

school, while the grades of the non-cooperative education students fluctuated. This would indicate that cooperative education is a favorable influence in cutting attrition, motivates the student toward higher grades and, in general, has a maturing effect on his academic performance.

This Northwestern University survey is substantiated by a similar survey at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Students in the cooperative education program there had a lower attrition rate and seemed to have fewer problems pertaining to financial difficulties and motivation. Evidence showed that participation in the cooperative education program influenced students in such a manner that they failed fewer courses and their classroom performance was markedly enhanced. The survey concluded that the cooperative education student excelled in each area of academic performance studied.

While some cooperative education programs require the student to spend a longer period of time in school than the regular student, some do not. At the University of South Florida a student can earn a bachelor's degree in most areas within 47 months when on the cooperative education program, less than 4 years from the time he enters the University. At most schools, the regular student will earn a bachelor's degree within 45 or 46 months from the time he first enters the institution. The student who is in a cooperative education program which takes additional months of schooling is usually rewarded by an additional increment of income upon receiving his degree and entering permanent full-time employment.

A survey by the College Placement Council in 1967 showed that the average cooperative education bachelor's degree graduate in the technical field received an offer 2.5 per cent higher than the offer of his non-cooperative education classmate and an offer of approximately 5 per cent more than his non-cooperative education classmate in the non-technical field. As one industrial representative has said, "Cooperative Education allows the college graduate to land on his feet running" at both a higher rate of productivity and a higher salary level. And it should be pointed out that many cooperative education students report starting salaries following graduation at 10 per cent or more above the salaries of their non-cooperative education peers.

I believe one of the best ways to evaluate a program is by testing the product. In a recent survey among those who had taken the cooperative education route at the University of South Florida, we found that the students really believe in cooperative education. The comments of the students were most gratifying. Of the survey sample, 100 per cent said they would take a co-op route again if entering the University and would advise others to do as well. They pointed out a number of specific things that made them rate cooperative education most highly. Points upon which they placed extreme value included: Learning to get along with people, learning the responsibility of living on their own, making valuable contacts, and getting a running start in their professional careers both from an experience and income standpoint, building contacts and references which helped them to get into graduate programs, and the satisfaction gained as they earned all or part of their educational expenses while attending the University. To many, this latter point brought a high degree of self-satisfaction, knowing they had paid their way and did not have to turn to any financial aid program.

Just a few of the comments were: "It taught me how to better get along with and work with others."

"Cooperative education gave me some practical knowledge upon which to build self-confidence."

"My starting salary was about \$1,000 a year higher than it would have been if I had not been a cooperative education student."

"It enabled me to complete my college education."

"The training periods offered me a valuable insight into my chosen profession."

"The experience was tremendous, priceless."

"It taught me to live, to be responsible for paying my rent, buying groceries."

"I see no finer way than cooperative education."

"Cooperative education gave me a feeling of worth."

It should be noted that industry, business, and government agencies wholeheartedly support this program, and as I noted earlier, Congressman Gibbons takes several of our cooperative education political science majors for work around his office and the House Office Building each term. Congressman Gibbons has seen our modest program grow at the University of South Florida and has expressed to us his satisfaction with the results.