

Three years of college increasingly favored

BOSTON (AP) — An increasing number of college-bound high school seniors favor speeding up the time it takes to get a bachelor's degree, according to two surveys.

Seventy-seven percent of 2,000 students in one poll said they would be more inclined to choose a school that let them finish in three years instead of the traditional four. That was up from 42 percent when the question was asked in 1983.

And 54 percent of 646 potential applicants to Oberlin College said they would prefer to get a bachelor's degree within three years.

"We knew that there was interest in this, and we knew it was the sensible thing both educationally and financially, but we were surprised at the very significant number of students who had come independently to the same conclusion," said S. Frederick Starr, president of the Ohio school and a chief proponent of the idea.

Fifteen accelerated and chancellors met last month in Washington to discuss accelerated degree programs, year-round classes, combined undergraduate- and graduate-level education, and other ways to expedite a college education.

Among the schools and systems pushing or considering accelerated bachelor's degrees are Stanford, the state universities of New York, the Higher Education Council of Virginia and the California state university system.

The nationwide survey of 2,000 randomly selected high school students by George Dehne & Associates found a dramatic increase in the number indicating a desire to attend a college offering a three-year degree since the last time the question was asked in 1983.

"Kids are saying, heck, I just can't afford the four years and I want to go to a good school, but if it's going to save me money then it's a better option for me," said company President George Dehne.

The Oberlin study, of people randomly selected from among those who had expressed interest in the school, was done for the college by Jack Maguire Associates of Concord, Mass.

Maguire's study found minorities and students with high grades even more inclined to favor an accelerated education.

"It's all about the business of quickly getting on with life's work," said pollster Jack Maguire.

The margin of error in the Maguire survey was plus or minus four percentage points and in the Dehne poll plus or minus five points.



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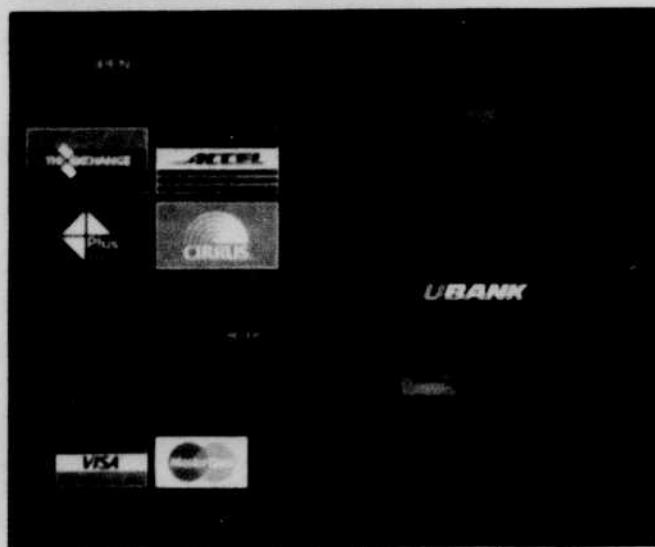


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