

College Plans

This memo discusses the college plans measure (UWMAXCOL). College plans are a measure commonly used to capture educational ambitions—specifically, they indicate whether the student has plans to attend college after completing high school. College plans are an important indicator as they are positively associated with eventual educational and occupational attainment. In fact, Sewell and Hauser found that college plans were the predictor variable most strongly associated with eventual educational attainment (Sewell and Hauser, 1975).

This memo reviews the college plans survey questions included in the UW-BHS survey, changes in the college plans questions across cohorts, the application of Carnegie Classification codes to the college plans questions, and it discusses the rationale behind the creation of one specific measure of college plans.

Original Survey Items

In all years, the UW-BHS survey included a question on College Plans (Question 24):

24) Do you plan to go on to college or other additional schooling right after high school? That is, do you plan to be continuing your education THIS FALL?

No	1	→		SKIP TO QUESTION 30_a ON PAGE 9
Don't Know.....	2			
Yes	3			

Students who answered 'No' to question 24 moved on to the next section of the survey. Students who responded "Yes" or "Don't Know" to question 24, were asked to complete questions 26 to 29. These questions are series of follow up questions that inquire about the names and location of colleges they were considering attending, as well as whether the student had applied to the college, had been accepted to the college, had applied for financial aid, and had been awarded financial aid. The follow up questions inquiring about college plans are questions 26 to 29, which are the only questions used to create the college plans measure. *The exact wording of these questions changed between 2000 and 2002-05.*

Note that question 24 is not used in the creation of the college plans question as it only allows for a binary indication of whether the students had college plans (Yes/No). Using Q24 one can not differentiate between those with plans to attend a two year and those with plans to attend a four year college

Questions 26 to 29 (for 2002 to 2005):

Please tell us about the colleges you are likely to attend. ORDER THESE SCHOOLS BY PREFERENCE.

(CIRCLE ONLY ONE IN EACH BOX)

		b	c	d	e
		Have you applied to this school?	Have you been accepted to this school?	Did you apply for financial aid?	Were you awarded financial aid?
	1ST CHOICE:				
26)	Name _____	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(an)	_____	No	No	No	No
(ac)	City _____		Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
(a)	State _____				

2ND CHOICE:					
27)	Name _____	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(an)	_____	No	No	No	No
(ac)	City _____		Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
(a)	State _____				
3RD CHOICE:					
28)	Name _____	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(an)	_____	No	No	No	No
(ac)	City _____		Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
(a)	State _____				
4TH CHOICE:					
29)	Name _____	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(an)	_____	No	No	No	No
(ac)	City _____		Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
(a)	State _____				

Questions 26 to 29 for 2000:

26) a) What is the name and location of the college, professional, or technical school you will most likely attend in the fall?

Name _____ City _____ State _____

Don't know

b) Have you **APPLIED** to this school?

Yes

No

c) Have you **BEEN ACCEPTED** to this school?

Yes

No

Don't know

27) a) If you cannot attend this first school, what is your second-choice school?

Name _____ City _____ State _____

I don't have a second-choice school

Don't know

b) Have you **APPLIED** to this school?

Yes

No

c) Have you **BEEN ACCEPTED** to this school?

Yes

No

Don't know

28) Please tell us the names and locations of other schools to which you have applied, if any.

a) Name _____ City _____ State _____

Have you **BEEN ACCEPTED** to this school?

Yes

No

Don't know

b) Name _____ City _____ State _____

Have you **BEEN ACCEPTED** to this school?

Yes

No

Don't know

c) Name _____ City _____ State _____

c) Name _____ City _____ State _____

Have you **BEEN ACCEPTED** to this school?

Yes

No

Don't know

d) Name _____ City _____ State _____

Have you **BEEN ACCEPTED** to this school?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comparability of Questions 26 to 29 across Cohorts

The formatting of the college plans questions changed from the 2000 survey to the 2002-2005 survey. However, much of the same information was gathered in each version. One similarity across cohorts is that they were all (2000 & 2002-2005) asked to identify a first choice college and second choice college, as well as give information on whether they had applied to that school and been accepted to that school. However, in 2000 students then list up to four other schools to which they had applied in addition to whether they had been accepted to those schools. In 2002-2005, students are asked to cite their third and fourth choice schools as well as whether they had applied to and been accepted to those schools. (Additionally, information about whether the student had applied for financial aid from each specific school and whether the student had been awarded financial aid from each specific school is only available for the 2002-2005 cohorts. The questions regarding financial aid in 2000 inquire about financial receipt from any of the schools that the students planned on attending.) Despite the changes in the survey, for all years it is possible to analyze the top four colleges that the respondent planned on attending in the year after high school.

Apply Carnegie Codes to the College Plans Questions

In responding to questions 26 to 29 students wrote the name and location of the colleges that they planned on attending. In an effort to protect the respondents' confidentiality the name, city, and state of college listed have been removed from the data file. However, the UWBHS team recoded the colleges listed in these items using the Carnegie Classifications. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education™ is the most widely recognized reference work of all colleges and universities in the United States. (The Carnegie Classification codes included in the UWBHS file come from the Carnegie Classifications Data File, as prepared May 30, 2006.) For more information on the Carnegie variables, see <http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/>. For information about the May 30, 2006 file, see <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs/memos/carnALL05.xls>.

The major advantage of using the Carnegie Classifications is that they provide a systematic and detailed classification of nearly all of the post-secondary institutions in the United States along 15 important dimensions that help to classify post-secondary institutions. Each of the colleges that are reported by students in the senior survey have a value as calculated by Carnegie Classification for Institutions of Higher Education for each of 15 attributes that describe the school (accreditation type, level of institution, degree of urbanization, control, etc). In order to recode the respondents text response (name of the school) into these specific numerical values, the college reported by the student in questions 26 to 29 are matched to those found in the Carnegie Classifications data file (see <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs/memos/carnALL05.xls>), and then the values given by the Carnegie Classifications data file are recorded into the new variable. Thus, for each school that a student listed in questions 26 to 29, provided it is included in the Carnegie Classification, a host of variables that describe the specific school are available and included in the data file.

Creating a College Plans Variable Based using Questions 26 to 29

There were some colleges listed by students that were not included in the Carnegie Classification, or students provided insufficient information for coding. For these schools, geography and level (2 year or 4 year) were coded by UWBHS staff.

One way to create a college plans measure is to indicate whether the student has: no college plans, two year college plans, or four year college plans based upon the student responses to questions 26-29, which allow the respondent to list the top four colleges that he/she plans on attending. In the 2002-2005 version of the survey, students listed their top four college choices in questions 26, 27, 28, and 29. However, in 2000 student listed their top four college choices in 26, 27, 28a, and 28b. Question 24 is not used in this coding schema as it only allows for a binary indication of college plans (Yes/No). It does not allow for differentiation between those with two and four year college plans, using Q26 to 29 allows for the two year and four year college plans distinction.

In instances in which individuals note multiple schools that are of different types (2yr/4yr) the four year school types will be given preference. For example, if a student notes plans to attend University of Washington in Q26

and Eastern Community College in Q27, the four year school—U of Washington—would be given preference and the individual would be coded as having four year college plans. Students that leave all four of these questions blank will be coded as having no college plans. In an attempt to identify students that skipped these question, as well as many others, we code students that did not fill in Qs26 to 29 as well as the five questions following Qs 26 to 29 (Qs 32 to 36) as missing. One of the benefits of this coding strategy is that it allows one to distinguish between students with college plans that want to attend a two year school and those with college plans that want to attend a four year school.

From a combination of the UWBHS staff coded and Carnegie coded colleges, we created the following variables.

UWLV26A	"Level of School, s026, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV27A	"Level of School, s027, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV28_A	"2002+ Only: Level of School, s028, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV28A	"2000 Only: Level of School, s028a, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV28B	"2000 Only: Level of School, s028b, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV28C	"2000 Only: Level of School, s028c, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV28D	"2000 Only: Level of School, s028e, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWLV29_A	"2002+ Only: Level of School, s029, based on Carnegie and UWBHS Coded Schools"
UWmaxcol	"Max level of school from S026 through s029, 2/4 year, Carnegie+UWBHS Codes"

Citations

Sewell, William and Robert Hauser. 1975. *Education, Occupation, and Earnings*. New York: Academic Press