

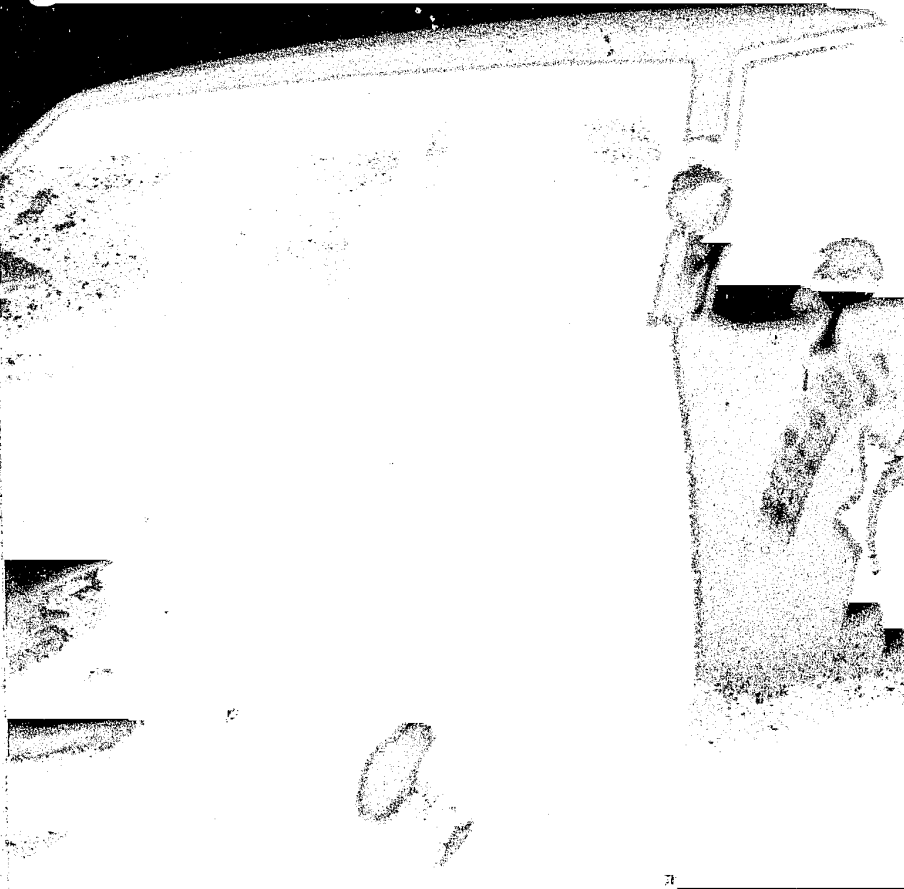
FBI

November 1988

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Driving

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... the most potentially
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FBI National Academy

Attendance Trends From 1976-1987

"Who attends the National Academy is of interest to faculty and administrators in planning curricula and programs with the goal of appropriately enriching the National Academy experience."

By
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and
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The FBI National Academy (FBINA) is an 11-week program designed to increase the knowledge and skills of law enforcement managers throughout the United States and selected foreign nations. Each year, approximately 800 to 1,000 officers attend one of four sessions at the National Academy. The FBINA offers a wide variety of courses in such disciplines as forensic science, law, education and communication arts, behavioral science, and management, as well as training in law enforcement arts, physical fitness, and firearms. Many of these courses are accredited by the University of Virginia, and students may earn

as many as 16 undergraduate credit hours or 9 graduate credit hours for successfully completing the program.

During each session of the FBINA, a survey is administered to obtain demographic information from the attendees. The survey requests information regarding agency type and size represented in the student body, as well as information concerning incentives which may be offered to officers obtaining college credits. Students also provide data regarding their age, organizational rank, years of experience, and level of education.

The purpose of this study is to examine changes in the various charac-

teristics of FBINA attendees and their agencies. These data may provide insight for police officers who are considering attending the FBINA or for police managers who are encouraging their officers to seek an appointment to the FBINA program.

Data are available for approximately 12 years, from April 1976 to December 1987, representing 46 sessions and almost 11,000 individuals. The 46 sessions were divided into three 4-year periods and aggregated within each period. Dividing the data in this manner enabled comparison of percentage differences from one time period to another.

a code 3 run? This will depend on a lot of variables and will ultimately be the decision of the individual officer. The best answer to this question is: You can't help anyone if you don't get there! Remember: The red light and siren only request the right-of-way. They don't grant it. When traveling code 3, keep in mind that the high-pitched sound of a siren is very directional. It travels in a straight line and will bounce off solid objects, such as a car trunk.

Finally, remember that it is easy to become personally caught up in the

heat of the chase when the adrenalin starts flowing. Catching the violator becomes a matter of pride. An officer's vision tunnels in on the violator to the exclusion of existing hazards. It takes a great deal of maturity to discontinue a pursuit when the hazards posed to innocent bystanders can't be justified. An officer should not be reprimanded for terminating a pursuit; however, disciplinary action is justifiable for officers exercising poor judgment in *continuing* a pursuit. Granted, when the violator runs, there is reasonable cause to pur-

sue, as it might be a stolen car or a fleeing felon. However, it frequently turns out to be only a frightened juvenile without a driver's license. The final question must be asked. Are the risks to the public and the officer associated with a pursuit worth the possible consequences? That question is one each officer must answer before initiating a pursuit or deciding if a pursuit should be terminated. These are critical decisions, because ultimately, the officer will be held accountable for the outcome.

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Slap-Fire Shotgun

This "slap-fire" shotgun was constructed by a local teenager, reported the Brunswick, OH, Police Department.

The weapon is constructed of two steel tubes of different diameters, allowing one tube to fit inside the other. The receiver is 10 inches long, while the thinner tube, the barrel, is 14½ inches long. Each tube is equipped with a hand-hold consisting of a metal rod welded at a 90-degree angle to the tube. The rear of the receiver tube has a welded cap. A small screw welded to the base of the cap acts as a firing pin.

The weapon fires a 12-gauge shotgun shell, held in place by the rim of the shell. The barrel tube is inserted into the receiver and forced back, bringing the firing pin into contact with the shell's primer. Only moderate force is required to fire the weapon, which is accurate up to 15 feet.

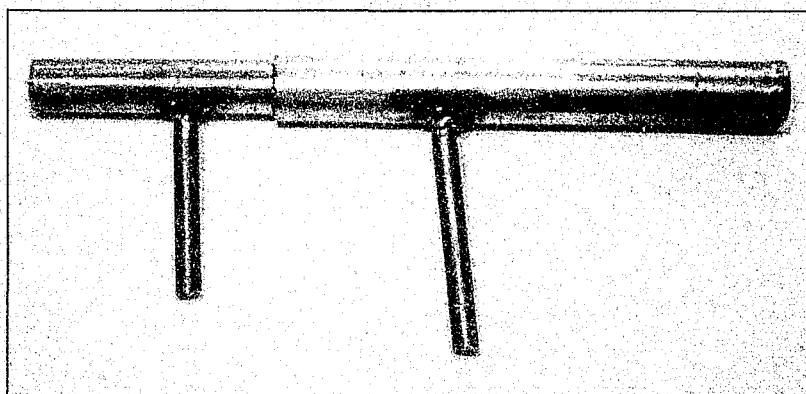
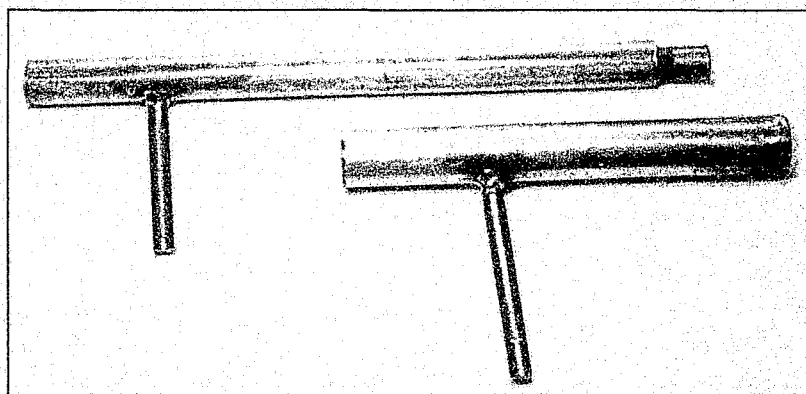
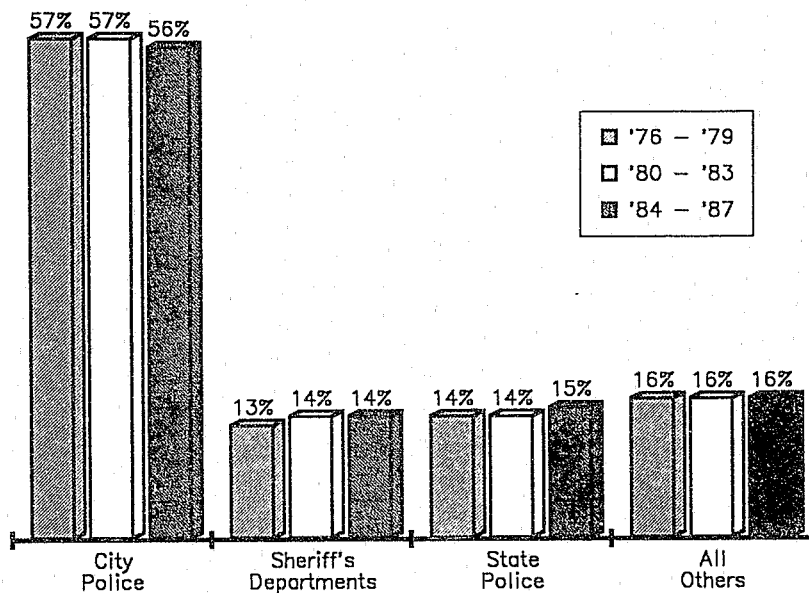


Figure 1. Percent of Attendees by Agency Type.



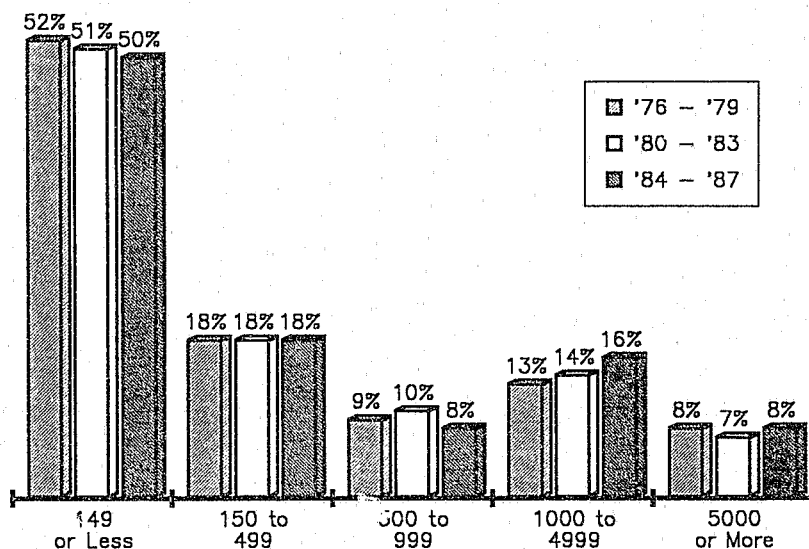
Agency Type

The types of agencies represented by the FBINA student body were categorized as city police departments/authorities, sheriffs' departments, State police/authorities, and others. (See fig. 1.) Representation of these four agency types remained fairly constant over time. In all three time periods, city police were the most highly represented by those attending the FBINA, with well over one-half of the students representing this type of agency. Sheriff's departments and State police agencies were represented in about equal numbers in each time period. These three agency types provided some 85 percent of the students who attended the FBINA between 1976 and 1987.

Agency Size

Agencies were grouped by size as under 150, 150-499, 500-999, 1000-4999, and 5000 or more staff members. (See fig. 2.) These five agency-size groups showed very little fluctuation in representation over time. The largest increase in representation was for agencies employing a staff of 1000-4999; this group increased from 13 percent of the student body in the first time period to 16 percent in the third time period. For all three periods, the highest percent of attendees were from those agencies employing less than 150 personnel; they represented about one-half of the FBINA student body.

Figure 2. Percent of Attendees by Agency Size.



Career Incentives

Students were asked if their agencies provide incentives for the successful completion of college credit courses. The response choices provided were no incentives, complete reimbursement for college credits earned, partial reimbursement for college credits earned,

“The majority of students who attended the National Academy were from city police departments or authorities and from agencies with under 150 staff.”

promotional opportunities, or salary increases for courses completed. Students were also asked if their agencies provide released time from duties to attend college classes.

Increasing numbers of students participating in the FBINA program reported that their agencies were offering repayment incentives for courses taken, but fewer students reported that incentives such as released time to attend classes during duty hours, salary increases, or promotional opportunities were being offered. (See fig. 3.) The largest increase was for partial reimbursement; 29 percent of the students reported that their agencies provide this incentive in the first time period compared to 37 percent in the most recent time period. Students reporting that total reimbursement was offered showed a slight increase from 18 percent to 20 percent. All the remaining incentives, time off to attend classes, salary increases, and promotion opportunities for college credits earned, showed a decrease ranging from 2 percent to 5 percent over the three time periods.

A large number of students reported that their agencies offer no incentives for formal education. The percent of students reporting no incentives ranged from 43 percent to 47 percent and showed no consistent change over time.

Organizational Rank

Information was collected for 16 positions or ranks of law enforcement officers attending the FBINA; these were reduced to the following categories: Senior executive officers (including chief of police, assistant chief, deputy chief, sheriff, and undersheriff), captains, lieutenants, sergeants, and others. (See fig. 4.) The number of

Figure 3. Percent of Attendees by Career Incentive.

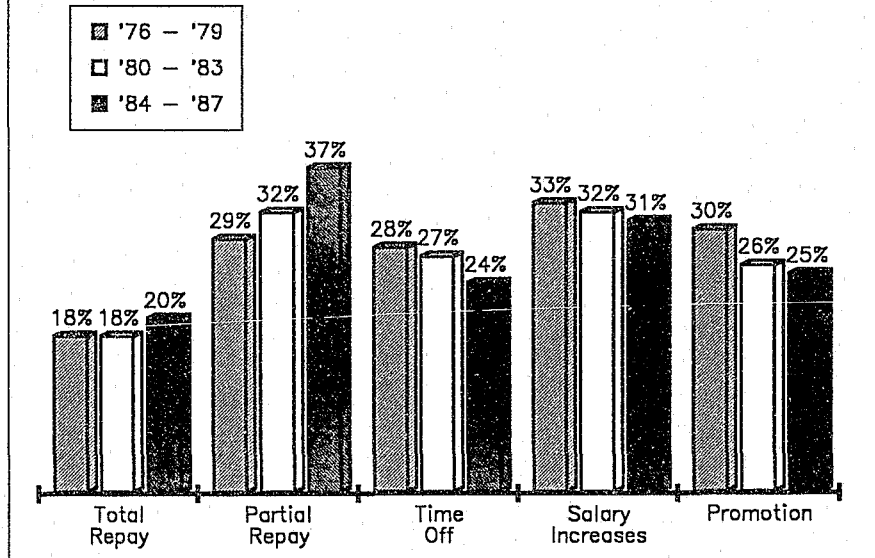


Figure 4. Percent of Attendees by Organizational Rank.

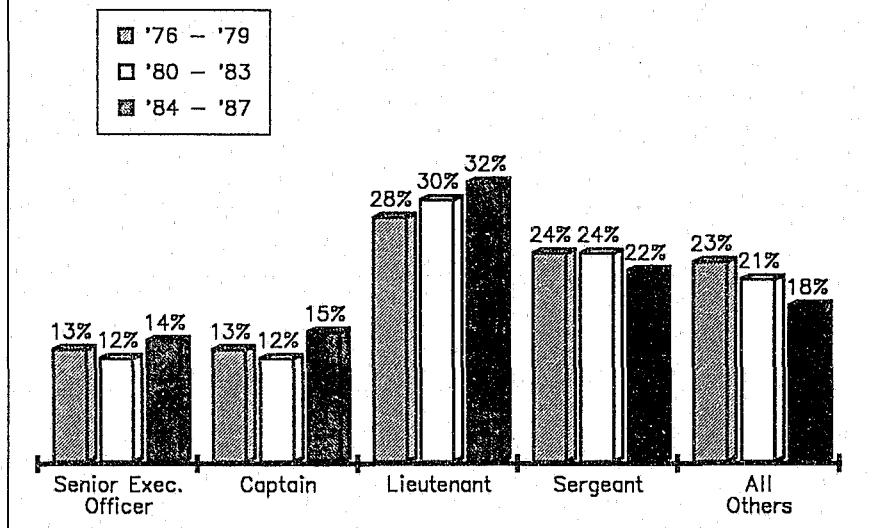
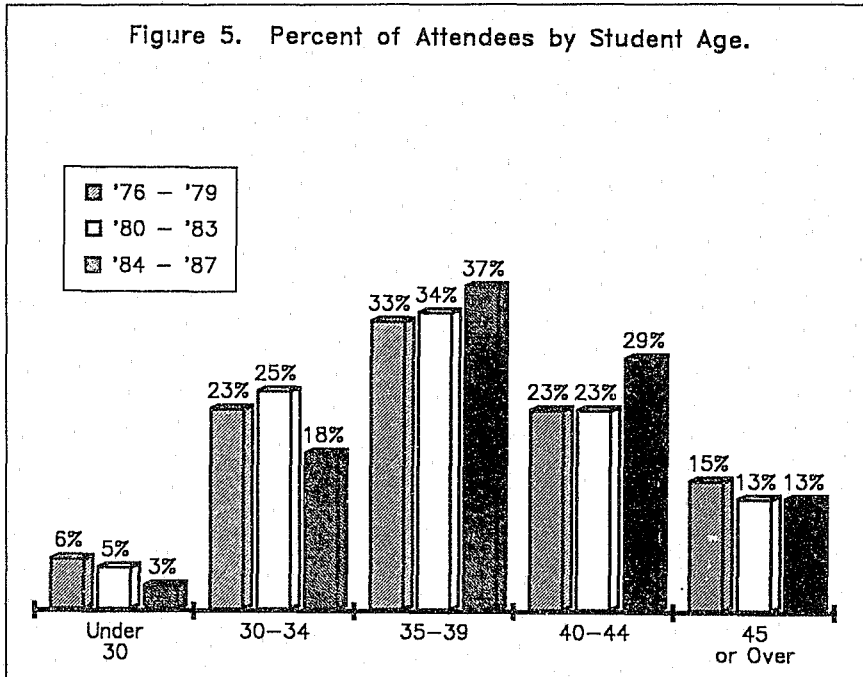


Figure 5. Percent of Attendees by Student Age.

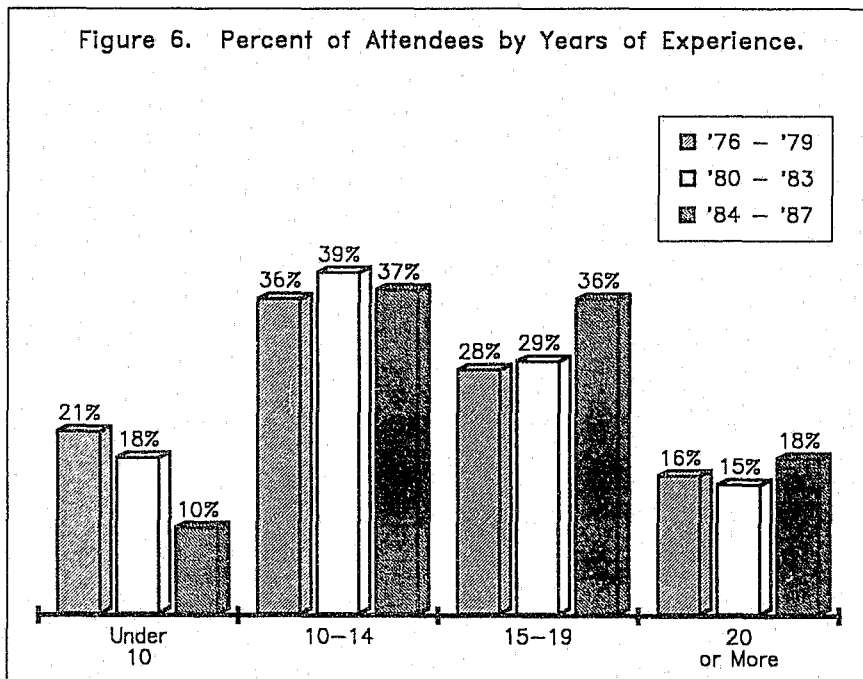


higher-ranking officers, i.e., senior executive officers, captains, and lieutenants, generally increased in representation from the first to the third time period, with increases ranging from 1 percent to 4 percent. Representation in the remaining categories, i.e., sergeants and others, declined, with the decrease ranging from 2 percent to 5 percent.

Student Age

The average (mean) age of students, 38 years, has remained stable across the three time periods; however, when different age groups were examined, changes over time were apparent. (See fig. 5.) For the three time periods, representation in the student body decreased for both younger and older officers, i.e., officers under 35 and over 44. The largest decrease was for officers 30-34 years old; this group declined by 5 percent, from 23 percent of the student body for the first time period to 18 percent for the third time period. On the other hand, the two middle groups, ages 35-39 and 40-44, increased in representation by 10 percent.

Figure 6. Percent of Attendees by Years of Experience.



Years of Experience

The average (mean) number of years of experience for officers attending the FBINA increased slightly over the three time periods (mean years = 14, 14, 15). A different pattern emerged when years of experience were grouped into categories—under 10 years, 10-14 years, 15-19 years, and 20 or more years. (See fig. 6.) For those officers with fewer than 10 years of experience, there was an 11-percent decrease in representation, from 21 percent in the first time period to 10 percent in the last time period. The largest

“... students are arriving at the Academy better prepared academically for their studies than they were 12 years ago.”

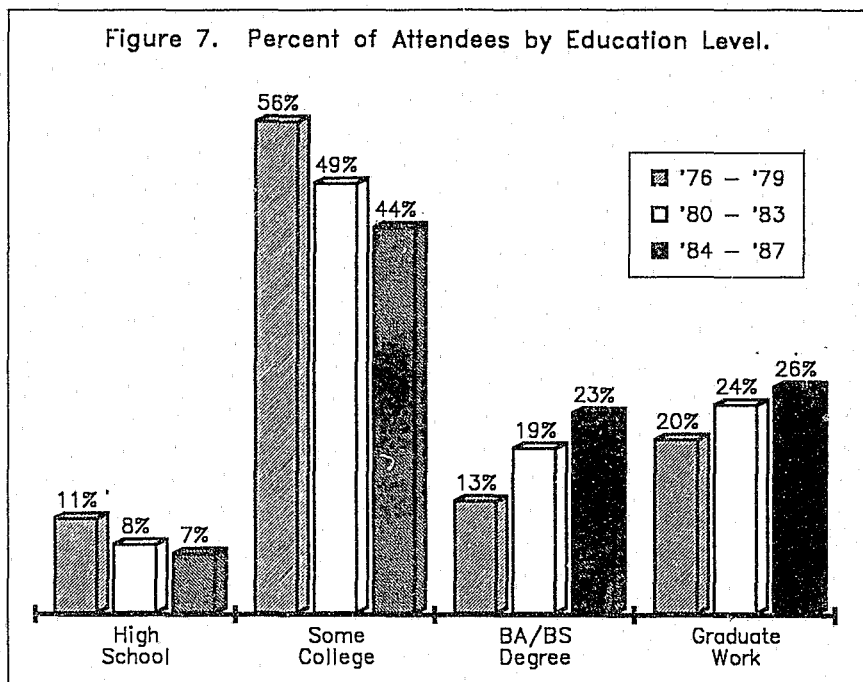
increase was for those officers with 15-19 years of experience; this group increased 9 percent, from 28 percent in the first time period to 36 percent in the third time period.

Education Level

The education levels of FBINA students were grouped as high school, some college (including working toward an associate or bachelor's degree, or holding an associate degree), B.A./B.S. degree, and graduate work (including work toward master's, doctorate, or law degrees, or holding these degrees.) The percent of students with a 4-year college degree or beyond has increased substantially over the three time periods. (See fig. 7.) There was a 10-percent increase for students with a B.A./B.S. degree and a 6-percent increase for those students working toward or completing advanced degrees. Conversely, those students who had undergraduate course credits but had not attained a B.A./B.S. degree decreased by 12 percent from the first to the third time period. Those students who had no formal studies beyond high school decreased by 4 percent over the three time periods and represented a small percentage of the student body.

Years Since College Attendance

Students were asked when they last attended college for credit—within the last year, within the last 2 years, within the last 5 years, and over 5 years. The response rate for this question ranged from 76 percent to 78 percent compared to the other survey questions where the response rate ranged from 96 percent to 99 percent. Because the 76-78 percent response rate is minimally acceptable by survey standards, some caution should be used in generalizing the results to all National Academy students.



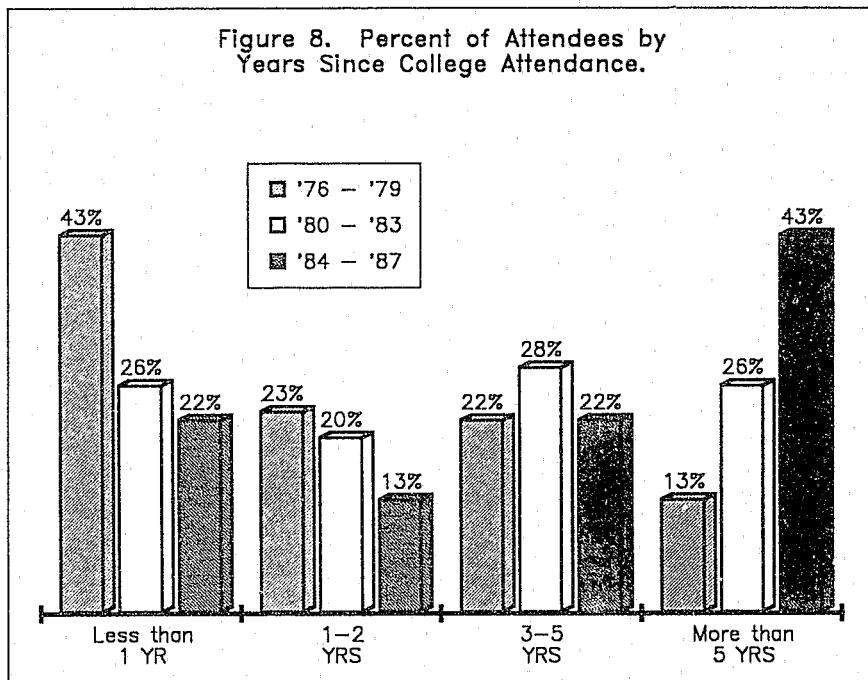
For the three periods, the length of time between FBINA students' last enrollment in accredited college courses and their attendance at the National Academy had increased substantially. (See fig. 8.) The percentage of students who reported taking courses for credit within 1 year prior to FBINA attendance decreased from 43 percent in the first time period to 22 percent in the third time period. Those in the 1- to 2-year group also decreased from 23 percent to 13 percent. Further, those students who had not taken college courses for credit in more than 5 years increased from 13 percent in the first time period to 43 percent in the third time period.

Discussion

The various characteristics of agencies and officers who participated in the FBINA program show different trends over the past 12 years. Of the

agency characteristics examined, the representation of students from the different types and sizes of agencies has remained fairly constant over the three time periods covered in this study. The majority of students who attended the National Academy were from city police departments or authorities and from agencies with under 150 staff. However, career incentives provided by the agencies to encourage their officers to continue their formal education changed over the past 12 years. Partial reimbursement for courses taken replaced salary increases as the most prevalent career incentive over the three time periods; students who reported their agency offered partial reimbursement showed an 8-percent increase from the earliest time period to the last time period. Released time, salary increases, and promotional opportunities as incentives for formal ed-

Figure 8. Percent of Attendees by Years Since College Attendance.



ucation showed a combined decrease of 11 percent, as reported by students. This may reflect increased budget restraints experienced by many law enforcement agencies.¹

Various student characteristics have also changed over the past 12 years. Agencies sent slightly more high-ranking officers and slightly fewer low-ranking officers to the most recent FBINA sessions. Substantially more officers aged 35 to 44 attended the more recent FBINA sessions. Agencies also sent officers with more experience; there was a marked decrease in the number of officers with less than 10 years of experience who attended the most recent FBINA sessions.

One of the trends in law enforcement has been for agencies to encourage, or require, advanced degrees for their officers.² This trend appears to be

reflected in the student body; students are arriving at the Academy better prepared academically for their studies than they were 12 years ago. Almost half of the National Academy students had an undergraduate degree or higher, increasing from 33 percent of the student body for the first time period to 49 percent for the third time period. The percent of students having less than a bachelor's degree has decreased from 67 percent in the first time period to 51 percent in the third time period.

Interestingly enough, however, students who attended the National Academy more recently had been away from the classroom longer than students who attended earlier sessions. Forty-three percent of the students had not taken a course in over 5 years in the last time period compared to 13 percent in the first time period. One explanation

may be that officers are obtaining higher levels of education prior to beginning their law enforcement careers. Another explanation may be that officers are entering law enforcement prior to obtaining degrees but are continuing their education and obtaining a degree at an earlier career stage.

The preceding discussion of trends in the FBINA profile data should be viewed with some caution. While the trends exist for this 12-year time period, generalizing the continuation of the trends for the future is not warranted. For example, it cannot be assumed that in the next 12 years, the number of students with undergraduate degrees will show an additional 15 percent increase from 49 percent to 65 percent of the students.

Conclusion

Who attends the National Academy is of interest to faculty and administrators in planning curricula and programs with the goal of appropriately enriching the National Academy experience. Further, this article should assure prospective students that they will find colleagues with similar backgrounds at the National Academy. At the same time, they will be challenged to broaden their perceptions through exposure to a wide diversity of law enforcement professionals.

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Footnotes

¹H.J. Miran, et. al., *Managing the Pressures of Inflation in Criminal Justice*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC, 1979; L.D. Stellwagen and K.A. Wylie, *Strategies for Supplementing the Police Budget*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC, 1985.

²J.L. Chronister, et. al., *A Study of Factors Influencing the Continuing Education of Law Enforcement Officers*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC, 1982; International City Management Association, *Baseline Data Report*, "Police Personnel Practices," Washington, DC, January 1983; J. LeDoux, et. al., "Higher Education for Law Enforcement: Half a Century of Growth," *The Police Chief*, vol. 51, No. 4, April 1984; Stellwagen and Wylie, supra note 1.