ever dreamed we would take it as far as we have. I think initially we just did it because we felt we had to – because everyone has to do it for accreditation, and people were asking us to get accreditation.*

These statements indicate some respondents were confusing needs assessment and decision support activities with SOA.

Table 5.1 shows the frequency of reported use during 1994/95 and use in the past of SOA activities in the responding colleges. In order to determine which category of SOA activities was most frequently used, the frequencies for locally and commercially produced alumni surveys were combined as were those for locally and commercially produced student surveys. On this basis, 65.5% of the responding colleges indicated SOA use of student surveys and 37.9% reported SOA use of alumni surveys. Using these frequencies, the average responses were as follows: (a) ministry readiness activities was 53.4%; (b) academic development activities, 36.4%; and (c) student satisfaction activities, 45.7%.

Table 5.2 presents the frequencies for SOA activities as reported in the 10 colleges where interviews were conducted both in the interviews and on the General College Information Form. With respect to student satisfaction activities there were no substantial differences (i.e., more than two mentions different) in the number of mentions in the interviews and questionnaires. With respect to three of four ministry readiness activities and all six academic

Table 5.1
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Current and Past Use of SOA Activities (n=29)

SOA activity	Used in last 12 months		Have used but no longer use	
	f	%f	f	%f
Christian service reports	25	86.2	0	0.0
Field placements reports	21	72.4	0	0.0
Surveys of employers	7	24.1	1	3.4
Doctrinal defences	9	31.0	0	0.0
Pre- and post-tests	10	34.5	2	6.9
Standardized Bible content examinations	13	44.8	3	10.3
Comprehensive examinations	15	51.7	0	0.0
Portfolios of students' work	7	24.1	0	0.0
Theses/projects	10	34.5	0	0.0
Standardized tests	1	3.4	0	0.0
Locally produced subject examinations	18	62.1	0	0.0
Locally produced alumni surveys	11	37.9	6	20.7
Commercially produced alumni surveys	0	0.0	0	0.0
Locally produced student surveys	18	62.1	1	3.4
Commercially produced student surveys	4	13.8	1	3.4
Graduating student surveys	15	51.7	1	3.4
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	8	27.6	1	3.4
Other	1	3.3	0	0.0

Table 5.2
Frequency of Use of SOA Activities by Colleges
Where Interviews Were Conducted
(n=10)

SOA activity	Interview f	Questionnaire f
Student surveys (includes commercially and locally produced surveys, focus groups, and interviews)	10	10
Graduating student surveys (including interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups)	9	8
Alumni surveys (commercially and locally developed)	8	7
Course evaluations	8	n.a.
Standardized Bible content examinations	5	9
Field placement reports	4	8
Pre- and Post-tests	4	8
Entering student surveys	4	n.a.
Survey of employers	3	5
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	2	4
Faculty self-assessments	2	n.a.
Job placement/further education follow-up	2	n.a.
Christian service reports	1	10
Theses/major projects	1	6
Portfolios	1	4
Comprehensive examinations	0	7
Locally produced subject examinations	0	6
Doctrinal defences	0	3

Notes. 1. Multiple mentions by interview respondents in the same college were counted only once.
2. Only activities mentioned at least twice in an interview or questionnaire are included
3. n.a. = not asked because either the literature or pilot testing did not support inclusion

development activities there were substantially more mentions in the questionnaire than in the interviews.

Ministry Readiness Activities

Findings of the study with respect to the use of Christian service reports, field placement reports, surveys of employers, and doctrinal defences are presented below.

Christian service and field placement reports. The SOA activity most frequently reported as used in 1994/95 on the General College Information Forms was Christian service reports (86.2%). Christian service is defined in the AABC *Manual* (1994) as active involvement "in some aspect of ministry" (p. 4). Christian service has long been considered a characteristic of Bible colleges. Witmer (1962) reported that "practical Christian service as a vital part of education for Christian ministries has distinguished Bible institute-college education ever since the first schools were established" (p. 136). Brereton (1990) observed that the practical "clinic" or "laboratory" aspect of the educational methodology of some early Bible colleges was so important "that it might properly be argued that the classroom learning supplemented" (p. 107) the application aspect. This characteristic seems to continue to be an important aspect of Bible college education in Canada as reflected by the use of the reports on students' Christian service for SOA. Similarly, 72.4% of respondents indicated that field placement reports were used for SOA purposes.

Respondents in all 10 institutions involved in the interviews indicated on the General College Information Form that Christian service reports were used for SOA, and respondents in 8 of those 10 institutions reported field placement reports were used. However, when asked, "What student outcomes assessment activities are performed on campus?" only one interview respondent mentioned Christian service reports and four respondents spoke about field placement reports.

One respondent, for example, stated that

> *one informal student outcomes assessment activity is the practicum aspect where they work under one of the staff members. The staff members have a weekly meeting of the people in that practicum for evaluation of how it is going. Anything can be brought up there.*

When asked if there were written evaluations, this respondent commented that

> *the students are required to keep a journal of the practicum. That is not evaluated, but it is noted that it has been handed in.*

Such use of field placement reports was not only very informal, but also subject to bias because of its reliance on anecdotal evidence and ad hoc procedures to bring information to bear on planning. Another respondent noted that field placement reports were

> *the only major thing we do at this time to try to measure, and monitor in an on-going way, the development of a student's professional abilities.*

A third interviewee stated that students in field placements

> *do their own evaluations that goes to the supervising pastor and to the college. They evaluate what they have learned, how well they have learned it, and what they still need to learn. These provide them with the opportunity in their senior year to structure their program – perhaps taking an independent study course or two.*

Surveys of employers. Surveys of employers were reported as having been used in nearly one-quarter (24.1%) of the colleges on the questionnaire. Respondents in 5 of the 10 colleges involved in interviews discussed the use of employer surveys in the interviews. Two of the interview respondents admitted that this was a critical element which they had not yet, but planned to, include in their SOA program. One of these respondents provided this overview of the elements of his college's proposed SOA procedures:

> *All of your outcomes need to be tested to see if you are achieving the outcomes in the lives of your students that you intend. I think you research that in three ways: (1) you ask students themselves as to their perception of it, (2) you ask students who have experience in using what you offered – namely your alumni – to see if it worked out how you thought it would in their lives, and (3) you ask employers what mark the student has left.*

These comments demonstrated a clear understanding of SOA.

Another respondent, a college dean, reported that a survey of employers had been conducted for SOA use:

> *We developed a little questionnaire for employers of graduates to get their perceptions of the institution – the strengths and weaknesses that they have found in the graduates from here. The results are supposed to help us in developing changes in the program.*

Doctrinal defences. None of the interview respondents said anything about doctrinal defences although three of the colleges indicated such use on the questionnaires.

Academic Development Activities

Findings for the study with respect to the use of pre- and post-tests, standardized Bible content examinations, comprehensive examinations, portfolios of students' work, theses/projects, standardized tests, and locally produced subject examinations are presented in this section.

Pre- and post-tests. Apart from the use of standardized Bible content examinations discussed below, only one interview respondent discussed the use of pre- and post-tests. The interview provided evidence of an extensive program involving pre- and post-tests in Bible content knowledge, effective essay writing, and general studies. The dean stated that the effective essay pre-test was

> *essentially a brief essay which asks students entering the college to imagine how they would respond as a senior if someone asked them what they learned from this Bible college.*

The dean further explained that the general studies pre-test was

> *a series of five essays that deals with five areas: their views about physical well-being and its role in their lives as Christians, the area of life science and their faith, psychology and faith, fine arts and their faith, and the question of the environmental movement. This last topic provides a little bit in the area of ethics and critical issues.*

He said the college did this

> *for two reasons: (1) to have them give a sense of their level of faith in relation to some issues in those five areas, because those five areas basically line up with the general studies components that we have in our curriculum; and (2) so that we can measure where they are when they come in and then when they leave this*

> *place to see if there has been some movement in their ability to integrate their Christian faith with, say, fine arts or the idea of physical well-being. So what we are trying to test is the sense of movement in understanding and to see how that really integrates into their daily lives.*

The post-test portion for both the effective essay and general studies assessments, the dean explained, was administered in the students' last semester when they were given

> *the essay that they wrote at the beginning to read and, then, are asked to critique it by making comments on whether they still hold to those views or whether they have grown in their understanding. It is a very introspective and subjective process. Essentially, the post-test is taking the original one and reflecting on it.*

Standardized Bible content examinations. Six interview respondents stated that their colleges used the AABC standardized Bible content examinations. Three respondents identified how they use it as a pre-test with new students and again as a post-test with students who are completing a program. The other three respondents identified Bible content examinations as SOA activities but did not use them to determine the abilities of students at the end of their programs. Rather, one interviewee said

> *it is an assessment of where they are at when they come, rather than of growth that has taken place.*

Another reported using it

> *as a challenge exam for two very basic Bible courses – essentially survey, content courses – that we offer. We allow students to take the standardized test as a challenge exam. So we do not require them to take it, but we do allow it.*

The third commented that the college used it

> *to see where the students are at with respect to their knowledge of the Bible. Then all of our marks are based on how well they do in relationship to this, rather than on a percentage basis. We establish a base mark with it. Then when we record their marks we tell them that their mark was above or below the base mark without telling them what the base mark was. In other words, "You have gained or have not gained relative to where you were at entry." We have always said we would like to do a re-test with the standardized test at the end, but we never think of it at the end of the year.*

Comprehensive examinations. Comprehensive examinations were reported on the questionnaire as having been used as SOA techniques in the

1994/95 academic year in at least half of the colleges (51.7%). None of the interview participants mentioned using comprehensive examinations even though seven reported their use on the General College Information Form.

Portfolios. Portfolios were mentioned by one interviewee. A college dean said the college

> *asks students, at the end of their third year, before they get ready to go on their internship, to put together a portfolio. It is part of our internship manual. It includes: their own assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, and call to ministry; what they hope to do after college; their goals for their internship; and activities that they believe will contribute to their learning. This is sent to the church at which they will intern and to the internship supervisor.*

Theses/projects. Theses were not mentioned by any of the interviewees. Projects were discussed by one interview participant who indicated that Bachelor of Theology students

> *as part of their senior seminar are required to do two major projects. Those would be done in the last semester of their senior year. One of them is to present an in-class seminar on a topic of their choice related to ministry. It could be anything from pastor-spouse relationships, to how to raise children, to how to handle church conflict. The second project is to develop a theology of ministry paper. This follows a very prescribed outline. It is written in full, and then presented as a paper to the entire college community, including faculty, staff, and students, and then we invite our local pastors, our area pastor, and some others from the area to come. The students present that paper as an integration of their learning – basically saying, "Here is what I have learned and here is what I believe about ministry as I get ready to leave the college." They are told up front that it is not written in stone, but they need to have some kind of an integrating activity.*

Standardized tests. Except for the standardized Bible examinations discussed above, the only example of a standardized test provided in the interviews was of a commercial reading test used in one college to determine base-line reading comprehension scores. One of the respondents in the college indicated that they used the base-line scores as a reference point for course grading, but did not use the same test as a post-test. As with the use of standardized Bible content examinations as a pre-test without a follow-up post-test, this use of standardized tests does not fit the definition of SOA used in this

study because: (a) it only provides a baseline measure without an outcome assessment and (b) it focuses on assessing the learning of individual students rather than the development of students on a collective basis.

Locally produced subject examinations. Locally produced subject examinations were also reported on the questionnaires as having been used as SOA techniques in the 1994/95 academic year in at least half of the colleges (62.1%). Again, none of the interview participants noted them as a SOA activity, yet on the questionnaire six of the participating colleges said they were used. While it is undoubtedly true that the colleges use locally produced subject examinations, it is far less certain they are used for SOA.

Student Satisfaction Activities

Findings of the study with respect to locally produced alumni surveys, commercially produced alumni surveys, locally produced student surveys, commercially produced student surveys, graduating student surveys, and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys are presented in this section.

Locally produced alumni surveys. In the questionnaire responses most respondents (58.6%) reported their college either used locally produced alumni surveys in 1994/95 or had done so in the past. The interviews provided evidence that some of these surveys were conducted only once every few years, often in conjunction with a self-study for accreditation with the AABC. For example, a president of an accredited college, when asked about the ways that SOA information is linked into the planning processes, responded that

> *there is a fairly good link this year because we are in the process of an internal self-study in preparation for an external team visit [from the AABC]. In this case the expectation is that the information will be shared with faculty and staff and that there will be reaction to it.*

He also noted that

> *basically what we are doing in outcomes assessment is tied directly to the accreditation process and is motivated by that.*

Respondents in three other colleges said their colleges used locally produced alumni surveys to obtain data on perceptions of alumni about the

degree to which their college experience had either assisted them in developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they needed after college or provided them with experiences that enabled them to meet their goals or those of the college. For example, the dean of a college not affiliate with the AABC indicated that an alumni survey had been conducted at five-year intervals. That survey asked the alumni to identify the "value-added" by the college by asking them to rate their perception of the degree of need they had when they entered the college and the degree attained during college with respect to 46 knowledge and ministry skill objectives. As well, the alumni were asked to respond to three questions with respect to 7 spiritual development objectives, 11 academic development objectives, 8 socio-physical development objectives, and 9 professional development objectives. The three questions related these aspects to (a) the degree of need they had when they entered the college, (b) the effectiveness of the college in preparing them, and (c) the potential effectiveness the college could have had in preparing them.

In another college, alumni were asked to provide feedback on the same objectives used in the graduating student survey. The alumni were asked to identify the degree to which they needed each of 26 skills, knowledge, or attitude objectives and to assess the degree of preparation provided by the college. The alumni survey in a third college had a similar format but asked for responses with respect to 63 items. All three of these alumni surveys were also used for gathering evaluation data on the services and facilities of the college as perceived by alumni.

Commercially produced alumni surveys. No interview participants mentioned the use of commercially produced alumni surveys. Likewise, none of the questionnaire respondents in colleges where interviews were held reported any use of commercially produced alumni surveys.

Locally and commercially produced student surveys and graduating student surveys. The findings of the study with respect to the use of all types

of student surveys except withdrawing/non-returning student surveys are combined in this section because of the overlap in the nature of their use. Interview respondents in all 10 colleges told of using student surveys and in nine colleges identified using graduating student surveys. Locally produced student surveys (62.1%) and graduating student surveys (51.7%) were used as SOA techniques in the 1994/95 academic year by at least half of the colleges according to the questionnaire responses.

The interviews and document analyses indicated that some student surveys and graduating student surveys were used to gather perceptions of student satisfaction with respect to the degree to which the college's educational goals were being met. An academic dean of a small college, for example, explained that

> *the mission statement of the college is certainly one of the fundamental statements that we have that guides outcomes. We actually break down either the mission statement or the goals of the college to such things as, "to learn to do critical thinking." Then we ask the student very specifically, "How did we do in that area? Do you feel that you are a better critical thinker than you were when you came?"*

Graduating students in this college were also asked to provide their perceptions of

> *every area of student activity in the life of the college and then to respond as to how those aspects helped to shape who they are as they graduate. They are asked questions like how they feel about being prepared for job interviews. Do they feel confident about that? Do they feel confident about moving on to seminary?*

In another, larger college a paper and pencil survey for all students completing a program—whether one, two, three, or four years—was used. The survey instrument asked students to respond to three separate questions with respect to 36 learning objectives covering the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains: (a) "Before attending [name of college], I would rate my competency in this objective as;" (b) After attending [name of college], I would rate my competency in this objective as;" and (c) "I would rate the importance

of this objective in my Christian walk as." For each question the students were provided a four-point scale response plus a "No opinion" option.

Analysis of other student surveys and graduating student surveys as well as interview comments showed that in some cases the content of these surveys dealt with students' perceptions of various aspects of the college's operations with no attempt to obtain data on the degree of change or degree to which goals had been met. Interview participants referred to learning about student attitudes regarding cafeteria food, maintenance in dormitories, library holdings, chapel programs, and capital developments from these surveys. One college president, the only one to report using a commercially produced student survey, noted that the survey indicated students

> *want to eat whenever they want. They are totally frustrated with being told they have to be there from this hour to this hour. What we have done at lunch is put in a soup and sandwich line where they can go grab their thing. And they love it.*

Another respondent said faculty and administrators interviewed new students

> *asking them to give us some assessment, based on their experience in their first semester, as to whether their expectations had been met.*

This interview was based on a short questionnaire that students were asked to complete ahead of time. The questionnaire asked students to rate 10 areas of the college's life as either "Below expectations," "Met expectations," or "Exceeded expectations." The 10 areas were quality of school, family atmosphere, friendships, spiritual growth, cost, quality of instruction, music program, drama program, athletic events, and residence life. Students were also asked to complete these two open-ended questions: "If you had the power and authority to change one aspect of [name of college], what would it be?" and "What has been the most helpful aspect of your time at [name of college] so far?" These questions generally asked for students' perceptions of the inputs or setting of the college rather than the students' perceptions of the outcomes of their college experience.

One of the faculty members interviewed reported on the use of graduating student focus groups which were

> *asked to check over the library, the food, the residence services, the academics, and spiritual life. Hopefully, they hit each of these headings. But I found it to be a very, very weak system in that you get a kind of mob psychology. So if one person, who happened to be fairly verbal, was upset with something the whole group went off in that direction.*

This faculty member related that the focus group reported to the faculty by having all faculty attend a reporting session:

> *The student who headed this up would have these comments on flip charts and present it to the faculty. Some faculty refused to go, but that was the plan. The majority of the faculty went. We found that it was sort of a "bash faculty" kind of thing. Or I did and some of my colleagues did in the faculty. We finally said, "We find no useful purpose in this at all. We do not find it helpful. The kind of information we're getting seems so nonspecific that we can not use it. It seems that certain people are getting bashed, and we are supposed to just sit there and listen to it. And in many instances we feel the bashing is grossly unfair."*

In addition, a second concern expressed by this respondent revealed additional confusion about the nature of SOA in the topics addressed in these graduating student surveys. Students were reporting on "things that bothered" students as opposed to assessing how well goals had been attained. The respondent said that a second problem with the process

> *was the loop was being closed way too late. The outcomes survey identified things that bothered some graduates from their first year. If we had heard in the first year that this was something that was bothering them, it could have been corrected just like that. But, after four years it was too late.*

Interview participants from four colleges mentioned that entering students were surveyed and interviewees from all 10 colleges reported they surveyed students generally. These surveys tended to be designed to determine the degree of "customer satisfaction" among students and/or the expectations, interests, and attitudes of students. A third category of questions focused on the effectiveness of various recruitment practices of the colleges. These findings were demonstrated both in the comments made in the interviews and by a

review of the documentation provided. Examples of these uses include this comment by the president of one college:

> *We have taken surveys of the students because we felt very uneasy having 160 freshmen and having three blocks – that meant there were in excess of 50 in each class. We have to keep the number of compulsory courses in our programs down and for financial reasons we have had to keep our staffing down. So we did surveys to respond to that, because we feel that is not an optimal learning situation. Our surveys tell us that incoming students want to have a close personal relationship and do not want big-ness. We can not fully satisfy those desires but it reinforces our need to create at least some settings that are smaller.*

Another respondent in the same college outlined the nature of the surveys the college conducted. He reported that they

> *ask high school students what they really want in a Bible school. Then, those students who actually come here and sign up for classes, prior to them actually being in a class, are asked, "What are your expectations as you come here? What do you perceive the school to be? What are some of the fears that you have?"*

The president of a different college explained what his college was doing with student surveys for SOA purposes by saying:

> *To use crass terms, we have to have satisfied customers. To have students come to this institution, we have to be incredibly sensitive or aware of what they are feeling, what they are thinking – areas of satisfaction, areas of dissatisfaction. We are committed to meeting the needs of people, not only faculty and staff, but also the needs of our students. If we are going to be need-sensitive, people-sensitive, or student-sensitive, we have to be doing some kind of formal or informal outcomes assessment. Probably more times than not it is informal, but the bottom line is you want to have your ear pressed to the ground – you want to know if people are happy and satisfied – you want to know if you are doing what you say you are doing.*

Later in the interview this respondent identified some of the topics that the surveys focused on. One of the topics was food services:

> *At least once a semester students fill out a written evaluation form, not just on the quality of the food, but appearance, cleanliness, service provided by the personnel. Now that is something quite basic where students had a written assessment.*

This last statement indicated that SOA was being confused with student evaluation or assessment of the services of the college. A third president responded that student surveys are used because the college

needs to know what students are looking for, what are their needs, and how does what happens here relate to the real world out there. Certainly, I think all that data increases your awareness of what we need to be doing here.

Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys. The only interview participant who discussed withdrawing/non-returning student surveys said they were used to identify reasons for withdrawal, especially looking for points of dissatisfaction. Most of the questions were the same as those used on graduating student survey in that college.

Other SOA Activities

Several other activities were identified in the interviews as being used for SOA purposes. Those which were mentioned by interview participants from at least two colleges are discussed in this section.

Course evaluations. Course evaluations were mentioned by respondents in 8 of the 10 colleges where interviews were conducted. Course evaluations were not included on the questionnaire because the review of the literature and pilot testing did not support their inclusion. No questionnaire respondents added them under the "Other" category, yet in the interviews most respondents (14 out of 22) identified them as a SOA activity or as a source of SOA information. In all but one case, an analysis of the forms revealed that the course evaluations only provided feedback to instructors about their classroom management, preparation, grading, assignments, and delivery style. Essentially they were evaluations of courses and instructors rather than SOA instruments.

However, one of the interviewees and sample forms provided evidence of students identifying the degree to which they had attained to the course objectives on course evaluations. The individual responsible for SOA in this college provided a summary of the instruments used for SOA which stated that

> in addition to the usual items of course content, methods, assignments and instructor, there is a section for evaluating how well each specific course objective was addressed. These ratings can then be compared with scores on student assignments, tests, and examinations which more objectively reflect fulfillment of specific course objectives.

> Statistical summaries are computer generated for each course, or teacher or all results. This latter summary . . . is reviewed particularly with regard to questions relevant to college and program objectives (for example, the question re stimulation of analytical thinking).

Job placement/further education follow-up. One college dean reported that his college offered a specialized program for which the provincial government requires job placement data. These data are used by the government along with student loan default rates to determine whether the graduates of the program will be certifiable in the field for which they are training.

One respondent in another college noted that the college had done

> *an informal check two years ago of whether our graduates for the previous three years had found jobs, but no real outcomes assessment in terms of their abilities, strengths and so on. What we did was attempt to follow up on all the graduates we still had contact with and determine whether they were working, and, if so, whether that work was in the area for which they had been prepared.*

The president of the same college expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of information on the quality of performance provided by job placement rates:

> *The only way we are going to find out if we are doing what we say we are, is to check with the people who graduate. It is not enough just to say, "Yes, in the last ten years we have graduated 100 people who have gone into the ministry." So what? How well are they doing? They might all be failing miserably, doing a terrible job, or just performing at a mediocre level. How do we know if we do not find out? And if we find out, we might find out we are not doing as good a job as we thought we were doing.*

One interview participant reported having obtained job placement and further education success data in an even more informal manner by

> *talking to former students about where they are working and by asking other students I talk to things like, "Hey, by the way, how is your friend down in Ontario? What is she doing now?" I hear about former students that way, but that is the extent of it.*

In this case anecdotal evidence appeared to be acceptable as SOA data. There were other examples of willingness to accept anecdotal evidence. An academic dean commented that

> *there is an awful lot of student approval for what goes on here. We have reports from people who visit us on occasion, just because they are interested in some of the specialized programs that we run. These people have stayed four or five nights with students in dorms. They have come back to us astonished because of their own experiences elsewhere in the past. They have said to us, "I have lived in that dorm for a whole week, mixing with students, and they were unburdening their hearts about their wishes for the future, and all of that." These people could not believe – and these are mature educators – that they were not getting all kinds of negative feedback from the students. And that says a lot. That gave us a reading, an informal reading of what goes on in the students general appreciation of what happens here. It was of a very high order.*

A respondent in another college said that there were

> *a lot of alumni coming around the school. So that gives us an opportunity to have some feedback. There was just one in here a few minutes ago whom I have not seen in years. So, I asked him, "What are you doing?" He said, "Well, I am starting a theology club and the Bible study methods class you taught me is helping." That is an example of the voluntary information that is coming.*

One president responded that he received a great deal of what he termed SOA input from

> *proactive talking with people, surveys, and our feelings as we are rubbing shoulders with local church people.*

Another president added that

> *we make statements up front as to what we would like to see happen to our students as a result of being in our institution and, if we do not assess at the other end to see if something has taken place, we can be simply kidding ourselves as to what might be happening to the students who have been coming here for a year. And you can do that in a very organized way or you can do that in everyday observation and interview situations.*

Faculty self-assessments. Respondents in two colleges stated in the interviews that faculty self-assessments were used for SOA purposes. One respondent explained that faculty self-assessment meant that

> *at the end of the semester faculty are asked to assess for themselves how well they are doing. For example, if we said that in this class students would learn to do this, did they? And if not, why not and what can we do about it? So faculty submit one of those for each class they teach. And it fits into student outcomes assessment in my mind because it determines how the faculty can improve.*

The other college respondent reported that faculty self-assessments were a form of faculty evaluation where the faculty members compare their performance "to

what they are expected to do in their job description." As used in these two colleges, faculty self-assessment was a formative evaluation tool designed to provide an opportunity for self-reflection on the performance of faculty members.

This section has provided an overview of the frequency and nature of SOA activities used in the colleges that participated in the study. The following section provides findings of the study with respect to the variations in the number and kind of SOA activities used according to selected characteristics of the colleges.

Characteristics of Colleges Using SOA Activities

Differences were noted in the number and kinds of SOA activities used during 1994/95 in the responding colleges when analyzed according to size, denominational affiliation, and affiliation with the AABC. These differences are presented here.

Differences in the Number of SOA Activities Used

Size. Table 5.3 presents the frequency and percentage frequency of the number of SOA activities conducted in the colleges in this study during 1994/95, classified by size of college. Larger colleges tended to have had more SOA activities conducted in them than in smaller colleges. This increased level of SOA activity in larger colleges may reflect greater specialization in personnel and accessibility of more resources.

Denominational affiliation. Table 5.4 shows the frequency and percentage frequency of the number of SOA activities conducted in colleges included in this study during 1994/95, classified by the denominational affiliation of the college. More respondents in colleges with no denominational affiliation reported their college used more than eight SOA activities than did respondents in colleges that were denominationally sponsored. This may reflect the need for independent Bible colleges to have information to

demonstrate effectiveness so as to support recruiting and donor development efforts in the absence of traditional support enabled by denominational loyalty.

Table 5.3
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of the Number of SOA Activities Used by Colleges in 1994/95, Classified by Size of College (n=29)

SOA activities used in 1994/95 (Quartiles)		Small colleges (n=8)		Medium small colleges (n=7)		Medium large colleges (n=7)		Large colleges (n=7)	
		f	%f	f	%f	f	%f	f	%f
< 5	n=6	2	25.0	3	42.9	1	14.3	0	0.0
5-6	n=8	2	25.0	2	28.6	1	14.3	3	42.9
7-8	n=8	3	37.5	1	14.3	3	42.9	1	14.3
> 8	n=7	1	12.5	1	14.3	2	28.6	3	42.9

Notes. Small colleges: < 42.1 FTE students
Medium small colleges: 42.1-98 FTE students
Medium large colleges: 98.1-241 FTE students
Large colleges: > 241 FTE students

Table 5.4
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of the Number of SOA Activities Used by Colleges in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination (n=29)

SOA activities used in 1994/95 (Quartiles)		Affiliation with denomination: Yes (n=18)		Affiliation with denomination: No (n=11)	
		f	%f	f	%f
< 5	n=6	4	22.2	2	18.2
5-6	n=8	5	27.8	3	27.3
7-8	n=8	7	38.9	1	9.1
> 8	n=7	2	11.1	5	45.5

The president of a college affiliated with a denomination expressed a sense of denominational encouragement for SOA through the presence of a denominational leader on the college's Board of Governors who

> *constantly asks us, "Are you aware of the kinds of things that pastors need to be prepared for in this day and age?" and "How can I know as a denominational leader that these issues are being addressed in the curriculum somewhere?"*

On the other hand, a senior academic administrator of a college not affiliated with a denomination said the primary reason for conducting SOA was to

> *make sure that you are accomplishing your mission, to make sure that you are not just kidding yourself regarding what you are achieving.*

AABC affiliation. Table 5.5 shows the frequency and percentage frequency of the number of SOA activities conducted in the colleges in the study during 1994/95, classified by the affiliation of the college with the AABC. Colleges affiliated with the AABC implemented more SOA activities than colleges not affiliated with the AABC. In light of the requirements for conducting and reporting on new SOA activities, this result is not surprising.

Table 5.5
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of the Number of SOA Activities Used in Colleges in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC (n=29)

SOA activities used in 1994/95 (Quartiles)		Affiliation with the AABC: Yes (n=13) f	Yes (n=13) %f	No (n=16) f	No (n=16) %f
< 5	n=6	1	7.7	5	31.3
5-6	n=8	4	30.8	4	25.0
7-8	n=8	2	15.4	6	37.5
> 8	n=7	6	46.2	1	6.3

Differences in the Kinds of SOA Activities Used

Size. Table 5.6 shows the frequency and percentage frequency of the kinds of SOA activities used in 1994/95 in colleges in the study, classified by size. Student outcomes were assessed in larger colleges by the use of locally

Table 5.6
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Use of SOA Activities in 1994/95, Classified by Size of College
(n=30)

SOA activity	Small colleges (n=8)		Medium small colleges (n=7)		Medium large colleges (n=8)		Large colleges (n=7)	
	f	%f	f	%f	f	%f	f	%f
Christian service reports	7	87.5	6	85.7	6	75.0	6	85.7
Field placements reports	5	62.5	6	85.7	6	75.0	4	57.1
Surveys of employers	2	25.0	0	0.0	3	37.5	2	28.6
Doctrinal defences	3	37.5	1	14.3	0	0.0	5	71.4
Pre- and post-tests	2	25.0	1	14.3	5	62.5	2	28.6
Standardized Bible content examinations	3	37.5	1	14.3	6	75.0	3	42.9
Comprehensive examinations	5	62.5	4	57.1	3	37.5	3	42.9
Portfolios of students' work	3	37.5	1	14.3	1	12.5	2	28.6
Theses/projects	4	50.0	2	28.6	2	25.0	2	28.6
Standardized tests	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	12.5	0	0.0
Locally produced subject examinations	4	50.0	4	57.1	5	62.5	5	71.4
Locally produced alumni surveys	1	12.5	2	28.6	4	50.0	4	57.1
Commercially produced alumni surveys	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Locally produced student surveys	4	50.0	3	42.9	6	75.0	5	71.4
Commercially produced student surveys	1	12.5	0	0.0	1	12.5	2	28.6
Graduating student surveys	4	50.0	3	42.9	4	50.0	4	57.1
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	1	12.5	1	14.3	4	25.0	4	57.1
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	14.3

Notes. Small colleges = < 42.1 FTE students
Medium small colleges = 42.1-98 FTE students
Medium large colleges = 98.1-241 FTE students
Large colleges = > 241 FTE students

produced alumni surveys, standardized Bible content examinations, locally produced student surveys, surveys of employers, and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys more frequently than in smaller colleges. More comprehensive examinations, field placement reports, and theses/projects were used in smaller colleges for SOA purposes than in larger colleges.

Of the 10 colleges that participated in the interviews, five used interview techniques and the other five used pencil and paper forms for conducting student and graduating student surveys. Of the five colleges that conducted interviews with students, two were small, one was medium-small, and two were medium-large in terms of FTE students. Three of the five colleges that conducted paper and pencil surveys were large and the other two were medium-large.

Denominational affiliation. The frequency and percentage frequency of the kinds of SOA activities used in colleges in the study during 1994/95, classified by denominational affiliation, are shown in Table 5.7. Respondents in colleges with denominational affiliation reported a higher frequency of use of locally produced student surveys, surveys of employers, graduating student surveys, and field placement reports for SOA purposes than did respondents in colleges with no denominational affiliation. Standardized Bible content examinations, pre- and post- tests, and theses/projects were noted by respondents as used for SOA in colleges with no denominational affiliation more frequently than in denominational colleges.

AABC affiliation. Table 5.8 shows the frequency and percentage frequency of use during 1994/95 of SOA activities in colleges, classified by affiliation with the AABC. More respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC reported using locally produced alumni surveys, standardized Bible content examinations, locally and commercially produced student surveys, employer surveys, graduating student surveys, doctrinal defences, pre- and post-tests, and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys than did

Table 5.7
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Use of SOA Activities in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination
(n=30)

SOA activity	Affiliated with a denomination			
	Yes (n=18)		No (n=12)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Christian service reports	15	83.3	10	83.3
Field placements reports	14	77.8	7	58.3
Surveys of employers	5	27.8	2	16.7
Doctrinal defences	5	27.8	4	33.3
Pre- and post-tests	4	22.2	6	50.0
Standardized Bible content examinations	6	33.3	7	58.3
Comprehensive examinations	9	50.0	6	50.0
Portfolios of students' work	4	22.2	3	25.0
Theses/projects	4	22.2	6	50.0
Standardized tests	1	5.6	0	0.0
Locally produced subject examinations	11	61.1	7	58.3
Locally produced alumni surveys	6	33.3	5	41.7
Commercially produced alumni surveys	0	0.0	0	0.0
Locally produced student surveys	13	72.2	5	41.7
Commercially produced student surveys	2	11.1	2	16.7
Graduating student surveys	11	61.1	4	33.3
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	5	27.8	3	25.0
Other	1	5.6	0	0.0

Table 5.8
Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Use of SOA Activities in 1994/95, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC
(n=30)

SOA activity	Affiliation with the AABC			
	Yes (n=17)		No (n=13)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Christian service reports	11	84.6	14	82.4
Field placements reports	9	69.2	12	70.6
Surveys of employers	5	38.5	2	11.8
Doctrinal defences	5	38.5	4	23.5
Pre- and post-tests	6	46.2	4	23.5
Standardized Bible content examinations	8	61.5	5	29.4
Comprehensive examinations	6	46.2	9	52.9
Portfolios of students' work	3	23.1	4	23.5
Theses/projects	5	38.5	5	29.4
Standardized tests	1	7.7	0	0.0
Locally produced subject examinations	8	61.5	10	58.8
Locally produced alumni surveys	7	53.8	4	23.5
Commercially produced alumni surveys	0	0.0	0	0.0
Locally produced student surveys	11	84.6	7	41.2
Commercially produced student surveys	3	23.1	1	5.9
Graduating student surveys	8	61.5	7	41.2
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	6	46.2	2	11.8
Other	1	7.7	0	0.0

respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC. No SOA were reported as used more in colleges not affiliated with the AABC as compared with the use in colleges that were affiliated with the AABC.

Intended Use of SOA Activities

The response rate to the question on the General College Information Form asking about intentions regarding future use of SOA activities was lower than that for other questions on the questionnaire. Some respondents may have been confused as to the necessity of responding to this question because of the way it was presented. It was included in an extra column beside the response columns for the frequency of use of SOA activities. Respondents may have felt that they were only to indicate intended use if they intended to initiate an activity. Eight respondents completed the current use section but did not answer any of the intended use questions. Two others responded to intended use questions only with respect to those activities that they also marked as "Do Not Use." They may have assumed that marking the "Used in Last 12 Months" response implied continued future use. Nonetheless, the activities receiving eight or more intended use responses were Christian service reports (14), field placement reports (11), standardized Bible content examinations (11), locally produced alumni surveys (10), locally produced student surveys (10), graduating student surveys (10), pre- and post-tests in at least one subject/area (10), and surveys of employers (8). Table 5.9 shows the frequency of intended use of SOA activities in responding colleges.

Table 5.10 shows the frequency of intended, current, and past use of SOA activities in order to show the relationship between past use and future intentions. Most respondents indicated they intended to continue using those SOA activities used in either 1994/95 or previously. Exceptions were (a) commercially produced alumni surveys where the one institution in which it was indicated there was intended use had no record of prior use and (b) pre- and post-tests where 40% of the respondents who indicated they intended to

Table 5.9
Frequency of Intended Use of SOA Activities
(n=19)

SOA activity	f
Christian service reports	14
Field placements reports	11
Surveys of employers	8
Doctrinal defences	3
Pre- and post-tests	10
Standardized Bible content examinations	11
Comprehensive examinations	6
Portfolios of students' work	5
Theses/projects	5
Standardized tests	0
Locally produced subject examinations	7
Locally produced alumni surveys	10
Commercially produced alumni surveys	1
Locally produced student surveys	10
Commercially produced student surveys	3
Graduating student surveys	10
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	8
Other	0

Table 5.10
Frequency of Intended, Current, and Past Use of SOA Activities
(n=19)

SOA activity	Intend to use in future f	Used in last 12 months f	Have used but no longer use f
Christian service reports	14	14	0
Field placements reports	11	11	0
Surveys of employers	8	5	1
Doctrinal defences	3	3	0
Pre- and post-tests	10	5	1
Standardized Bible content examinations	11	8	1
Comprehensive examinations	6	5	0
Portfolios of students' work	5	4	0
Theses/projects	5	4	0
Standardized tests	0	0	0
Locally produced subject examinations	7	7	0
Locally produced alumni surveys	10	3	5
Commercially produced alumni surveys	1	0	0
Locally produced student surveys	10	10	0
Commercially produced student surveys	3	3	0
Graduating student surveys	10	8	1
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	8	6	0
Other	0	0	0

use such tests in the future had not used them before. Plans for innovation in SOA activities appear to have been limited.

One interview respondent did indicate some innovative techniques were being considered. An academic dean said his institution had a five-year plan to develop a series of focus groups. To begin the process he had

> *initiated a pilot project that will run from January, 1996, into the last part of April, putting a panel group and then a focus group together to begin to look at one area – the performance of people who are now in youth ministry that come out of this college. There are a lot of different reasons, but one of them is, obviously, to see how our curriculum is functioning now, a second is to see if there are areas we need to look at to improve or add.*
>
> *We plan to look at placement rates as well, in terms of graduates that are going into actual job placements and/or students that go on to graduate work or seminary from here. And we are looking at entrance scores at some of those places to give us an assessment of how people are doing.*

Methods for Reporting SOA Information

Table 5.11 shows the frequency of reporting methods used for internal communication of SOA information in the colleges in this study. The most frequently used internal reporting method was printed reports to faculty (17) followed by oral reports to Board and oral reports to faculty (14 each). Fewer institutions reported to students either in written form or orally (8 each).

As evidenced in the interviews, reporting of SOA information ranged from capsule reports provided as part of a general progress report to detailed reports including data, analysis, and summary recommendations. One academic dean said that

> *at present the reporting mechanism has simply been, of course, supplying a summary of the results plus all the empirical data to Board members so they can see it and study it, and then, second, giving a written and oral presentation to our Board of Directors meeting semi-annually.*

He stated that the faculty council also received the same report as the Board. On the other hand, a dean of a small college reported that the president and dean annually interview all graduating students concerning strengths and weakness of academics affairs as well as

student life in general, everything from chapel to health care to campus security. So it gives us a good chance to get at all of those issues and to respond. A summary and analysis of the outcomes assessment interview are presented to both the board and the curriculum committee. That allows the Board and curriculum committee to think about what we need to do. That material is given consideration in terms of future planning and development.

Table 5.11
Frequency of Internal Reporting Methods for Information From SOA Activities (n = 18-25)

Reporting method	Frequency		
	Used in last year	Never used	Used in past but not now
Printed report to Board	12	10	1
Printed report to faculty	17	6	2
Printed report to students	8	11	0
Oral report to Board	14	5	2
Oral report to faculty	14	5	2
Oral report to students	8	11	0
Reports to relevant committee, task force, or administrator	12	5	1

One president responded that SOA information was being used with

various sub-groups in the college by sharing information with them and having that information go into the plans they make to implement their programs. For example, the director of research will be meeting with the Student Life staff in the next week or so and sharing his recent survey with them. That particular survey has to do with some of the ethical choices and lifestyle issues that the young people are struggling with. And our Student Life staff needs to know that.

In addition, this president stated that

we share all of this with our Board and with its various sub-committees: the education committee, the student life committee, and the finance committee. Second, we share all this information with our whole constituency. We report to the two conferences [denominations]. Third, we had all this information in hand when we did our strategic planning with the Board.

Of the 26 responses with respect to external reporting of SOA information or activities, 12 indicated they reported to the AABC, 10 said they made no external reports, 5 indicated sponsoring denominations, 3 mentioned donors, and 1 identified government agencies. Six respondents identified more than one agency in their response. The college of one respondent who indicated a report was made to the AABC was only considering affiliation with the AABC in 1994/95 and was not counted as a college affiliated with the AABC.

An unexpected finding was the fact that respondents in two colleges affiliated with the AABC did not indicate they reported on SOA results or activities to the AABC. One respondent stated that external reporting was not applicable and the other only mentioned supporting denominations. One respondent in a college affiliated with the AABC did not respond to this question. Three of the respondents who did say they reported to the AABC also indicated they were not required to conduct SOA procedures.

Summary

This chapter presented findings of the study with respect to the methods used to gather and report SOA data.

Methods Used to Gather SOA Data

Nearly 80% of the colleges were reported as having conducted five or more SOA activities in 1994/95. Ministry readiness activities were cited as being used most frequently, followed by student satisfaction, and academic development. Specifically, the SOA activities employed most according to the General College Information Form responses were Christian service reports, field placement reports, locally produced student surveys, locally produced subject examinations, comprehensive examinations, and graduating student surveys.

Differences Between Questionnaire and Interview Responses

The interviews produced different results with respect to academic development and ministry readiness activities. For example, only one of the

interview respondents mentioned Christian service reports despite the fact that respondents in all 10 of the institutions where interviews were conducted had reported that Christian service reports were used for SOA purposes on the General College Information Form. Christian service reports were undoubtedly made, but the degree to which they were actively incorporated in SOA is questionable in light of the lack of comments by the interview participants. Likewise, seven of the General College Information Forms from colleges where interviews were conducted had comprehensive examinations marked as used in the last year, but none of interview respondents mentioned their use.

On the other hand, graduating student surveys were identified by interview respondents in 9 of the 10 colleges as having been used, while respondents in only 8 of those 10 colleges indicated using graduating student surveys on the General College Information Form. Student surveys, graduating student surveys, and alumni surveys appear to be have been actively used for student evaluation of the facilities and services of the colleges. However, only three interview respondents provided evidence that graduating student surveys or alumni surveys were used for SOA.

Confusion With SOA

The difference in interview and questionnaire data with respect to SOA activities may be explained by the use of a prompted response item in the questionnaire and an open-ended question in the interview. When provided with an activity on the questionnaire respondents marked it, but when asked to identify the SOA activities these same responses were not made. Questionnaire respondents may have simply marked those activities conducted regardless of whether they were used for SOA purposes. Interview respondents, on the other hand, were not given a list to choose from but were simply asked to state the SOA activities performed. These individuals discussed student satisfaction activities with a similar frequency as the respondents on the questionnaire did, but they also mentioned several kinds of activities that were not on the

questionnaire—some of which are not SOA activities, and they identified other activities with a substantially lower frequency as compared to the questionnaires, if they were identified at all. Interview respondents were likely thinking of those activities they considered to be SOA activities.

The interviews provided a number of examples of confusion of about the meaning of SOA. Teacher and course evaluations, "customer satisfaction" type student surveys, and entering student perceptions, background characteristics, and interests were all referred to as SOA activities by interviewees. "Customer satisfaction" surveys do not fulfill the definition of SOA used in this study unless the "customer" is directly asked about the extent to which institutional or personal goals are met. Entering student intents and background information provides baseline data for use in the talent-development approach to assessment, but in this study the evidence suggested it was gathered and used in isolation.

In summary, respondents seem to have been confused about the definition of SOA activities. The interview respondents declared techniques designed to gather student satisfaction data or student desires and interests as SOA activities and talked about student satisfaction activities as SOA activities to a greater extent than ministry readiness or academic development activities. Questionnaire respondents seem to have neglected or not understood the definition for SOA on the form and simply marked off those things their college did whether they were used for SOA purposes or not.

Anecdotal Data

Several interview respondents expressed satisfaction with the use of anecdotal evidence for SOA purposes. In the examples given, this kind of evidence lacks the rigor necessary to provide reliable and trustworthy data.

Effective Use of SOA

At the same time as confusion, abuse, and neglect of SOA activities were demonstrated, some participants in the interviews demonstrated use of SOA

activities in well-conceived and implemented programs. In the interviews and documents from these colleges there was evidence of a strong link between the mission of the college and/or the objectives of the students and the criteria for assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of outcomes. There appeared to be three colleges among those interviewed which had such a mission- or objective-focused SOA program.

Differences in the Use of SOA Activities

Differences in the use of SOA activities were noted on the basis of the size of institutions, affiliation of the college with a denomination, and affiliation of the college with the AABC.

Size

According to the General College Information Form replies, fewer SOA activities tended to be conducted in smaller institutions; however, some of the most active SOA programs were in smaller colleges. SOA activities employed in smaller colleges were generally more labor-intensive in administration, subjective in terms of analysis, and open-ended in terms of responses such as comprehensive examinations, field placement reports, and theses/projects for assessing student outcomes. On the other hand, SOA activities that could be administered in groups, could be scored in volume or by machine, and produced quantitative data such as locally produced student surveys and graduating student surveys, in the form of questionnaires, were more likely to have been conducted in larger colleges.

Affiliation With a Denomination

More SOA activities were reported as having been performed in colleges not affiliated with denominations than in denominational colleges. Greater use was said to have been made of student satisfaction activities in denominational colleges, while in non-denominational colleges there was more use of academic development activities noted.

Affiliation With the AABC

While the AABC required that SOA procedures be practiced, there was not total compliance among its affiliate institutions. Nonetheless, respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC recorded a higher frequency of SOA activities carried out in 1994/95 than did respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC. Respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC said their colleges assessed student outcomes to a greater extent by means of surveys, standardized Bible content examinations, doctrinal defences, and pre- and post-tests than did respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC. Non-affiliate colleges were not reported to have been substantially higher in their frequency of use of any SOA activity in comparison with colleges affiliated with the AABC.

Reporting of SOA Information

SOA information was reported most frequently to faculty members, governing boards, and the AABC (where applicable). Donors and students received the fewest reports. SOA information, when reported in this fashion, is likely being used for planning and accountability purposes rather than as a recruitment or constituency building tool.

External reporting was conducted in about half of the colleges. The AABC was the most frequently identified external agency to which the colleges reported. This kind of reporting is probably used to demonstrate accountability.

Conclusion

Much of what was done under the rubric of SOA was needs assessment and operational evaluation. However, there were examples of SOA activities used to determine the degree to which students attained institutional or student goals or developed in skills, knowledge, and attitudes as a result of their attendance at the college.

CHAPTER 6

SATISFACTION WITH SOA ADMINISTRATION AND ACTIVITIES

This chapter provides findings of the study with respect to satisfaction of administrators and faculty members from the Canadian Bible colleges in this study with these two variables: (a) the extent of faculty involvement in the administration of SOA procedures and (b) the methods of gathering SOA information as reported on the Individual Personnel Form.

In this study, personnel were classified as (a) "faculty members" if they identified themselves as "Teaching faculty member;" (b) "senior academic administrators" if they identified themselves as "President" or "Academic administrator;" or (c) "other administrators" if they identified themselves as occupying other positions on the Individual Personnel Form. The term "administrator" refers to both senior academic administrators and other administrators. Satisfaction with respect to faculty involvement in the administration of SOA was determined by comparing the frequencies and means of the responses on the degree to which faculty "Are" involved and "Should be" involved. Satisfaction with respect to the methods of gathering SOA was determined by these methods: (a) a direct question on satisfaction with the use of specific SOA activities and (b) comparing mean responses to questions on the perception of current and ideal use of the same SOA activities.

Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA

Respondents were asked to identify the degree to which faculty members were and ought to have been involved in these four aspects of the administration of SOA: (a) planning, (b) directing, (c) implementing/ operating, and (d) evaluating. The results, classified by position (faculty members and administrators), are given in this section. The response categories provided were as follows: "Not at all involved" (1), "Slightly involved" (2), "Moderately involved" (3), "Very involved" (4), and "Highly involved" (5).

Table 6.1 shows the percentage frequencies and means of the responses given by faculty members and administrators from the participating Bible colleges with respect to the current and desired degrees of involvement of faculty members in aspects of administration of SOA.

Degree of Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA

Table 6.1 shows the responses of participating faculty members and administrators from Canadian Bible colleges with respect to the current degree of involvement of faculty members in aspects of the administration of SOA activities in their colleges. The means for both administrators' and faculty members' responses indicated they perceived faculty members as about "Moderately involved" (3) in the planning (mean of faculty members' responses was 3.1; mean of administrators' responses was 3.1), directing (2.9; 2.9), and implementing (2.8; 3.0) aspects and between "Slightly involved" (2) and "Moderately involved" in the evaluating (2.6; 2.8) aspect of the administration of SOA activities. The highest mean for degree of involvement was reported for planning (3.1 by both faculty members and administrators). The lowest mean for degree of involvement was reported for evaluation (2.6 by faculty members; 2.8 by administrators).

Satisfaction of Faculty Members With Faculty Involvement

As shown in Table 6.1, faculty member responses of "Very involved" (4) and "Highly involved" (5) were lower by 16.6% to 39.2% with respect to faculty involvement as compared to desired faculty involvement in the four aspects of SOA administration. The greatest differences in the percentage of faculty member respondents marking "Very involved" (4) or "Highly involved" (5) for involvement of faculty in SOA administration as compared to desired involvement of faculty were 39.2% (66.7% "Should be" vs. 27.5% "Are") for evaluation and 31.8% (72.1% vs. 40.3%) for planning, while the smallest differences were 16.6% (50.0% vs. 33.4%) for directing and 19.7% (55.7% vs. 36.0%) for implementing.

Table 6.1
Frequency of Current and Desired Faculty Involvement in Aspects of Administration of SOA, Classified by Position of Respondent

Aspect of administration	Position	n_a	n_s	Degree of involvement: Not at all involved %f		Slightly involved %f		Moderately involved %f		Very involved %f		Highly involved %f		Mean	
				Are	Should be	Are	Should be	Are	Should be	Are	Should be	Are	Should be	Are	Should be
Planning	Faculty	62	61	11.3	0.0	25.8	3.3	22.6	24.6	25.8	50.8	14.5	21.3	3.1	3.9
	Administrators	77	75	18.2	4.0	9.1	4.0	32.5	24.0	22.1	48.0	18.2	20.0	3.1	3.8
Directing	Faculty	63	60	19.0	6.7	25.4	15.0	22.2	28.3	17.5	33.3	15.9	16.7	2.9	3.4
	Administrators	75	73	20.0	5.5	16.0	15.1	32.0	21.9	18.7	39.7	13.0	17.8	2.9	3.5
Implementing	Faculty	61	61	19.7	4.9	23.0	9.8	21.3	29.5	26.2	42.6	9.8	13.1	2.8	3.5
	Administrators	76	74	17.1	5.4	19.7	14.9	25.0	14.9	26.3	50.0	11.8	14.9	3.0	3.5
Evaluating	Faculty	62	60	27.4	5.0	17.7	5.0	27.4	23.3	21.0	51.7	6.5	15.0	2.6	3.7
	Administrators	75	75	21.3	4.0	17.3	6.7	28.0	24.0	26.7	50.7	6.7	14.7	2.8	3.7

Notes. The scale used was 1 = *Not at all involved*, 2 = *Slightly involved*, 3 = *Moderately involved*, 4 = *Very involved*, and 5 = *Highly involved*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

n_a = number of responses in the subset for "Are."

n_s = number of responses in the subset for "Should be."

The means for the responses of faculty members for all aspects of administration of SOA procedures were substantially (≥ 0.5) less for current degree of involvement as compared with desired degree of involvement. The difference in means with respect to planning was 0.8 ("Should be" 3.9 vs. "Are" 3.1), directing 0.5 (3.4 vs. 2.9), implementing 0.7 (3.5 vs. 2.6), and evaluating 1.1 (3.7 vs. 2.6). Responding faculty members seem to have been dissatisfied with the level of involvement of faculty members in these aspects of the administration of SOA procedures.

Satisfaction of Administrators With Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA

The frequencies and means of administrators' responses relative to their perception of the current and desired degrees of involvement of faculty members in aspects of administration of SOA procedures are given in Table 6.1. Between 25.8% and 32.0% fewer Bible college administrators responded that faculty members were "Very involved" (4) or "Highly involved" (5) than indicated they believed faculty members should be involved at those levels. The greatest difference in administrators' responses of "Very involved" (4) or "Highly involved" (5) with respect to perceived involvement and desired involvement of faculty members in SOA administration was 32.0% for evaluating (65.4% "Should be" vs. 33.4% "Are") while the smallest difference was 25.8% for directing (57.5% vs. 31.7%).

The highest mean response by administrators with respect to the current degree of involvement of faculty members in aspects of SOA administration was for planning (3.1) and the lowest mean was for evaluating (2.8). The highest mean response by administrators concerning the desired degree of involvement of faculty members in administrative aspects of SOA was for planning (3.8) and the lowest means were for directing and implementing (both 3.5).

The means for administrators' responses on desired involvement of faculty members in each administrative activity were substantially (≥ 0.5) higher than the means for involvement. The difference in means with respect to planning was 0.6 (3.8 "Should be" vs. 3.1 "Are"), directing 0.6 (3.5 vs. 2.9), implementing 0.5 (3.5 vs. 3.0), and evaluating 0.9 (3.7 vs. 2.8). Administrators in the responding Bible colleges appear to have been dissatisfied with the level of involvement of faculty members in these aspects of administration of SOA procedures especially with respect to faculty members role in evaluating of SOA activities.

One college dean identified faculty involvement in SOA administration as very critical to its success and expressed the desire for

> *greater involvement in student outcomes assessment by faculty. We need a greater sense of ownership by faculty in the development of new methods of student outcomes assessment. We need to broaden the involvement of our faculty in the process. Up to now it has been a small circle. Unless the faculty members have a sense of ownership, I can sit here and memo them until I am blue in the face and it is not going to have any impact.*

Speaking with reference to course evaluations, one faculty member demonstrated the impact of lack of involvement by saying

> *I suppose every teacher needs to be encouraged a bit more to utilize it, rather than to simply be handed the paper and told, "This is how they viewed your course." I must admit that while I like fan mail and like people to say I am a great teacher, I do not like criticism too much. So, I have been given these reports sometimes and thought, "Oh, look at these." I don't really take hold of them and do something significant with them. I always get around to reading them, but maybe not in ways that expect change. Sometimes it is just, "Well, lets see how the class looks this year."*

The president and dean of another college noted that faculty were not very involved and recognized the importance of their involvement, but did not perceive them as being interested. Therefore they concluded that administrators had to initiate the process and direct the use of SOA information. The president observed that the impetus for SOA

> *moves from administration to faculty because, nice as it is to be faculty driven, being faculty driven has all sorts of problems, so we are very administration*

driven here. Some of our faculty do struggle with that. But it depends on administration. Administration does gets some direction from faculty – not that we omit the faculty in the process because they are very critical, they are the middlemen that make things happen and they all have to buy in. But, most of them tend not to. They are more worried about their historical books and their ancient history.

The dean commented that

faculty are not into outcomes assessment much at all, at least not in our institution. I suspect that is the way it is generally. Unless our faculty are unique. So the main usage of the results is in administrative meetings, discussions, curriculum planning and the like. If administration does not push it, then very little will be done with it.

Satisfaction of Faculty Members and Administrators With Faculty Involvement in Administration of SOA

As shown in Table 6.1 mean responses from faculty members and administrators were not substantially different (≥ 0.5). Both administrators and faculty members seem to have perceived the current degree of faculty involvement as having been less than the desired degree of faculty involvement in planning, directing, implementing, and evaluating of SOA activities. For example, only slightly more faculty members indicated that faculty members should have been "Very involved" (4) or "Highly involved" (5) than did administrators with respect to planning (faculty members, 72.1% vs. administrators, 68.0%) and evaluating (66.7% vs. 65.4%) of SOA activities.

Satisfaction With SOA Activities

Data about satisfaction with SOA activities were gathered in two ways. First, the participants were asked to indicate the degree of satisfaction they had with SOA activities. Second, respondents were asked to identify their perception of the current and ideal use of SOA activities. The differences between perceptions of current and ideal use were analyzed to assess the degree and direction of satisfaction. This analysis is based on these two premises: (a) that discrepancies between perceptions of ideal and current use indicate dissatisfaction with current practice whether the differences are

positive or negative, and (b) that the direction of the difference is indicative of the respondents' desires to see increased or decreased use of an activity.

Analysis of Satisfaction Means

This section provides the satisfaction means for SOA activities. The findings for all respondents—classified by position of respondent, institutional size, affiliation of the college with denomination, and affiliation of the college with the AABC—are presented in the following sections.

Satisfaction Means for All Respondents

Table 6.2 shows the satisfaction means with SOA activities for all respondents on the Individual Personnel Form. The response categories provided were "Very dissatisfied" (1), "Somewhat dissatisfied" (2), "Neutral" (3), "Somewhat satisfied" (4), and "Very satisfied" (5). The highest satisfaction means were for locally produced subject exams (4.2) and Christian service reports (4.0). The lowest satisfaction means were for surveys of employers and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys (both 2.9). Most satisfaction means (14 out of 17) were between "Neutral" (3) and "Somewhat satisfied" (4), two were slightly lower than "Neutral" (3) and one was slightly above "Somewhat satisfied" (4).

Satisfaction Means Classified by Position of Respondent

The distribution of the mean responses relating to satisfaction with SOA methods, classified by position of respondent, are presented in Table 6.3. Substantial inter-group differences (≥ 0.5) in satisfaction means were observed with respect to these six SOA activities: (a) commercial alumni surveys (faculty members, 3.4 vs. senior academic administrators, 2.8 and other administrators, 2.5), (b) comprehensive exams (faculty members, 4.1 vs. other administrators, 3.5), (c) standardized Bible content examinations (faculty members, 3.7 and other administrators, 3.8 vs. senior academic administrators, 3.2), (d) portfolios (senior academic administrators, 3.7 vs. other administrators, 3.1), (e) theses/projects (senior academic administrators, 3.9 vs. other administrators, 3.2),

Table 6.2
Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities for All Respondents

SOA activity	n	Mean
Christian service reports	120	4.0
Field placements reports	105	3.9
Surveys of employers	79	2.9
Doctrinal defences	83	3.6
Pre- and post-tests	89	3.3
Standardized Bible content examinations	99	3.6
Comprehensive exams	90	3.9
Portfolios of students' work	70	3.4
Theses/projects	71	3.5
Standardized tests	45	3.0
Locally produced subject examinations	115	4.2
Locally produced alumni surveys	109	3.2
Commercially produced alumni surveys	45	3.0
Locally produced student surveys	112	3.8
Commercially produced student surveys	53	3.4
Graduating senior surveys	101	3.6
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	87	2.9

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied.* (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 6.3
Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent

SOA activity	Mean		
	Faculty members (n=21-52)	Senior academic administrators (n=8-28)	Other administrators (n=20-52)
Christian service reports	3.9	4.2	3.9
Field placements reports	3.7	4.3	3.8
Surveys of employers	2.8	3.2	2.8
Doctrinal defences	3.7	3.7	3.3
Pre- and post-tests	3.2	3.2	3.4
Standardized Bible content examinations	3.7	3.2	3.8
Comprehensive exams	4.1	3.9	3.5
Portfolios of students' work	3.4	3.7	3.1
Theses/projects	3.5	3.9	3.2
Standardized tests	2.9	3.1	3.3
Locally produced subject examinations	4.4	4.3	4.0
Locally produced alumni surveys	3.1	3.5	3.0
Commercially produced alumni surveys	3.4	2.8	2.5
Locally produced student surveys	3.6	4.0	3.8
Commercially produced student surveys	3.6	3.5	3.2
Graduating senior surveys	3.7	3.8	3.5
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	2.9	3.1	2.7

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

and (f) field placement reports (senior academic administrators, 4.3 vs. other administrators, 3.8 and faculty members, 3.7).

Satisfaction Means Classified by Size of College

Mean responses from the Individual Personnel Form on satisfaction with SOA activities, classified by college size, are given in Table 6.4. Satisfaction means by respondents in medium-small colleges (42.1 to 98 FTE students) tended to be lower than for respondents in the other size categories of Bible colleges. Of the 17 activities identified on the questionnaire the satisfaction means by respondents in medium-small colleges were lowest in 10 activities. Respondents in small colleges (< 42.1 FTE students) recorded the greatest number of highest means (7) with respondents in large colleges (> 241 FTE students) next (5).

Substantial inter-group variations (means differing ≥ 0.5) occurred with respect to the means reported on 13 of the 17 activities. The greatest range of difference in means was found between respondents in small colleges and medium-small colleges with respect to the use of commercially produced alumni surveys (difference of 1.5—small colleges, 3.8 vs. medium-small colleges, 2.3), standardized Bible content examinations (1.3—3.9 vs. 2.6), and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys (1.2—3.4 vs. 2.2).

Small colleges' personnel obtained substantially higher satisfaction means than did respondents in all other size categories of colleges on commercially produced alumni surveys and surveys of employers, and substantially higher satisfaction means than personnel responding from large colleges on standardized tests. Satisfaction means for respondents in small and large colleges were substantially higher than were those of respondents in medium-small and medium-large (98.1 to 241 FTE students) colleges with respect to commercially produced student surveys. Satisfaction means for personnel from large colleges were substantially higher than those for respondents in (a) all other size categories of colleges on locally produced

Table 6.4
Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Size of Institution

SOA activity	n	College size: Small n=6-23 Mean	Medium small n=7-27 Mean	Medium large n=12-29 Mean	Large n=19-49 Mean
Christian service reports	120	3.8	3.9	4.3	3.9
Field placements reports	105	3.8	3.7	4.2	3.8
Surveys of employers	79	3.6	2.9	2.6	2.7
Doctrinal defences	83	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.6
Pre- and post-tests	89	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.3
Standardized Bible content examinations	99	3.9	2.6	3.8	3.7
Comprehensive exams	90	4.3	4.2	3.4	3.7
Portfolios of students' work	70	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.1
Theses/projects	71	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.5
Standardized tests	45	3.6	2.9	3.3	2.6
Locally produced subject examinations	115	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.3
Locally produced alumni surveys	109	3.0	2.7	3.0	3.5
Commercially produced alumni surveys	45	3.8	2.3	3.3	3.0
Locally produced student surveys	112	3.4	3.5	3.7	4.1
Commercially produced student surveys	53	3.8	3.1	3.1	3.6
Graduating senior surveys	101	3.6	3.6	3.2	3.9
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	87	3.4	2.2	2.8	3.0

Notes. Small colleges: < 42.1 FTE students
Medium small colleges: 42.1-98 FTE students
Medium large colleges: 98.1-241 FTE students
Large colleges: > 241 FTE students
The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*.
(*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

alumni surveys and (b) medium-large colleges on graduating senior surveys. The satisfaction mean for respondents in large colleges was substantially higher on locally produced student surveys than the satisfaction means for respondents in small and medium-small colleges. Responses from respondents in medium-small colleges resulted in substantially lower satisfaction means than did responses from personnel from (a) all other size categories of colleges on commercially produced alumni surveys and standardized Bible content examinations and (b) large colleges on portfolios of students' work. Satisfaction means for respondents in small and medium-small colleges were substantially lower than for respondents in medium-large and large colleges with respect to comprehensive exams. Respondents in medium-large colleges obtained satisfaction means substantially higher than did respondents in medium-small colleges on field placement reports and substantially higher than did respondents in small colleges on Christian service reports. Satisfaction means for personnel in small colleges were substantially higher than for personnel in medium-large colleges. Satisfaction means for personnel in medium-large colleges, together with those for personnel in large colleges, were also substantially higher than was the satisfaction mean for personnel in medium-small colleges on withdrawing/non-returning student surveys.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With a Denomination

Satisfaction means for SOA activities, classified by denominational affiliation of the Bible college, are shown in Table 6.5. Substantial differences in satisfaction means were reported between respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination and those from colleges not affiliated with a denomination with respect to the use of 4 of 17 SOA activities. The satisfaction means for respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination were substantially lower with respect to commercially produced student surveys (3.1 and 4.0 respectively) and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys (2.7, 3.2) and substantially higher with respect to standardized tests (3.3, 2.7) and field

Table 6.5
Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination

SOA activity	Mean	
	Affiliated with a denomination	
	Yes (n=25-77)	No (n=18-44)
Christian service reports	4.1	3.7
Field placements reports	4.1	3.5
Surveys of employers	2.9	2.8
Doctrinal defences	3.6	3.6
Pre- and post-tests	3.3	3.2
Standardized Bible content examinations	3.5	3.8
Comprehensive exams	3.8	4.0
Portfolios of students' work	3.5	3.2
Theses/projects	3.6	3.3
Standardized tests	3.3	2.7
Locally produced subject examinations	4.2	4.3
Locally produced alumni surveys	3.0	3.4
Commercially produced alumni surveys	2.9	3.2
Locally produced student surveys	3.8	3.8
Commercially produced student surveys	3.1	4.0
Graduating senior surveys	3.5	3.8
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	2.7	3.2

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

placement reports (4.1, 3.5) than those for respondents in colleges not affiliated with a denomination.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With the AABC

Table 6.6 shows the satisfaction means, classified by affiliation status of the college with the AABC. The satisfaction mean for respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC was higher than for those in colleges not affiliated with the AABC with respect to locally produced alumni surveys (3.5 and 2.5 respectively) and locally produced student surveys (4.0, 3.3). The satisfaction mean for respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC was substantially lower than for those from colleges not affiliated with the AABC with respect to comprehensive exams as instruments for gathering SOA information (3.6, 4.2).

Analysis of Means for Ideal and Current Use

This section describes the findings of the study with respect to satisfaction with the use of SOA activities as measured by the current and ideal use scales.

Means for Current Use

Mean responses for the current use of SOA activities as reported on the Individual Personnel Form by all respondents and as classified by position of respondent are presented below.

All respondents. The means of all responses on the Individual Personnel Forms with respect to the current use of SOA activities are shown in Table 6.7. The SOA activities with the highest means for current use (between "Moderate use" [3] and "Frequent use" [4]) were locally produced subject examinations (3.8, on a five-point scale), Christian service reports (3.5), and field placement reports (3.4). Standardized tests (1.1), commercially produced alumni surveys (1.2), commercially produced student surveys (1.4), and surveys of employers (1.8) received the lowest means for current use (between "Do not use" [1] and "Slight use" [2]).

Table 6.6
Satisfaction Means for SOA Activities, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC

SOA activity	Mean	
	Affiliated with the AABC	
	Yes (n=28-73)	No (n=16-50)
Christian service reports	4.0	3.9
Field placements reports	3.9	3.9
Surveys of employers	2.8	3.0
Doctrinal defences	3.6	3.6
Pre- and post-tests	3.4	3.0
Standardized Bible content examinations	3.7	3.4
Comprehensive exams	3.6	4.2
Portfolios of students' work	3.2	3.5
Theses/projects	3.5	3.5
Standardized tests	3.0	3.2
Locally produced subject examinations	4.2	4.2
Locally produced alumni surveys	3.5	2.5
Commercially produced alumni surveys	3.0	3.1
Locally produced student surveys	4.0	3.3
Commercially produced student surveys	3.5	3.3
Graduating senior surveys	3.7	3.4
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	2.9	2.8

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 6.7
Means for Current Use of SOA Activities

SOA activity	n	Mean
Christian service reports	126	3.5
Field placements reports	110	3.4
Surveys of employers	111	1.8
Doctrinal defences	111	2.3
Pre- and post-tests	123	2.1
Standardized Bible content examinations	120	2.7
Comprehensive exams	125	2.7
Portfolios of students' work	111	2.0
Theses/projects	104	2.3
Standardized tests	103	1.1
Locally produced subject examinations	127	3.8
Locally produced alumni surveys	122	2.4
Commercially produced alumni surveys	97	1.2
Locally produced student surveys	125	2.9
Commercially produced student surveys	101	1.4
Graduating senior surveys	122	2.7
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	114	2.1

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Classified by position of respondent. Table 6.8 presents the means of responses with respect to current use of SOA activities, classified by position of respondent. Substantial inter-group differences in means for current use (> 0.5) resulted with respect to these four SOA activities: (a) standardized Bible examinations (other administrators, 2.9 vs. senior academic administrators, 2.4), (b) comprehensive exams (faculty members, 3.0 vs. other administrators, 2.4), (c) portfolios (senior academic administrators, 2.2 vs. other administrators, 1.7), and (d) theses/projects (faculty members, 2.5 and senior academic administrators, 2.4 vs. other administrators, 1.8). Other administrators' responses in each of these four cases showed that they perceived the use of these SOA activities substantially differently than at least one other group of respondents.

Means for Ideal Use

This section presents the mean responses for the ideal use of SOA activities as reported by respondents on the Individual Personnel Form. Means for all responses and as classified by position of respondent are presented below.

All respondents. The means of all responses on the Individual Personnel Forms with respect to ideal use of SOA activities are shown in Table 6.9. All but four of the means for ideal use of SOA activities were 3.0 ("Moderate use") or higher on a five-point scale. The SOA activities which received the highest means for ideal use were locally produced subject examinations (3.9), Christian service reports (3.9), field education reports (3.9), locally produced student surveys (3.6), graduating senior surveys (3.6), locally produced alumni surveys (3.5), and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys (3.5). The SOA activities which received the lowest means for ideal use were commercially produced alumni surveys (2.2), commercially produced student surveys (2.2), standardized tests (2.2), and theses/projects (2.8).

Table 6.8
Means for Current Use of SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent

SOA activity	Faculty members		Senior academic administrators		Other administrators	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean
Christian service reports	54	3.4	31	3.6	41	3.4
Field placements reports	44	3.4	28	3.6	38	3.3
Surveys of employers	44	1.9	27	1.8	40	1.7
Doctrinal defences	52	2.3	25	2.4	34	2.1
Pre- and post-tests	53	2.2	29	2.1	41	2.0
Standardized Bible content examinations	52	2.7	27	2.4	41	2.9
Comprehensive exams	60	3.0	24	2.6	41	2.4
Portfolios of students' work	52	2.1	26	2.2	33	1.7
Theses/projects	50	2.5	25	2.4	29	1.8
Standardized tests	41	1.1	23	1.2	39	1.2
Locally produced subject examinations	58	3.9	27	3.6	42	3.9
Locally produced alumni surveys	49	2.4	30	2.5	43	2.4
Commercially produced alumni surveys	39	1.4	22	1.1	36	1.1
Locally produced student surveys	56	2.9	28	2.8	41	3.1
Commercially produced student surveys	40	1.4	22	1.5	39	1.4
Graduating senior surveys	50	2.9	28	2.7	44	2.6
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	49	2.1	26	2.1	39	2.1

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 6.9
Means for Ideal Use of SOA Activities for All Respondents

SOA activity	n	Mean
Christian service reports	129	3.9
Field placements reports	119	3.9
Surveys of employers	117	3.0
Doctrinal defences	115	3.0
Pre- and post-tests	123	3.2
Standardized Bible content examinations	122	3.4
Comprehensive exams	120	3.1
Portfolios of students' work	101	3.0
Theses/projects	101	2.8
Standardized tests	100	2.2
Locally produced subject examinations	124	3.9
Locally produced alumni surveys	129	3.5
Commercially produced alumni surveys	97	2.2
Locally produced student surveys	129	3.6
Commercially produced student surveys	100	2.2
Graduating senior surveys	129	3.6
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	117	3.5

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Classified by position of respondent. Table 6.10 shows the means for ideal use of SOA activities, classified by position of respondent. Substantial differences in the means for ideal use reported by the three classes of respondents were observed with respect to these two SOA activities: (a) comprehensive exams (faculty members, 3.3 vs. senior academic administrators, 2.8) and (b) theses/projects (faculty members, 3.0 and senior academic administrators, 2.9 vs. other administrators, 2.4).

Difference of Means for Ideal and Current Use

This section presents the results of the analysis of the difference between means for ideal and current use with respect to SOA activities. Results are presented for all respondents and as classified by position of respondent.

All respondents. Table 6.11 shows the differences between the means for ideal and current use of SOA activities for all respondents. It is reasonable to conclude that the larger the difference between the means for ideal and current use the greater the level of dissatisfaction with current use.

One of the weakness of the satisfaction scale analysis is that, while it provides an indication of the magnitude of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with an activity, it does not provide an indication of the *nature* of dissatisfaction. By analyzing the differences in the means for ideal and current use the nature of dissatisfaction can be determined. A positive difference between means for ideal and current use was interpreted as indicating desire for increased use. On the other hand, a negative difference between means for ideal and current use was understood as indicating desire for reduced use. No difference, or an insubstantial difference (< 0.5), between means for ideal and current use was considered to indicate relative satisfaction with the current extent of use.

For 13 of the 17 SOA activities the mean for ideal use was substantially greater (≥ 0.5) than the mean for current use. This indicated that the respondents desired increased use of these SOA activities. For the remaining four SOA activities (locally produced subject examinations, Christian service

Table 6.10
Means for Ideal Use of SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent

SOA activity	Faculty members		Senior academic administrators		Other administrators	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean
Christian service reports	56	3.8	30	4.0	43	3.9
Field placements reports	51	3.7	27	4.1	41	4.0
Surveys of employers	53	3.0	26	3.0	38	3.2
Doctrinal defences	56	3.1	24	3.1	35	2.9
Pre- and post-tests	54	3.2	29	3.4	40	3.1
Standardized Bible content examinations	56	3.4	26	3.4	40	3.5
Comprehensive exams	60	3.3	22	2.8	38	3.1
Portfolios of students' work	54	2.8	21	3.3	26	3.0
Theses/projects	51	3.0	23	2.9	27	2.4
Standardized tests	46	2.1	23	2.2	35	2.2
Locally produced subject examinations	57	3.8	27	3.7	40	4.1
Locally produced alumni surveys	56	3.5	28	3.5	45	3.6
Commercially produced alumni surveys	42	2.1	20	2.0	35	2.3
Locally produced student surveys	60	3.4	27	3.6	42	3.7
Commercially produced student surveys	45	2.0	21	2.1	34	2.4
Graduating senior surveys	59	3.5	27	3.7	43	3.6
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	53	3.5	24	3.4	40	3.5

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 6.11
Differences Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Activities

SOA activity	Difference between means for ideal and current use		
	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c
Christian service reports	129	126	0.4
Field placements reports	119	110	0.5
Surveys of employers	117	111	1.3
Doctrinal defences	115	111	0.7
Pre- and post-tests	123	123	1.1
Standardized Bible content examinations	122	120	0.7
Comprehensive exams	120	125	0.4
Portfolios of students' work	101	111	1.0
Theses/projects	101	104	0.5
Standardized tests	100	103	1.0
Locally produced subject examinations	124	127	0.0
Locally produced alumni surveys	129	122	1.1
Commercially produced alumni surveys	97	97	1.0
Locally produced student surveys	129	125	0.6
Commercially produced student surveys	100	101	0.8
Graduating senior surveys	129	122	0.8
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	117	114	1.4

Notes. M_i-M_c = Difference between the means for ideal and current use.
n_i = number in the subsample for ideal use.
n_c = number in the subsample for current use.
The scale for current use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*. (*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)
The scale for ideal use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*. (*No opinion* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

reports, comprehensive exams, and field placement reports) the means for ideal and current use were not substantially different (≥ 0.5) or were equal indicating respondents were relatively satisfied with what was current practice. None of the differences between the means for ideal and current use were negative.

The largest differences between means for ideal and current use were reported with respect to withdrawing/non-returning student surveys (1.4), surveys of employers (1.3), locally produced alumni surveys (1.1), pre- and post-tests (1.1), commercially produced alumni surveys (1.0), standardized tests (1.0), and portfolios of students' work (1.0). The mean for ideal use of each of these SOA activities was greater by at least one category on the response scale than the mean for current use. The respondents seem to have been indicating they desired greater use of these SOA activities.

Comparison with analysis of satisfaction means. These differences were generally consistent with the results for the satisfaction scale. The seven SOA activities with the greatest difference between means for ideal and current use also received the lowest satisfaction means. The four SOA activities with an insubstantial or no difference between means for ideal and current use also received the highest satisfaction means.

Classified by position of respondent. Table 6.12 shows the differences between the means for ideal and current use of SOA activities classified by position of respondent. The differences between means for ideal and current use varied substantially (≥ 0.5) with respect to these three SOA activities: (a) standardized Bible examinations (senior academic administrators, 1.0 vs. other administrators, 0.5), (b) comprehensive exams (other administrators, 0.7 vs. senior academic administrators, 0.1), and (c) portfolios (other administrators, 1.3 vs. faculty members, 0.8).

Table 6.12
Differences Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Activities, Classified by Position of Respondent

SOA activity	Difference between means for ideal and current use								
	Faculty members			Senior academic administrators			Other administrators		
	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c
Christian service reports	56	54	0.4	30	31	0.4	43	41	0.5
Field placements reports	51	44	0.4	27	28	0.5	41	38	0.7
Surveys of employers	53	44	1.1	26	27	1.2	38	40	1.5
Doctrinal defences	56	52	0.7	24	25	0.7	35	34	0.8
Pre- and post-tests	54	53	1.1	29	29	1.3	40	41	1.1
Standardized Bible content examinations	56	52	0.7	26	27	1.0	40	41	0.5
Comprehensive exams	60	60	0.3	22	24	0.1	38	41	0.7
Portfolios of students' work	54	52	0.8	21	26	1.0	26	33	1.3
Theses/projects	51	50	0.5	23	25	0.4	27	29	0.5
Standardized tests	46	41	1.0	19	23	1.0	35	39	1.0
Locally produced subject examinations	57	58	-0.1	27	27	0.1	40	42	0.2
Locally produced alumni surveys	56	56	1.0	28	28	1.1	45	43	1.2
Commercially produced alumni surveys	42	39	1.2	20	23	0.9	35	36	1.2
Locally produced student surveys	60	56	0.5	27	28	0.8	42	41	0.7
Commercially produced student surveys	45	40	0.7	21	22	0.7	34	39	1.0
Graduating senior surveys	59	50	0.6	27	28	1.0	43	44	1.0
Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	53	49	1.4	24	26	1.3	40	39	1.4

Notes. M_i-M_c = Difference between the means for ideal and current use.
n_i = number in the subsample for ideal use.
n_c = number in the subsample for current use.
The scale for current use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)
The scale for ideal use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*No opinion* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Summary

This chapter presented findings of the study with respect to satisfaction of the respondents with the degree of faculty member involvement in the administration of SOA activities and with the degree of use of SOA activities.

Satisfaction With Faculty Member Involvement in SOA Administration

Responding Bible college faculty members and administrators perceived faculty members as having been "Slightly involved" (2) to "Moderately involved" (3) in the evaluating aspect of the administration of SOA activities, and "Moderately involved" (3) in the planning, directing, and implementing aspects. Faculty members and administrators perceived faculty members as having been substantially less involved in all four aspects of the administration of SOA activities than they would have liked faculty members to have been. The largest difference between involvement and desired involvement responses was with evaluating and planning of SOA activities. More administrators than faculty members indicated faculty should have been "Very involved" (4) or "Highly involved" (5) in the directing and implementing aspects of the administration of SOA activities. Faculty members appeared to want more involvement in the planning and evaluating aspects than in the actual doing of SOA.

Satisfaction With the Use of SOA Activities

Satisfaction with the use of SOA activities was determined by a direct question and by analysis of the difference between means for ideal and current use. Both kinds of analyses yielded similar results. In addition to the results from all respondents, responses were analyzed on the basis of the position of respondents, size of college, affiliation of college with a denomination, and affiliation of college with the AABC.

Satisfaction Means for All Respondents

Respondents appeared to have been moderately satisfied with the use of SOA activities. The SOA activities with the highest satisfaction means were

locally produced subject examinations, Christian service reports, field placement reports, and locally produced student surveys. Standardized tests, commercially produced student surveys, commercially produced alumni surveys, and surveys of employers received the lowest satisfaction means.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Position of Respondent

Satisfaction means with respect to most of the SOA activities did not show substantial variations when analyzed according to position. Some substantial differences in satisfaction means were identified in the study. Faculty members had substantially higher satisfaction means than reported by one or both administrator groups with respect to commercially produced alumni surveys and comprehensive exams. Faculty members also reported higher, although not substantially higher, means for current use than administrators on these two SOA activities. Faculty members apparent satisfaction may have been based on a misperception of the level of use of these two SOA activities.

Satisfaction means for senior academic administrators were substantially higher than those for other administrators with respect to the degree of use of portfolios, theses/projects, and field placement reports. They also obtained substantially higher means for current use than other administrators with respect to these three SOA activities. Other administrators' satisfaction means for these three activities might have been higher if they were aware of the higher levels of use.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Size of College

Satisfaction means with respect to most SOA activities were substantially different among respondents in various sizes of Bible colleges. Only four SOA activities (locally produced subject examinations, doctrinal defences, pre- and post-tests, and theses/projects) received substantially the same satisfaction means from respondents in all sizes of colleges. Respondents in medium-small Bible colleges reported the lowest satisfaction means on the most activities.

Respondents in small colleges reported the highest satisfaction means on the most activities followed by respondents in large Bible colleges.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Denominational Status

Respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination recorded substantially lower satisfaction means with respect to commercially produced student surveys and withdrawing/non-returning student surveys and substantially higher satisfaction means with respect to standardized tests and field placement reports as procedures for conducting SOA.

Satisfaction Means Classified by AABC Status

Similarly, satisfaction means varied when analyzed by the affiliation status of the respondents' colleges with the AABC. The satisfaction means for locally produced alumni surveys and student surveys were higher for respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC than for those from colleges with no affiliation to the AABC. Higher satisfaction means may have resulted from these techniques being used more and, thereby, being seen to be used, as part of a college's self study in the accreditation process.

Current Use of SOA Activities

Respondents indicated "Slight use" (2) to "Moderate use" (3) of most SOA activities. No means for current use were at or above "Frequent use" (4). Other administrators reported substantially different means for current use with respect to standardized Bible examinations, comprehensive exams, portfolios, and theses/projects. The other administrators may not have been as aware of the actual implementation of these SOA activities as the faculty members and senior academic administrators.

The reported means for ideal use indicate that respondents wanted more use of locally produced subject exams, Christian service and field placement reports, locally produced student and alumni surveys, and surveys of graduating and withdrawing/non-returning students than of commercially produced surveys, standardized tests, or theses/projects. Respondents

appeared to prefer SOA activities which were traditionally used, locally produced and/or controlled, and dealt with perceptions of students as opposed to standardized pre-packaged methods which may measure aspects of achievement in a way that provides comparison to other institutions.

Ideal Use of SOA Activities

Means for ideal use were substantially higher for 12 of the 17 SOA activities than means of responses for current use. Faculty members' and senior academic administrators' means for ideal use differed substantially with respect to the use of comprehensive exams. Faculty members had a higher ideal use mean than did senior academic administrators. Faculty members appear to have wanted to increase the use of comprehensive exams and to have sensed that senior academic administrators were not as supportive.

Difference of Ideal and Current Use of SOA Activities

The analysis of the difference between means for ideal and current use produced similar results to the analysis based on satisfaction means. On the basis of the differences between the means for ideal and current use, respondents appeared dissatisfied with the degree of use of most SOA activities. Respondents wanted substantially more use of withdrawing/non-returning student surveys, surveys of employers, locally produced alumni surveys, pre- and post-tests, standardized tests, and portfolios of students' work. On the other hand, respondents were generally satisfied with the extent of use of locally produced subject examinations, Christian service reports, comprehensive exams, and field placement reports.

Conclusion

Respondents were dissatisfied with the involvement faculty in SOA administration. While they recorded moderate levels of satisfaction with the use of SOA activities, as compared to the ideal levels of use respondents were dissatisfied with the current use of SOA activities.

CHAPTER 7

USE OF SOA INFORMATION IN PLANNING

This chapter presents findings of the study with respect to the use of SOA information in planning in Canadian Bible colleges. These findings were gathered from respondents on the General College Information Form and by interviews.

Use of SOA Information in Institutional Planning

Respondents were asked to report on ways that SOA information was used in specific aspects of planning in their respective Bible colleges. Because responses were open-ended, content analysis was performed to categorize them. Some responses appeared to reflect either misunderstanding of the question or the meaning of SOA. This misunderstanding was evident for all responses of some respondents and for some responses by others. Usable responses were obtained from 15 colleges.

Unusable Responses

Responses from 16 colleges were unusable for several reasons. This section explains the reasons for not using them.

Two respondents provided information about personnel involved in processing SOA information in response to questions in the entire section. Their responses reflected a misunderstanding of the nature of the questions. The expectation, and experience in the pilot testing, was that respondents would provide examples either of the impact that SOA information had on planning decisions in their colleges or of procedures their colleges used to integrate such information into planning decisions. These respondents provided responses such as these listed below:

President and Board (capital projects)

An advisory council representing churches guides us here (strategic planning)

Advisory council (meets once a year), alumni (instruction)

Responses provided by four participants did not describe how SOA information was used in planning. Instead, these four respondents gave

(a) information about the college's operational procedures, (b) criteria used in evaluating the quality of planning decisions, and/or (c) another kind of inappropriate comment.

Some of the responses which provided information about operational procedures are presented below:

> *We use our general church office, pastors, faculty as resource people for leads.* (recruiting of staff)
>
> *Our curriculum is geared to student needs – academic and practical. We work closely with our students to help them reach their goals. Each student is assigned a faculty counsellor.* (advising of students)
>
> *Through ministry tours by students and staff, youth retreats, and attendance at various church gatherings and conventions.* (recruiting of students)

Two examples of responses from these four respondents providing criteria for evaluating the quality of planning decisions were as follows:

> *At least 50% of the estimated cost must be in hand prior to beginning.* (capital projects)
>
> *We are in the midst of a major building program. We operate on a 'pay-as-we-build' principle. We will soon have a debt-free, new 1-million-dollar 'plus' facility for training.* (capital projects)

These respondents also gave unrelated or inappropriate responses such as those recorded below:

> *That we all "own the vision." The length of stay is very encouraging.* (tenure/promotion of staff)
>
> *The challenge of fulfilling God's call for their lives* (retention of students)
>
> *Toward Christ-like character – effective evangelism* (strategic planning)
>
> *We are limited in our financial resources which makes long-term tenure difficult for many. However, we do have a health benefit package.* (tenure/promotion of staff)

Whether these responses resulted from respondents misunderstanding of the question or SOA is not clear. These four respondents were from small (< 42.1 FTE students) colleges not affiliated with the AABC.

Responses from the six respondents discussed above were not included in the data analysis.

Ten other questionnaires did not contain usable data. The General College Information Forms from three colleges were completed by subordinate/acting personnel by phone or e-mail late in the data-collection phase of the study because of personnel changes or illnesses. These individuals were not asked, or did not feel prepared, to provide responses to this section. Four respondents left this section of the questionnaire blank with no comment. Two others wrote "Not applicable." Both were from colleges with no SOA program. For one of these respondents the questionnaire raised the issue of the value of SOA , as reflected in these comments given below:

> *Student outcomes is a neglected area by our school. A "scientific" approach may reveal that we are not accomplishing what we think we are!!*

One respondent did not respond to this section of the questionnaire except to say that

> *very little formal relationship is made between student outcomes assessment and any of these areas. Evaluation/assessment takes place with each student in a personal interview before graduation. Also the faculty/board meetings evaluate the general tone, work, and direction of each year and prepare for the next. However, very little formal assessment takes place in the form you suggest.*
>
> *A more intentional assessment process should take place. In a small school informal assessments are made often and are shared in conversation, church/constituency meetings, etc. But these have not been well planned or intentionally developed.*

For the above stated reasons, the responses from these 16 colleges were not used in the analysis which follows.

Usable Responses

Fifteen colleges provided at least some responses which appeared relevant to the questions asked. However, some of these responses appeared to reflect either misunderstanding of the question or the nature of SOA. The characteristics of these 15 colleges which provided usable responses to this section of the General College Information Form are shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1
Characteristics of Colleges of Respondents Providing Usable Responses to Question About Use of SOA Information
(n=15)

Characteristic	Respondents' colleges %f	Total colleges %f
Size		
Small (< 42.1 FTE students)	26.7	25.8
Medium-small (42.1 - 98 FTE students)	26.7	25.8
Medium-large (98.1 - 241 FTE students)	20.0	25.8
Large (> 241 FTE students)	26.7	22.6
Affiliation with a denomination		
Yes	60.0	61.3
No	40.0	38.7
Affiliation with the AABC		
Yes	53.3	45.2
No	46.7	54.8

The colleges from which at least some appropriate responses were received, were, on the basis of size, affiliation with a denomination, and affiliation with the AABC, reasonably representative of the colleges in the study. However, the data should only be viewed as indicative of ways that SOA information was being used in planning within the Bible colleges in the study due to the low response rate and possibility of misunderstanding of the questions.

Illustrative data for this aspect of the study were also gathered by interviews. Eight of the 10 colleges participating in the interviews were represented within the 15 respondents providing usable responses on the questionnaire. Some of the responses provided were not classified. The responses given below are examples:

Helps to form the nonformal instruction. (Instructional planning)

The president is made aware of the results. These too are used in determining administrative changes. (Strategic planning)

The findings with respect to the use of SOA information in planning in Canadian Bible colleges are presented according to these categories: (a) academic planning, (b) personnel planning, (c) resource allocation planning, (d) strategic planning, (e) student planning, and (f) planning for accreditation.

Academic Planning

Data on the use of SOA information in academic planning were acquired by two questions on the questionnaire relating to (a) program/curriculum and (b) instructional planning. Findings of the study on these two questions are given below.

Program/Curriculum Planning

Most respondents on the questionnaire (13 occurrences; n = 15) indicated that their Bible colleges used SOA information as an input into decisions related to revision of curriculum or development of new programs. Examples of the responses received are given below:

Student evaluations and evaluations of student outcomes assessments are part of the data considerations in every program/curriculum discussion.

Recently had substantive influence on revising curriculum.

Through the mechanism of regular faculty meetings, we have adjusted our curriculum in response to perceived deficiencies, e.g., more classes in personal and corporate worship.

Helps shape the curriculum and new programs from a student perspective.

Four of these 13 responses focused on the use of student input—which was either implied or stated as having been gathered by surveys—to guide programmatic planning. The two responses recorded below are examples:

Exit interviews and alumni and student surveys resulted in new academic programs.

We use a lot of surveys and course evaluations as feedback for instructors so as to "fine-tune" our programs and to determine who gets credit for what.

One additional respondent stated that this question regarding use of SOA information in curricular or program planning was "Not applicable." One

other respondent said, "Matching with seminary entrance for BTh." There was insufficient detail in this response to enable it to be categorized.

The interviews provided additional evidence of the use of SOA information in curricular planning. For example, the president of one college related how

> *through a number of student outcomes assessment instruments it was shown that we were not giving enough attention to oral communications and public speaking. I can remember the discussion we had in the faculty about that. They said "Well, maybe we should make the oral communications course mandatory." And "Yes, that is a good idea." And so that became a part of the basic curriculum, the core curriculum. And, others said "Are there modules in other courses where that could be stressed and students be given opportunities for oral expression?" So, that was agreed upon and incorporated.*

A dean declared that SOA information was useful for

> *validating or revamping curriculum and curriculum design. It helps in assessing needs for curriculum design or program development.*

Instructional Planning

The most commonly reported use of SOA information in instructional planning was to provide feedback on the effectiveness of teaching (8 occurrences; n = 15). Two other respondents mentioned both the use of SOA information in instructional planning and as an input in faculty evaluation, whereas two more indicated that SOA information was used in faculty evaluation only. The comments provided below are indicative of those received:

> *For example, if weaknesses in any instructional area become apparent through assessment, definite changes for improvement are implemented.*
>
> *Faculty evaluation – students have input.*
>
> *Instructors regularly use their assessment of student outcomes to reshape instruction.*
>
> *Individual instructors use data for gauging instructional effectiveness. Supervisors use data as part of faculty portfolios to jointly assess strengths/weaknesses.*

Two of these 12 responses seemed to indicate that colleges used SOA information as one means to determine the effectiveness of instruction in

enabling students to attain the instructional goals. These were the responses given:

> *Compare instructional goals with perceived outcomes.*
>
> *Assists us in assessing the quality of instruction in the classroom; therefore, whether course objectives are being met and to what extent.*

One other respondent said students were pre-tested as a means of providing individualized outcomes goals and then post-tested to assess whether they had successfully completed the program. This use was for individual student assessment as opposed to collective assessment of the degree of goal attainment by students. One response provided an example of procedures used to communicate decisions or promote discussion of issues identified by SOA. This respondent said that

> *president's chapels often address issues coming out of student assessment.*

When asked about the use of SOA information for instructional planning, most interview participants related how course evaluations had been used in instructional development. As discussed in Chapter 5, only one instance of course evaluations could be shown to be used for SOA purposes. For this reason most of the interview data were not helpful to understanding this use of SOA information. In the one college where the course evaluations included questions on the degree to which course objectives were attained, the president did not cite any examples of the uses of that information in instructional planning.

Personnel Planning

Two questions were used on the General College Information Form to identify how SOA information was used in personnel planning. They were with respect to (a) tenure/promotion decisions and (b) planning for faculty recruitment.

Tenure/Promotion Decisions

The use of student evaluations of faculty as an input into tenure or promotion decisions was the most frequently given response (3 occurrences;

n = 9) with respect to the use of SOA information in tenure/promotion of staff. While student evaluations of faculty may be an integral part of faculty evaluations they do not fit the definition of SOA used in this study because they are not a means of measuring the degree to which students, collectively, attain the goals of the institution. The following were the comments received:

> *Faculty evaluation by students somewhat.*
>
> *Very casual here. Since there are so few teachers and so little turnover, each new person becomes a case in point. Nobody cares about promotion, but we do rotate duties to keep fresh. Student responses help us determine which courses each teacher is best suited for.*
>
> *Student evaluations and outcomes data provide information which is used formatively, and may be used summatively.*

SOA information may have been used as an input into faculty promotion/tenure decisions in two other colleges:

> *Student assessment is the primary source of faculty and staff evaluation on this campus.*
>
> *Only if the student outcomes affect a staff/faculty member significantly would it be considered for promotion/tenure. It would never be considered in isolation.*

However, there is no evidence in these statements that the concept of SOA as a collective measure of student attainment of instructional goals was clearly in mind.

This comment given below reflected a lack of understanding of either the question or SOA, because its relationship to the use of SOA information is unclear:

> *There is no official tenure system in place; but those areas deemed the most needy are given highest priority.*

Two other respondents said that SOA information was "Not used" or "Not used extensively" in staff promotion/tenure planning, and a third reported that this question was "Not applicable."

Similar to the input with respect to instructional planning, those interview participants who provided examples of staff promotion/tenure planning impacts referred to the use of course evaluations. Since all but one of

the colleges involved in the interviews did not use course evaluations that reflected the sense of SOA used in this study, the comments were not relevant.

Staff Recruitment

Nine responses were received with respect to the use of SOA information in staff recruitment. One response appeared to give data clearly related to the use of SOA information in staff recruitment:

> *Our pool of part-time faculty comes from a limited group but they are chosen by their demonstrated proficiency in addressing issues pinpointed in the outcomes assessment procedures.*

There were two responses of "Not applicable," one of "Not used," and one of "Not used extensively" to this question. These responses constituted 44% of the responses received to this question. The other four responses to the question relating to the use of SOA information in staff recruitment evidenced either misunderstanding of the question or of SOA. They are presented and discussed below.

One respondent said that

> *the description of the outcomes we seek is an integral part of recruiting staff.*

While this response mentioned the use of outcomes, it is unclear how it relates to the use of SOA information in planning. The identification of outcomes is an aspect of curricular planning but it is not a result of SOA, rather, it is an input into SOA. This response was difficult to categorize because it was too vague:

> *Major input here. Survey results affect recruitment.*

The remaining two responses spoke of instructional strategies as criteria for hiring. If the need for the instructional strategies desired had been determined through the analysis of SOA data (e.g., students taught via these strategies attain the instructional goals more effectively than those taught via other strategies) these would be appropriate answers. However, the source of the desired attributes and their connection to SOA was not clear in these responses:

> *The need to have all instruction related to ministry (lay or professional) is an important consideration in hiring staff.*
>
> *The need for an interactive style of teaching in recruiting future instructors.*

In an interview, one president noted that the use of SOA information in personnel recruitment was often indirect. As program or curricular changes are made, personnel needs are naturally involved in the planning, but little direct application of SOA information was evidenced in the interviews. Another president responded that SOA information had not been influential in a recent decision to create a new position. When asked if the addition of a staff member to strengthen the Biblical studies area had been made because of SOA information, this president replied that

> *the faculty themselves recognized the need for it. It was more anecdotal – more a recognition on the part of faculty and staff that this had to be done. It was more that the faculty felt there was a real need for a Bible college to have a strong biblical department, rather than a decision based on a sense that students were not getting an adequate understanding of Bible content and theology.*

Resource Allocation Planning

Three questions on the questionnaire sought to ascertain how SOA information was used in resource allocation planning by addressing these topics: (a) donor/alumni relations, (b) operating budget/resource allocation, and (c) capital projects. The findings of the study with respect to use of SOA information in resource planning are presented in this section.

Donor/Alumni Relations

Twelve responses addressed ways in which SOA information was used in alumni/donor relations. The most frequent responses recorded (three occurrences) related to SOA information being used to solicit support from alumni or donors through the demonstration of impact on students by their college experience. However, impact seemed to be demonstrated by use of informal anecdotal evidence or perception data taken from alumni surveys rather than assessment of competencies and attitudes of students attained through their college experience. These responses were received:

> *Current student stories are of great importance to both alumni and donors.*
>
> *Donors are often interested to know what dividends their investment in students has paid. We use alumni survey data/testimonials in this area and also to encourage all alumni.*

A major tool for assessment is the Alumni Survey. Experience demonstrates greater confidence on the part of Alumni who know we are quality-driven, using assessment to reveal areas for change.

Two other responses simply noted that alumni surveys were conducted. These told how assessment was conducted as opposed to how the information gained was used:

This (an alumni survey) has only been done once formally. We do have a strong base of alumni with whom we connect informally on a continuous basis.

Alumni survey in conjunction with AABC self-study.

One respondent wrote that SOA information was used to guide the decision of the alumni association in resource allocation by identifying areas of need. This response, while it appeared appropriate, did not provide sufficient information to determine if there was understanding of the concept of SOA information:

Has assisted Alumni Executive in allocating their resources toward needed areas of college development.

Two respondents said that this question was "Not applicable." One respondent indicated that SOA information was "Not used" in planning for alumni/donor relations.

The interviews provided examples of the ways that SOA information was used in alumni/donor development more that in the planning for it. One interview participant noted, for example, that the college

did some limited reporting back to our constituents through the alumni information magazine. We did not do it to the extent that we had intended but we did lift out some key ideas. For marketing reasons we pulled out the positive and said, "Here's what people say about this college." We are not going to share our dirty laundry with them, obviously, but we said, "Here are the positive things that came out of this."

An academic dean remarked:

We can go back to our stakeholders and say to them, "This is what you told us we should be about, this is what we think is what we are about, and this is the degree to which we are succeeding in that mission. And, at a more earthly level, we are worthy of your support – constituents, you are getting your money's worth. It is a promotional tool. You can say that so many graduates are achieving in these areas and that is tied back into our constituents' desires about

what we are. There are many spin-off effects from a promotional, public relations, fund development, fund raising perspective.

The president of that college added:

Certainly I talk about that in public presentations. If there is a trend that I see coming through a survey that may reinforce something that we have thought for some time and just did not have the data to support it, then I would quote that.

Operating Budget/Resource Allocation

Ten questionnaires contained responses with respect to how SOA information was used in operating budget/resource allocation planning.

Three respondents answered that SOA information influenced their college budgets by providing direction as to where changes, and monetary commitments necessary for those changes, were needed. These responses stated that SOA information was used to guide budgeting decisions:

Of course assessment and implementation of changes demanded by it have budgetary implications and help drive the budgetary process.

Budget decisions are influenced by the outcomes we seek and by our perception of where we are succeeding and where we need to upgrade.

Annual budgeting procedures are weighted toward those areas considered to be most needy by the faculty. This decision is aided by the outcomes assessment.

Two responses showed evidence of confusion with either the question or SOA:

The President and Board Chairman in consultation with staff work out different levels of salary depending on hours spent.

Need to promote college in ways consumers say effective.

This response gave evidence of a link between SOA information and budgeting, but provided few details:

A comprehensive survey done of all Alumni every five years is used extensively in our strategic planning process. (Budget tied to Strategic Plan).

Two responses indicated that SOA information was "Not used extensively" or "Not used directly" in budgeting. Finally two respondents said "Not applicable."

In an interview, one of the college presidents said that

budgeting decisions have not been made on objective kind of data. What we have done is react to needs when they arise. It has been more like emergencies where

> *we have to respond to the need. But in terms of saying, "Okay, we are going to assess all the different areas of the institution and objectively say, 'This area needs this amount of funds and this area needs that amount,'" – that kind of use of outcomes assessment information has not occurred.*

Another president concluded that

> *it certainly should be. How does it at the moment? The program changes we have made mean we have had to budget for more faculty hours, for example.*

This comment indicated that the effects on budgeting may be indirect similar to the impact of SOA information on personnel recruitment.

Capital Projects

The response observed most frequently (five responses; n = 11) was that SOA information was used as input into the identification of capital projects and/or the setting of priorities on those projects. It was not clear in any of the responses how information about students' attainment or lack of attainment of institutional goals was used in identifying projects or in setting priorities. In fact, as can be seen in the following examples, four of the five responses indicated that student surveys were used to provide input here:

> *Surveys have indicated needs re classroom problems, and changes have been made.*
>
> *Student surveys don't make much difference except in setting very general priorities. Otherwise we just spend when we have money and specific needs.*
>
> *Highlight student perceived needs.*
>
> *Athletics/recreation very important, our survey helped show the need to construct a gym (leased one being demolished).*

Student assessment about the adequacy of facilities seems to have been the basis of decisions rather than the need for facilities to house programs required to attain institutional goals that were not being met or needed to be enhanced. The fifth response in this category was vague as to the nature of the assessment activity used to gather information that guided such capital decisions:

> *Assessment may/will reveal needs for major capital projects, and can assist in process of project prioritization.*

Three respondents indicated that the question was not applicable and a further two stated that SOA information was "Not used extensively" or "Not used directly" in capital project planning. One comment resisted categorization and appeared to be inappropriate to the question:

> *A comprehensive survey done of all Alumni every five years, is used extensively in our strategic planning process. Several courses have been implemented, several dropped, and several redesigned on the basis of this input.*

This response appears to be related to curricular planning.

Apart from responding to student needs assessment information which some interview participants confused with SOA information, the interviews did not provide examples of direct use of SOA information on planning for capital expenditures.

Use of SOA Information in Strategic Planning

The use of SOA information in strategic planning was addressed in one question on the General College Information Form. Fourteen responses were recorded.

Six respondents' comments indicated that SOA information provided input from students on their perceived needs and that such input had an impact on strategic planning. Another four seemed to indicate a similar contribution, but they emphasized that SOA information was one of the inputs into the strategic planning process. Comments typical of these 10 responses included:

> *In discovering client expectations; discovering weaknesses in programs.*
>
> *Part of the data package reviewed in the strategic planning process.*
>
> *Assessing why students come to our school, what their expectations of this experience are.*
>
> *Information is considered as part of the basis for determining college direction and emphasis.*
>
> *Student input/recommendations received in formulating a long-range (strategic) plan.*
>
> *A comprehensive survey done of all Alumni every five years is used extensively in our strategic planning process.*

Responses to the questionnaire indicated student expectations and attitudes toward the college that were obtained by entering student surveys and graduating student surveys, which were considered to be SOA information instead of baseline data or evaluation input, were the kinds of information used in strategic planning. Evidence of this tendency was found in these two comments from the questionnaires:

> *Student assessment helps us to measure "felt needs" and to plug in better at that level.*
>
> *Suggestions and criticisms from student exit interviews are taken seriously.*

One interview respondent specified that one of the problems with the use of SOA information was that it was not well linked to strategic planning:

> *There is not a specific procedure written down in policy on how we are going to do strategic planning, so there is not a mechanism right now that guarantees that something that is done in a survey will be taken into the strategic planning process.*

One respondent on the questionnaire responded by stating "Not applicable" and one other said that SOA information was "Not used directly" in strategic planning. Another respondent indicated that SOA information was beneficial with respect to assessing key performance areas or indicators which provided guidance for future action in those areas. This individual reported that SOA information

> *helps us in assessing our Key Performance Areas or Indicators; therefore, where ongoing processes are helpful or new initiatives may be needed.*

Student Planning

The use of SOA information in student planning was addressed in three questions relating to (a) student advising, (b) student recruitment, and (c) student retention. The findings of the study on these planning issues is given in this section.

Student Advising

The first question dealing with use of SOA information in student planning asked about uses with respect to student advising. The nine responses

were quite disparate in nature. Two respondents spoke this way about the impact of SOA information on student advising in their colleges:

> *For example, graduating students indicated a perception that more career counseling would have assisted them; career weeks were established each semester. This is one example of many that could be cited.*
>
> *Review of response of students to our faculty advising program.*

Two others indicated that SOA information was "Not used directly" or "Not used extensively." One additional respondent wrote "Not applicable" for a response.

Some confusion as to the nature of SOA seemed evident in these two responses which spoke of using SOA information to (a) identify a need of advising assistance or (b) assess progress in field education requirements. Both of these uses dealt with individual students, as opposed to students on a collective basis:

> *Since our college is small, the faculty advisors are able to give personal attention to those students who are struggling. Outcomes assessment helps us identify these students.*
>
> *Internship and field service evaluations are used twice each semester in the process of measuring progress and ensuring desired outcomes in both personal and professional development.*

Two other comments were not easily categorized. Both spoke of an informal process but were lacking in sufficient detail to be understood more fully. One comment was "informal input only," while the other was "on paper and informally through interviews."

During an interview, the president of one college remarked that SOA information was used in his college for gatekeeping purposes with respect to student advising. He related how students had to apply for admission to the third year of studies. Part of the advising procedures involved a review of SOA information from field placement reports, course grades, and student life reports. He reported that the intention of the procedure was to give

some counsel and guidance in terms of affirming or cautioning students on their choice of vocational goals and on continuing to pursue those goals. There is also an opportunity to address spiritual concerns that we might have.

Student Recruitment

Fourteen responses were received with respect to uses of SOA information in student recruitment. The two most frequent kinds of responses were (a) use of surveys to determine reasons students gave for coming so that future recruitment activities could be improved (five occurrences) and (b) use of graduates and alumni experiences as indicative of the potential for prospective students (five). These 10 responses indicated that colleges used anecdotal evidence of the impact of the colleges on students or perception survey results on reasons for choosing the college in recruitment materials and presentations. Such practices are reflected in these responses:

Prior students' outcomes/evaluations are often helpful in conveying to a student prospect what he/she may benefit from at [this Bible college]. We use alumni surveys/testimonials in recruiting.

Assessing why students come to our school – what motivated them – directly impacts our recruitment methods in subsequent years.

The courses and ministries students value the greatest are often given priority in our promotional materials and verbal "sales talk."

A survey is done as to what issues were most influential in choosing [this Bible college].

Helps us know their expectations of a Bible college.

We survey incoming students each year to determine key factors in recruitment.

Promotion of our education by featuring some of the outcomes (positive ones) to prospective students.

The use of statistics related to graduate placements for recruitment purposes was referred to by one respondent. The use of graduate placement rates is clearly an example of the use of SOA information. However, this respondent did not clearly state that placement rates were used in recruitment planning as opposed to recruitment promotional activities:

Statistics regarding graduate placement are used in admissions.

One respondent indicated that the impact on student recruitment of SOA activities was direct. Yet, this individual appeared to be saying that changes in programs resulting from SOA information had an impact on recruitment:

> *Has a direct effect on programs AND on recruitment.*

One respondent responded with "Not applicable," another said that SOA information was "Not extensively used" in student recruitment, and a third said that the impact of SOA information was to guide changes in admissions policies.

Interview participants provided four kinds of comments. In the first place, one respondent simply noted that there was no use of SOA information in student recruitment planning. Second, an interviewee observed that the college used comments from former students about the challenging, but valuable nature of the program, which was considered to be SOA information, to help convince potential students to attend. Third, two presidents identified the use of data from surveys which identified specific, effective recruiting practices in the planning of future recruitment campaigns as a use of SOA information in recruitment planning. One of these presidents reported that

> *every year when the new students come, the question is asked, "What influenced you to come to this college? Was it alumni? Was it someone on staff? Was it a present student? Was it your parents? Was it the warmth and enthusiasm of the admissions staff?" We track the answers from year to year to determine the major factors influencing students coming to the school. That would be a good example. We are always asking what is most effective in recruiting. Is it sending music and drama groups to churches? Is it going to conferences, retreats, or camps? We are always evaluating our recruiting economically. What worked well and what did not? What gave the best bang for the buck?*

Finally, two presidents observed that SOA information is useful in recruiting, as opposed to planning for recruiting, because, as one of them said

> *our recruiting people can go out and say, "We have it on record that our graduates do well in seminaries, graduate schools, and we have it on record that our students are doing well with mission agencies and para-church organizations. We can tell you that if you come and go through our program – we cannot guarantee you a job, we cannot guarantee you a placement – but we can provide you with an education that is going to fit you for this and for that*

and we know it. It is not just a guess. We've got the data to back it up." It certainly gives our recruitment people confidence that they are, again crassly put, selling a pretty good product – one that they can promote with a great deal of confidence. We do not have to be afraid that students are going to come and say, "This is not what I thought I was getting."

Student Retention

The third aspect of student planning addressed in this study for which SOA information was used was student retention. Eleven responses were received.

SOA information was reported by two respondents to have been used to improve retention by influencing other changes which resulted in students being more satisfied so staying longer. These comments were placed in this category of response:

Student input on programs result in changes positively affecting retention.

Student dissatisfaction comes through in exit/midprogram interviews. If deemed significant, this is addressed and greater student satisfaction will produce greater retention.

Two respondents said that SOA information provided increased understanding of reasons for student attrition. They did not provide sufficient data to determine how the information was used:

With grads, a review of why they stayed; with dropouts/transfers, a review of why they left.

Discovering student aspirations and fears helps us address them.

A third pair of responses indicated that SOA information was used to improve student advising:

Students thinking of dropping out would be reminded of what previous classes have valued over the long term. We would also use assessment to demonstrate their own progress.

Information from assessment outcomes gives the faculty a basis upon which to provide academic and personal counsel.

Three responses evidenced misunderstanding with the question or SOA and were not easily categorized:

Used to assess student satisfaction in co-curricular areas.

External outcomes assessments become the means of building efficacy for ministry and further study.

We conducted more detailed attrition/retention research last year – including contact with students who did not return.

One respondent said "Not applicable" and one replied that SOA information was "Not extensively used" for student retention purposes.

One president replied in the interview that SOA affects retention because

the word filters down that we are listening and that if students have gripes or beefs or even mild dissatisfactions, that if those are articulated, they're not going to be squelched, that we really want to know. And that not only do we want to know, but we intend to take action if it's a serious kind of a concern.

Another president said much the same thing about identifying student concerns in response to how SOA information was used in planning for retention:

We always think we know what bothers students, what they like and do not like. But, when you finally let them tell you, your eyes are opened. One of the very simple things that bothered our students was being shuttled off to this place and that place when they needed some help. Well, our students were completely frustrated by not knowing where to go. So, we amalgamated some offices and that solved half of the problems right there. A very simple change that has brought great satisfaction.

In other words, if students are satisfied they will stay longer and listening to them and being responsive will produce more satisfaction. While this may be an effective strategy for enhancing student retention, it is not a use of SOA information in planning for retention.

Planning for Accreditation

One question was included on the questionnaire to obtain data with respect to the use of SOA information in accreditation planning. Six of the 15 respondents were from colleges affiliated with the AABC.

Three of the 15 respondents simply noted that their colleges were required to perform SOA activities for AABC accreditation purposes. They did not indicate what impact SOA information had on planning for accreditation. Three others responded that the question was "Not applicable." One of them said "Not applicable" despite the college having been affiliated with the AABC.

The other two explained that the question was not applicable because their colleges were not interested or eligible in accreditation. Another noted that although the college was not eligible for accreditation there was an attempt to maintain standards which would allow student to transfer courses to some other Bible colleges. One reply to this question about the impact of SOA information on planning for accreditation was that

> *several courses have been implemented, several dropped, and several redesigned on the basis of this input.*

It is not clear what kind of connection existed between this comment and the use of SOA information in planning for accreditation. Another response was "a survey was done" without providing any further details. Two responses appeared to provide insight into the way that SOA information was used in planning for accreditation. One of these indicated that the connection with accreditation planning was integral with the overall improvement of the college:

> *Outcomes Assessment recommendations become part of long term planning for institutional improvement which has accreditation implications.*

The second response was that SOA information

> *assists us in validating/assessing institutional/program goals and objectives.*

Interview respondents did not address this issue directly. Rather, it was generally implicit in their responses depending on their relationship to the AABC. As noted above, most colleges reported that AABC accreditation was an important factor in their initiating SOA procedures and SOA procedures were often implemented to coincide with and provide data for the self-study stage of the accreditation procedures.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study with respect to the use of SOA information in planning in Canadian Bible colleges.

Data Quality

Unusable data, confusion about the meaning of SOA, and brief responses affected the quality of the data gathered by the questionnaires with respect to the use of SOA information in planning.

Unusable Data

The data gathered by the questionnaire with respect to the use of SOA information in planning were very limited in quality. There were three serious problems with the responses to this section of the questionnaire: (a) low response rates, (b) lack of understanding of the question or the concept of SOA, and (c) high frequency of short responses which were difficult to interpret or of "Not applicable" as a response.

Because of inappropriate responses and no responses, usable data were gathered from only 15 of the 31 returned questionnaires. Even within the 15 usable forms, some responses showed evidence of a lack of understanding of either the questions or the definition of SOA used in the study.

Confusion With SOA

Many responses to the questions regarding use of SOA information did not appear to have been based on an understanding of SOA, as defined on the questionnaire. The definition given was that SOA referred

> to actions taken by the institution, or a section/department of the institution, to attempt to measure the degree to which students, collectively, attain the general and professional educational goals of the college (e.g., competencies in general education, biblical/theological, and professional programs) as well as student development goals (e.g., attitudes, personal growth, and socialization).

Rather, the respondents emphasized the use of surveys gathering perceptions of students and alumni on the value of the curricular offerings of the college or success of the college in attaining its goals. In addition, some responses showed apparent acceptance of anecdotal input from students and alumni on the value of the college experience as valid and reliable SOA data. Some respondents apparently confused entering student perceptions and individual assessment

techniques with SOA. These issues were evident in the questionnaire and interview responses.

Many of the questionnaire and interview respondents classified the use of data obtained from surveys of entering or graduating students as the use of SOA information in various aspects of planning. Entering student input can be used to (a) establish baseline attitudes, skills, and knowledge to compare with graduating student attitudes, skills, and knowledge to assess the value-added by attending college and/or (b) determine students' goals against which to compare students' outcomes to determine the degree to which their goals were attained during the time they attended college. Graduating student interviews and questionnaires can provide data with respect to (a) the value students place on the instruction received at the college and/or (b) their perception of the relevance of their experiences or degree to which they have attained their goals. However, according to the questionnaire and interview responses, very little SOA use was made of entering student surveys. Generally, these surveys were used to identifying students' motives for attending college, background characteristics of students, the impact of recruitment techniques on students' decisions to attend college, entering students' attitudes toward certain issues, and the first impressions of students with respect to the college's facilities, services, and activities. The data gathered in these colleges in graduating student surveys, as mentioned or alluded to in these responses, were used to ascertain their evaluation of the colleges' facilities, services, and administrative procedures or policies. No evidence was present in the questionnaire responses and very limited evidence was obtained in the interviews (see Chapter 5) that graduating student surveys were used for SOA purposes.

Brief Responses

A third issue affecting the quality of the data acquired in this portion of the study was the high frequency of use of brief responses such as "a survey was done," "Not extensively used," or "Not used directly" as responses to these

questions. These kinds of responses are of marginal value because they do not provide any real insight into the kind of actions taken. Another response with low value that had a relatively high frequency was "Not applicable" without an explanation as to what made the question so.

Uses of SOA Information in Planning

Some insight into the nature of use of SOA information in planning that has been made in at least some colleges is possible, despite these problems. Although the responses did not allow for a quantification of the colleges using SOA information as defined in this study, some examples were obtained. Data from the interviews appear to be more reliable and probably more valid in this regard. SOA information appears to be have been used in these ways:

1. to guide academic planning through giving feedback to instructional and curricular evaluation such that strengths and weakness were identified and were able to be addressed;

2. to provide validation of student outcomes which were then used in constituency and donor development, student recruitment, and student retention; and

3. as part of the input into the self-study process for colleges affiliated with the AABC.

Limited use of SOA information, as defined in this study, was evidenced in the participating Bible colleges with respect to these aspects: (a) operational budgeting and resource allocation, (b) capital projects, (c) personnel planning, and (d) student advising.

CHAPTER 8

SATISFACTION WITH USE OF SOA INFORMATION IN PLANNING

This chapter presents the findings of the study with respect to satisfaction of administrators and faculty members from the responding Canadian Bible colleges with the use of information from SOA in planning as reported on the Individual Personnel Form. As in Chapter 6, satisfaction was measured by (a) mean responses on the satisfaction scale and (b) the difference between mean responses on ideal and current use scales.

Analysis of Satisfaction Means

Respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the use of SOA information in 12 aspects of planning. The findings for all respondents and for respondents classified by position, college size, affiliation of college with a denomination, and affiliation of college with the AABC are given in this section. The results for the 12 aspects of planning are presented in these six categories: (a) academic planning, (b) personnel planning, (c) resource allocation planning, (d) strategic planning, (e) student planning, and (f) planning for accreditation.

Satisfaction Means for All Respondents

Satisfaction means for all responses with respect to the use of SOA information in planning are shown in Table 8.1. The highest satisfaction means were recorded with respect to these three categories: (a) planning for accreditation (3.7 on a five-point scale), (b) academic planning (curriculum/program, 3.5; instructional, 3.7), and (c) strategic planning (3.5). The lowest satisfaction means were reported for these categories: (a) resource allocation planning (donor/alumni relations, 2.8; operating budget/resource allocation, 2.8; capital projects, 2.9) and (b) personnel planning (tenure/promotion, 2.9; staff recruitment, 3.2). Most satisfaction means were between "Neutral" (3) and "Somewhat satisfied" (4). Satisfaction means for resource allocation planning were between "Somewhat dissatisfied" (2) and "Neutral" (3).

Table 8.1
Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information

Aspect of planning	n	Mean
Academic planning		
Curriculum/Program planning	121	3.5
Instructional planning	122	3.7
Personnel planning		
Tenure/Promotion decisions	83	2.9
Staff recruitment	89	3.2
Resource allocation planning		
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.8
Operating budget/Resource allocation	97	2.9
Capital projects	91	2.9
Strategic planning	118	3.4
Student planning		
Student advising	119	3.5
Student recruitment	109	3.3
Student retention	115	3.2
Planning for accreditation	90	3.7

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Satisfaction Means Classified by Position of Respondent

The satisfaction means with respect to the use of SOA information in planning, for respondents classified by position, are presented in Table 8.2. Satisfaction means were reported between "Neutral" (3) and "Somewhat satisfied" (4) for (a) all 12 aspects of planning by senior academic administrators, (b) 9 of 12 aspects of planning by faculty members, and (c) 7 of 12 aspects of planning by other administrators. Satisfaction means for senior academic administrators were the highest with respect to all aspects of planning. Satisfaction means for other administrators were the lowest with respect to all aspects of strategic planning and personnel planning, and two of the three aspects of resource allocation planning. Faculty members obtained the lowest satisfaction means with respect to planning for accreditation and two of the three aspects of student planning. Substantial differences (≥ 0.5) were found between the mean responses of senior academic administrators and other administrators with respect to these four aspects of planning: (a) tenure/promotion of staff (senior academic administrators, 3.3; other administrators, 2.5), (b) staff recruitment (3.5; 2.9), (c) operating budget/resource allocation (3.3; 2.6), and (d) capital projects (3.2; 2.7).

Satisfaction Means Classified by Size of College

Satisfaction means with respect to the use of SOA information, classified by the size of college, are given in Table 8.3. Substantial differences (≥ 0.5) were found between or among mean responses with respect to 7 of the 12 aspects of planning. The satisfaction mean for respondents in large colleges was substantially lower than for respondents in small colleges with respect to the use of SOA information in instructional planning (3.5 and 4.0 respectively). The satisfaction mean for respondents in large colleges was substantially lower than for respondents in both small colleges and medium-small colleges with respect to planning for tenure/promotion of staff (2.6 for large colleges and 3.1 for both small and medium-small colleges).

Table 8.2
Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent

Aspect of planning	n	Mean: Faculty members (n=42-56)	Mean: Senior academic administrators (n=15-28)	Mean: Other administrators (n=26-39)
Academic planning				
Curriculum/Program planning	121	3.4	3.8	3.4
Instructional planning	122	3.6	3.9	3.6
Personnel planning				
Tenure/Promotion decisions	83	3.0	3.3	2.5
Staff recruitment	89	3.2	3.5	2.9
Resource allocation planning				
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.7	3.0	2.9
Operating budget/Resource allocation	97	2.8	3.3	2.6
Capital projects	91	2.9	3.2	2.7
Strategic planning	118	3.5	3.7	3.2
Student planning				
Student advising	119	3.4	3.6	3.4
Student recruitment	109	3.2	3.5	3.3
Student retention	115	3.0	3.3	3.3
Planning for accreditation	90	3.6	3.9	3.8

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 8.3
Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Size of Institution

Aspect of planning	n	College size: Small (n=15-27) Mean	Medium small (n=9-25) Mean	Medium large (n=20-26) Mean	Large (n=30-47) Mean
Academic planning					
Curriculum/Program planning	121	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.4
Instructional planning	122	4.0	3.6	3.8	3.5
Personnel planning					
Tenure/Promotion decisions	83	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.6
Staff recruitment	89	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1
Resource allocation planning					
Donor/Alumni relations	102	3.1	2.8	3.3	2.5
Operating budget/Resource allocation	97	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.7
Capital projects	91	3.2	2.8	3.0	2.7
Strategic planning	118	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.3
Student planning					
Student advising	119	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.1
Student recruitment	109	3.5	3.0	3.4	3.2
Student retention	115	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.0
Planning for accreditation	90	3.7	3.3	4.1	3.5

Notes. Small colleges: < 42.1 FTE students
Medium small colleges: 42.1-98 FTE students
Medium large colleges: 98.1-241 FTE students
Large colleges: > 241 FTE students
The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*.
(*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Two aspects of resource allocation planning had substantial differences in satisfaction means when classified by size of institution. The satisfaction mean for personnel in large colleges was substantially lower than the satisfaction means for personnel in small and medium-large colleges with respect to donor/alumni relations planning (2.5, 3.1, and 3.3 respectively). Also with respect to donor/alumni relations, the satisfaction mean for respondents in medium-small colleges was substantially lower than the satisfaction mean for respondents in medium-large colleges (2.8; 3.3). With respect to capital projects planning, the satisfaction mean for respondents in large colleges was substantially lower than for respondents in small colleges (2.7; 3.2).

The student advising and student recruitment aspects of student planning had substantial inter-group differences in satisfaction means based on the size of the respondents' college. With respect to student advising, respondents in large colleges obtained a substantially lower satisfaction mean than did respondents in both small and medium-small colleges (3.1; 3.9; 3.6). In addition, the satisfaction mean for respondents in medium-large colleges with respect to student advising was substantially lower than for respondents in small colleges (3.4; 3.9). The satisfaction mean for respondents in medium-small college was substantially lower than for respondents in small colleges with respect to student recruitment planning (3.0; 3.5).

Finally, with respect to planning for accreditation, the satisfaction means for respondents in medium-small and large colleges were substantially lower than the satisfaction mean for respondents in medium-large colleges (3.3; 3.5; 4.1).

In 6 of the 12 aspects of planning the satisfaction mean for respondents in large colleges was substantially lower than for respondents in at least one other size category. With respect to 10 of the 12 aspects of planning respondents in large colleges obtained the lowest satisfaction mean. Similarly, the satisfaction mean for respondents in small colleges was substantially higher than for

respondents in at least one other size category with respect to 6 of the 12 aspects of planning and was the highest with respect to 10 of the 12 aspects of planning. The satisfaction mean for respondents in large colleges with respect to all three aspects of resource allocation was between "Somewhat dissatisfied" (2) and "Neutral" (3), while the satisfaction mean for respondents in small colleges was between "Neutral" (3) and "Somewhat satisfied" (4) with respect to these aspects.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With a Denomination

Satisfaction means with respect to the use of SOA information in planning, classified by the affiliation of the college with a denomination, are given in Table 8.4. Satisfaction means showed no substantial differences (≥ 0.5) based on the affiliation of the respondents' college with a denomination. However, for 11 of the 12 aspects of planning, the satisfaction mean for respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination was higher, although not substantially higher, than for respondents in colleges not affiliated with a denomination. The single exception was with respect to the use of SOA information in capital project planning.

Satisfaction Means Classified by Affiliation With the AABC

Satisfaction means with respect to the use of SOA information in planning, classified by the affiliation of the college with the AABC, are given in Table 8.5. The satisfaction mean for respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC was substantially higher (≥ 0.5) with respect to planning for student advising than for those respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC (3.8 and 3.2 respectively). Satisfaction means obtained by respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC were higher, although not substantially, than satisfaction means recorded by respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC with respect to 8 of the remaining 11 aspects of planning.

Table 8.4
Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination

Aspect of p ing	n	Mean: Affiliated with a denomination: Yes (n=54-75)	Mean: Affiliated with a denomination: No (n=29-47)
Academic planning			
Curriculum/Program planning	121	3.6	3.3
Instructional planning	122	3.7	3.6
Personnel planning			
Tenure/Promotion decisions	83	3.1	2.7
Staff recruitment	89	3.2	3.1
Resource allocation planning			
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.9	2.8
Operating budget/Resource allocation	97	2.9	2.8
Capital projects	91	2.9	3.0
Strategic planning	118	3.5	3.4
Student planning			
Student advising	119	3.6	3.2
Student recruitment	109	3.3	3.2
Student retention	115	3.3	3.0
Planning for accreditation	90	3.8	3.4

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied.* (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 8.5
Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC

Aspect of planning	n	Mean: Affiliated with the AABC: Yes (n=48-68)	Mean: Affiliated with the AABC: No (n=29-55)
Academic planning			
Curriculum/Program planning	121	3.4	3.6
Instructional planning	122	3.6	3.8
Personnel planning			
Tenure/Promotion decisions	83	2.9	3.0
Staff recruitment	89	3.2	3.1
Resource allocation planning			
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.7	2.9
Operating budget/Resource allocation	97	2.8	3.0
Capital projects	91	2.8	3.1
Strategic planning	118	3.3	3.6
Student planning			
Student advising	119	3.2	3.8
Student recruitment	109	3.3	3.3
Student retention	115	3.1	3.3
Planning for accreditation	90	3.8	3.5

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*. (*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Analysis of Means for Ideal and Current Use

The findings of the study with respect to satisfaction with the use of SOA information in planning in Canadian Bible colleges as measured by the difference between the current and ideal use means are presented in this section.

Means for Current Use

Mean responses for the current use of SOA information in planning activities as reported on the Individual Personnel Form by all respondents and as classified by position of respondents are presented in this section.

All Respondents

Mean responses from all respondents with respect to current use of SOA information in planning activities are shown in Table 8.6. Most of the current use means were between "Slight use" (2) and "Moderate use" (3). Current use means for the two aspects of academic planning were highest (curriculum/program planning, 3.2; instructional planning, 3.4). Current use means for the two aspects of personnel planning were lowest (tenure/promotion, 2.1; staff recruitment, 2.3).

Classified by Position of Respondent

Current use means for the responses from all respondents with respect to SOA information use in planning activities are shown in Table 8.7. Other administrators obtained the lowest current use means for all aspects of planning except (a) planning for accreditation where they reported the highest current use mean and (b) student recruitment planning for which all three groups' current use means were the same. Other administrators' current use means were substantially lower (≥ 0.5) than faculty members' current use means with respect to both aspects of personnel planning (tenure/promotion, 1.8 and 2.3 respectively; staff recruitment, 2.0 and 2.6) and the capital projects aspect of resource allocation planning (2.0 and 2.5). The current use mean for other administrators was substantially lower than for senior academic administrators

Table 8.6
Means for Current Use of SOA Information

Aspect of planning	n	Mean
Academic planning		
Curriculum/Program planning	124	3.2
Instructional planning	126	3.4
Personnel planning		
Tenure/Promotion decisions	96	2.1
Staff recruitment	99	2.3
Resource allocation planning		
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.4
Operating budget/Resource allocation	101	2.3
Capital projects	96	2.3
Strategic planning	121	2.9
Student planning		
Student advising	121	3.1
Student recruitment	112	2.9
Student retention	118	2.9
Planning for accreditation	103	2.9

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 8.7
Means for Current Use of SOA Information,
Classified by Position of Respondent

Aspect of planning	Faculty members		Senior academic administrators		Other administrators	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean
Academic planning						
Curriculum/Program planning	55	3.2	30	3.4	39	3.1
Instructional planning	57	3.4	30	3.4	39	3.3
Personnel planning						
Tenure/Promotion decisions	46	2.3	21	2.2	29	1.8
Staff recruitment	45	2.6	22	2.2	32	2.0
Resource allocation planning						
Donor/Alumni relations	45	2.3	25	2.8	32	2.3
Operating budget/Resource allocation	44	2.4	24	2.7	33	1.9
Capital projects	42	2.5	24	2.4	30	2.0
Strategic planning	54	2.8	29	3.2	38	2.8
Student planning						
Student advising	55	3.2	29	3.3	37	2.8
Student recruitment	51	2.9	26	2.9	35	2.9
Student retention	50	2.8	28	2.9	40	2.8
Planning for accreditation	47	2.9	25	2.9	31	3.1

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

did with respect to donor/alumni relations (2.3 and 2.8) and student advising (2.8 and 3.3). Other administrators' current use means were substantially lower than both senior academic administrators' and faculty members' current use means with respect to operating budget/resource allocation (1.9, 2.7, and 2.4).

Means for Ideal Use

This section presents the mean responses with respect to ideal use of SOA information in planning activities as reported on the Individual Personnel Form. Means for all responses and as classified by position of respondent are given below.

All Respondents

The ideal use means for SOA information in planning from all respondents are shown in Table 8.8. All ideal use means were between "Moderate use" (3) and "Frequent use" (4). The highest means were reported for the two aspects of academic planning (curriculum/program planning, 3.9; instructional planning, 4.0) and the three aspects of student planning (student advising, 3.8; student recruitment, 3.9; student retention, 3.8). The lowest ideal use means were recorded for the two aspects of personnel planning (tenure/promotion, 3.2; staff recruitment, 3.3).

Classified by Position of Respondent

Means for ideal use of SOA information in planning classified by position of respondent are given in Table 8.9. Ideal use means obtained by responding faculty members, senior academic administrators, and other administrators were not substantially different (≥ 0.5) for any of the 12 aspects of planning.

Differences of Means for Ideal and Current Use

This section presents the results of the analysis of the difference between ideal and current use means with respect to the use of student outcomes assessment information in planning. Results are presented for all respondents and as classified by position of respondent.

Table 8.8
Means for Ideal Use of SOA Information

Aspect of planning	n	Mean
Academic planning		
Curriculum/Program planning	132	4.0
Instructional planning	134	4.0
Personnel planning		
Tenure/Promotion decisions	105	3.2
Staff recruitment	111	3.3
Resource allocation planning		
Donor/Alumni relations	116	3.7
Operating budget/Resource allocation	116	3.4
Capital projects	110	3.3
Strategic planning	129	3.9
Student planning		
Student advising	129	3.9
Student recruitment	126	3.8
Student retention	128	3.9
Planning for accreditation	111	3.5

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 8.9
Means for Ideal Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent

Aspect of planning	Faculty members		Senior academic administrators		Other administrators	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean
Academic planning						
Curriculum/Program planning	59	3.9	30	4.0	43	3.9
Instructional planning	61	3.9	30	4.0	43	4.0
Personnel planning						
Tenure/Promotion decisions	53	3.2	22	3.0	30	3.2
Staff recruitment	55	3.3	22	3.3	34	3.3
Resource allocation planning						
Donor/Alumni relations	52	3.5	26	3.8	38	3.7
Operating budget/Resource allocation	54	3.4	24	3.5	38	3.3
Capital projects	51	3.2	23	3.4	36	3.2
Strategic planning	58	3.8	29	4.0	42	4.0
Student planning						
Student advising	58	3.8	29	4.1	42	3.8
Student recruitment	57	3.7	26	3.7	43	4.0
Student retention	56	3.8	28	4.0	44	4.1
Planning for accreditation	53	3.4	24	3.5	34	3.7

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

All Respondents

Differences between the means for current and ideal use of SOA information in planning reported by all respondents are shown in Table 8.10. As in Chapter 6, the magnitude of difference between current and ideal use indicated the degree of dissatisfaction with current use, and the direction of difference indicated whether more or less use was desired.

All of the differences between means for ideal and current use of SOA information in planning were substantial (≥ 0.5) and all showed the desire for more use. The greatest differences between ideal and current use means were with respect to SOA information use in all aspects of resources allocation planning (donor/alumni relations, 1.2; operating budget/resource allocation, 1.1; capital projects, 1.0), personnel planning (tenure/promotion, 1.0; staff recruitment, 1.0), and strategic planning (1.0), and one aspect of student planning (student retention, 1.1). The smallest differences in ideal and current use means were with respect to planning for accreditation (0.6), all aspects of academic planning (curriculum/program planning, 0.8; instructional planning, 0.6), and one aspect of student planning (student advising, 0.8).

Comparison With Analysis of Satisfaction Means

As shown in Table 8.11, the results of analysis of the difference between the ideal and current use were generally consistent with the results from the analysis of satisfaction with respect to the use of SOA information in planning. The four aspects of planning which received the smallest differences between ideal and current use means (instructional planning, 0.6; planning for accreditation, 0.6; curriculum/program planning, 0.8; and student advising planning, 0.8) indicating less dissatisfaction also recorded the four highest satisfaction means (3.7, 3.7, 3.5, and 3.4 respectively). The four aspects of planning which received the largest ideal and current use mean differences (donor/alumni relations planning, 1.2; operating budget/resource allocation planning, 1.1; student retention, 1.1; and tenure/promotion planning, 1.0) also

Table 8.10
Difference Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Information

Aspect of planning	Difference between means for ideal and current use		
	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c
Academic planning			
Curriculum/Program planning	132	124	0.8
Instructional planning	134	126	0.6
Personnel planning			
Tenure/Promotion decisions	105	96	1.0
Staff recruitment	111	99	1.0
Resource allocation planning			
Donor/Alumni relations	116	102	1.2
Operating budget/Resource allocation	116	101	1.1
Capital projects	110	96	1.0
Strategic planning	129	121	1.0
Student planning			
Student advising	129	121	0.8
Student recruitment	126	112	0.9
Student retention	128	118	1.1
Planning for accreditation	111	103	0.6

Notes. M_i-M_c = Difference between the means for ideal use and current use.
n_i = number in the subsample for ideal use.
n_c = number in the subsample for current use.
The scale for current use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)
The scale for ideal use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*No opinion* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)
The information for this table is drawn from Tables 8.6 and 8.8.

Table 8.11
Comparison of Results of the Analysis of Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Information With the Analysis of Satisfaction Means for Use of SOA Information

Aspect of planning	Analysis of satisfaction means		Analysis of ideal and current use means	
	Mean	Rank	Difference of means	Rank
Planning for accreditation	3.7	1	0.6	2
Instructional planning	3.7	2	0.6	1
Curriculum/Program planning	3.5	3	0.8	3
Student advising	3.5	4	0.8	4
Strategic planning	3.4	5	1.0	8
Student recruitment	3.3	6	0.9	5
Staff recruitment	3.2	7	1.0	7
Student retention	3.2	8	1.1	11
Tenure/Promotion decisions	2.9	9	1.0	9
Capital projects	2.9	10	1.0	6
Operating budget/Resource allocation	2.9	11	1.1	10
Donor/Alumni relations	2.8	12	1.2	12

Notes. The satisfaction scale was 1 = *Very dissatisfied*, 2 = *Somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *Very satisfied*.
(*Not applicable* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)
The information for this table is drawn from Tables 8.1 and 8.10.

were among the five aspects of planning recording the lowest satisfaction means (2.8, 2.8, 3.2, 2.9). The exception to this generalization was capital project planning which received the third lowest satisfaction mean of 2.9 but had the sixth smallest differences between ideal and current use means (1.0). Removing the capital project planning aspect from consideration resulted in no aspect being more than two places different in rank between the two analyses.

Classified by Position of Respondent

Table 8.12 shows the differences between ideal and current use means for SOA information use in planning, classified by position of respondent. Other administrators obtained larger differences between ideal and current use means with respect to all 14 aspects of planning than senior academic administrators or faculty members did. The differences between ideal and current use means for other administrators were substantially larger (≥ 0.5) than the differences between ideal and current use means for at least one other group with respect to four aspects of planning. The difference between the means for other administrators' was greater than (a) senior academic administrators with respect to tenure/promotion of staff planning (other administrators, 1.4; senior academic administrators, 0.8), (b) faculty members with respect to staff recruitment planning (1.3 and 0.7) and capital projects planning (1.3 and 0.8), and (c) both senior academic administrators and faculty members with respect to operating budget/resource allocation planning (1.4, 0.8, and 0.9) The difference between administrators' (senior academic administrators and other administrators combined) ideal and current use means was larger, although not substantially, than the difference between faculty members' ideal and current use means with respect to 10 of the other 11 aspects of planning. Only with respect to strategic planning were the differences equal.

Table 8.12
Differences Between Means for Ideal and Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Position of Respondent

Aspect of planning	Difference between ideal and current use means								
	Faculty members			Senior academic administrators			Other administrators		
	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c	n_i	n_c	M_i-M_c
Academic planning									
Curriculum/Program planning	59	55	0.7	30	30	0.7	43	39	0.9
Instructional planning	61	57	0.5	30	30	0.6	43	39	0.7
Personnel planning									
Tenure/Promotion decisions	53	46	0.9	22	21	0.8	30	29	1.4
Staff recruitment	55	45	0.7	22	22	1.0	34	32	1.3
Resource allocation planning									
Donor/Alumni relations	52	45	1.2	26	25	1.0	38	32	1.4
Operating budget/ Resource allocation	54	44	0.9	24	24	0.8	38	33	1.4
Capital projects	51	42	0.8	23	24	1.0	36	30	1.3
Strategic planning	58	54	1.0	29	29	0.8	42	38	1.2
Student planning									
Student advising	58	55	0.6	29	29	0.8	42	37	1.0
Student recruitment	57	51	0.8	26	26	0.7	43	35	1.1
Student retention	56	50	0.9	28	28	1.1	44	40	1.3
Planning for accreditation	53	47	0.5	24	25	0.6	34	31	0.6

Notes. M_i-M_c = Difference between the means for ideal use and current use.
n_i = number in the subsample for ideal use.
n_c = number in the subsample for current use.
The scale for current use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)
The scale for ideal use was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*No opinion* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Current Use and Satisfaction With Use of SOA Information

This section presents the findings of the study with respect to the relationships between the reported level of current use of SOA information and satisfaction with the current use of SOA information in institutional planning.

All Respondents

The aspects included in academic planning, planning for accreditation, and strategic planning, along with the student advising aspect of student planning, received the highest means from all respondents for current use of SOA information as shown in Table 8.6, and the same aspects received the highest means for satisfaction with the current use of SOA information as shown in Table 8.1. Similarly, the aspects making up resource allocation planning and personnel planning received the lowest means from all respondents for both satisfaction and current use of SOA information.

Classified by Position of Respondent

When the means for current use of SOA information, classified by position of the respondent, as shown in Table 8.7, were compared with the means for satisfaction with the current use of SOA information, classified by position of respondent, as shown in Table 8.2, the perceived level of use of SOA information appeared to be related to the level of satisfaction with the use of SOA information. The aspects under academic planning obtained high current use and high satisfaction means for all three position types. The aspects under personnel planning were rated low on both satisfaction and current use by other administrators. Both faculty and other administrators recorded low satisfaction and current use means for SOA information use with respect to resource allocation planning. Other administrators' responses were high for both current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information with respect to planning for accreditation.

Classified by Size of Institution

Table 8.13 shows the means for current use of SOA information, classified by size of institution. When these results are compared to the means for satisfaction with the use of SOA information shown in Table 8.3 there are similar relationships to those identified above. The means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in all sizes of colleges were high with respect to the two aspects of academic planning. Similarly, the means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in all sizes of colleges were low with respect to two of the three aspects of resource allocation planning. One notable exception was that the means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in large colleges with respect to planning for donor/alumni relations were dissimilar. The mean of current use of SOA information for these respondents was relatively high while the mean of satisfaction with its use for these respondents was relatively low with respect to this one aspect. Means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in small and medium-large colleges were also both low with respect to both aspects of personnel planning. Likewise, means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for personnel in medium-large and large colleges were both high with respect to planning for accreditation. However, the mean for respondent in small colleges with respect to the use of SOA information in planning for accreditation was low and the mean for satisfaction with the use of SOA information for these same respondents in planning for accreditation was high. To summarize, where high use of SOA information was reported there was generally high satisfaction, and vice versa.

Classified by Denominational Affiliation

Table 8.14 shows the means for current use of SOA information, classified by affiliation of college with a denomination. When compared with the satisfaction means for current use of SOA information, classified by

Table 8.13
Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Size of Institution

Aspect of planning	n	College size: Small (n=16-26) Mean	Medium small (n=17-26) Mean	Medium large (n=21-26) Mean	Large (n=33-49) Mean
Academic planning					
Curriculum/Program planning	124	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.3
Instructional planning	126	3.7	3.3	3.3	3.6
Personnel planning					
Tenure/Promotion decisions	96	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1
Staff recruitment	99	2.5	2.4	2.0	2.3
Resource allocation planning					
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.6	2.8	2.6	3.1
Operating budget/Resource allocation	101	2.7	2.2	2.0	2.3
Capital projects	96	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.4
Strategic planning	121	3.1	3.1	2.6	2.9
Student planning					
Student advising	121	3.5	3.3	2.8	3.0
Student recruitment	112	3.1	2.9	2.7	3.0
Student retention	118	2.6	2.8	2.6	3.1
Planning for accreditation	103	2.6	2.1	3.4	3.2

Notes. Small colleges: < 42.1 FTE students
Medium small colleges: 42.1-98 FTE students
Medium large colleges: 98.1-241 FTE students
Large colleges: > 241 FTE students
The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

Table 8.14
Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With a Denomination

Aspect of planning	n	Mean: Affiliated with a denomination: Yes (n=58-74)	Mean: Affiliated with a denomination: No (n=38-53)
Academic planning			
Curriculum/Program planning	124	3.3	3.1
Instructional planning	126	3.5	3.3
Personnel planning			
Tenure/Promotion decisions	96	2.2	2.0
Staff recruitment	99	2.3	2.3
Resource allocation planning			
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.5	2.3
Operating budget/Resource allocation	101	2.3	2.3
Capital projects	96	2.4	2.2
Strategic planning	121	3.0	2.8
Student planning			
Student advising	121	3.3	3.0
Student recruitment	112	2.9	2.9
Student retention	118	2.8	2.9
Planning for accreditation	103	3.1	2.7

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

affiliation of college with a denomination shown in Table 8.4, patterns similar to those found above were observed.

Respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination rated the use of SOA information and the satisfaction with the use of SOA information high for both aspects in academic planning, the student advising aspect, and planning for accreditation. These respondents also obtained low means for the use of SOA information and satisfaction with the use of SOA information with respect to the three aspects of resource allocation planning. Respondents in colleges not affiliated with a denomination reported the same relationships between means for current use and means for satisfaction with current use of SOA information with respect to the instructional planning aspect (both means were high) and the three aspects of resource allocation planning (both means were low). In addition, the means for both responses were low with respect to the tenure/promotion planning aspect from these respondents. There were no instances of high means on one response and low on the other.

Classified by AABC Affiliation

The means for current use of SOA information, classified by affiliation of college with the AABC, are shown in Table 8.15. These means were compared with the means for satisfaction with the use of SOA information, classified by affiliation of the college with the AABC shown in Table 8.5. Means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in both classes of colleges were high with respect to both aspects of academic planning and were low with respect to all three aspects of resource allocation planning. Means for current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC were low with respect to both aspects of personnel planning and were high with respect to strategic planning and the student advising planning aspect.

Table 8.15
Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Affiliation of College With the AABC

Aspect of planning	n	Mean: Affiliated with the AABC: Yes (n=51-71)	Mean: Affiliated with the AABC: No (n=40-56)
Academic planning			
Curriculum/Program planning	124	3.2	3.2
Instructional planning	126	3.4	3.4
Personnel planning			
Tenure/Promotion decisions	96	2.2	2.1
Staff recruitment	99	2.3	2.4
Resource allocation planning			
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.4	2.4
Operating budget/Resource allocation	101	2.3	2.4
Capital projects	96	2.3	2.3
Strategic planning	121	2.8	3.0
Student planning			
Student advising	121	3.0	3.3
Student recruitment	112	2.9	2.9
Student retention	118	3.0	2.7
Planning for accreditation	103	3.3	2.4

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

One noteworthy difference between responses from respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC and those in colleges not affiliated with the AABC was noted with respect to current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for planning for accreditation. Means for both current use and satisfaction with the use of SOA information for respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC were high with respect to planning for accreditation. However, for respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC the mean for satisfaction with the use of SOA information was high but the mean for current use was low. While different, both findings were expected. The use of SOA information in planning for accreditation in colleges affiliated with the AABC would be expected to be higher than in colleges not affiliated with the AABC. Personnel in colleges not affiliated with the AABC would be satisfied with a lower level of use of SOA information for this purpose than would those in colleges affiliated with the AABC. These findings provide evidence of internal validity of the questionnaire.

Current Use of SOA Information and Use of SOA Activities

Table 8.16 shows the means for current use of SOA information, classified by the frequency of use of SOA activities in 1994/95. Responses from respondents in colleges which reported eight or more SOA activities and, thus, were eligible for interviews were compared with those from respondents in colleges which performed fewer than eight SOA activities. No substantial differences (≥ 0.5) were found with respect to the use of SOA information in planning, except with respect to planning for accreditation. Respondents in colleges in which eight or more SOA activities were conducted in 1994/95 reported substantially more use of SOA information in planning for accreditation than did respondents in colleges in which seven or fewer SOA activities were used. This is probably due to the fact, noted in Chapter 5, that 9 of the 10 colleges where interviews were conducted were affiliated with the AABC or had begun conducting SOA, at least in part, because they were

Table 8.16
Means for Current Use of SOA Information, Classified by Frequency of Use of SOA Activities

Aspect of planning	n	Mean Frequency of SOA activities < 8 (n=44-59)	Mean Frequency of SOA activities ≥ 8 (n=48-67)
Academic planning			
Curriculum/Program planning	124	3.2	3.2
Instructional planning	126	3.4	3.4
Personnel planning			
Tenure/Promotion decisions	96	2.1	2.2
Staff recruitment	99	2.3	2.3
Resource allocation planning			
Donor/Alumni relations	102	2.3	2.5
Operating budget/Resource allocation	101	2.3	2.3
Capital projects	96	2.3	2.3
Strategic planning	121	2.9	2.9
Student planning			
Student advising	121	3.3	3.0
Student recruitment	112	2.7	3.1
Student retention	118	2.7	3.0
Planning for accreditation	103	2.5	3.3

Note. The scale used was 1 = *Do not use*, 2 = *Slight use*, 3 = *Moderate use*, 4 = *Frequent use*, and 5 = *Extreme use*.
(*Do not know* was also provided, but not included in the analysis.)

considering AABC membership. In addition, the other college which reported conducting eight or more SOA activities, which did not participate in the interviews, also was affiliated with the AABC. In other words, this finding is probably reflective of the impact of AABC affiliation on the frequency of conducting SOA activities and on the use of SOA information for accreditation planning rather than of the impact of the frequency of conducting SOA activities on the use of SOA information for planning for accreditation.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study with respect to satisfaction with the use of SOA information in planning in Canadian Bible colleges. Satisfaction with the use of SOA information in planning was assessed by analyzing mean responses to the satisfaction scale and differences between means of the responses to the current use and ideal use scales on the Individual Personnel Form.

Satisfaction Means for the Use of SOA Information in Planning

Satisfaction means reported with respect to the use of SOA information in all aspects of planning for accreditation, academic planning, strategic planning, and student planning were between "Neutral" (3) and "Somewhat satisfied" (4). Satisfaction means with respect to four of the five aspects of resource allocation planning and personnel planning were between "Somewhat dissatisfied" (2) and "Neutral" (3).

Senior academic administrators obtained the highest satisfaction means on all aspects of planning and these means were substantially higher than the satisfaction means for other administrators with respect to all aspects of personnel planning and two of the three aspects of resource allocation planning. Satisfaction means were not substantially different when classified by affiliation of college with a denomination. One aspect of planning (student advising) had a substantial difference in satisfaction means when classified by affiliation of college with the AABC.

Several substantial differences between satisfaction means were evident when classified by the size of college. Satisfaction means for respondents in large colleges were substantially lower in 6 of the 12 aspects of planning than they were for respondents in at least one other size category. Similarly, satisfaction means for respondents in small colleges were substantially higher with respect to 6 of the 12 aspects of planning than they were for respondents in at least one other size category. Large organizations are generally more complex administratively with more administrative levels and areas than small organizations. Planning may occur in larger groups (e.g., faculty meetings) or more remote from the point of implementation (e.g., president's cabinet). Therefore, large institutions often have higher demand and need for timely, appropriate information to be provided to top level planners. At the same time, large organizations, because of their complexity, may require more information which may be more difficult to acquire, interpret, and provide. Likewise, large institutions may suffer from negative perceptions regarding the validity and reliability of SOA information because of the remoteness of the students and the increased tendency to use questionnaires and other paper and pencil kinds of data-gathering techniques as opposed to classroom-based or personal methods.

Current Use Means for the Use of SOA Information in Planning

Current use means for SOA information in planning were reported as generally being between "Slight use" (2) and "Moderate use" (3). The highest current use means were reported for both aspects of academic planning and the lowest for both aspects of personnel planning. Other administrators' current use means were generally lower than the current use means reported by respondents in the other two position categories. In particular, other administrators' current use means were substantially lower than at least one of the other groups' current use means with respect to all aspects of personnel planning and resource allocation planning. As compared to faculty members and senior academic administrators, other administrators may be better able to

determine how much use is made of SOA information with respect to these kinds of decisions especially as they relate to non-academic budgeting and personnel planning. Faculty members and at least some senior academic administrators may have been aware that SOA was being conducted and have assumed that the information obtained from it was used more widely in college planning than was the case.

Ideal Use Means for the Use of SOA Information in Planning

Ideal use means were all between "Moderate use" (3) and "Frequent use" (4). The highest ideal use means were recorded for all aspects of academic planning, student planning, and strategic planning. The lowest ideal use means were reported for all aspects of personnel planning, resource allocation planning, and planning for accreditation. Senior academic administrators, other administrators, and faculty members reported no substantial difference between ideal use means. All respondents appeared to have had general agreement as to the level of use of SOA information.

Differences Between Current Use and Ideal Use Means

All ideal use means were substantially higher than the respective current use means indicating that respondents desired increased use of SOA information in planning. The largest differences between ideal and current use means were with respect to all aspects of resource allocation planning, personnel planning, and strategic planning, and the student retention aspect of student planning. The smallest differences were recorded with respect to all aspects of planning for accreditation and academic planning, and the student advising and student recruitment aspects of student planning.

Other administrators' ideal and current use mean differences were larger than those from the other two position groups on all 14 aspects of planning, and were substantially larger than the difference from at least one other group on the three aspects of personnel planning and two of the three aspects of resource allocation planning. Similarly, other administrators' satisfaction means were

substantially lower than senior academic administrators' satisfaction with respect to the use of SOA information in these same aspects of planning. In addition, other administrator's satisfaction means were lower, although not substantially lower, than faculty members' satisfaction means with respect to these aspects of planning. Also, all the groups reported essentially the same ideal use means. Other administrators appeared, on the basis of these findings, less satisfied with or less aware of the current use of SOA information in these aspects of planning. On the other hand, other administrators may have desired increased use of SOA information in personnel planning and resource allocation planning so as to enable staff planning decisions and resource allocation decisions to be more "strategic" and to avoid potential conflicts resulting from budgeting and personnel decisions being perceived as based on personal preference rather than demonstrated need.

Both administrator groups recorded larger differences between means for ideal and current use of SOA information in planning with respect to 8 of the 12 aspects of planning, although not substantially larger, than the differences recorded by faculty members. Administrators reported larger differences with respect to all aspects of academic planning and planning for accreditation and with respect to two of the three aspects of student planning and resource allocation planning. Administrators may have desired greater use of SOA information in these areas of planning because of greater involvement in institutional planning and increased awareness of both the need for and the lack of adequate information on student outcomes to guide planning decisions.

Relationship of Satisfaction With and Use of SOA Information in Planning

Higher levels of satisfaction with the use of SOA information tended to occur in those colleges where there was a perception of higher use. The exceptions to this finding were in those instances where there was probably a low level of use desired. In those cases there was higher satisfaction with that low level of use.

Overall, respondents indicated a desire for greater use of SOA information in all aspects of planning in Canadian Bible colleges with an emphasis on its use in resource allocation planning and personnel planning.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the study, a summary of the findings, conclusions, implications for theory, and recommendations for practice and research.

Overview of the Study

Canadian Bible colleges, like postsecondary institutions generally, have been subjected to demands for accountability from students, donors, employers, and, in some cases, accrediting agencies. These stakeholders are concerned that colleges provide programs and settings that are effective in enabling students to attain institutional and student goals. Students and donors also want Bible colleges to demonstrate value for the time and money they invest. Employers are particularly interested in assurances that graduates of Bible colleges are adequately prepared for the positions they are seeking. The twin issues of effectiveness and efficiency can be addressed through evaluation studies. One form of evaluation that focuses on effectiveness is student outcomes assessment (SOA). This study investigated the use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges as a means of providing evidence of goal attainment.

However, as Banta (1993) pointed out, the use of SOA for accountability purposes alone is insufficient. The degree to which goals are attained also needs to be an element in institutional planning so as to improve the future effectiveness of institutional actions in attempting to fulfill the institution's mission. Therefore, this study also addressed the question of the use of SOA information in Canadian Bible colleges as an input into institutional planning.

Specific research questions were developed to guide the study. These questions were divided into two sections: (a) the methods used in Canadian Bible colleges to gather and report SOA data, and (b) how SOA information is used in institutional planning.

Questionnaires, interviews, and document analyses were employed to collect data by which to address the specific research questions. Two questionnaires were developed and pilot tested in July 1995. The final versions were sent to the 42 member institutions of the ACBC in August 1995. One college president informed the researcher that the institution was no longer a Bible college. Usable General College Information Form questionnaires were received from 31 of the 41 remaining institutions for a return rate of 75.6%. Usable Individual Personnel Form questionnaires were received from 146 respondents in 29 colleges. Interviews were conducted with 10 presidents and 12 other individuals from 10 colleges which indicated having used eight or more SOA activities in the 1994/95 academic year.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of the study are summarized in this section. The findings are presented as they related to each of the specific research questions which guided this study. The presentation of the findings is divided into two sections: (a) SOA methods, and (b) SOA information use in planning.

SOA Methods

Specific research question 1. "How are SOA data gathered in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Respondents reported that most colleges (79.3%) involved in this study had performed five or more SOA activities in the 1994/95 academic year. In addition, 87.1% of respondents indicated that their college had conducted or planned to conduct SOA. Respondents in over half of the colleges said their college used Christian service reports, field placement reports, locally produced subject examinations, locally produced student surveys, comprehensive examinations, and graduating student surveys to assess student outcomes.

2. Ministry readiness activities were reported as used most frequently followed by student satisfaction activities and academic development activities. However, the interview and open-ended questionnaire data provided

contradictory evidence that student satisfaction activities were more frequently used than ministry readiness or academic development activities.

3. Respondents noted little intended modification in the type or nature of SOA activities. In other words, there was little intent expressed to be innovative or to expand the definition of SOA.

4. Faculty members were more involved in the four aspects of the administration of SOA activities (planning, directing, implementing, and evaluating) in colleges with high use of SOA activities than were faculty members in colleges with low use. This finding indicated that there may be a relationship between faculty involvement in the administration of SOA activities and degree to which they are used.

5. Responses showed high variability in procedures for conducting SOA. This variety of procedures may have been indicative that there were locally developed approaches being implemented.

6. Respondents in 19 of the 31 colleges (61.3%) reported their college had no requirement to conduct SOA, including respondents in 5 of 14 colleges affiliated with the AABC which placed such a requirement on its members. This finding was surprising in light of the fact that it is a requirement for accreditation by the AABC. Clearly, the AABC accreditation criteria A.3.1 and A.4.1 (AABC, 1994) required SOA, and yet some respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC stated that there was no requirement to conduct SOA.

7. Primary responsibility for SOA was given to a senior academic administrator, according to 22 of 27 respondents (81.5%) who answered this question. This was consistent with Sawchenko's (1991) finding that senior administrators with the ability and positions to influence decision-making were responsible for institutional research in Canadian Bible colleges in addition to their other responsibilities.

8. Eight colleges had designated offices responsible for SOA. Only one of which was an office of institutional research; the others were existing administrative offices.

9. Only one questionnaire respondent indicated there was an internal policy requiring the college to conduct SOA. Interview participants from three colleges said the college had established policy that guided SOA. Each demonstrated the college had well developed mission- and/or objective-focused SOA programs which were organized and established on a formal rationale and policy base. Most colleges, however, appeared not to have formal policy which established a rationale, accepted activities, reporting procedures, minimum frequencies, levels of standardization, or scope of use for SOA.

10. Anecdotal evidence was accepted as apparently valid and reliable SOA data in some colleges.

Specific research question 2.1. "How are SOA data reported internally in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Printed reports to faculty members and oral reports to governing boards and faculty members were the most frequently cited internal reporting methods for SOA information. The reporting methods and audiences were in line with those generally used in colleges and universities as noted by Banta (1985).

2. Reporting to students was done in less than half (42.1%) of the responding colleges.

Specific research question 2.2. "To what external agencies are SOA data reported by Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. The AABC was identified most frequently as the external agency to which SOA information was reported, yet that was by less than half of the respondents (12 out of 26; 46.2%). Few respondents mentioned reporting SOA information to donors (11.5%) or government agencies (3.8%).

Specific research question 3. "What relationships exist between selected institutional characteristics of Canadian Bible colleges and the methods used to gather SOA data?"

1. More SOA activities were performed in large colleges than in small colleges. In particular, SOA activities which could be administered and scored in group settings and provided quantitative data were used in large colleges more frequently than in small colleges. On the other hand, SOA activities which were more labor intensive in administration and scoring, required more subjective analysis techniques, and provided for more open-ended responses were conducted more frequently in small colleges than in large colleges.

2. More SOA were performed in colleges not affiliated with a denomination than in colleges affiliated with a denomination. Respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination reported more use of student satisfaction and ministry readiness activities than respondents in colleges not affiliated with a denomination. The data indicated more academic development SOA activities were employed in colleges not affiliated with a denomination.

3. More SOA activities were performed in colleges affiliated with the AABC than in colleges not affiliated with the AABC. Specifically, respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC reported using more student satisfaction activities than those from colleges not affiliated with the AABC.

Specific research question 4. "To what extent are college administrators and faculty members of Canadian Bible colleges satisfied with how SOA data are gathered in their respective colleges?"

1. Administrators and faculty members considered that faculty members were "Slightly involved" (2) to "Moderately involved" (3) in the evaluation aspect of the administration of SOA and "Moderately involved" (3) in the planning, directing and implementing aspects. Both groups of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the level of involvement of faculty in all four

aspects. Faculty members were especially dissatisfied with their involvement in planning and evaluation aspects, while administrators desired increased involvement of faculty members in the directing and implementing aspects.

2. Administrators and faculty members expressed moderate satisfaction with the use of SOA activities, but they also indicated desiring higher levels of ideal use than current use for all but one types of SOA activities.

3. Respondents in colleges which reported higher numbers of SOA activities also recorded higher means for satisfaction, while respondents in colleges which indicated lower use of SOA activities showed low satisfaction. The four activities which were most used (locally produced subject examinations, Christian service reports, field placement reports, and locally produced student surveys) received the highest satisfaction ratings. Likewise, the satisfaction ratings for the four SOA activities which were least used (standardized tests, commercially produced student surveys, commercially produced alumni surveys, and surveys of employers) were the lowest.

Use of SOA Information in Planning

Specific research question 5. "How is SOA information used in institutional planning decisions in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Analysis of the open-ended responses from the General College Information Form was inconclusive because of the high proportion of unusable responses. Weakness in the wording of the question and/or misunderstanding of the concept of SOA made the data from this section of the questionnaire particularly suspect.

2. SOA information was used differentially in planning in the responding colleges. Some colleges had developed specific procedures to incorporate SOA information into planning, others had only informal mechanisms, some seemed to rely on anecdotal evidence, and some did not use this information because there was little or no SOA being conducted.

3. SOA information was "Slightly used" (2) to "Moderately used" (3) in institutional planning. Information from SOA was used most in academic planning and least in personnel planning.

4. Other administrators reported lower levels of use than faculty members and senior academic administrators.

5. Interview participants from all 10 colleges where interviews were conducted reported the use of surveys which gathered data on student evaluations of college services and facilities. The general use of these data was for institutional research purposes unrelated to SOA.

Specific research question 5.1. "How is SOA information used in resource allocation planning in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Selective use of positive SOA information was made as a means of encouraging donor support in some colleges.

2. Little evidence was found that SOA information was used to direct resources to areas in which students either were not achieving the desired outcomes or were already achieving well.

3. Data on student satisfaction and perceived needs were used in some colleges participating in the study as an input in resource allocation planning.

Specific research question 5.2. "How is SOA information used in academic planning in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Input from course evaluations was used in most colleges in planning for curricular and instructional change. Such evaluative input was frequently confused with SOA information.

Specific research question 5.3. "How is SOA information used in personnel planning in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Course evaluation responses were considered in personnel decisions in some colleges. Formative evaluation uses included providing guidance for determining areas for faculty development.

2. Very limited use of SOA information was evidenced in personnel planning. The evidence from the study indicated that SOA information was used in only a few colleges to determine areas of instructional deficiency which could then form targets for recruitment of faculty members.

Specific research question 5.4. "How is SOA information used in strategic planning in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. Participants in the study reported that SOA information was used for environmental scanning and problem identification. Confusion of needs assessment with SOA was evident in several interview responses.

Specific research question 5.5. "How is SOA information used in student planning in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. The major use of SOA information was as a recruiting tool to provide potential students with current and former students' assessments of the quality of the program. In two cases current and former students' perceptions of the degree of goal attainment provided evidence to support claims that the college could provide an appropriate program to match with certain potential students' goals. The majority of respondents who mentioned this kind of use, however, spoke of such things as testimonials and student assessments. No evidence was obtained to suggest that SOA information guided planning regarding the characteristics of students for recruitment or retention efforts.

2. Limited use of SOA information for student advising was evident.

Specific research question 5.6. "How is SOA information used in planning for accreditation (including re-accreditation) in Canadian Bible colleges?"

1. One respondent indicated that SOA information was used to validate the attainment of specific student goals, which indicated the respondent viewed SOA information as a means of providing data for the self-study mandated by the accreditation process. Conversely, another recipient indicated that SOA information was used to identify areas in need of improvement which then

became components of the institutional plan to prepare the college to meet the accreditation criteria.

Specific research question 6. "To what extent are college administrators and faculty members of Canadian Bible colleges satisfied with the extent of the use of SOA information in institutional planning in their respective colleges?"

1. Respondents desired increased use of SOA information in planning. The desired level of use of SOA information was substantially higher than the current level with respect to all aspects of planning. Means for satisfaction with the use of SOA information were between "Somewhat dissatisfied" (2) and "Neutral" (3) for four of the five aspects of resource allocation planning and personnel planning. The greatest dissatisfaction with current use was with respect to the use of SOA information in resource allocation planning. Less dissatisfaction was expressed concerning the use of SOA information in planning for accreditation and academic planning.

2. Satisfaction with all 12 aspects of the use of information from SOA was higher (substantially with respect to five aspects) in colleges which reported higher uses of SOA activities.

3. Senior academic administrators (presidents and deans) were more satisfied with the use of SOA information than either other administrators or faculty members. Senior academic administrators were responsible for SOA and, therefore, would understand it best. However, their involvement with SOA adds potential bias to their perceptions of the actual use of SOA information.

4. Respondents in large colleges reported the lowest levels of satisfaction on 6 of the 12 aspects of planning and respondents in small colleges reported the highest satisfaction levels on 6 of the 12 aspects of planning.

Additional Findings

In addition to the findings related to the research questions the data supported these findings:

1. Interview respondents confused student evaluations of institutional facilities and services, including teaching and course evaluations, as well as entering student intentions, background characteristics, and interests with SOA activities.

2. Questionnaire responses and interview responses with respect to the use of SOA activities were contradictory indicating confusion about the meaning of SOA.

3. Respondents were confused with the questions about the use of SOA information on the General College Information Form. Their confusion may have been additional evidence of confusion with SOA, or it may have been because of poor wording of the question.

4. Three interview respondents provided evidence that their colleges had SOA programs with both outcomes assessment and talent-development aspects. These programs were closely tied to institutional mission or objectives, had rationale and philosophy statements, and produced information used in at least some aspects of planning.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached based on the findings of the study:

1. Many of the respondents misunderstood the meaning of SOA. The extent of this misunderstanding could not be determined.

2. At least three of the Canadian Bible colleges involved in this study had exemplary mission- and/or objective-focused SOA procedures; most, however, performed little or no true SOA.

3. The data indicated that Canadian Bible colleges involved in this study were conducting substantial amounts of institutional research, much of which could be easily modified so as to provide SOA data in a very cost effective way.

4. Only a few Canadian Bible colleges had offices responsible for SOA, and in those that did it was generally the responsibility of a senior administrator.

5. Most Canadian Bible colleges gave minimal attention to ministry readiness SOA. Rather, most colleges focused their attention on student satisfaction activities.

6. Most Canadian Bible colleges did not indicate that they were contemplating changes in SOA activities.

7. Faculty members in Canadian Bible colleges were perceived to be under-involved in the administration of SOA by administrators and faculty members.

8. Some Canadian Bible colleges which were affiliated with the AABC were unaware of the AABC requirement to conduct SOA.

9. Few Canadian Bible colleges have developed the basic policies necessary for effective SOA.

10 Differences in size of Canadian Bible colleges was associated with differences in the conducted of SOA, but size was not a predictor of whether true SOA was used.

11. Affiliation of Canadian Bible colleges with the AABC was related to increased use of what these colleges considered to be SOA activities.

12. Personnel in Canadian Bible colleges desired increased use of SOA activities and information.

13. SOA information had limited use in planning within Canadian Bible colleges in this study.

14. Few Canadian Bible colleges used SOA information to identify aspects of institutional effectiveness which then guided planning so as to improve that effectiveness as appropriate.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings and conclusions of the study is organized around the following themes: (a) understanding of SOA, (b) use of SOA activities, (c) organization and administration of SOA, (d) reporting of SOA information, (e) use of SOA information in planning, and (f) satisfaction with the use of SOA activities and information.

Understanding of SOA

Perhaps the key conclusion of the study is that there was a general lack of understanding of SOA by participants in this study. Neither Astin's (1987) talent-development model nor the outcomes model of assessment allow for the use of the kind of course/teaching evaluations or "customer satisfaction" surveys which were reported in this study. SOA use of these kinds of instruments need to ask respondents for an assessment of either the gains made (talent-development model) or goals achieved (outcomes model) as a result of the college experience. The AABC (1994) accreditation criterion reflects the outcomes model. Yet, even among colleges affiliated with the AABC, there was evident confusion as to the nature of SOA. The AABC criterion, for example, specifically referred to the use of portfolios, employer feedback, further education admission rates and grades, and related employment rates as SOA activities. Still, there was little evidence of these being used effectively in this study.

The lack of understanding clearly limited the validity of the other findings. Since the respondents did not understand what kinds of activities were truly SOA activities, their perceptions of use and satisfaction with both SOA activities and SOA information cannot help but be based on false assumptions. Despite this limitation, there are implications for practice, theory, and research as indicated below.

The manner in which this misunderstanding was uncovered supports the use of what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as triangulation. The

interviews in this study were used to provide illustration of activities and practices. In so doing, they also afforded a validity check. The analysis of the interviews first alerted the researcher to the presence of the misunderstanding. The presence of the definition of SOA on the questionnaire forms had been considered adequate, but the references to non-SOA activities by interviewees as if they were SOA activities began to reveal the misunderstanding. Had the interviews not been part of the research design this study would have suffered even more serious effects from invalid data.

Use of SOA Activities

In 1993, El-Khawas (cited in Banta, 1993) reported that 97% of public postsecondary institutions in the United States had indicated they had or planned to have procedures for SOA. The finding in this study that 87.1% of colleges were using or intended to use SOA compares favorably with the level of use El-Khawas reported. There were no comparable figures available for Canadian postsecondary institutions.

Despite the reported high frequency of use of ministry readiness activities on the questionnaires, the colleges in this study appeared to actually use student satisfaction data more than ministry readiness data in planning. This is consistent with Donald's (1993) finding that the only thing students are typically asked to measure in universities is teaching quality.

However, for a professional training institution, assessment of professional readiness (in the case of Bible colleges, ministry readiness) is an essential feature of a properly conceived SOA program. Banta (1985) noted that the development of SOA techniques at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for major field achievement was predicated on the conviction that test scores were insufficient to measure professional readiness so that additional information was needed

> from one or more other sources: evaluation of comprehensive student achievement by faculty, external reviewers or both; end-of-program assessment by seniors reporting perceptions of their own achievement;

> retrospective assessment by alumni of their own achievement; and assessment by employers of the competencies of alumni one or more years after graduation. (p. 22)

Bible colleges may have reported that they focused on ministry readiness assessment activities because the key function of Bible colleges is professional ministry preparation. This role would likely be highlighted in those Bible colleges with denominational affiliation. These colleges have a vested interest in effective professional preparation and, probably, an inquisitive constituency to which they are accountable. Questionnaire respondents may have felt that the appropriate answer was ministry readiness. However, few participants cited any examples of ministry readiness data either when they were asked to describe the impact of SOA information on planning on the questionnaire or when queried about the use of SOA information in the interviews. Instead, they gave uninterpretable responses or mentioned student evaluation or student satisfaction information.

The evidence in this study indicated that Bible colleges were using the information available from Christian service reports and field placement reports for SOA purposes to a very limited extent. These sources of data could be used more effectively for SOA purposes at very little extra cost to the colleges. Williams and Rizzo (1996), for example, explained how a social work program used existing field placement reports as SOA instruments. Conceptually, SOA of ministry readiness aspects of the curriculum ought to involve field placement reports because they reflect the professional context and they involve experienced professionals in the evaluation process—providing a "reality check" on the program components. Such use would be similar to that which Kuratko (1996) developed as an assessment program for business students in which students were required to develop a viable business plan and then to present it to a group of typical investors in an attempt to convince them of the plan's merit. Kuratko believed such an assessment was valid because it was grounded in a "real-world" setting.

Many of the "customer satisfaction" and course evaluation instruments could easily be modified so as to provide SOA data. Additional questions may be necessary, but mostly, changes in the nature of responses sought would be sufficient. Ewell (1985) suggested that most postsecondary institutions already have, although they might not recognize it, substantial SOA data, although it is not usually in the appropriate form and the institution may not recognize it as usable. What Ewell said is needed is that the data be identified, organized, analyzed, and reported.

The study found that there was little evidence of planned innovation in the responding Bible colleges. However, the literature supports the use of additional techniques not reported as being used or being used extensively in this study. Several authors (e.g., Black, 1993; Banta & Fisher, 1991; Courts & McInerney, 1993) have suggested that portfolios are a very useful SOA activity for assessing both professional competence and academic skills. Banta and Fisher also recommended the use of in-basket simulations as effective SOA activities. Satisfaction with the status quo in terms of SOA is a recipe for disaster when coupled with the lack of understanding of SOA, because colleges may be satisfied thinking they know something about how effectively they are achieving their goals, when in fact they have inappropriate data.

More SOA activities were performed in colleges not affiliated with a denomination than in colleges affiliated with a denomination. Respondents in colleges affiliated with a denomination reported more use of student satisfaction and ministry readiness activities than did respondents in colleges not affiliated with a denomination. The latter reported they administered more academic development activities. Personnel in colleges affiliated with a denomination may have a vested interest in focusing on ministry readiness because they see their college's mission as serving the professional ministry needs of the denomination. Student satisfaction data may also be obtained for

political reasons in order to keep aware of the attitudes of the denominational base.

Respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC reported performing more SOA activities, especially student satisfaction activities, than did respondents in colleges not affiliated with the AABC. Higher use in colleges affiliated with the AABC seems reasonable in light of the AABC requirement. However, use of true SOA activities was low in most colleges. Personnel in both colleges affiliated with the AABC and those not affiliated may not have been convinced of the benefits of SOA for institutional improvement. Banta et al. (1996) found that increased faculty involvement in the development of SOA activities enhanced support for SOA. Exposure to the results of SOA in the form of improved teaching and learning, if only through model programs as opposed to personal experience, may overcome resistance.

One possible reason that other administrators reported lower levels of use than did faculty members and senior academic administrators is that they may have been too far removed from the administration of SOA to know what was being done. They might have only seen the impact of SOA information on planning decisions directly affecting their areas. On the other hand, senior academic administrators, who generally are responsible for SOA, and faculty members, who are more directly involved with students, would have seen more of the SOA activities happening and have seen more direct use in academic planning. Therefore, they may have made the assumption that more was happening in other parts of the institution than actually was.

Organization and Administration of SOA

There was no one pattern of organization and use of SOA among the Bible colleges in this study. The literature (e. g., Banta, 1992; Banta et al., 1996) contains numerous examples of a rich variety of methods and patterns of SOA procedures. In fact, there is strong support in the literature for the development of varied, locally developed procedures for SOA. Fong (1988), for example,

argued that assessment techniques need to be flexible enough to allow for diverse educational missions between various institutions. As early as 1980 Lawrence and Green said that diversity in higher education must be recognized in assessment which implied the need to use a variety of measures and criteria. The lack of uniformity in SOA administration and organization can be considered a strength in so far as it reflects local development of SOA procedures which are developed with the context, mission, and needs of the college in mind.

The fact that some respondents in colleges affiliated with the AABC did not report a requirement to conduct SOA activities reveals a need for continued communication of the nature, purpose, and use of SOA among Bible colleges affiliated with the AABC. Despite having at least one workshop on the nature, use, and implementation of SOA at eight of the annual meetings of the AABC between 1983 and 1994; providing an extensive bibliography in the association's guide for accreditation; and having the criteria for accreditation debated and passed at the 1990 annual meeting, more effective communication on this topic is needed.

Ewell (1985) concluded that development of an effective SOA program requires the adoption of a conceptual framework to guide implementation. The establishment of a policy statement which includes a rationale and procedural expectations may help to standardize the use and frequency of SOA activities.

Centralization of administrative responsibility to a senior level administrator as this study found was the case, can provide the leadership which Astin et al. (1993) believed crucial to the success of SOA programs. On the other hand, centralization can work against the wide involvement that Astin et al. recommended. However, centralization does not necessarily lead to uniformity and limited involvement. Banta (1985) provided an example of a centralized but diversified SOA program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The role of the SOA office personnel is critical. Banta observed that

SOA was mandated and criteria for its development and use were centralized. However, she noted that the actual SOA activity development was decentralized and personnel from the Learning Research Center provided technical assistance only. The responsibility for the development of the various SOA activities remained with faculty members within the various departments.

Certainly, Ewell (1985) considered top level administrative support critical for the successful implementation of SOA procedures. The cooperation and interest of the presidents of the colleges in this study revealed an interest in and desire for SOA. Clarification of the nature and role of SOA for those who do not fully understand, ought to enhance the senior administrative support already evident.

In addition, Ewell (1985) recommended the establishment of an office to oversee SOA because he believed it was an important factor in successful implementation of a SOA program. He proposed that such an office could assist in the development of SOA by fulfilling these four roles: (a) serving as a clearinghouse for projects and ideas so as to coordinate efforts, (b) providing technical expertise and advice, (c) conducting some research, and (d) promoting the use of SOA within the institution by effectively communicating its role and findings. Many colleges are experiencing severe budget limitations, so may not be able to afford to hire or train qualified SOA staff. Alternatives to the institution having to hire additional staff or train existing staff were illustrated in three of the interviews. One participant said his college used consultants to assist in design and analysis of SOA activities. Another reported that he found one of his staff members already had experience with outcomes assessment from another field and was able to apply the principles from that field in education. The third respondent reported that the college acquired the necessary skills through one of its staff members pursuing further education on an independent basis because of a personal desire for an advanced degree.

The study found that increased faculty involvement was associated with more use of SOA activities. This finding is in line with the argument of Astin et al. (1993) that broadly based involvement increases the use of SOA.

Substantial dissatisfaction with involvement of faculty in administration of SOA was evident in this study. Astin et al. (1993) and Banta et al. (1996) argued that faculty involvement in the development of SOA activities increases the sense of confidence in the process and results. That confidence, they contended, will lead to increased use of the findings in planning. Kinnick (1985) maintained that this kind of lack of face validity is a serious impediment to the use of SOA information. Faculty participating in this study appear willing to take on an increased role.

There was some evidence of role expectation conflict with respect to faculty roles in the administration of SOA. Administrators' desire for increased faculty involvement in directing and implementing could be in conflict with the faculty members' expressed desire for more involvement in the planning and evaluating aspects.

Reporting of SOA Information

The study found there was limited reporting to students. Astin et al. (1993) considered reporting to students part of the way that institutions fulfill their responsibility to their students. Because students are the source of much of the SOA data and are the providers of a large portion of the income of the college through their tuition payments, they ought to be informed of results. Anecdotally, the past experience of the researcher suggests that reporting results to students leads to better response rates and effort on future assessment activities because students perceive that the information is attended to and makes an impact on college planning.

In addition, there was little evidence of reporting the results of SOA outside of colleges. Likely, the lack of reporting to government is a result of the independent, religious nature of Bible colleges. However, reporting to donors

is a means of accountability and of good public relations. Astin et al. (1993) argued that public institutions owe such reports to governments as the source of their funding. For the same reason, Bible colleges are accountable to donors. One interview participant echoed the position taken by Brandt (1994) that integrity in reporting is necessary for a Christian institution to fulfill its stewardship mandate.

Use of SOA Information in Planning

The use of SOA information in planning varied greatly. Whereas some colleges reported extensive use, others appeared to make little use of SOA information. Kinnick (1985) believed that carefully developed procedures are necessary to incorporate SOA information into the regular planning processes of an institution. In this study very little use of SOA information in resource allocation, personnel, or student advising planning was reported. Ewell (1989a) asserted that SOA information can be used to identify problems. The identification of problems is the first step in determining priorities for operational and capital budgeting. As a tool to increase the rationality of planning, SOA information can be used to allocate monetary and personnel resources where needed to fulfill the institutional mission as opposed to responding to the proverbial "squeaky wheel."

Satisfaction With the Use of SOA Activities and Information

In general, respondents were dissatisfied with the use of SOA activities and information. Dissatisfaction with the status quo could be used as a change lever. Hence, modest levels of satisfaction may be a basis from which to motivate faculty to improve the educational processes of the college.

There was some evidence to suggest that higher levels of use of SOA activities were related to higher satisfaction. More frequent use of SOA activities may have increased the awareness of personnel and provided greater potential opportunity to see benefits from its use. This is a tentative conclusion based on these two findings: (a) smaller institutions used more comprehensive

exams than larger colleges and respondents in smaller colleges were more satisfied with their use than those from larger institutions, and (b) larger colleges used more surveys and were more satisfied with locally produced alumni and student surveys. On the other hand, these two findings provided contrary indications: (a) smaller colleges used more field placement reports than larger colleges, but were not as satisfied; and (b) small colleges used more theses/projects than larger colleges, but reported no difference in satisfaction from larger colleges.

The study found that there were lower levels of satisfaction in larger colieges with the use of SOA activities as opposed to higher levels of satisfaction in smaller colleges. Respondents in larger institutions may have had higher expectations of the use of SOA information than did respondents in smaller institutions with limited resources who are more accustomed to "making do with little" and so appreciate what little they have.

Implications and Recommendations

The implications and recommendations of the findings of the study for theory, practice, and research are presented below.

Implications for Theory

The findings of the study supported the conceptual framework (Figure 2.4). Figure 9.1 is an expanded conceptual framework which incorporates the findings of this study. These findings demonstrated that planning in Canadian Bible colleges involves input from boards, administrators, faculty members, donors, alumni, and employers. While strategic planning pervades all activities related to academic planning, resource allocation planning, personnel planning, student planning, and planning for accreditation, the focus of this model is on the use of SOA information in the various planning processes of the colleges. Therefore, it treats strategic planning as one aspect of planning.

As depicted in Figure 9.1, intended student outcomes are developed from the interaction of the expectations of the college, students, and employers.

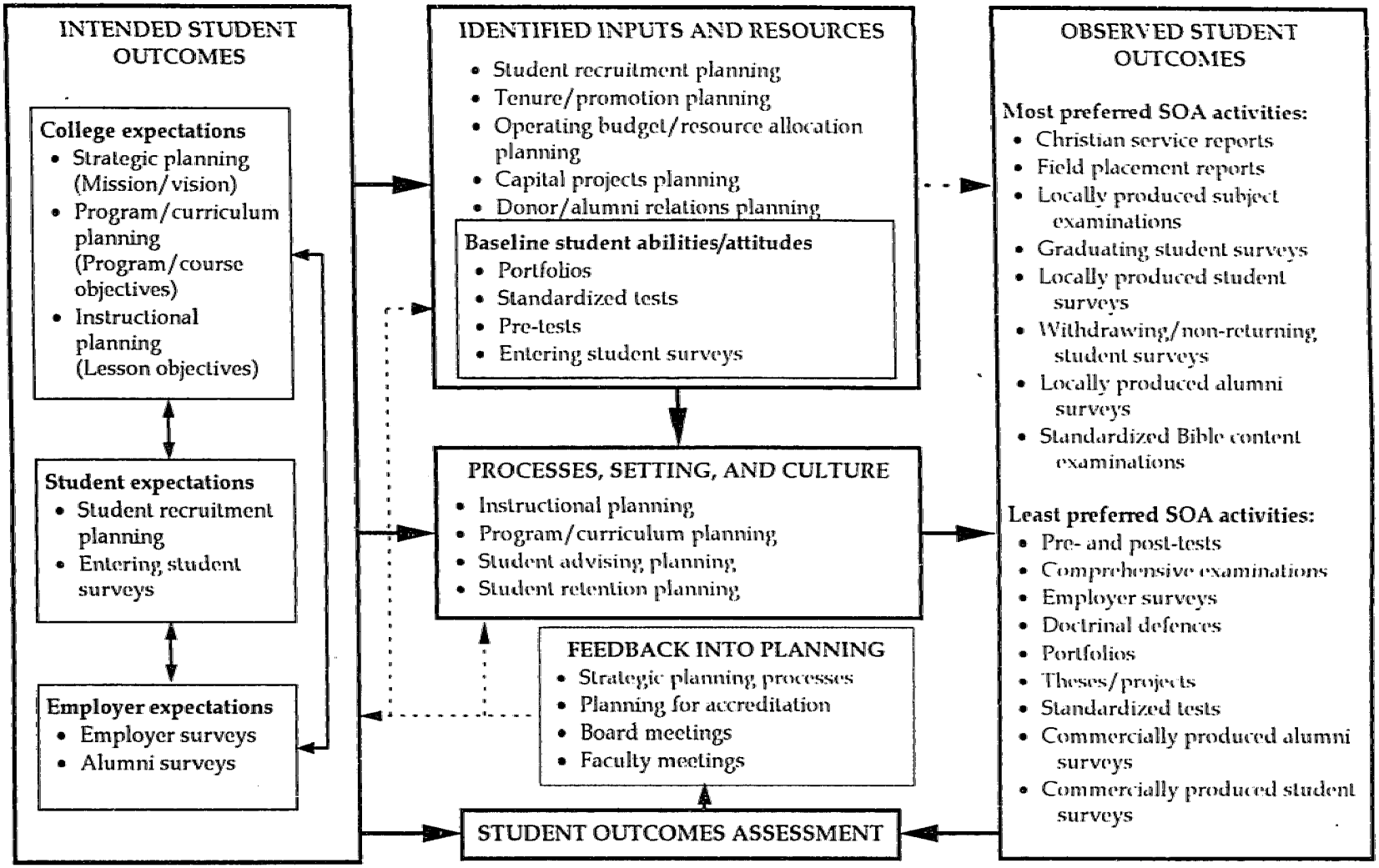

Figure 9.1. Conceptual Framework for Use of Student Outcomes Assessment in Planning in Canadian Bible Colleges

College expectations are established as the college mission/vision is developed in strategic planning, the program and course goals are set in curricular planning, and the lesson objectives are set in instructional planning. Student expectations can be identified by entering student surveys, and their expectations may affect student recruitment planning. Employer expectations can be revealed through employer and alumni surveys. Each of these sets of expectations influences the development of the other two. The intended student outcomes provide the basis for planning for student learning and the criteria for the assessment of student outcomes.

Planning related to inputs and resources focuses on providing the appropriate students, faculty, facilities, and resources to accomplish the intended student outcomes. Planning aspects pertaining to decisions about inputs and resources are student recruitment, tenure/promotion, operating budget/resource allocation, capital projects, and donor/alumni relations. To the extent that colleges intend to use SOA information for program revision they need to ascertain baseline data on student attitudes and abilities through such measures as entering student surveys, portfolios, standardized tests, and pre-tests. Baseline data allow value-added assessment to be conducted.

Planning related to the processes, setting, and culture is intended to provide appropriate learning and co-curricular experiences so as to foster the development of the intended student outcomes. Program/curriculum planning, instructional planning, student advising planning, and student retention planning affect the processes, setting, and culture.

The inputs and resources both independently and as mediated by the processes, setting, and culture produce the observed student outcomes. The framework lists those activities identified in the study that were used to provide SOA data. Those SOA activities which were most preferred, as identified in Table 6.9, are ranked accordingly. SOA involves comparing the observed student outcomes with the intended student outcomes. The resulting

information can be employed in strategic planning processes and planning for accreditation (where applicable) through board meetings and faculty meetings, as well as in other administrative venues.

Overall, the study found that respondents used substantial amounts of feedback data in planning. Despite the evident misunderstanding about the kind of information considered to be SOA data, the findings supported the conceptual framework's contention that the various aspects of planning need to include feedback on goal attainment as measured by SOA.

Astin's (1987) view that there is strong appeal for talent-development assessment through pre- and post-testing among educators received support in the use, or intended use, of pre-and post-testing of students with the AABC standardized Bible content examinations. On the other hand, the argument that the outcomes assessment perspective is important to faculty members interested in assessing professional preparation programs and to employers and students received support in these two ways: (a) several colleges specifically tied SOA to institutional goals and (b) the overwhelming concern of Bible college personnel with student satisfaction.

The findings of this study also provided support for Halpern's (1987) contention that SOA information is useful for improving programs (see also Jacobi et al., 1987 and Nichols, 1991), gatekeeping, and budgeting and accountability. For example, several respondents identified specific program improvements which were predicated on SOA information. Similarly, in an interview, one president mentioned how his college used SOA information for student advising purposes with respect to whether individual students should progress on to the third year of their programs. In addition, several respondents provided examples of the impact of SOA information on several planning issues which had budgetary implications. As well, the use of SOA information for accreditation purposes in colleges affiliated with the AABC was evidence of the accountability function. In line with the finding of Banta,

Rudolph, et al. (1996) that SOA information can be used for accreditation purposes, several respondents provided evidence of the use of SOA information in planning for accreditation.

As Jacobi et al. (1987) maintained the findings of this study provided evidence of the use of SOA information in strategic planning in several colleges. While most respondents said they used SOA information for determining student aspirations or evaluations of the college, one respondent mentioned that SOA information was profitable for indicating strengths and opportunities.

Furthermore, there was support for Ewell's (1989a) proposition that SOA information, as a form of discrepancy evaluation, can be used to identify problems. For example, one college president referred to employer surveys as a means of identifying areas where the college needed *"to be doing a better job of preparing our graduates."*

Respondents in colleges with exemplary SOA programs provided support for six of the nine principles set out by Astin et al. (1993). At least one respondent in a college with an exemplary SOA program mentioned: (a) using the college's mission statement to guide the development of SOA activities; (b) employing several SOA activities; (c) making intended goals the criteria for assessing outcomes; (d) including process data, by means of course evaluation responses, in SOA; (e) having developed an ongoing sequence of SOA activities; and (f) linking SOA information to planning issues because of a strong commitment to its use by the senior administrators.

Recommendations for Practice

Several recommendations for practice are based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. In light of the general lack of understanding of SOA, Canadian Bible colleges need to provide inservice training so that their personnel can develop a proper understanding of the meaning, value, and role of SOA. Bible colleges need to ensure that they use the data available to them from Christian service

and field placement reports in SOA. Bible colleges need to place more emphasis on assessing the academic aspects especially as they try to establish academic credibility.

2. Canadian Bible colleges need to employ additional methods of assessing student outcomes. This will require the formalization of SOA procedures, which in turn depends upon the development of a rationale. Furthermore, it will entail the adoption of innovative SOA activities such as portfolios and expert panel assessments.

3. Canadian Bible colleges should consider establishing a specific office responsible for SOA in order to ease the burden on senior administrators, standardize the use of SOA, provide continuity and technical assistance, ensure consistency of reporting, and increase understanding and commitment among other staff members. In order to accomplish this, administrators should consider alternatives to simply hiring new employees or training existing employees such as the use of consultants.

4. The AABC needs to continue to clarify its understanding of SOA and communicate that to its member institutions. The development of a guide to SOA, identification of resource people for in-service training, and continued use of workshops at annual meetings should be considered.

5. Canadian Bible colleges need to increase use of SOA activities and information so as to validate the accomplishments they are making and to identify those areas which need improvement.

6. In order to increase the effectiveness of their educational efforts through reliable and valid feedback and the likelihood of implementation and use of SOA practices and information, Canadian Bible colleges ought to increase the involvement of faculty members in the administration of SOA especially at the planning stage. At the same time they should also clarify roles for faculty in a consultative manner so as to avoid possible role expectation conflict.

7. Canadian Bible colleges should establish clear guidelines, policies, and procedures for use of SOA activities and information.

8. Canadian Bible colleges need to establish policies and procedures designed to increase the use of SOA information for all areas of planning. Requiring the inclusion of SOA data in all program evaluations, strategic plan updates, and individual personnel plans may help to increase its use.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of the study suggest these questions and issues for further research in Bible colleges and other postsecondary institutions:

1. What is the relationship between use of and satisfaction with SOA activities in Canadian Bible colleges? That is, to what extent does increased exposure to and experience with SOA affect satisfaction with SOA?

2. What do faculty and administrators of Canadian Bible colleges understand SOA to be? This study found that the definition of SOA used was not understood by many of the respondents, but it did not identify what they did think it was.

3. The findings of the study suggested that personnel in Canadian Bible colleges do not perceive SOA as beneficial to their institutions. A study that investigates the benefits accruing to the Canadian Bible colleges which are using SOA in planning could assist others to understand what SOA is and to perceive its value as an institutional improvement tool.

4. A further study that identified factors which enhance the use of SOA activities and information would assist administrators of SOA programs to maximize their efforts.

5. This study addressed the current use of SOA and satisfaction of personnel in Canadian Bible colleges with that use. Additional research to investigate the satisfaction of students, alumni, employers, and constituents with the SOA activities of these colleges and the information these stakeholders

receive would assist in gaining an understanding of the use of SOA in Canadian Bible colleges.

6. Do administrators of other private and public postsecondary institutions in Canada also evidence the same confusion regarding the nature of SOA? In other words, is this misunderstanding specific to Bible colleges or is it typical of Canadian postsecondary institutions?

7. Do personnel in Bible colleges in the United States evidence the same confusion regarding the nature of SOA or is this reflective of the lack of attention to SOA in Canada?

8. Researchers should use triangulation techniques to provide validity checks on the data and include their use in research designs.

9. Further research is needed which identifies (a) the inputs and resources variables and (b) the processes, setting, and culture variables (see Figure 9.1) as well as the relationships between these variables and student outcomes.

10. Researchers conducting descriptive studies should make use of extensive pilot testing, including interviews, in order to ensure that their instruments are comprehensive and unambiguous.

Personal Reflections

In this section I present some of the things I have learned while conducting this project. This research project is one aspect of a doctoral program that has allowed me the opportunity to visit and observe several Bible colleges—some of the smallest and some of the largest; to discuss with many key leaders in those Bible colleges regarding the nature and future of Bible colleges and the role of SOA in them; and to reflect on my own experience in Bible college administration and teaching. In addition, I have been able to interact with key aspects of the literature on educational administration as well as with intelligent and challenging researchers, faculty members, and fellow students.

I have had the privilege over the last two years to simply have time to study, write, talk, and listen. As a result of these opportunities I have attended three academic conferences, presenting papers related to issues raised in and around this research project at two of them. At the next annual meetings of the AABC and the ACBC I will present the findings and conclusions of this study. This time has also afforded me the privilege to write a paper related to the use of information in decision-making which has been published in an international journal. I have been challenged to integrate my world view with my understanding of educational administration and my practice of it.

Probably the key questions I have heard with respect to Bible colleges can be stated in these ways: "Where are Bible colleges headed?" and "Will they survive?" These questions continue to surface in coffee times and classroom discussions, in strategic planning sessions and residence meetings, in alumni newsletters and board meetings. This research has given me a new perspective on that future.

In the first place, I see that in many ways Bible colleges are healthy. Much of what takes place in them is, I believe, effective and efficient. Learning—effective and sustainable—is occurring daily within those institutions. Lives are changed and students are equipped for service—vocationally and avocationally. All the student testimonials are not just public relations pieces.

However, there are some signs which are not as positive. Bible colleges are balkanized. They are small and often isolated. Their faculty members are often stretched to teach in areas for which they are not fully equipped and to lead students into areas they have never been themselves. Far too often, theological distinctions are used to segment and divide. Competition and trying to do it all in each college are much too prevalent instead of cooperation and complementary specialization.

Observations I have made, some peripheral to my research and some from my own experience, raise a number of questions: What is the role of accreditation? Does accreditation stimulate institutional growth and specialization or cloning of an anachronistic model? Should Bible colleges seek to gain credibility via the academic model or should they follow the lead of universities and community colleges and embrace a coop, internship, or apprenticeship model for "training God's army" (Brereton, 1991)? How much impact is the AABC able to have when such a large minority of leaders of Canadian Bible colleges affiliated with the AABC can seemingly be unaware of such a clear requirement to conduct SOA, and when so many personnel can be unclear about the meaning of SOA when the AABC has done so much to clarify it? What kind of impact would assessment of student outcomes have on the future of Canadian Bible colleges? What role should Bible colleges play? Should they be predominantly professional preparation institutions? Is that role better played in stronger partnerships with churches and ministries? Is that role better played by churches and ministries? Is a Bible college which expands its curricular offerings beyond the professional aspects destined to become a liberal arts college? Is that necessarily wrong? I do not have answers for these questions, but believe further investigation is warranted.

The role of SOA has been clearly set forth by the AABC. Even for those colleges which have chosen not to be accredited, there is a compelling case for demonstrating that students do achieve the outcomes intended because of attending the college. Integrity demands that Bible colleges demonstrate that. But, some programs will be shown to miss the mark. Value-added assessment provides tools to pinpoint the aspects of colleges inputs and resources or processes, setting, and culture that need alteration. Operating by hunches is too inefficient, especially when resources are limited.

SOA is clearly not a new approach for many colleges, especially those affiliated with the AABC. That made the finding that there was

misunderstanding of it all the more surprising. The process of discovering that misunderstanding revealed the weaknesses in the research instruments and methodology I used. While disconcerting, that is part of learning. It revealed the weaknesses of questionnaires with supplied answers to chose from, even after pilot testing and supplying the definition of SOA. It showed the value of triangulation and allowing participants to offer relatively unguided feedback. Both methods have blind spots, which makes the complementary use of both all the more valuable. Of course, the reason the interviews were included in the research design was to provide just that verification.

Perhaps the most significant contribution this study makes for those outside the Canadian Bible college scene occurs in the questions it raises about the implementation of theory into practice. One could argue that the AABC has done just about all that could be done by an international accrediting agency to educate its members about SOA, yet many have not learned. To the degree that they have a misconception about SOA, they will be unable to properly implement it. A cursory evaluation of the success of the AABC policy on SOA might say that SOA has not fulfilled its promise. One could easily blame SOA. One could easily dismiss it as just another fad—a good sounding theory, but not really useful.

However, one also has to ask questions about the amount of time it takes to transfer new knowledge to the practitioner level. If my own experience is any guide, administration of a Bible college is a demanding vocation. There is little time for serious reflection on the latest research on administrative behavior, let alone the latest evaluation tools or theories or curricular proposals. I doubt that many administrators in any field have large quantities of spare time. Often the problems for which we try to provide solutions are complex and urgent. We look for, and often are offered, quick solutions—administrator-proof programs. Could it be that many of the implementations of theory which have been declared failures have been prematurely evaluated? How long does

it take for an organization to educate all its members in a new way of operating? How long does it take for habits to be changed? How long for the cultural norms and behaviors to begin to support the new concepts and behaviors? How long for individuals to make the learning transfers from the theory to their particular situation? How long for the impact of the changes to manifest some results? How long before the implementation processes reach the point of being adequately refined and automatic? Perhaps, longer than we want and think.

REFERENCES

Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. (1994). *Manual: Criteria and policies: Constitution and bylaws.* Fayetteville, AR: Author.

Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. (1995). *AABC directory: 1995/96.* Fayetteville, AR: Author.

Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development. (1994). *New directions for adult learning in Alberta.* Edmonton, AB: Author.

Association of Canadian Bible Colleges. (1994). *Association of Canadian Bible Colleges directory 1994/95.* Three Hills, AB: Author.

Astin, A. W. (1985). *Achieving educational excellence.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. (1987). Assessment, value-added, and educational excellence. *New Directions for Higher Education, 59,* 80-107.

Astin, A. W. (1991). *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education.* New York: American Council on Education, Macmillan.

Astin, A. W., Banta, T. W., Cross, K. P., El-Khawas, E., Ewell, P. T., Hutchings, P., Marchese, T. J., McClenney, K. M., Mentkowski, M., Miller, M. A., Moran, E. T., & Wright, B. D. (1993). Principles of good practice for assessing student learning. *Leadership Abstracts, 6*(4), 1-2.

Banta, T. W. (1985). Use of outcomes information at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 47,* 19-32.

Banta, T. W. (1992). Student achievement and the assessment of institutional effectiveness. In B. R. Clark & G. R. Neave (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of higher education* (Vol. 3, pp. 1686-1697). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Banta, T. W. (1993). Summary and conclusion. In T. W. Banta (Ed.), *Making a difference: Outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education* (pp. 357-376). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T. W., & Fisher, H. S. (1991). *An international perspective on assessing baccalaureate program outcomes.* Paper presented at Measurements of Quality in Higher Education, International Working Conference Proceedings, Washington, May 23-24, 1991, pp. 62-70. Washington: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 357711.) Originally appeared in *Evaluation Practice, 11*(3), October 1990.

Banta, T. W., Lund, J. P., Black, K. E., & Oblander, F. W. (Eds.). (1996). *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T. W., & Moffett, M. S. (1987). *Performance funding in Tennessee: Stimulus for program improvement.* New Directions for Higher Education, 59, 35-43.

Banta, T. W., Rudolph, L. B., Van Dyke, J., & Fisher, H. S. (1996). Performance funding comes of age in Tennessee. *Journal of Higher Education, 67*(1), 23-45.

Barak, R. J., & Sweeney, J. D. (1995). Academic program review in planning, budgeting, and assessment. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 86,* 3-17.

Black, L. C. (1993). Portfolio assessment. In T. W. Banta (Ed.) *Making a difference: Outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education* (pp. 139-150). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Borden, V. M. H., & Bottrill, K. V. (1994). Performance indicators: History, definitions, and methods. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 83,* 5-21.

Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1983). *Educational research: An introduction* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Bogue, E. G., & Saunders, R. L. (1992). *The evidence for quality: Strengthening the tests of academic and administrative effectiveness.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bottrill, K. V., & Borden, V. M. H. (1994). Appendix: Examples from the literature. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 82,* 107-119.

Brandt, H. D. (1994). Assessment: Mandate or privilege? In D. J. Lee & G. G. Stronks (Eds.) *Assessment in Christian higher education: Rhetoric and reality* (pp. 3-31). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Bredfeldt, G. J. (1991). *The values and attitudes of incoming Bible college students compared with the expectations of faculty.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL.

Brereton, V. L. (1990). *Training God's army: The American Bible school, 1880-1940.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Cave, M., Hanney, S., & Kogan, M. (1991). *The use of performance indicators in higher education: A critical analysis of developing practice* (2nd ed.). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Chaffe-Stengel, P. (1992). Integrated program review: Lessons from assessment research at California State University, Fresno. In California State University Institute for Teaching and Learning (Ed.), *Student outcomes assessment: What makes it work? Assessment practices and experiences in the California State University* (pp. 54-68). Long Beach, CA: California State University and Colleges. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 363 227)

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practices in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin,* (March), 3-7. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 282491)

Courts, P. L., & McInerney, K. H. (1993). *Assessment in higher education: Politics, pedagogy, and portfolios.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Donald, J. (1993, November). Measures of university quality: Student input and learning. In A. Naimark (Chair), *Measuring up: Using indicators to manage change: Proceedings of an AUCC symposium held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 14-16, 1993* (Vol. 2., pp. 79-92). Ottawa, ON: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Easley, R. R. (1987). *Assessment of student outcomes in the Bible college: Identification of important outcomes and current practices.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Elford, I. C. (1996). Utilization of student outcomes assessment information in institutional decision making. *International Journal of Educational Management,* 10(3), 36-45.

Erwin, T. D. (1991). *Assessing student learning and development: A guide to the principles, goals, and methods of determining college outcomes.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Evers, F. T., & Gilbert, S. N. (1991). Outcomes assessment: How much value does university education add? *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 21(2), 53-76.

Ewell, P. T. (1983). *Information on student outcomes: How to get it and how to use it.* Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Ewell, P. T. (1985). Some implications for practice. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 47*, 111-119.

Ewell, P. T. (1988). Outcomes, assessment, and academic improvement: In search of usable knowledge. In J. C. Smart (Ed.) *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 4, pp. 53-108). New York: Agathon Press.

Ewell, P. T. (1989a). Information for decision: What's the use? *New Directions for Institutional Research, 64*, 7- 19.

Ewell, P. T. (1989b). Putting it all together: Four questions for practitioners. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 64*, 85-90.

Ewell, P. T., & Jones, D. P. (1994). Data, indicators, and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 82*, 23-35.

Fong, B. (1988). Old wineskins: The AAC external examiner project. *Liberal Education 74*(3), 12-16.

Fox, D. J. (1969). *The research process in education*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Gazard, P. R. (1980). *A needs assessment of transfer credit procedures in Canadian Bible colleges.* Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB.

GDA. (1996). *1995 B. C. colleges and institutes student outcomes: Survey results by program for former college and institute students.* A report prepared for the British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training & Human Resources Development Canada. Burnaby, BC: British Columbia Institute of Technology.

Gentemann, K. M., Fletcher, J. J., & Potter, D. L. (1994). Refocusing the academic program review on student learning: The role of assessment. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 84*, 31-46.

Gibson, G. (1994). *Native theological training within Canadian evangelicalism: Three case studies* [CD-ROM]. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: MM95841.

Gill, W. E. (1993, June). *Conversations about accreditation: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools: Focusing on outcomes assessment in the accreditation process.* Paper presented at the Double Feature Conference on Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement of the American Association for Higher Education, Chicago, June 12, 1993. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 792)

Gray, P. J. (1989). Editor's notes. *New Directions for Higher Education, 67,* 1-4.

Gust, L. W. (1993). Choral music programs at selected accredited and non-accredited Bible colleges in Canada and the United States. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 54*(3), 856A.

Halpern, D. F. (1987). Student outcomes assessment: Introduction and overview. *New Directions for Higher Education, 59,* 5-8.

Hiebert, D. W. (1993). Schools of faith: The effect of liberal arts, professional, and religious education on faith development. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 54*(8), 3213A.

Howard, J. A. (1991). *The academic dean in the context of member colleges of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges.* Unpublished master's project, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Hutchings, P, & Marchese, T. J. (1990). Watching assessment: Questions, stories, prospects. *Change, 22*(5), 13-38.

Jacobi, M., Astin, A., & Ayala, F., Jr. (1987). *College student outcomes assessment: A talent development perspective.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 7. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Johnson, R., Prus, J., Andersen, C. J., & El-Khawas, E. (1991). *Assessing assessment: An in-depth status report on the higher education assessment movement in 1990.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 332 625)

Kinnick, M. K. (1985). Increasing the use of student outcomes information. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 47,* 93-109.

Kinvig, C. A. (1987). *Relating experiential and classroom learning: A study in Bible college curriculum.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Krueger, D. W., & Heisserer, M. L. (1987). Assessment and involvement: Investments to enhance learning. *New Directions for Higher Education, 59,* 45-56.

Kuratko, D. F. (1996). New venture creation—The ultimate business course assignment. In T. W. Banta, J. P. Lund, K. E. Black, & F. W. Oblander (Eds.), *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses* (pp. 135-138). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lawrence, K. L., & Green, K. C. (1980). *A question of quality: The higher education ratings game.* AAHE-ERIC Higher Education Research Report No. 5, 1980. Washington: American Association for Higher Education.

Lee, D. J., & Stronks, G. G. (Eds.). (1994). *Assessment in Christian higher education: Rhetoric and reality.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Maclean's special issue: Universities. (1995, November 20). *Maclean's, 108*(47).

McLaughlin, G. W., & McLaughlin, J. S. (1989). Barriers to information use: The organizational context. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 64,* 21-33.

McLeod, M. W., & Atwell, C. A. (1993). A mini-dictionary on institutional effectiveness terms. *Community College Review, 20*(2), 30-38.

Millard, T. R. (1995). Changes in the missions of colleges accredited by the American Association of Bible Colleges as indicated by their educational programs, recruiting practices, and future plans. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 56*(9), 3522A.

Mouly, G. (1978). *Educational research: The art and science of investigation.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Nadeau, G. G. (1992). The use of quality and excellence indicators in post-secondary education. *CSSHE Professional File, 10,* 1-17.

Neal, J. E. (1995). Overview of policy and practice: Differences and similarities in developing higher education accountability. *New Directions for Higher Education 91,* 5-10.

Nedwek, B. P., & Neal, J. E. (1994). Performance indicators and rational management tools: A comparative assessment of projects in North America and Europe. *Research in Higher Education, 35*(1), 75-103.

Nichols, J. O. (1991). *A practitioner's handbook for institutional effectiveness and student outcomes assessment implementation.* New York: Agathon.

Pace, C. R. (1979). *Measuring outcomes of college: Fifty years of findings and recommendations for the future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palfreyman, B. J. (1992). Mentoring among key administrators in undergraduate theological colleges in Canada. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 53*(6), 1819A.

Pascarella, E. T. (1985). College environmental influences on learning and cognitive development: A critical review and synthesis. In J. C. Smart (Ed.) *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-61). New York: Agathon Press.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (1978). *Utilization-focused evaluation.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Penner, K. L. (1993). *The role of the Bible college president in Canada.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Provus, M. (1971). *Discrepancy evaluation: For educational program improvement and assessment.* Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Rose, R. A. (1981). *The evolution of the role of the board of trustees in the governance of a Canadian Bible college.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Sawchenko, L. P. (1991). *The status of institutional research in Canadian Bible colleges.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Sax, L. J., & Astin, A. W. (1996, May). *The impact of college on post-college involvement in volunteerism and community service.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Institutional Research, Albuquerque, NM.

Schneider, J. D. (1991). *Autonomy in moral judgment among Bible college students.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* New York: Doubleday.

Sorcinelli, M. D. (1991). Research findings on the seven principles. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 47,* 13-25.

Strategic Information Research Institute. (1994). *1994 B. C. colleges and institutes student outcomes: Summary of survey results by program.* A report prepared for British Columbia Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour and British Columbia Outcomes Working Group. Burnaby, BC: British Columbia Institute of Technology.

Stronks, G. G., & Lee, D. J. (1994). Introduction. In D. J. Lee & G. G. Stronks (Eds.) *Assessment in Christian higher education: Rhetoric and reality* (n.p.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Stufflebeam, D. L., & Webster, W. J. (1981). An analysis of alternative approaches to evaluation. In H. E. Freeman & M. A. Solomon (Eds.), *Evaluation studies: Annual review: Vol. 6,* (pp. 70-85). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Terenzini, P. T., Yaeger, P. M., Pascarella, E. T., & Nora, A. (1996, May). *Work-study program influences on college students' cognitive development.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Institutional Research, Albuquerque, NM.

Thiessen, D. B. (1985). An assessment of music objectives as rated important and achieved by personnel from Canadian Bible colleges affiliated with the American Association of Bible Colleges. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47*(1), 16A.

Thorndike, R. L. (1988). Reliability. In J. P. Keeves (Ed.), *Educational research, methodology, and measurement: An international handbook* (pp. 330-343). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Underwood, D. G. (1991). Taking inventory: Identifying assessment activities. *Research in Higher Education, 32*(1), 59-69.

Wallace, L. H. (1994). *Learning strategies of Bible college freshmen: A case study of Prairie Bible College.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.

Weidman, J. C. (1989). Undergraduate socialization: A conceptual approach. In J. C. Smart (Ed.) *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 5, pp. 289-322). New York: Agathon Press.

Weinhauer, C. E. (1979). *Church-related college environmental relations.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Williams, C. J., & Rizzo, D. M. (1996). Performance-based assessment of the Bachelor of Social Work program. In T. W. Banta, J. P. Lund, K. E. Black, & F. W. Oblander (Eds.), *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses* (pp. 141-144). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Witmer, S. A. (1962). *The Bible college story: Education with dimension.* Manhasset, NY: Channel Press.

Wolff, R. A. (1992). CSU and assessment—Second down and eight yards to go: A view from the scrimmage line. In California State University Institute for Teaching and Learning (Ed.), *Student outcomes assessment: What makes it work? Assessment practices and experiences in the California State University* (pp. 73-80). Long Beach, CA: California State University and Colleges. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 363 227)

APPENDIX A

General College Information Form Questionnaire

Student Outcomes Assessment in Canadian Bible Colleges
General College Information Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire with respect to the **last academic year** (i.e., September, 1994 - August, 1995).

The term **student outcomes assessment** as used in this questionnaire refers to actions taken by the institution, or a section/department of the institution, to attempt to measure the degree to which students, **collectively**, attain the general and professional educational goals of the college (e.g., competencies in general education, biblical/theological, and professional programs) as well as student development goals (e.g., attitudes, personal growth, and socialization).

SECTION 1
IDENTIFICATION

1. College name _____ (This item will only be used to coordinate information from individual personnel questionnaires.)

2. Date institution established _____

3. Type of institution: (Check one)

   Denominational _____

   Non-denominational ____

   Other ____ Specify: _____

4. Student body size on September 30, 1994:
   (Count on-campus (main, branch, or extension) students only. Do not include students enrolled through distance education, e.g., correspondence, teleconference, etc.)

   4.1 Number of for-credit students (head count) ..... ____

   4.2 Number of full-time students (12 or more credit hours or equivalent)..... ____

   4.3 Number of part-time students (11 credit hours or less) ..... ____

   4.4 FTE of part-time students (total part-time hours divided by 12) ..... ____

5. Faculty size:
   (Include all personnel who have some teaching load):

   5.1 Number of full-time faculty members in September 1994 ..... ____

   5.2 Number of part-time faculty members in September 1994..... ____

   5.3 FTE of part-time faculty members in September 1994 ..... ____

SECTION 2
ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

6. What procedures are used to assess student outcomes, as defined above, at your college? (Mark all that apply.)

- ☐ Assessment is conducted across campus using a common approach.
- ☐ Assessment is conducted across campus but in different ways in different sections/departments.
- ☐ Assessment is conducted as a unit in some sections/departments but not in others.
- ☐ Assessment varies from year to year in approach and extent.
- ☐ There is no assessment of student outcomes.
- ☐ Other (Please describe)

_____

_____

7 Please indicate which of the following assessment activities your college either used in the last 12 months or has used more than 12 months ago, but no longer uses. In the last column please mark those activities which your college plans to use in the foreseeable future.

Outcomes Assessment Activities	For each activity, please mark one response.			Mark, if applicable.
	Do Not Use	Used in Last 12 Months	Have Used But No Longer Use	Intend to Use in the Future
1. Locally-produced alumni surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Commercially-produced alumni surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Standardized Bible content examinations (e.g., AABC)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Locally-produced student surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Commercially-produced student surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Surveys of employers	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Written/oral comprehensive exams	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Graduating senior surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Standardized achievement tests for graduating students (e.g., Graduate Record Exam, College Level Examination Project)	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Locally-produced subject examinations	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Written/oral doctrinal statement/defense	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Pre-tests of students in first year and post-tests in last year for at least one subject/topic	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Evaluation of portfolios of students' work	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Evaluation of Christian service reports	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Evaluation of field placements reports	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Theses/major projects	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Other: (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 3
STUDENT ASSESSMENT STATUS AND ORGANIZATION

8. Is your college required to implement procedures to assess student outcomes?

☐ **No** (Please go to question 9.) ☐ **Yes**

8.1 If Yes, in what year did/does the requirement go into effect?

Year 19___ Not sure ____

8.2 If Yes, what authority(ies) requires the student outcomes assessment program?

_____

_____

_____

9. Does your college currently have procedures to assess student outcomes?

☐ **Yes** (Please go to question 11) ☐ **No** (Please go to question 10)

10. What plans are there regarding assessing student outcomes at your college?

☐ There are no plans for student outcomes assessment in the college.

☐ There are plans to implement procedures to assess student outcomes within the next academic year (i.e., 1995/96).

☐ There are plans to implement procedures to assess student outcomes one or more years from now (i.e., 1996/97 or later).

☐ Procedures to assess student outcomes are under discussion but no date for implementation has been set.

After answering question 10 please go to question 12 on page 4.

11. Who has the primary responsibility for ensuring that procedures for assessing student outcomes are carried out? Check only one.

☐ President

☐ Vice-president for _____

☐ Dean of _____

☐ Director of institutional research (or equivalent)

☐ Other: (Please specify) _____

SECTION 4
ASSESSMENT PERSONNEL

12. Does your institution have an "office" which is responsible for coordinating/assisting assessment of student outcomes?

☐ Yes - If yes, what is the exact name of that office?

_____

☐ No - If no, go to question 14

13. What functions does that office perform with respect to student outcomes assessment activities?
Check all that apply.

☐ Plans student outcomes assessment activities

☐ Coordinates student outcomes assessment activities

☐ Provides technical assistance to those who perform student outcomes assessment activities

☐ Conducts student outcomes assessment activities

SECTION 5
USE OF ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

14. How are the results of student outcomes assessment activities reported **within your college**?
Please indicate whether each of the following methods is used or not.

Reporting Method	Used in last year	Never used	Used in past but not now
Printed report to Board	☐	☐	☐
Printed report to faculty	☐	☐	☐
Printed report to students	☐	☐	☐
Oral report to Board	☐	☐	☐
Oral report to faculty	☐	☐	☐
Oral report to students	☐	☐	☐
Reports to relevant committee, task force, or administrator	☐	☐	☐

15. To which external organizations or agencies does your college report concerning your student outcomes assessment activities or information?

_____

_____

_____

16. In what ways is information obtained from student outcomes assessment used in the following planning activities?

16.1 Program/Curriculum: Please describe.

16.2 Strategic planning: Please describe.

16.3 Planning for accreditation: Please describe.

16.4 Instruction: Please describe.

16.5 Advising of students: Please describe.

16.6 Recruiting of students: Please describe.

16.7 Retention of students: Please describe.

16.8 Alumni/donor relations: Please describe.

_____

_____

16.9 Tenure/promotion of staff: Please describe.

_____

_____

16.10 Recruiting of staff: Please describe.

_____

_____

16.11 Operating budget/Resource allocation): Please describe.

_____

_____

16.12 Capital Projects (i.e., major expenditures): Please describe.

_____

_____

SECTION 6
OTHER COMMENTS

17. Please provide any additional relevant comments that you wish to make about this topic.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your time and effort. This information will be used to assist Bible colleges to be more effective in fulfilling their missions.

Chris Elford, Department of Educational Policy Studies, 7-104 Education North, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

APPENDIX B

Individual Personnel Form Questionnaire

Student Outcomes Assessment in Canadian Bible Colleges
Individual Personnel Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire with respect to the last academic year (i.e., September, 1994 - August, 1995).

The term student outcomes assessment as used in this questionnaire refers to actions taken by the institution, or a section/department of the institution, to attempt to assess the degree to which students, collectively, attain the general and professional educational goals of the college (e.g., competencies in general education, biblical/theological, and professional programs) as well as student development goals (e.g., attitudes, personal growth, and socialization).

All responses will be kept confidential and no responses will be reported in a way that will identify a particular college or individual. Please identify your college and type of position so that comparisons can be made between responses according to different types of institutions and roles. This way only one set of questions which describe the size, age, and nature of your college has to be completed by one person, the president, at your college instead of by each person.

1. College name _____

2. What is your current position? (Check only one--the position which occupies the largest portion of your time.)

- ☐ Teaching faculty member
- ☐ Institutional research officer
- ☐ President
- ☐ Student life/affairs administrator
- ☐ Librarian
- ☐ Registrar
- ☐ Non-academic administrator (Operations, finance)
- ☐ Academic administrator (Dean, Associate Dean)
- ☐ Recruitment/Enrolment administrator
- ☐ Other (Specify _____)

3. For each of the following aspects of the collection and use of student outcomes assessment information, please indicate in the first line the degree to which faculty members are involved in your college. In the second line please indicate the degree to which you believe faculty members should be involved. (Check the appropriate box for each activity.)

Student Outcomes Assessment Activities	Degree of Faculty Members Involvement	Highly Involved	Very Involved	Moderately Involved	Slightly Involved	Not at all Involved	Not Applicable
1. Planning and designing student outcomes assessment procedures	Are	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Should be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Directing student outcomes assessment procedures	Are	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Should be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Implementing/ operating student outcomes assessment procedures	Are	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Should be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Evaluating student outcomes assessment procedures	Are	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Should be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Please indicate your attitude regarding your college's use of each of the assessment methods listed below.

How satisfied are you with your college's use of this method of student outcomes assessment?		How much do you think your college uses this method of student outcomes assessment?	How much do you think your college should use this method of student outcomes assessment?
Satisfaction Scale 9 = Not applicable 5 = Very satisfied 4 = Somewhat satisfied 3 = Neutral 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied 1 = Very dissatisfied	**Student Outcomes Assessment Methods**	**Current Usage Scale** 9 = Do not know 5 = Extreme use 4 = Frequent use 3 = Moderate use 2 = Slight use 1 = Do not use	**Ideal Usage Scale** 9 = No opinion 5 = Extreme use 4 = Frequent use 3 = Moderate use 2 = Slight use 1 = Do not use
1 2 3 4 5 9	1. Locally-produced alumni surveys	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	2. Commercially-produced alumni surveys	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	3. Standardized Bible content examinations (e.g., AABC)	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	4. Locally-produced student surveys	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	5. Commercially-produced student surveys	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	6. Surveys of employers	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	7. Written/oral comprehensive exams	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	8. Graduating senior surveys	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	9. Standardized achievement tests for graduating students (e.g., Graduate Record Exam, College Level Examination Project)	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	10. Locally-produced subject examinations	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9

How satisfied are you with your college's use of this method of student outcomes assessment?		How much do you think your college uses this method of student outcomes assessment?	How much do you think your college should use this method of student outcomes assessment?
Satisfaction Scale 9 = Not applicable 5 = Very satisfied 4 = Somewhat satisfied 3 = Neutral 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied 1 = Very dissatisfied	**Student Outcomes Assessment Methods**	**Current Usage Scale** 9 = Do not know 5 = Extreme use 4 = Frequent use 3 = Moderate use 2 = Slight use 1 = Do not use	**Ideal Usage Scale** 9 = No opinion 5 = Extreme use 4 = Frequent use 3 = Moderate use 2 = Slight use 1 = Do not use
1 2 3 4 5 9	11. Written/oral doctrinal statement/defense	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	12. Pre-tests of students in first year and post-tests in last year for at least one subject/topic	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	13. Evaluation of portfolios of students' work	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	14. Withdrawing/non-returning student surveys	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	15. Evaluation of Christian service reports	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	16. Evaluation of field placements reports	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	17. Theses/major projects	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	18. Other (Specify) _____ _____	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9

5. Please indicate your attitude regarding your college's use of outcomes assessment information in planning with respect to each of the following institutional activities.

		How much do you think your college uses student outcomes assessment information in planning for this activity?	How much do you think your college should use student outcomes assessment information in planning for this activity?
Satisfaction Scale 9 = Not applicable 5 = Very satisfied 4 = Somewhat satisfied 3 = Neutral 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied 1 = Very dissatisfied	**Types of Activities or Planning**	**Current Usage Scale** 9 = Do not know 5 = Extreme use 4 = Frequent use 3 = Moderate use 2 = Slight use 1 = Do not use	**Ideal Usage Scale** 9 = No opinion 5 = Extreme use 4 = Frequent use 3 = Moderate use 2 = Slight use 1 = Do not use
1 2 3 4 5 9	1. Program/curriculum	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	2. Strategic planning	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	3. Planning for accreditation	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	4. Instruction	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	5. Advising of students	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	6. Recruiting of students	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	7. Retention of students	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	8. Alumni/donor relations	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	9. Tenure/promotion of staff	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	10. Recruiting of staff	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	11. Operating budget/resource allocation	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	12. Capital projects (i.e., major expenditures)	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
1 2 3 4 5 9	13. Other: _____	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9

Thank you for your time and effort. This information will be used to assist Bible colleges to be more effective in fulfilling their missions.

Chris Elford, Department of Educational Policy Studies, 7-104 Education North, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

APPENDIX C

General Cover Letter and Instruction Sheet

August, 1995

The President
«College_Name»

Dear President:

This is a request for your participation in a research project. As part of my PhD program at the University of Alberta I am investigating the use of student outcomes assessment information in Canadian Bible colleges in institutional planning. In order to study this issue I am asking you and individuals in your institution to complete the enclosed questionnaires. All member colleges of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges are being asked to participate.

Information gathered will be kept confidential and all reporting will be done in such a way as to ensure your anonymity and that of your institution. Copies of two questionnaires are enclosed:

- one copy of the **General College Information** questionnaire. Please complete this form yourself with assistance from those who best know the information requested.
- several copies of the **Individual Personnel** questionnaire (please make more copies if necessary). These are to be filled out by the president, all academic administrators, all vice-presidential level administrators, and four randomly selected faculty members. (See the attached **Instructions for Distributing Individual Personnel Questionnaires.**)

The results of the study will be available through the ACBC and a presentation of the findings will be made at a future annual meeting. If you wish to receive an executive summary of the findings, please complete the enclosed request form.

The second stage of this study will involve interviews with individuals involved in collecting and using student outcomes assessment information. I will contact those people separately.

Please **collect the completed questionnaires in their separate, sealed envelopes** and then **return them to me in the enclosed pre-addressed, stamped envelope.** Instructions are enclosed about how to put the separate envelopes into the large envelope so as to keep the width within Canada Post limits.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation in distributing and completing the questionnaires as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Elford

Instructions for Distributing Individual Personnel Questionnaires

Administrators: One questionnaire is to be completed by the individual who serves in each of the following positions (or the equivalent). Anyone serving more than one position should fill out only one questionnaire.

- **President**
- **Academic Administrators:**
  (Examples only)
  - **Academic Dean**
  - **Registrar**
  - **Department Chairs**
  - **Provost**
- **Vice-presidential level administrators:**
  (Examples only)
  - **Business Administration**
  - **Student Affairs**

Faculty: Four faculty members (include all personnel who teach at least part-time) are to complete a questionnaire. To ensure a random distribution please use a faculty list arranged alphabetically by last names. Please cross off any names on that list which are included in the positions listed above. (If four or fewer faculty members remain please have each complete a questionnaire.) Use the following list of random numbers to identify the four faculty members who will complete a questionnaire.

1. Select names as indicated by the random number until you have 4 names.

2. Skip any number which is larger than the number of names you have.

The random numbers are: 16, 6, 22, 39, 34, 15, 29, 35, 49, 12, 33, 14, 17, 41, 21, 36, 50, 18, 47, 4, 26, 16, 44, 20, 46, 5, 19, 43, 1, 27, 7, 39, 48, 26, 25, 19, 28, 32, 37, 13, 3

Example for a college with 8 faculty members on the list:
Select names 6, 4, 5, and 1. All the intervening numbers are larger than 8.

Example for a college with 21 faculty members on the list:
Select names 16, 6, 15, and 12. All the intervening numbers are larger than 21.

If you have any questions regarding the distribution of the questionnaires please contact me. My e-mail address is celford@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca. My phone number is (403) 464-2185.

Thank you for your help.

Chris Elford

APPENDIX D

General College Information Form Cover Letter

President «LastName»
«College_Name»

August, 1995

Dear President «LastName»:

Please complete the attached **General College Information Questionnaire.** Please involve whoever can best provide the information as you gather the information required to complete this questionnaire. Pilot testing indicates that completing the questionnaire should take about 30 minutes.

In order to provide a reasonable length questionnaire to most individuals, the General College Information Questionnaire is the only questionnaire which asks details of the policies and procedures followed in collecting student outcomes assessment data. In order to be able to link the responses on the individual questionnaires with the policies and procedures I am asking you to identify your college. Information gathered will be kept confidential, and all reporting will be done so as to ensure personal and institutional anonymity. Participation in this study is voluntary. Please do not answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

Student outcomes assessment refers to those actions taken by a college to determine how well the students, **collectively**, have attained the intended attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge, and/or skills after attending a college. Student outcomes assessment is increasingly expected of postsecondary institutions in Canada and around the world. It is also important to determine how the information obtained by student outcomes assessment is being used in institutional planning.

Your cooperation in completing and returning the questionnaire in the enclosed, pre-addressed envelope as soon as possible is appreciated.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation, participation, and support.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Elford
Department of Educational Policy Studies
7 - 104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

APPENDIX E

Individual Personnel Form Cover Letter

Recipients of Individual Personnel Questionnaire August, 1995
Canadian Bible Colleges

Dear Recipient:

This is a request for your participation in a research project. As part of my PhD program at the University of Alberta I am investigating the use of student outcomes assessment information in Canadian Bible colleges in institutional planning. In order to study this issue I am asking you to complete the attached questionnaire. It should take about 20 minutes to complete. Personnel from all member colleges of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges are included in this survey.

Student outcomes assessment refers to those actions taken by a college to determine how well the students, **collectively**, have attained the intended attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge, and/or skills after attending a college. Student outcomes assessment is increasingly expected of postsecondary institutions in Canada and around the world. It is also important to determine how the information obtained by student outcomes assessment is being used in institutional planning.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Please do not answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Information gathered will be kept confidential and all reporting will be done in such a way as to ensure your anonymity and that of your institution.

The results of this study will be available through the ACBC. Presentations of the findings will also be made at a future annual meeting.

The second stage of this study will involve interviews with individuals involved in collecting and using student outcomes assessment information. I will contact those people separately.

Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is appreciated. **Please put your questionnaire in the enclosed envelope, seal it, and return it to your president who will return all the questionnaires from your college in their sealed envelopes.**

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation, participation, and support.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Elford
Department of Educational Policy Studies
7 - 104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

APPENDIX F

Interview Schedule for Presidents

President Interview Schedule

1. What was the basic motivation for beginning to assess student outcomes?
2. How long has the college been assessing student outcomes?
3. What linkages exist between the student outcomes assessment program and institutional planning in this college?
4. What are the links between student outcomes assessment activities and decisions regarding the following matters? Please give specific examples of decisions affected by information from student outcomes assessment in each area.
   (a) curriculum development and/or improvement
   (b) budgeting
   (c) hiring personnel
   (d) strategic planning
   (e) quality control
   (f) instructional improvement
   (g) student recruitment
   (h) student retention
   (i) capital projects
5. What are some of the positive impacts of the student outcomes assessment program in this college?
6. How is the student outcomes assessment program in this college positively affecting planning?
7. In what ways could the student outcomes assessment program in this college be improved?
8. In what ways could the impact of student outcomes assessment program on planning be improved?
9. **(a)** What is your rating of the overall level of success of the student outcomes assessment program in this college? Please use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = not successful and 10 = highly successful.

   (b) To what extent are faculty in support of the program? Please use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = not supportive and 10 = highly supportive.

   (c) To what extent are administrators in support of the program? Please use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = not supportive and 10 = highly supportive.
10. Is there any other information you think is relevant to understanding the nature of the student outcomes assessment program in this college?

APPENDIX G

Interview Schedule for Individual Directly Responsible for Student Outcomes Assessment

Interview Schedule

Questions:

1. Please describe your role and that of others with respect to student outcomes assessment in this college. Specifically, please identify:

   (a) How long have you been involved with student outcomes assessment?

   (b) What are you responsible for in student outcomes assessment?

   (c) Who else is responsible for aspects of student outcomes assessment?

   (d) What do they do?

2. Please describe how student outcomes assessment in this college is organized. Specifically, please identify:

   (a) How it fits into the organizational structure?

   (b) Does it involve all students and departments?

   (c) At what stages of students' involvement with the college are assessment procedures performed?

3. What are the goals for student outcomes assessment?

4. (a) Is there a statement of philosophy/objectives for student outcomes assessment in this college?

   (b) If so, what is the philosophy/What are the objectives? (Could I have a copy of the statement(s)?)

5. (a) What student outcomes assessment activities are performed on campus?

   (b) How frequently do each of these occur?

   (c) How are these activities coordinated?

   (d) How are faculty involved in the activities?

6. What happens to the results of the student outcomes assessments?

7. (a) In what ways are people informed of the results of student outcomes assessment in this college?

   (b) Who is informed about what results?

   (c) How often?

   (d) In what format?

8. What are some of the positive impacts of the assessment of student outcomes in this college?

9. In what ways could student outcomes assessment in this college be improved?

10. **(a)** What is your rating of the overall level of success of the student outcomes assessment program in this college? Please use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = not successful and 10 = highly successful.

    (b) To what extent are faculty in support of the program? Please use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = not supportive and 10 = highly supportive.

    (c) To what extent are administrators in support of the program? Please use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = not supportive and 10 = highly supportive.

11. Is there any other information you think is relevant to understanding the nature of student outcomes assessment in this college?

APPENDIX H

List of Colleges Which Participated in the Questionnaire Survey and Interviews

Alberta Bible College
Bethany Bible College
Bethany Bible Institute*
Briercrest Bible College*
Canadian Bible College
Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute
Canadian Nazarene College
Catherine Booth Bible College*
College Biblique Quebec
Columbia Bible College*
Covenant Bible College
Eastern Pentecostal Bible College
Emmanuel Bible College*
Full Gospel Bible Institute
Gardner College*
International Bible College
Living Faith Bible College
Maritime Christian College
Millar College of the Bible
Mount Carmel Bible School*
North American Baptist College
Northwest Bible College*
Ontario Bible College
Pacific Bible College
Peace River Bible Institute
Prairie Bible College
Providence College*
Rocky Mountain College*
Steinbach Bible College
Swift Current Bible Institute
Winkler Bible Institute

Note: * indicates participation in an interview

APPENDIX I

Letter of Endorsement From Dr Larry McKinney, ACBC President

Letter of Endorsement From Dr Randall Bell, AABC Executive Director

ACCREDITING
ASSOCIATION OF
BIBLE COLLEGES
P.O. Box 1523 • Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702-1523 • 501-521-8164 • Fax 501-521-9202

MEMORANDUM

TO: AABC Member Colleges

FROM: Randall Bell, Executive Director RBB

SUBJECT: Dissertation Project of Chris Elford

DATE: August 4, 1995

I am writing to encourage your participation in the dissertation project of Chris Elford. Enclosed are self-explanatory materials relating to the study.

I believe that Mr. Elford's project, "Student Outcomes Assessment in Canadian Bible Colleges" will be helpful to the entire Bible College Movement. I have personally reviewed the proposal and believe that it is worthy of the support of the AABC membership. The AABC Committee on Professional Development has also reviewed this project and expressed its enthusiastic endorsement of it.

We are grateful for your participation in this research, and we thank you in advance for your cooperation with this endeavor.

fr