

**COLLEGE OF COMMISSIONER SCIENCE:
REASONS THAT CANDIDATES GIVE FOR NOT
COMPLETING THEIR DISSERTATION**

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Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science


Lees-McRae College

Banner Elk, North Carolina

Lloyd Swift, Advisor


To the Doctoral Candidate Review Board:

I am submitting herewith a Dissertation written by Maxine J. Mullins, entitled "College of Commissioner Science: Reasons that Candidates Give for not Completing Their Dissertations." I have examined the final copy of this report for format and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Commissioner Science.

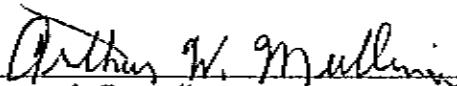

Lloyd Swift, Advisor

We have read this Dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

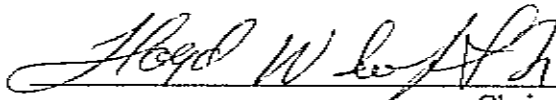

Blue Ridge Council


Great Smoky Mountain Council


Palmetto Council


Sequoyah Council

Accepted for the Piedmont-Appalachian
College of Commissioner Science


Chairman,
Doctoral Candidate Review Board
and Daniel Boone Council

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Thanks to the Review Board members for their time and insights as I worked to complete this study. Those doctoral candidates from years past who returned the survey forms helped make this a meaningful study. Get back in the swing and complete yours! If I can, anybody can!

To my husband, Arthur; my son, Shaun; and my daughter-in-law, Billie, I say "Thank you!" Your encouragement, support and understanding gave me incentive to keep working. I love you.

And my thanks to God for the ability to continue, for my understanding, for patience, and for His love.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to determine the reasons that Doctoral Candidates in the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science give for not completing their study or project and writing their dissertations. It was anticipated that the reasons given will improve the programming for the Commissioner College.

The methods used to gather information included a survey sent to seventy-eight participants from a list secured from the registrar of the Commissioner College. From the years 1991 to 2003, each of the Scouters who had participated in the third-year program but not completed their dissertation was sent a letter explaining the purpose of the study, a survey form, and an envelope for return of the survey. Demographics collected included gender and ages of the participants, their present position in Scouting, years of service, and whether they have or have had a child in Scouting. The second part of the survey used a checklist to determine the reasons given for not completing their dissertation and another checklist of conditions under which each would return to the Commissioner College to complete their work. Additional space for comments was included.

The return of the surveys and the information aggregated showed that Scouters are very busy people. Some indicated that a busy life style inhibited their work; health problems and age resulted in different priorities; and lack of assistance from their advisor may have left them stranded with incomplete work. Several indicated that they might like to return to complete their work, but several are no longer involved with Scouting. Comments from several of the participants are included in the study.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) rely upon adult volunteers to help provide services to youth from ages six to eighteen. Many adults work directly with the youth as scoutmasters, cubmasters, den leaders, venturing crew leaders and merit badge counselors, to name a few positions. Other adults volunteer as leaders representing the chartering organizations and council and district programs.

Scouting experiences occur in units at the local level. Healthy units, whether packs, troops, crews, or posts, have interesting and exciting activities for the youth. To help keep units active and healthy, "the Boy Scouts of America provides a program called unit service in which the commissioner is the key figure" (BSA, 1989a, p. 3). Training for all unit leaders is a key aspect of each phase of Scouting service. To help commissioners realize their objectives of assistance to units, councils provide in-service programs, both locally and regionally.

The Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science is a regional program that serves five councils of the Boy Scouts of America. These councils are Blue Ridge Council, Daniel Boone Council, Great Smoky Mountain Council, Palmetto Council, and Sequoyah Council. Each year representatives from these councils provide training for those involved in commissioner service that choose to receive instruction beyond basic training.

From 1991 to 2004, nearly 100 people have completed three years of training in the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science (Brown, 2004). They have completed classes at the candidate for Doctor of Philosophy in Commissioner Science level and need only to complete the process of writing their dissertation. This study is designed to determine the

reasons given for not completing the final process for the Ph.D. in Commissioner Science. The results of the study will help the staff of the College of Commissioner Science plan programs for the future to assist participants in reaching their goals.

Chapter One gives a background of Commissioner Service, the program provided by the Piedmont-Appalachian College, and definitions pertinent to the study. Reasons and limitations for this study are presented in Chapter One.

Commissioner Service

The Commissioner's role is different from that of other Scouters. Commissioners are district and council leaders with a major purpose of helping Scout units succeed.

They coach and consult with adult leaders of Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews. Commissioners help maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America. They also oversee the unit charter renewal plan so that each unit reregisters on time with an optimum number of youth and adult members.

(<http://www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=cm>)

There are three types of commissioners: administrative, unit, and roundtable commissioners. Administrative commissioners include the council commissioners, assistant council commissioners, district commissioners, and assistant district commissioners. Their key function is maintaining a quality commissioner staff.

A council commissioner is elected at the annual meeting of the local council after being selected by the council nominating committee. One of the principle responsibilities of the council

commissioner is to see that a complete program is in place to train every commissioner in the council.

District commissioners, in turn, see that every member of their staff receives adequate training. District commissioners are approved and appointed by the council executive board, with the concurrence of the Scout executive, on the recommendation of the district nominating committee. (<http://www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=cm>). District commissioners should have the ability to guide and motivate commissioners to visit units regularly, identify unit needs, and help unit adults to meet needs of their Scouting units.

The unit commissioner is assigned to one or more units, with the purpose of keeping the units healthy and seeing that they recharter on time. The district commissioner with the approval of the council executive board appoints unit commissioners. The unit commissioner's service is "based on a philosophy of friendship and counseling" rather than on prying and distrust (BSA, 1989a. p. 3).

Roundtable commissioners are resources for unit leaders and provide program skills and tips at regularly scheduled roundtables. A good background in Cub Scout and Boy Scout skills, as well as energetic teaching techniques and people skills, are helpful to roundtable commissioners.

Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science

Continuing education for commissioners is provided by a variety of ways in different parts of the country. Regular meetings of the council commissioner and staff are an integral part of keeping current and up-to-date with information useful to commissioners. The annual council

commissioner conference, popular in some councils, is often held as a weekend event to help develop commissioner fellowship. The "College of Commissioner Science" is a type of conference modeled after college courses and degrees (BSA, 1989a). Some conferences are held on a regional basis, with two or more councils cooperating to run a joint event.

The Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science is one such program, with five councils clustering to present classes leading toward certification and a degree. The College is held on the campus of Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina. The program was begun in 1983, with staffing from Blue Ridge Council, Daniel Boone Council, Palmetto Council, and Sequoyah Council. The Great Smoky Mountain Council joined later.

The program presented by the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science is under the oversight of a Board of Directors consisting of one representative from each council. The program allows commissioners to take classes on a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctor's Degree level, or for a roundtable program. The Doctor's Degree classes are divided into two years of work, one year with classes related to the process of writing a dissertation and one year for presentation of the findings.

The councils alternate responsibility for each degree presented, together with the Roundtable/Huddle program. The council that is responsible for a program appoints a dean for that degree level. The dean, in turn, recruits a staff to teach the classes at that level. One of the requirements for completing the PhD in Commissioner Science is to serve on staff and to help teach the classes during the time of enrollment.

The third year program of the College of Commissioner Science is designed to help the Doctoral Candidate identify a need in Scouting that might be a dissertation topic. Instructors for the classes are participants in the Commissioner College as advisors, graduates, or students. The Doctoral Candidate Program includes classes on designing a project, developing a thesis, potential research sources and tools, individual topic selections, and how to assemble and write the dissertation.

Each council designates a representative to sit on the Doctoral Candidate Review Board and give guidance to the candidates pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Commissioner Science. When the Doctoral Candidates leave the campus after the weekend of classes, they have a good idea of how their project is to be organized. They have been assigned an advisor who will guide them during the development of their project and writing of their dissertation (Alverson, np). The process of conducting their study and writing the dissertation is expected to take a period of no more than two years. If they are not prepared to present their findings after one year, they may ask for a one-year's extension. If they fail to complete the dissertation in the one- or two-year time frame, they are expected to enroll in the third year program again. It is at this point that many of the Doctoral Candidates seem to encounter problems.

Definitions

The definitions pertinent to this study include:

Dissertation -- a report about the project under study. This report should describe the Scouting problem and the project selected for study, how the project was done, and the conclusion and recommendations from the research. It should be at least 20 pages in length.

Project -- an event, activity, or administrative change. The project is the implementation of ideas and requires planning and action. The dissertation is the report on the process of implementing the event so another can replicate it.

Thesis -- a concept, idea, or theory. The thesis is the basis for collecting and analyzing facts and viewpoints. The dissertation is the report on the process of identifying a problem, the research that is conducted, and the analysis of the data.

Reasons for the Study and Limitations

This researcher is interested in determining the reasons that Candidates for Doctor's Degree in Commissioner Science at the Piedmont-Appalachian College in Banner Elk, North Carolina give for failure to complete work on their dissertations. The faculty and staff can use the results of the study to evaluate their program and procedures in conducting classes and assignments.

Limitations of the study are few. The years under study include 1991 to 2003. It is not known whether the participants are still active as Scouting commissioners and are still in the geographical area. If they have moved to another location, can they be located? The limitations will slightly affect the outcomes of the study.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The review of literature related to the role of Boy Scout commissioners is presented in Chapter Two. A variety of booklets relate to the special aspects of commissioner science. Videos give help to commissioners who want to increase their skills in helping units to succeed. A handbook with instructions and suggestions for developing a project or thesis and writing a dissertation gives additional help.

The review of literature related to the reasons that doctoral candidates at the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science fail to complete requirements for a PhD in Commissioner Science began with Candidate for Doctor of Commissioner Science (Third Year): Course Outline by James W. Alverson. This publication was provided to the candidates in the doctoral candidate classes in 2004.

The Course Outline includes an overview of the classes on the candidate level and guides the candidate through the process of selecting a topic, designing a research instrument, and writing the dissertation. The worksheets guide the researcher through the process and timetable for successful completion of the study.

The Boy Scouts of America have a variety of booklets related to commissioner service. Commissioner Administration of Unit Service (1989a) is a guidebook for commissioners and professional Scouters. The functions of administrative commissioners, unit commissioners, and roundtable commissioners are discussed, from orientation and recruiting to progress records and resources. Commissioner training includes six elements to be carried out in a timely manner:

- Orientation video within forty-eight hours

- Personal coaching/orientation within two weeks
- Commissioner basic training within two months
- Arrowhead Honor within one year
- Commissioner Key after three years
- Continuing education (monthly and annually) (BSA, 1999, pp. 4 & 5)

Highlights for District Commissioners . . . An Overview (BSA, 1989b) reviews the purposes of district commissioners. "District leaders mobilize resources to ensure the growth and success of Scouting units within the district's territory" (BSA 1989b, p. 3). Other topics include the relationship of the district commissioner with the district executive and the district chairman, making the Key 3. A diagram of the standard district is included.

The Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service (BSA, 1990) lists several roles that a commissioner plays, including friend, representative, doctor, teacher, and counselor. A key topic in this publication is Charter Renewal, with instructions on helping the unit to recharter on time. Three leadership styles are discussed: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. "Good leaders will use each of these styles" (p. 32) in various situations. "The Unit Commissioner's Orientation: Helping Units Succeed" (Video # AV-04V001R) presents the different roles that a commissioner plays, with opportunities for discussion during training.

Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops, and Crews (BSA, 1991) helps "the new commissioner deal with problems related to the units he or she has been assigned. The material is written from the point of view of an experienced Scouter giving the new commissioner time-tested advice. Standards and action helps for a variety of topics relate to Cub Scouting or packs, Boy Scouting or troops, and Exploring or posts. Topics such as "Summer Program" and

"Uniforms" have standards for each of the three levels of Scouting. "Unit Problem-Solving for Commissioners" (Video #AV-04V002) is a video to help commissioners increase their skills in handling common, often unit life-threatening problems. The methodology used in conducting the research for this project is presented in Chapter Three.

Chapter III

Methods of Research

The methodology of the study was designed as a survey of doctoral candidates who have not presented their dissertation before the Doctoral Board for the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science. Chapter Three describes the process of securing a list of participants, developing the letter, designing a survey form, sending the survey to participants, and the responses received. The specific results will be presented in Chapter Four.

A list of 78 Doctoral Candidates from the years 1991 to 2003 was secured from the Registrar of the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science. These candidates only need to complete a study/project and write their dissertation but have let the time lapse for completion. The list included the addresses, the year of attendance, and the council they represent. The list included names of nineteen repeat candidates who had been granted extensions of time, but they are included only once in the list of 78. This information was entered into a database at the home of the researcher. The names were alphabetized and each individual was assigned a number. The numbers were used for tracking those who returned the forms.

Developing the Cover Letter

The letter for inclusion with the survey form was written to give information to the participants about the study being conducted by the researcher (See Appendix A). Information was included to let the receiver know that a study was being undertaken as part of the Doctoral Program at the Piedmont-College of Commissioner Science to determine the reasons that individuals fail to complete the program after completing the third year and selecting a topic for

study. The participants were assured that confidentiality of respondents would be maintained, so the respondents could be as open with their answers as possible. Their forthrightness would enable the researcher to find some real answers for her project question: "Why do Doctoral Candidates at the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science fail to complete their Dissertations?"

Designing the Survey

The survey (See Appendix B) was designed in two parts: Part One solicits demographic information and Part Two solicits specific information about the progress made on their project and reasons for not completing their study. Each survey form included a number in the upper right hand corner. This number had been assigned for tracking the responses to the survey. The demographics collected include the sex of the individual, their years of experience in Scouting, the council they represent, their former and present positions in Scouting, and if they have (or have had) a child in Scouting.

Part Two of the survey asked the participant to describe the progress made on their study or project. A checklist of reasons for not completing their dissertation was given. The participants were asked to check as many reasons as they wanted and to indicate with an asterisk (*) the reason they felt strongest about. A space was left for "Other" reasons in case there were reasons that had not been listed. Another list gave the participant the opportunity to indicate the conditions that would encourage them to reenter the program and complete their dissertation. Space was left for comments. It was the desire of the researcher that respondents would be open and forthright in their comments in order to make an impact on the program and completion of projects in the future.

Validity. To determine if the appropriate questions were included in the survey, two members of the Doctoral Review Board reviewed the survey form. A suggestion was made to add space in Part A for the title of their study. Two items were added to the checklist: "Did not start my project/study" and "Did not finish my project/study."

Surveys Mailed and Responses Received

The packets for mailing were assembled: A cover letter (See Appendix A), a two-page survey form (See Appendix B), and a self-addressed stamped return envelope. A total of seventy-eight letters were mailed. A list of the councils and the number of letters sent for each council are presented in Table 1. The number of returns is included.

The returns began coming in within a week. Fourteen letters were returned because of changes of address. The researcher attempted to secure new addresses and resent five of those that had been returned. It was discovered that four individuals are deceased. A return rate of 32 percent (24 usable returns divided by 74 possibilities) was obtained.

Great Smoky Mountain Council had the greatest number (24) of participants listed as not completing the program, followed by Sequoyah Council (21). Each of these councils had one-third of their participants responding to the survey. Blue Ridge Council had 38 percent (5 of 13) returning the survey. Palmetto Council had 43 percent (3 of 7) who returned the survey. Daniel Boone Council had seven participants listed, but no response was received from this council. Six of the survey forms were sent to out of the region participants. One was completed and returned. The information was aggregated and analyzed, and the results are reported in Chapter Four.

Table 1

Councils Represented and the Number of Participants Surveyed

Council Represented	Number of Participants	
	Surveyed	Returned
Blue Ridge	13	5
Daniel Boone	7	0
Great Smoky Mountain	24	8
Palmetto	7	3
Sequoyah	21	7
Out of Region	6	1

Note. Three survey forms were received after the tabulations had been completed. Their information and comments are included in Appendix C.

Chapter IV

Results and Discussion

The research undertaken by the candidate for a PhD in the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science for the Boy Scouts of America is an attempt to determine the reasons that doctoral candidates give for failure to complete the fourth year program by presenting a dissertation to the Doctoral Review Board. A survey to collect demographics on the 78 participants from 1991 to 2003 was mailed to those on a list supplied by the registrar of the college. The results include demographic information, reasons for not completing their study, and conditions under which they would consider returning to the program to complete their dissertation. Space was left for comments about the program.

Demographics

Twenty-four of the 74 survey forms, or 32 percent, provided useable information. Seventeen of the respondents were male. Statistics were reported for age and years of experience in Scouting. Ages of the respondents ranged from 37 to 77, with an average age of 56. The median age was 55. Seventy-one percent of the respondents ranged in age from 46 to 65 (middle-aged). Information on the ages of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Years of Scouting experience range from a minimum of five years to a maximum of more than 44 years, with a total number of years for this group reported to be 504.5 years. The average number of years experience in Scouting is 21.02 years; the median number of years experience is 19 years. Only one Scouter who responded to the survey had less than ten years of experience. At the other end of the scale, two Scouters had 40 or more years of experience. Information on the years of experience is presented in Table 3.

Table 2

Age in Years for Respondents Not Completing PhD

Ages	Respondents	
Range	<u>N</u>	Percent
36-45	3	12.5
46-55	9	37.5
56-65	8	33.3
66-75	3	12.5
76+	1	4.2

Table 3

Years of Experience for Respondents Not Completing PhD

Years of Experience	Respondents	
Range	<u>N</u>	Percent
Less than 10	1	4
10-19	11	46
20-29	6	25
30-39	4	17
40 or more	2	8

Information was gleaned concerning positions in Scouting and whether or not the respondents have or have had children in Scouting. Nine of the respondents are not involved in the Scouting movement at this time. Present positions held include, but are not limited to, Assistant Council Commissioner, three District Commissioners, four Unit Commissioners, a Roundtable Commissioner, cubmaster, troop committee, and one who listed four positions held.

Seven of the participants now have a child in Scouting, and 18 have previously had a child in Scouting. Three respondents mentioned that a son had attained the rank of Eagle, one reported they have grandchildren in Scouting, and another mentioned children in both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Two respondents indicated they neither have nor have had a child in Scouts; three indicated that they have had and still have a child in Scouts.

Reasons for Not Completing the Study

A checklist was the instrument for the respondents to designate the reason(s) for not completing work on their dissertations. Each individual was asked to check those reasons for not completing their work and to indicate with an asterisk (*) the reason they felt strongest about. One of the respondents had completed her study, but time expired before she was able to present the findings to the College of Commissioner Science.

Eight of the participants indicated they had not selected a topic and did not start work on their project. One indicated that he had done some research but gave his topic to a friend who completed the program using his selected topic. Another commented that there was just not enough information on the selected topic. "Health problems" was listed as a reason by seven of the respondents. Death of a child caused one to drop out. Those are included in the "Other" tally,

which was checked by 50 percent of those who responded. The complete tally of the reasons given is in Table 4.

Two major reasons for not completing their project were not enough time and not enough help from their advisor. Ten participants selected each of these reasons and four individuals selected each of them as the major reason for not completing the program. Eight participants selected "Family/work problems". A typical response from one busy person is shown in the box at the right. "I will not be completing the program or be participating in Scouting," she wrote. Another respondent (Number 504) was as busy, it seems, but was more positive about returning to participate at some time in the future. With one son working toward his Eagle rank, another having achieved it, a husband leading a contingent to Philmont, her church work and service on National Camp staff, she wrote: "The timing hasn't been right yet."

Assist. Webelos Leader, Assist. Scoutmaster, Assist. Commissioner, Tiger Cub and Den Leader, trainer in all aspects. Daughter in Girl Scouting. American Red Cross as a CPR, Emergency Preparedness, Clinic volunteer, work full time, maintain my home and marriage. (Number 523)
--

"You mean I was supposed to have an advisor?" and "What advisor?" were comments from two participants. While each of them selected another reason as the major reason for not completing, it was evident that contact with their advisor was lacking as they prepared to write up their project. Only one respondent selected "another advisor" as a condition for returning to complete work on their dissertation. Four persons chose "Just got tired - burn out" and four selected "No longer in Scouting." They are not necessarily the same people. Another respondent (Number 517) wrote, "I didn't see the benefit to me. I learned all I could from attendance at Commissioner College (3 years). Great program - enjoyed a lot."

Table 4

Reasons for Not Completing Work on Dissertation at Piedmont-Appalachian College of
Commissioner Science.

Reason	Responses	
	N	Percent
Did not start my project/study	8	33
Did not finish my project/study	10	42
No longer in Scouting	4	17
Not enough time to spend on my project	10	42
Not enough information	3	13
Not enough help from advisor	10	42
Too much demanded from advisor	2	8
Just got tired - burn out	4	17
Not a good writer	1	3
Didn't like the topic	3	13
Lack of experience in Scouting	0	0
I feel I am not qualified to complete it	1	3
No facilities (typewriter or computer)	1	3
Finances - can't afford the tuition, time	0	0
Family/Work problems	8	33
Other (please describe)	12	50

Note. Numbers add up to more than 24, since each person could select more than one reason.

Two people felt incompetent to write the dissertation. One individual lacked facilities for performing the work, and two reasons listed were not selected by anyone: "Lack of experience in Scouting" and "Finances - - can't afford the tuition, time."

Returning to the Program

The survey form included eight conditions under which the participants might consider returning to the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science and completing their dissertation. Eight respondents indicated that they had no intentions of completing dissertations. One respondent retired as Assistant Council Commissioner and one individual is still active in the local troop. Of the other six individuals (none of whom are active in Scouting) not planning to complete their dissertation, only one had negative comments about the Commissioner College. One respondent indicated that he was getting along in years by giving a write-in: "Return of youth."

A minimum amount of classes would encourage eight individuals to return to the college, and personal coaching would entice five more. An extension of time and a new topic would prove favorable in five cases each. Another advisor, more information on the topic, and different location for the college were each selected once. More information about the course offerings did not make anyone's selection list, although one individual indicated that he felt that the program "is not very well organized and obviously not at all emphasized in the [] Council." Another gentleman who "just got tired" suggested lowering the 20-page requirement. The total list and the number who selected each condition are in Table 5. The comments made in the last section of the survey and not yet quoted are in Appendix C. Recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.

Table 5

Conditions Under Which a Candidate Would Return to Complete Dissertation

Would Return IF...	Responses	
	N	Percent
Extension of time	5	21
Another advisor	1	4
Take a minimum of classes	8	33
New topic	5	21
Personal coaching	5	21
More information on topic	1	4
More information on class offerings	0	0
Different location for Commissioner College	1	4

Note. Numbers add up to more than 24, since each person could select more than one reason.

Chapter V

Recommendations

This study was made of Doctoral Candidates at the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science from the years 1991 to 2003 who did not complete their dissertations to determine reasons they give for not completing their study and receiving a PhD Degree.

Recommendations based upon the findings are presented in Chapter Five.

The researcher found that most of the respondents are very busy people. They are dedicated to volunteerism and have worked many years with the Boy Scouts of America. Many hold a variety of positions with the Scouts. They have other responsibilities that might include their jobs, church work, family responsibilities, and other community services.

When undertaking the task of conducting research, writing a dissertation, and presenting their findings before the Doctoral Review Board, many Scouting commissioners feel inadequate and overwhelmed. The many responsibilities listed previously take priority and they lack encouragement or fail to see the benefit of completing their project. Many felt that the advisor was not available and that information was lacking.

Based upon the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- (1) Assign a temporary advisor at the end of the Master's Degree or at the time the bulletins are distributed in the spring. This would allow the candidates to have someone to communicate with as they think about selecting a topic.
- (2) Provide time during the Candidate's Program (3rd year program) for advisors and candidates to chat and become more familiar with each other. Presently, it seems that the

classes are taught, some communication takes place, but no advisor is assigned until the last day of the weekend.

- (3) Clarify the expectations of communication with the advisor/advisee. Who makes the first contact? When should it be made? What is a typical format for this communication: phone, letter, e-mail?
- (4) Explore the possibility of one-on-one or small group coaching within each council.
- (5) Each council is encouraged to provide an appropriate display area for the dissertations, perhaps at the council office. This would allow the candidates to go by the office and browse.
- (6) A "Commissioners' Corner" in each council's newsletter would give opportunity for each council's commissioners to be kept abreast of happenings in the council. A link at each council's web site (with up-to-date postings) would be helpful in doing research.
- (7) Encourage councils to "sell" the idea of PhD in Commissioner Science. Information is often late getting out, especially to newer commissioners, and their plans have already been made for the weekend that the college is planned.
- (8) Provide information about the class offerings that are required for those who have already been in the program and received an extension of time for writing their dissertation. The one-day offerings, perhaps as commuters, with personal coaching would possibly encourage those who have dropped out to return.

Further study of all the participants who come to the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science is recommended. The research conducted here does not indicate the numbers who attend as first and second year students and fail to return for the third and fourth

years. In reviewing the lists of participants since 1998, there are several participants listed as staff members who have not completed the four-year program. A closer look at those who have completed the Doctoral Program, compared to the list received by the researcher, will also give more information.

It is the belief of the researcher that the Boy Scout commissioners have an abundance of skills, a wealth of information, and a great quantity of patience and love for Scouting. Their minds are full of the ideas and questions they wish to pursue in writing their dissertations. But they procrastinate and perform other special functions, and the time slips up on them all too soon. I hope this research will be valuable to those engaged in presenting the program for the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science.

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Internet: (<http://www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=cm>)

Appendix A - Cover Letter

Maxine Mullins
HC 67, Box 30
Pilgrims Knob, VA 24634
Phone: 276-259-7431

January 25, 2005

Dear Fellow Scouter:

The Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science is part of the continuing education program offered to Commissioners in our service area. I am presently enrolled in the Doctoral Candidate Program of the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science. My topic for study is "Reasons that Doctoral Candidates Fail to Complete Requirements for PhD in Commissioner Science." I need your help.

My study involves collecting data on individuals who have been enrolled during the last ten years and who need only to complete their dissertation to receive their Doctorate in Commissioner Science. The College Registrar supplied your name as having participated in the Candidate Program and not completing the requirements for the PhD.

My data collection involves a survey form, consisting of two parts. The information collected in the first section will be aggregated for description only. No individual profiles will be included. The information collected in the second section will be coded to protect any information given to me. Quotations will be used in a discrete manner, with no identifying data attached.

Therefore, I would like for you to be as open in your comments as possible. If there is information that I have not asked for but that you think is pertinent, please feel free to include it. The information collected will be used for program improvement with the College of Commissioner Science.

Please return the survey form in the enclosed envelope. The results of the study will be available should you desire them. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Maxine Mullins
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosures: questionnaire
Return envelope

Appendix B - Survey form
Piedmont-Appalachian College
Of Commissioner Science

Code _____

Survey for Doctoral Candidate

PART I

Age _____ (Circle) Male or Female Years in Scouting _____

Council _____

Dissertation topic _____

Present Position in Scouting _____

Previous Positions held _____

Child in Scouting Now? (Circle) Yes or No / Previously? (Circle) Yes or No

PART II

Please describe the progress you made in completing your study or project and writing your dissertation (report).

_____ (Use the back if needed.)

Why did you not complete your work? Check as many as you like and indicate with * the reason you feel the strongest about.

_____ Did not start my project/study

_____ Did not finish my project/study

_____ No longer in Scouting

_____ Not enough time to spend on my project

- _____ Not enough information
 - _____ Not enough help from advisor
 - _____ Too much demanded from advisor
 - _____ Just got tired - burn out
 - _____ Not a good writer
 - _____ Didn't like the topic
 - _____ Lack of experience in Scouting
 - _____ I feel I am not qualified to complete it
 - _____ No facilities (typewriter or computer)
 - _____ Finances - can't afford the tuition, time
 - _____ Family/Work problems
 - _____ Other (please describe)
-

Under what conditions would you consider returning to the program? Mark as many as you would like.

- _____ Extension of time
- _____ Another advisor
- _____ Take a minimum of classes - Not repeat the whole program
- _____ New topic
- _____ Personal coaching
- _____ More information on topic
- _____ More information on class offerings
- _____ Different location for Commissioner College

Please make any comments about the Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science. Be as open as possible, since this will be used to improve the program. Remember that all comments will be left in my possession and will not be given to any other individuals.

Appendix C - Quotes from Survey

515 F Did not start - finishing my college degree and did not have time or energy. "The classes were fine. I just did not have the time."

523 F "At the time I attended, the program was well-run." Not volunteering at all, does not expect to reenter. Has to work.

535 M "I have attended the college the past eight years. . . Each year has been a positive experience for me. I am looking forward to attending again this year."

551 F "I completed my project, made the write up, but did not go back the last year to turn it in."

552 F "I enjoyed my classes at the College. I have no desire to return to class." Note: This form was received too late to be included in tabulations. Age 58, former Roundtable Commissioner and Den Leader, no years of experience given, no child in Scouting.

555 M "I think that more or better follow-up would have helped me get started earlier . . .

Overall I think the program at College of Commissioner Science is good. The staff knows their stuff."

560 M. "Basically a good program. A varied format may be helpful...rather than sitting in one room all day. Perhaps more prep work before actually attending sessions." Heard from advisor once.

562 M "The program is great - uplifting. The people are terrific." Note: This form was received too late to be included in the tabulations. Age, 64 1/2; 12 years of Scouting experience, presently on roundtable staff, no children in Scouting, none previously. Half finished, not enough time to spend on project - health reasons. Consider returning with extension of time and minimum of classes.

564 M "Lack of motivation and time. Never got thoughts together." Note: This form was received too late to be included in tabulations. Age 56; Assistant Scout Master, District Training Chair with 17 years of experience, child previously in Scouting. He felt that he is not a good writer.

566 F. Not interested in completing, not a good writer. " The college is good for what it stands for. I always enjoyed going over for the weekend, but the cost is a little steep for no more than you do. At this point, I am just not interested in going back; however it is just me - not anything to do with the college."

571 M. "I am no longer in Scouting - My experience at CC was a strong factor. I have a very negative feeling toward Scouting as a result of my advisor's attitude." Too much demanded.

573 M "Discouraged by course advisor who said that I did not have a good subject. I was told a dissertation wasn't needed and that the answer was simple: Have the boy join a larger troop."