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Perceptions of African-american Seniors Regarding Factors of Institutional Support at Three Predominantly White Tennessee State-supported Institutions of Higher Education

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UMI

PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SENIORS REGARDING FACTORS OF

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AT THREE PREDOMINANTLY

WHITE TENNESSEE STATE SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS

OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Delmar L. Mack

May 1999

UMI Number: 9929533

APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Committee of

DELMAR L. MACK

met on the

8th day of March, 1999.

The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that his study be submitted to the Graduate Council, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.

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Chair, Graduate Committee

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Signed on behalf of   Dean, School of Graduate
the Graduate Council   Studies

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SENIORS REGARDING FACTORS OF

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AT THREE PREDOMINANTLY

WHITE TENNESSEE STATE SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS

OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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This study of African-American seniors at East Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville was conducted to solicit student responses about the perceptions of their schools, university services, and experiences at those institutions.

The study employed quantitative data and descriptive analysis was performed. Data collected in this study described the demographic characteristics of the students and their perceptions, attitudes, experiences and level of involvement in the campus environment for African-American seniors.

Data in this study indicated perceptions that Tennessee must be committed to increasing financial support to the universities. Universities must be committed to increase faculty and student involvement, create a culturally diverse environment and expand existing recruitment and retention programs.

DEDICATION

The person who made a significant impact on my life was my grandmother, Mrs. Dorothy Mack. Dorothy counseled and taught me the meaning of being blessed by God. She never allowed me to stray far from the beaten path established by her. She was a very strong spiritual woman who held two generations together in the times of the great depression and beyond. Those of us who lived with Dorothy loved and respected her immensely. There were many times I felt that things in my life were unfair, particularly to Blacks in the nineteen fifties, sixties, and seventies. These times never seemed to trouble Dorothy, who was a strong Black woman and mother of eight. Dorothy did not allow me or my siblings to doubt our abilities, goals, and dreams. Her son, James A. Mack was the first African-American to graduate from East Tennessee State College with honors (1963). In life and now in her absence there are no words of expression that can match the eternal love I have for Dorothy. I will always be unpretentiously grateful to her for loving and caring for me when I was all alone.

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I appreciate all committee members for their participation. A special thanks to Dr. Nancy Dishner, Committee Chair, who had faith in me and provided necessary support and expert guidance in the final phase of my doctoral writing.

Dr. Nancy Dishner

Dr. Bonnie Marrs

Dr. Hal Knight

Dr. Terry Tollefson

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A National Center for Education Statistics in a 1996 report found that Blacks on the average take longer than Whites to complete college. Of the 1990 college graduates, 65% of Blacks completed in five or fewer years compared to 72% of Whites. Taking longer to graduate may result from changing schools or majors, stopping out, or taking a reduced course load for financial, academic, or personal reasons. The additional time in college can be costly to the individual by delaying entrance into the full-time labor market (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1996).

Obtaining a high quality education has always been seen as one of the best ways to improve one's social and economic prospects, especially for someone who is socially or economically disadvantaged. To provide Black and disadvantaged students with equal access to postsecondary education, the federal government passed the Higher Education Act of 1965. For the first time students could qualify for government grants or loans based on need rather than strictly based on merit (Levin & Levin, 1991).

Black children have traditionally been at an educational disadvantage compared with White children. The reasons may include: (a) lower average levels of parental

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education, (b) a greater likelihood of living with only one parent, (c) fewer resources in their communities, and (d) a greater percentage of children experiencing poverty. For instance in 1992, 46% of Black children, as opposed to 16% of White children, lived in a family with an income level below the poverty line (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992; NCES, 1994).

As a result of the 1965 Higher Education Act some progress has been made, but Blacks continue to trail Whites in many areas. Even though fewer Black students are dropping out of school than a decade ago, their graduation rates are still much lower than those of White students. The percentage of Blacks ages 16-24 who are high school dropouts has declined from 21% in the early 1970s to 14% in 1993. The dropout rate for Whites has decreased less during this period from 12% to 8%, (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992; NCES, 1994).

Blacks are also less likely than Whites to make an immediate transition from high school to college. Academic progress made by Blacks in higher education is not as dramatic as the recent academic improvements at the secondary levels. Overall, about 30% of Black high school graduates 16-24 years of age were enrolled in college as undergraduates during the late 1980s, about the same as a decade earlier. In contrast, about 38% of White students

were enrolled in college in 1990, up from 30% a decade earlier (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1994; NCES, 1994).

Today, recruitment and retention of African-American students in institutions of higher education are still a concern. Blacks in the United States still suffer lower economic prosperity and social status levels as compared to the White majority. Higher education often serves as the best means of social mobility available to our nation's youth. As the gap in earnings between high school and college students continues to widen, college has become increasingly more important for Blacks (NCES, 1996).

Tinto (1993) indicated that the ability of students to assimilate and adapt to the campus culture is directly related to retention and persistence to graduation. Black students generally are less likely than White students to see themselves as integrated within the mainstream of life in largely White colleges.

Additional evidence shows that the campus environment in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) makes Black students feel uncomfortable and prevents them from full participation in campus life. These feelings of not belonging consequently may contribute to attrition by Blacks and females (Canabal, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

Although many institutions of higher education actively recruit Black students, only those institutions with good retention strategies become successful in graduating an increased number of Blacks. The problem is that many schools place little emphasis on retention efforts that may result in a low retention and graduation rate. The entire campus must shoulder the responsibility of development and carrying out of a campus-wide retention program (Sherman, Giles, & Green, 1994).

Previous research studies regarding student retention have focused on isolating variables such as counseling, instruction, campus culture and the social environment. Many of these studies have also explored the effects of intervention programs aimed at curbing the attrition of students in undergraduate and graduate programs (Levin & Levin, 1991; Canabal, 1993).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the African-American seniors' perceptions of institutional support at three predominately White Tennessee state supported universities to determine parameters that supported their ability to persist to graduation. There are no current studies that examine African-American seniors' perceptions

of institutional support regarding persistence to graduate
at three predominately White Tennessee state supported
institutions of higher education.

Significance of the Problem

In March 1992, 80% of U.S. minorities ages 25 to 29 had
earned high school diplomas. Only one-third enrolled in
college and less than 12% earned bachelor's degrees. Blacks
were graduating from college at less than half the rate of
White students in the same age group (Manzo, 1994a). Racial
and ethnic differences in college enrollment rates may
reflect differences in access to and persistence in higher
education for groups with varying social and economic
backgrounds (Manzo, 1994b).

Differing enrollment rates are also leading indicators
of future differences in the earnings and productivity
associated with postsecondary education. Between 1993 and
1995, White high school graduates ages 18-24 were more
likely to be enrolled in college than were their Black and
Hispanic counterparts. For these years, the average
enrollment rate for Whites was nine percentage points higher
than that of both Blacks and Hispanics. The percentage of
high school graduates ages 18-24 enrolled in college was
higher in 1995 than in 1972 for Blacks and Whites. During
this period, the college enrollment rates for Whites grew 11
percentage points with most of the growth occurring after

1981. College enrollment rates for Blacks of the same age group grew moderately over the period, a total of eight percentage points (NCES, 1997b).

Enrollment rates for older adults, high school graduates ages 35 or older, were much lower than those for their younger counterparts ages 18-24 regardless of racial and ethnic group. Between 1993 and 1995 college enrollment rates were similar for White (8.2%), Black (8.1%), and Hispanic (9.5%) high school graduates ages 25-34 (NCES, 1997b).

The gains in broadening access to higher education made in the 1960s and 1970s should not be assumed to have solved the disparity (Manzo, 1994a). The ultimate challenge is not to create assessment programs, but to develop comprehensive services that respond to the academic needs of students. Effective student retention programs meet the unique characteristics of institutions and their students' needs (Sherman et al., 1994).

Limitations

The study was limited to examining the institutional perceptions of African-Americans seniors at three selected four-year, predominately White, Tennessee state supported universities and their persistence to graduate. The African-American seniors' perceptions of institutional support at three PWIs Tennessee state-supported universities

may differ from those attending private institutions and other state institutions. These differences may occur from an inability of those schools to have access to adequate state or federal funding. The impact of this study was to review the successful retention strategies as they were perceived by African-American seniors at those institutions. The assumption was that a majority of those seniors would persist to graduate and the survey instrument would be helpful in identifying those strategies.

Overview of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one describes the broad issues related to the study. Chapter one also includes a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the problem, and limitations of the study.

Chapter two presents a historical perspective of selected four-year Tennessee state supported institutions and characteristics of Black students. Statistical information is provided to support the need for this study and the challenges that Blacks are faced with today. Chapter two also identifies the academic progress that has been made and explores the direction that postsecondary institutions should take in preparing for an increasing diverse student population.

Chapter three presents a discussion of the methodology, the target population, research design, design of the instrument, procedure for data collection, data analysis, research questions, and summary. Chapter four consists of presentation of descriptive data analysis and a quantitative summary that guided the study. Chapter five presents the summary, comments, recommendations, and suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature included research in the following areas: (a) a historical perspective of Black equality within Tennessee higher education, (b) Black student characteristics, perceptions, persistence, and attainment in education; (c) statistical information on minorities in education, (d) social aspects, progress, outcomes, and gender differences of African-Americans at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) in higher education.

Introduction

Recruitment and retention of Black students in institutions of higher education are a national concern. This concern is based on the disturbing under-representation of Black students on campuses throughout the nation as documented by various reports. Chapter two will provide a historical perspective and a foundation to support the purpose for investigating this problem.

Blacks in the United States have long suffered lower economic prosperity and social status relative to the White population. Higher education often serves as the best means of social mobility available to our nation's young people. For example, graduating from college is associated with more

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stable patterns of employment and higher earnings. As the gap in earnings between high school and college graduates continues to widen, attending college has become even more important for minorities who are trying to enter into a globally competitive labor market (NCES, 1996).

Historical Perspective of Tennessee Supported Institutions

Before 1954 Tennessee Higher Education was segregated by law and by the Tennessee constitution. In 1968, no African-American faculty were employed at any of the historically White higher education schools and the African-American student population was minimal. Because of this partiality, the Geier lawsuit was filed on May 28, 1968, by a student, Rita Sanders Geier. The suit was initiated by a Black faculty member at Tennessee State University (TSU), seeking state-wide access to higher education. In 1983 a new set of plaintiffs, other White faculty and students at TSU, filed a motion to intervene in the pending court suit. The allegations stated that Tennessee State University was also becoming more segregated. The court decision in 1984 resolved inequities of the original and amended version resulting in the Geier Stipulation of Settlement (Modisher, 1996).

The Stipulation has agreements in the following three general areas:

Student Enrollment and Retention - The stipulation requires each institution to set long-term other-race enrollment goals. Other-race means Black at historical White institutions and White at Tennessee State University and Shelby State Community College, both being historically Black institutions. These goals included: (a) intensive other-race student recruitment efforts, (b) review of campus racial image to ensure that it is not shown as single race, (c) a pre-professional program designed to prepare students for graduate studies in law and health problems, (d) developmental (remedial) programs to address the special needs of academically at-risk students and to increase their chances of success in the college program, and (e) mandatory screening of all entering first-year students using the national college board test to decide whether potential students have the basic academic competencies necessary for college-level work (Modisher, 1996).

Employment - Long range employment goals are set based on the availability in the job market. This is required by federal law and the data are used in Geier programs. The stipulation also specified that progress under Geier will be a factor in performance evaluation of institutional administrators (Modisher, 1996).

Tennessee State University was the only public historically Black institution in the state underfunded and neglected compared with historically White institutions in

Tennessee. When created, Tennessee State University was specifically given one quarter of the funding per FTE student allocated to historically White institutions created by the same statute. The stipulation required enhancement of the Tennessee State University's physical facilities and academic programs to compensate for this past disparity. The Tennessee Board of Regents also reviewed and eliminated program duplication between Tennessee State University and Middle Tennessee State University (Modisher, 1996).

In summary, the primary purpose of this stipulation of Settlement was the elimination of Tennessee's dual system of higher education, and to maximize and improve educational opportunities for Blacks. The parties agreed that statewide access to public higher education in the State of Tennessee by Black students and the degree of Black presence in faculty and administrative positions statewide not be decreased because of the application of the provisions of this stipulation (Modisher, 1996).

Black Student Characteristics

In an extensive review of the literature on college attrition from 1950 to 1975, Pantagnes and Creedon (1978) found that demographic variables such as age, sex, socioeconomic status (father's occupation, family income, parental education, ethnicity, and social status), hometown

location and size, as well as size and type of high school, account for marginal differences in determining student attrition or persistence (National Center For Education Statistics (NCES), 1997b; NCES 1997c).

Christoffel (1986) noted some variables that led to attrition among Black students. These included low levels of parental education, poor high school preparation, lack of adequate advising in high school, poor study habits, low education goals, lack of parental financial aid, and full-time employment and were in many ways similar to those for all students. These variables, however, are intensified for Black students who typically enter college with more than one deficit (Cummins, 1986; Fleming, 1984; Pulliams, 1977).

Astin (1975), Tinto (1975b), Pascarella and Terenzini (1979) report correlates of student characteristics with college success. Frequently, these center primarily on retention and are based on self-reported responses to a questionnaire. Pascarella and Terenzini conclude that their self-report instrument "may be useful in identifying potential freshman year voluntary dropouts during the second semester of the freshman year" (p. 72). Rugg (1982) replicated these results at a second, very similar institution. However, in both studies the questionnaire was administered about midway through the second semester, when it was likely that students had already solidified a decision to stay or leave. Thus, it probably would have

been much easier to simply ask students what their plans were once the remaining six or seven weeks of the term had expired (Sherman et al., 1994).

A group of studies conducted by Tracey and Sedlacek represented an effort to specifically predict retention of Black students. Eight predictor variables were measured via a self-reporting questionnaire administered upon admission. Tracey and Sedlacek concluded that these variables were especially valid for Black students. The variables were: positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, ability to understand and deal with racism, demonstrated community service, preference for long-range goals, availability of strong support person, successful leadership experience, and knowledge acquired in a specific field (Sherman et al., 1994).

A majority of the Tracey and Sedlacek research in 1991 was conducted at the University of Maryland-College Park, except for some studies with medical, pharmacy, and law students. Thus, the applicability of its conclusions may be limited. There is little controversy that these variables do influence predictions. The results obtained appear to hold for studies of all students. Tracey and Sedlacek did not consistently find the same variables to predict with the same potency. These noncognitive variables do not increase predictability to a level where a reasonable professional would be comfortable. While these data may provide useful

information for advising, the same is true for other devices
and approaches. The noncognitive variables are particularly
troubling for selection because they represent many of the
goals an excellent college education should foster.
Requiring students to possess these attributes upon
admission may reduce the institution's opportunity to
significantly influence its students (Sherman et al., 1994).

None of these investigators was able to identify and
measure attributes upon which college success could be
meaningfully predicted. The most obvious dimensions of
student retention were generally addressed in tutorial
programs, peer counselors, monitoring of student progress,
and a variety of efforts to assist in career selection,
study skills, financial, and personal problems. These
efforts have apparently been somewhat successful in aiding
Black students to remain in school after the first year.
Discrepancy between the performance of Black and White
students continues, leading to suspicions that some
dimensions of academic success may be missed (Sherman et
al., 1994).

A greater racial/ethnic diversity of students is
related to more heterogeneity of language and culture in our
nation's schools. The characteristics and needs that
children bring to school based on their race/ethnicity,
family backgrounds and economic well-being influence the
environment in which learning occurs (NCES, 1997a).

The quality of education is reflected not only in the class subjects taught and in student achievement levels but also in the learning environment provided by the schools. A school's learning environment is enhanced by a diverse student population; the safety of school classrooms; facilities; behaviors; enrollment and attendance patterns of the students themselves (NCES, 1997e).

The racial/ethnic composition of the student population contributes to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of the nation's elementary and secondary schools. With the rich opportunities for learning that diversity brings come challenges and risks associated with poverty, which is more concentrated among minority than nonminority students. Growth in the Hispanic population over the past decades has increased Hispanic representation in schools of all types. Black and Hispanic students are more concentrated in central city public schools than in other areas. In 1993, Black and Hispanic students together made up more than 50% of students in central city public schools (NCES, 1997e).

Student racial/ethnic diversity at the postsecondary level is less prevalent than at the elementary/secondary level. In 1993, more than one out of five postsecondary students were members of minority groups, compared to one out of three public elementary/secondary students. Colleges and universities have sought to increase the racial/ethnic

diversity of their student bodies, and minority enrollment increased from 15% in 1976 to 23% in 1993. This increase was due primarily to the increased enrollment of Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students, whereas the enrollment of Black students remained fairly steady at 9 to 10% of all students (NCES, 1997e; NCES, 1998b).

Racial and ethnic diversity has increased substantially in the United States in the last two decades and is projected to increase even more in the decades to come. In 1995, 67% of U.S. children ages 5-17 were White, 15% were Black, 13% were Hispanic, and 5% were Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaskan Native. In contrast, between 2000 and 2020, the number of White children ages 5-13 is projected to decrease by 11%, and the number of White children ages 14-17 is projected to decrease by 10%. For the same age group, Black and Hispanic numbers will increase from 15-60% respectively (see Table 1) (NCES, 1997a).

It is important for institutions to be prepared for this shift in the student population. The success of the schools and their graduates may be negatively affected if these institutions are not prepared for a diverse student population. Student diversity allows for professional, educational, and social growth for administration, faculty, staff, and students.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN THE POPULATION OF CHILDREN
AGES 15-17

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage change	
	1993 to 2000	2000 to 2020
White		
Ages 5-13	2.9	-11.2
Ages 14-17	10.1	-10.3
Black		
Ages 5-13	12.9	15.4
Ages 14-17	11.5	20.0
Hispanic		
Ages 5-13	29.8	47.0
Ages 14-17	23.6	60.6
Other		
Ages 5-13	32.5	67.2
Ages 14-17	45.1	73.3

Note: The Social Context of Education, 1997a, p. 5.

Perceptions of Black Students in Education

Sherman reviewed a study conducted by Boyd on face-to-
face interviews with Black students at 40 colleges and
universities across the United States during the 1972-73
academic year. The study offered recommendations based on
the responses to the interviews (Sherman et al., 1994).

Institutions should attempt to be more responsive to
the needs of Black students, especially maintaining
financial aid at current or increased levels. The number of
Black students at predominantly White colleges should

continue to increase dramatically as well as the number of
Black faculty and staff (Sherman et al., 1994).

Colleges should recruit Black students to demonstrate
recognition of their diversity rather than concentrate on
their multiple disadvantages (e.g. social, economic,
parent's level of education). Academic support to Black
students should be provided in various forms such an
providing mentoring programs and financial assistance
(Sherman et al., 1994).

A variety of majors and open channels of communication
from college administration and faculty to all Black
students should be maintained. Colleges should plan ahead
for Black students and staff in order to meet their annual
or long-range goals rather than drift from crisis to crisis
in meeting recruitment and retention needs (Sherman et al.,
1994).

Persistence of Black Students in Education

Tracey and Sedlacek (1982) also found that variables
such as social and economic environment correlated more
closely with Black student retention than academic variables
such as test scores and grades. They concluded that Black
students who achieved satisfactory grades and stayed in
school were similar to Black students who dropped out of
school.

Both groups had comparable levels of self-confidence and realistic self-appraisals. They found that the key difference between the two groups of Black students (persisters and non-persisters) was the fact that the Black students who continued had more support from family and community. The researchers concluded that college success for Black students should be examined with regard to enrollment status and then with regard to grades (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985).

Studies by Spady concluded that shared group values, grade performance, environmental fit or congruence, and friendship support led to increased social integration. Social integration then increased institutional commitment. Institutional commitment reduced the likelihood of dropping out (Spady, 1970, 1971). However, elements of social and academic integration, like personal interaction with other students and with faculty members, appeared to be more important to Black students' persistence in college than to non-minority students. The feeling of being integrated into the mainstream of institutional life seemed to characterize the experiences of Black college students who persisted to graduation (Churchill & Iwai, 1981; Tinto, 1975a, 1982).

Among bachelor's degree seekers, Whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders are more likely to persist toward a bachelor's degree than are their Black and Hispanic counterparts. Half of all students beginning postsecondary

education at two-or four-year colleges indicate that their initial degree goal is a bachelor's degree. Among beginning students seeking bachelor's degrees in 1989-90, 63% had either completed or were still working toward a bachelor's degree in spring 1994. Whites and Asian were more likely than Blacks or Hispanic to have either earned a bachelor's degree. An additional eight percent had earned an associate degree or a vocational certificate (NCES, 1996).

The educational attainment of 25-to 29-year olds increased between 1971 and 1996. The percentage of students completing high school rose from 78 to 87%; the percentage of high school graduates completing at least some college rose from 44 to 65%; and the percentage of high school graduates completing four or more years of college rose from 22 to 31%. While the educational attainment of Blacks ages 25 to 29 in 1996 is below that of their White counterparts, it did increase between 1971 and 1996. However, the gap between Black and White attainment decreased only for high school graduates. The percentage of Blacks completing high school rose from 59 to 86 during this period (NCES, 1997d).

The ability of colleges and universities to attract and graduate Blacks and other minority students is important to the goal of Equal Opportunity. Changes in the number of degrees earned by minorities of both sexes, particularly in

relation to the number earned by Whites, provided a measure
of higher education's progress toward this goal (NCES,
1996).

Statistical Information

A National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
report shows that one percent more Blacks and five percent
more Hispanics graduated in 1991 than 20 years before. More
than two-thirds of the Blacks and 60% of the Hispanics
entering Division I schools in 1986-87 dropped out before
graduating, according to the 1993 NCAA Division I Graduation
Rates Report. While the enrollment of Blacks grew 19%
between 1980 and 1991, only one percent more were awarded
bachelor's degrees (Manzo, 1994b).

In March 1992, 80% of minorities ages 25 to 29 had
earned high school diplomas. Only one-third enrolled in
college, and less than 12% earned bachelor's degrees.
Blacks were graduating from college at less than half the
rate of White students in the same age group. Since the
push to bring racial diversity to higher education began in
the 1960s, universities have competed to enroll the most
talented African-American students. The efforts have been
successful and Black enrollment has increased. But once
Blacks matriculate at a particular institution, they are
often forgotten and left to fend for themselves (Manzo,
1994a).

The total number of Black students enrolled in higher education in the United States in 1992, including two-year colleges, was 1,393,483. This shows an increase of 58,000, or 4.4%, from 1991. The percentage of all African-Americans ages 18 to 24 enrolled in college increased from 23.6% to 25.3% from 1991 to 1992. Most of these gains are attributable to Black women. Over the past 12 years, overall Black enrollment in higher education has increased from 1,107,000 students to 1,393,000. This shows a 26% gain (Vital Signs, 1994a).

Fifteen historically Black institutions are members of the NCAA's Division I (see Table 2). Of these schools, South Carolina State University had the highest graduation rate for Black students (48%). This was equal to the Black graduation rate at most of the predominantly White state universities. Grambling State University, Howard University, and Mississippi Valley State University also had graduation rates (see Table 3) above 40%, well above the very low national average of 34% for Black students (Vital Signs, 1994b).

At the bottom of the list was Alabama State University, where the overall Black graduation rate was only 15%. For Black men, the graduation rate was even lower. Only nine percent of freshmen Black men went on to earn a degree. In the four-year period 1984-1987, of the 1,408 Black men who enrolled at Alabama State, only 156 earned diplomas (Vital

Signs, 1994b). In 1994, only 34% of Black students graduated from large American universities against 48% of White students (NCES, 1996).

Table 2

GRADUATION RATES AT BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Institution	Black Graduation Rate %
South Carolina State University	48
Grambling State University	47
Howard University	44
Mississippi Valley State University	44
North Carolina A&T University	39
Bethune-Cookman College	37
Florida A&M University	35
Delaware State University	29
Morgan State University	27
Alcorn State University	26
Tennessee State University	25
Southern University	24
Jackson State University	23
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore	22
Alabama State University	15

Note: The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 1994b. p. 45.

Attrition of Black students at rates often exceeding 75% continues to persevere. Until recently, the high profile and success of recruitment efforts and the absence of reporting mandates drew attention away from the results (Manzo, 1994a). The nationwide graduation rate for all Black students is a key indicator of Black progress in higher education. It is also important to view the completion rate of minorities at the nation's top-rated colleges and universities (see Table 4). The figures show that Black students are successfully coping with the rigorous curriculum and often on a less than hospitable campus environments at these educationally rigorous institutions (Vital Signs, 1994a).

Table 3

COMPARISON GRADUATION RATES AT LARGE STATE UNIVERSITIES

Institution Rates	White % Rate	Black % Rate	Dif. % Between
University of Mississippi	49	48	1
University of Alabama	55	49	6
University of South Carolina	62	56	6
University of Georgia	60	48	12
University of Arkansas	39	26	13

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Institution Rates	White % Rate	Black % Rate	Dif. % Between
University of Kentucky	50	37	13
University of Oklahoma	44	30	13
University of Tennessee	52	39	13
University of Arizona	49	33	16
University of Delaware	71	53	18
Louisiana State University	38	20	18
University of Florida	61	42	19
University of Texas	63	44	19
University of West Virginia	55	36	19
University of Wisconsin	69	48	21
University of Maryland	62	40	22
University of Missouri	58	36	22
University of North Carolina	83	59	24
Ohio State University	56	28	28
University of Washington	67	25	42

Note: The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 1994b. p. 45.

TABLE 4

BLACK AND WHITE GRADUATION RATES
AT THE NATION'S TOP-RANKED UNIVERSITIES

Institution	White % Rate	Black % Rate
Harvard University	96	92
Brown University	94	89
Yale University	96	88
Princeton University	96	86
Dartmouth College	96	85
Standford University	94	84
Duke University	94	82
Georgetown University	92	81
Columbia University	86	80
Northwestern University	89	79
University of Virginia	93	79
Cornell University	90	76
Rice University	88	76

Note: The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 5, 1994b.
p. 44.

The proportion of all high school seniors in minority groups who planned to continue their education at four-year colleges and universities immediately after high school increased between 1972 and 1992, although between-group differences have remained fairly constant. In both 1972 and 1992, similar proportions of Black and White seniors planned to attend four-year colleges and universities. A larger

proportion of Black and Hispanic seniors planned to attend an academic program in a two-year college in 1992 than in 1972 (see Table 5). The proportion of Black seniors increased from 5% to 11%, while the proportion of Hispanic seniors increased from 11 to 26%. However, no change occurred among White seniors over this time period (NCES, 1996).

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
WHO PLAN TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

	4-year program		2-year program	
Race/Ethnicity	1972	1992	1972	1992
Total	34	54	11	13
White	35	55	12	12
Black	32	42	5	11
Hispanic	11	20	11	12
Asian Pacific Islander	47	65	18	12

Note: Minorities in Higher Education 1996, p 2.

Social Aspects

The social expectations are so deep in the subconscious mind that one would be startled if Black kids succeeded in higher education. Black students are expected to fail; therefore, society is not disturbed when it happens.

High overall attrition rates, about 50% among White students, show a general inclination of institutions to accept inefficiency (Manzo, 1994a).

Tinto defined social integration into the college environment as the degree of student involvement in extracurricular activities, peer group association, and informal contacts with faculty about non-academic interests. Tracey and Sedlacek (1982) and Arrington (1987) also found that variables such as social and economic environment correlated more closely with minority student retention than academic variables such as test scores and grades.

According to Manzo, (1994b) high attrition rates have been tolerated for the simple reason fact that society continues to be ambivalent about Blacks' access and participation in education in the society. The old, ugly nemesis of racism, discrimination, and determination to protect the privileged positions of Anglo-Americans tend to be very real. It is true that Black students feel isolated, even on progressive campuses. There are still racial incidents occurring on campuses. The racial climate on college campuses has not improved in the last 10 years. Campus climate is not to be dismissed, but racism is going to continue at predominantly White institutions so the climate will continue to be less than optimal for minorities.

The composition of students in terms of factors such as English language proficiency, family income, parents' education, and family structure known to affect the social context of education have changed over time. The social context of schooling is also a function of how students with various characteristics are distributed across schools. Social background factors such as race/ethnicity, family income, parental education, and family structure are associated with various levels of educational access and different educational outcomes. The preprimary enrollment, incidence of early childhood academic and behavioral problems, level of student achievement, and the likelihood of dropping out of school or going on to college after graduation are each associated with various social background factors. Such factors are interrelated and must be examined jointly when trying to understand the effect of any single factor on education (Astin, 1975; NCES, 1997a).

Poverty is negatively associated with enrollment rates in early childhood education programs. Differences in enrollment rates in early childhood education across levels of poverty may indicate differential access to this level of education. For example, in 1995, three-and four-year olds from families who were classified as poor were less likely to be enrolled in preprimary education than three-and four-year olds from families who were classified as non-poor, 24 and 52% compared to 42 and 64%, respectively (NCES, 1997a).

Children in single parent families are more likely to experience early school problems and are less likely to participate in early literacy activities than children in two parent families. Parents' education level is also strongly associated with student achievement. In general, children of parents with higher levels of education perform better, on average, on assessments of student achievement (NCES, 1997a).

Postsecondary Persistence and Attainment

To help ensure successful outcomes for the increasing number of students seeking postsecondary credentials, it is crucial to understand the factors associated with degree completion. Today, students can choose from a range of institution types and enrollment options to find the best fit between their degree objectives, abilities, and social and economic circumstances. Many students are attending part-time, working while enrolled, attending sporadically, and attending more than one institution before graduating. While these strategies may help students strike a balance between their economic and social considerations and their degree objectives, they may also negatively affect students' persistence and attainment. Most of the data describe the persistence and attainment through 1994 of students who began their postsecondary education in the 1989-90 academic year (NCES, 1997b).

Despite overall rising enrollment rates, participation in higher education is still lower for many minority and low income groups. The percentage of high school graduates ages 16-24 who enrolled in college immediately after high school grew for Whites and Blacks between 1972 and 1995 and fluctuated, but overall remained relatively stable for Hispanics. Approximately half of those students of all ages who began their postsecondary education in 1989-90 attained some postsecondary credential within five years of their initial enrollment. Twenty-six percent obtained a bachelor's degree, 11% an associate degree, and 13% a certificate. Another 13% of students were also still working toward a degree in 1994, and the remaining 37% were no longer enrolled and left without a degree or certificate by that year (NCES, 1997b).

Disparities found in postsecondary enrollment rates related to low income and minority status were also evident in attainment outcomes. Regardless of the type of degree pursued, 1980 high school sophomores with low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds and those from some minority groups were less likely than others to obtain a postsecondary credential. Enrollment has two dimensions, intensity and continuity. The intensity of enrollment refers to whether a student attends part-time or full-time, and the continuity of enrollment refers to whether or not a student is continuously enrolled over a period of time.

Both part-time and noncontinuous enrollment have been shown to be related to lower rates of student persistence (NCES, 1997b).

Full-time enrollment is associated with higher rates of persistence and attainment. The intensity of students' enrollment is related to their postsecondary persistence and attainment regardless of their degree objective. Bachelor's degree seekers who first enrolled on a full-time basis were more likely to complete a bachelor's degree within five years than those who enrolled less than full-time (52 compared to 13%). Financial aid provides access to postsecondary education for students without the financial resources to attend on their own. Because aid may substitute for work as a financial resource, it may facilitate persistence and attainment by enabling a student to attend full-time rather than working to finance his/her education and enrolling part-time (NCES, 1997b).

Beginning bachelor's degree seekers who received financial aid in 1989-90 (both grants and loans) were more likely to attain a bachelor's degree within five years than those who did not receive such aid. The differences in the attainment rates among 1989-90 beginning postsecondary students seeking bachelor's degrees according to financial aid receipt are largely an artifact of the control of the institutions students attend. When the control of the institution is held constant, persistence and attainment

rates among bachelor's degree seekers who received any aid (grants and loans in particular) were similar. The data presented here illustrate that along with students' background characteristics, their enrollment choices are related to their likelihood of completing postsecondary education. Students choose when to enroll, the type of institution in which to enroll, the intensity of their enrollment, and how to finance their enrollment. In doing so, they must balance their degree aspirations with the economic and social realities of their lives. Generally, the evidence suggests that students who attend part-time and work full-time are less likely to complete their degrees in a timely fashion than students who attend full-time and work part-time. Part-time attendance can also signify the existence of other factors besides work that might interfere with persistence, such as limited financial resources or family responsibilities (NCES, 1997b; NCES, 1997f).

For students seeking bachelor's degrees, the pragmatic path to attainment appears to be entering a four-year institution immediately following high school. Although delaying entry in order to work and save money or starting out at a lower cost, community college may make good financial sense. Evidence suggests these choices are less likely to lead to attaining a bachelor's degree within five years. Bachelor's degree seekers who received financial aid and those who did not receive aid persisted and attained at

similar rates. Even though certain enrollment choices may be associated with higher rates of success, no particular enrollment pattern is feasible or appropriate for every student. Rather, the postsecondary sector offers a range of enrollment choices in order to meet the needs of students with different degree objectives and social and economic circumstances (NCES, 1997b).

With the earnings gap between a high school degree and a postsecondary credential widening and the economy demanding increasingly skilled workers, great numbers of students who are unable to attend full-time or who cannot afford to enroll in four-year institutions may be entering the postsecondary sector. Many of these students have full-time jobs, child care needs, and other family obligations. Understanding the factors associated with postsecondary success can help these students in making appropriate enrollment choices. Moreover, this information can assist postsecondary institutions in designing programs for students who are at risk of attrition (NCES, 1997b).

Progress and Outcomes of African-Americans at PWIs

Institutions may have good intentions for improving graduation rates but are often motivated by financial realities. The best barometer of access is completion, not enrollment. Both students and administrators point to the campus climate as a major factor influencing a student's

decision to remain at a particular school. Traditionally, colleges and universities reward faculty for their teaching and scholarship. But some administrators say they should also be rewarded for helping their schools meet recruitment and retention goals (Rodriguez, 1994).

Tinto (1975b) hypothesized that the decision to remain in school is a function of the success of experiences in the social and academic systems. According to Tinto, the academic systems of colleges and universities include the grade performance of students and the frequency and quality of their interactions with faculty and staff.

Levin and Levin (1991) described five retention program components that were deemed critical for schools to be successful. They are: (a) proactive interventions, (b) small-group tutorials, (c) study and test-taking skills, (d) language skills, and (e) quality instruction. These programs each contain unique elements.

Proactive interventions initiated during the student's first term on campus clearly work best when problems are intercepted early and there is enough time to make a difference through distributed practice. Relying on small-group tutorials rather than one-on-one retention programs are more successful and stress the importance of social integration as a key component (Levin & Levin, 1991).

Study skills and techniques for test preparation are critical components of virtually every successful retention

program to deal with academic under-preparedness. Learning strategies offer students specific information-processing techniques for understanding and applying what they are studying. Excellence in teaching demonstrated by a committed professor contribute to the retention and success of many minority students (Levin & Levin, 1991).

Effective student retention programs are those that meet the unique characteristics of institutions and their students. Some of the factors to be considered when designing retention programs are: institutional goals, culture and history, resources available, student characteristics, and the purposes of student academic and social services. Student retention is a complex task that combines all aspects of academic life with the way students respond in the academic community as individuals and as members of groups. The key to planning, implementing, and continuing successful retention programs may be collecting and using accurate and valid assessment data (Sherman et al., 1994).

Retention programs with the best chance of success appear to be those at institutions that understand the linkage between institutional culture, the learning environment, and student success. These institutions recognize the need to assess organizational systems as an integral part of improving student success, particularly minority student success at majority institutions. Too

often retention programs are not integrated into the total
campus culture and a systemic approach to institutional
change that will lead to improved graduation rates is
missing. A commitment to student success must take a long
term comprehensive view. It is reflected in campus
priorities that emphasize retention and graduation as much
as access. Student and faculty assessment procedures as
much as admissions criteria must also be included (Sherman
et al., 1994).

During the 1960s, American society responded strongly
to the civil rights movement, making aggressive, widespread
efforts to address many of the wrongs imposed on Blacks for
centuries. Access to higher education was seen as one major
solution to the problem of racial inequality. Today the
country's mood regarding racial issues and the state of
higher education has changed. The national moral response
to Black demands for equality has been tempered by
ambivalence. Persistent problems associated with the racial
divide in the U.S. represents another negative influence.
Higher education's complacency on these issues has been
shaken recently by the outbreak of ugly racial incidents on
a number of college campuses across the United States.
Universities as diverse as the Citadel, the University of
Michigan, Princeton University, the University of Texas, and
the University of California at Los Angeles have experienced
racial incidents ranging in severity from the distribution

of racist literature, to name-calling, to physical attacks
(Allen, 1992).

Black college students differ from their White peers in
that their parents are more often urban, have fewer years of
education, work at lower status jobs, earn less, and are
more often divorced or separated than White students'
parents. Black college students have aspirations similar to
(or higher than) their White counterparts and they attain
these aspirations less often than White students. On the
average, Black students who attend PWIs do not perform as
well academically as Whites. Their academic difficulties on
White campuses are often compounded by the absence of
remedial/tutorial programs and a limited informal
information exchange with White faculty and students (Allen,
1992; Peterson et al., 1978).

Black students on historically Black campuses tend to
have different backgrounds and opportunities than their
peers. They generally lag behind in terms of family
socioeconomic status, high school academic records,
university faculty/facilities, available academic majors,
and opportunities for advanced study. Researchers have
identified persistent differences in the college experiences
of Blacks (Allen, 1992; Peterson et al., 1978).

Gender Differences

According to Allen (1992), Gurin and Epps reported that women's goals were lower on all measures of educational and occupational aspirations. They more often aspired to jobs that were disportionately occupied by women and provided lower prestige, power, and pay. Males, on the other hand, were three times as likely to plan to pursue a doctoral degree. For these reasons, they concluded that Black women gained less status by attending college than did Black men.

Recently, the enrollment of women generally, and Black women in particular, in postsecondary institutions has risen dramatically. In fact, Black women now outnumber Black men in college by roughly two to one. This discrepancy owes more to declines in rates of Black male college attendance than to Black female gains. There is still reason to question positive portrayals of Black women's college experiences (Allen, 1992).

Allen reported gender and occupational expectations to be the strongest predictors of college major choice for Black students attending PWIs and historically Black colleges. Among both groups, Black females more often chose traditional over nontraditional majors than did Black males. Generally speaking, being male and having high occupational aspirations was predictive of majoring in the biological, technical, and natural sciences. Although Black students on

White campuses were significantly less likely to select these majors, irrespective of gender (Allen, 1992).

Academic achievement is highest for students who have high educational aspirations, who are certain that their college choice was correct, and who report positive relationships with faculty. Compared to Black students who attend historically Black colleges, those Black students attending PWIs report lower academic achievement. Students who aspire to prestigious, powerful occupations report higher educational aspirations. Those with high educational aspirations are also more likely to display high self-confidence. In general, Black students who attend PWIs report lower college grades, higher grades in high school, less favorable relations with their professors, and are, on average, younger than their peers who attend historically Black institutions (Allen, 1992).

Findings suggested that Black student college outcomes are influenced by the immediate surrounding social context, while interpersonal relationships represented the bridge between individual predispositions and the institutional setting or context. What he or she does when confronted with difficult subject matter, how he or she handles the uncertainty of new situations, and how adept he or she is in help-seeking behavior will ultimately determine whether a student's college experience is positive or negative (Allen, 1992).

The informal elements of formal organizational structure of students who attended historically Black universities reported better academic performance, greater social involvement, and higher occupational aspirations. On PWIs, Black students emphasize feelings of alienation, sensed hostility, racial discrimination, and lack of integration. On historically Black campuses, Black students emphasize feelings of engagement, connection, acceptance, and extensive support and encouragement (Allen, 1992).

Future studies of Black student outcomes should examine the importance of this relationship between social context and student outcomes. Researchers need to understand better how historical, cultural, social, and psychological factors exert an independent, powerful influence on student outcomes (Allen, 1992).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In summary, the evidence suggests that Black students attending historically Black institutions have fewer socio-economic resources than do both Black and White students attending PWIs. In some cases Blacks also have lower high school grade-point-averages and other standardized test scores than their peers on White campuses. Providing these students with equal facilities and educational materials

early in the educational process (e.g., elementary school)

may increase their chances of success in post-secondary

institutions.

Chapter 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the:
(a) target population, (b) sampling method of selecting of
African-American seniors, (c) research design, (d)
instrumentation, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, and
(g) summary.

Population

The target population under investigation consisted of
African-American seniors at three Tennessee state supported
predominately White institutions (see Table 6). East
Tennessee State University (ETSU), Middle Tennessee State
University (MTSU), and the University of Tennessee at
Knoxville (UT-Knox), were randomly picked by selecting the
odd-numbered institutions in a random listing.

Sampling Method for Selection of Seniors

Quantitative researchers attempt to discover something
about a larger group of individuals by studying a much
smaller group. Random sampling is used to select the sample
from the larger population. The purpose of this random
sampling is to ensure that all African-American seniors at
the three institutions have an equal chance of being
selected.

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The sampling method used for this study was based on the statistical sampling methods used by Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1994). Name and addresses of all African-American seniors were provided by school administrators. The participants' names were chosen randomly from a computerized list until 60 names were selected from each institution.

TABLE 6

TOTAL NUMBER OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN SENIORS AT THREE RANDOMLY
SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	AFRICAN-AMERICAN SENIORS	SAMPLE SIZE
East Tennessee State University	108	60
Middle Tennessee State University	455	60
University of Tennessee Knoxville	400	60

Research Design

A descriptive research method was employed for this study. "Descriptive studies are concerned primarily with determining what is," (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 374). Questionnaires and interviews are used extensively in educational research to collect information that is not directly observable. The questionnaire method has two

advantages over interviews. The use of a questionnaire may allow for a larger number of subjects to be selected, and the time required to collect data is typically less (Gall et al., 1996).

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the target sample to answer questions posed in this research study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). The African-American Seniors' Institutional Perceptions (AASIP) instrument was developed by the investigator of this study and patterned after an instrument used by Arrington (1987). The AASIP was designed to determine the African-American seniors' perceptions of institutional support at their institutions.

The research instrument was designed to collect data about African-American seniors institutional perceptions of the sample, and to determine parameters that supported their ability to persist to graduation.

Instrumentation

A panel of three experts from ETSU evaluated the appropriateness and quality of the instrument items. The panel consisted of Dr. Nancy Dishner, Associate Vice-President, Division of Academic Affairs; Dr. Sue Barr, Associate Dean, College of Public and Allied Health; and Dr. Sally Lee, Associate Vice President, Division of Student Affairs. Based on their review some minor language changes were made on the instrument.

A pilot study was conducted at ETSU using 25 African-Americans juniors. The investigator contacted Edward Howat of the ETSU Department of Athletics. Permission was granted to survey African-American juniors in the Physical Education Department. Mr. Howat agreed to distribute the survey instrument to selected students and return the completed surveys to the investigator in a timely fashion. The completed questionnaires were reviewed by the investigator to ensure the clarity and quality of the participants' responses to the instrument items. Several questions in the survey instrument were refined to use a Likert scale.

Data Collection

Each university's registrar or appropriate official was contacted by telephone with a request for permission to conduct the study in their institution. A request letter followed and contained: (a) purpose of the study, (b) importance of the study, (c) a copy of the instrument, (d) how to obtain a copy of the final report, and (e) a request for a list of African-American seniors with their campus addresses. A follow-up telephone call was made to the registrar or appropriate official who had not responded within two weeks.

The research was conducted twice. The first attempt did not produce a satisfactory response rate. The method for the first data collection was by mail. Therefore,

additional data collection methods were designed for the second process. Subsequently, the investigator visited each institution and met with a university representative. The investigator explained the: (a) purpose of the study, (b) importance of the study, (c) confidentiality of the response, and (e) a estimated time to complete the study. The data collection at ETSU was performed by telephone calls, mailings and personal visits to deliver the questionnaires. The data collected was completed at MTSU by hosting a social function and requesting the respondents to complete the questionnaire at that time. Data collection at UT-Knoxville was completed by mailing the questionnaire to the target population. No other options were made available on the University of Tennessee-Knoxville campus.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Descriptive statistics are mathematical techniques for organizing and summarizing numerical data. The questions in the survey instrument employed numerical values. Therefore, descriptive analysis was appropriate for this study. The ordinal data reported frequencies, distribution of score, and percentage measurements.

Inferential and descriptive statistics were used with the application of probability. Rarely in educational research can an entire population be studied. Instead, data are collected from a group who are assumed to be a

representative sample of that population. The research findings based on data analysis can be used to make inferences about the defined population African-American seniors (Gall et al., 1996).

Surveys were analyzed to: (a) answer the research questions using the Likert scale, and (b) describe the institutional perceptions of African-American seniors regarding elements that supported their academic progress to graduation.

Research Questions

The review of the literature led to formation of the following research questions:

1. How satisfied are African-American students with administrative and faculty services?

2. How satisfied are African-American students with services provided by the institution?

3. Did the cultural aspects of the institution meet the needs of African-American students?

4. What are African-American students' perceptions concerning why other African-American students left the institution?

5. What are African American students' perceptions concerning why other African-American students remain in the institution to complete their degree?

6.   What are characteristics of these African-American

     seniors in regard to their:

     gender?

     major?

     grade point average?

     age now as seniors?

     age as they began school?

     financial aid?

     number of hours they work while attending school?

     parents' income?

     parents' educational level?

7.   What was the most rewarding part of African-American

     students' college life?

8.   What group(s) or individual(s) you would most or least

     likely turn to for help with academic, personal or

     financial problems?

     Each research question was answered by various items in

the AASIP (see Table 7).

TABLE 7

CORRESPONDING OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS
TO ITEM NUMBERS ON SURVEY INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	ITEMS IN SURVEY INSTRUMENT
1	1,2,3
2	6
3	7
4	4
5	5
6	8-18
7	19
8	20

Summary

This chapter presented a general overview of gathering information for this study, a brief discussion of the target population, research design, data analysis, and research questions. A descriptive research method is considered an appropriate research tool for this type of inquiry for analysis of ones' perceptions or attitudes. The instrument used in this study was designed to examine those perceptions. The participants' names were chosen randomly from a computerized list until 60 names were selected from each institution. A random selection of three Tennessee

supported predominately White institutions of higher
education and 90 African-American seniors participated in
this study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis
of research data obtained from the 90 surveys returned by
African-American (AA) seniors enrolled in three
predominantly White Tennessee state-supported universities
during the 1998 fall semester. The survey instrument
solicited student responses about their perceptions,
university services, and experiences at those institutions.
The data described the demographic characteristics of the
students and their perceptions, attitudes, experiences and
level of involvement in the campus environment for African-
American seniors.

Item responses from the demographic section of the
survey instrument were analyzed and presented in this
chapter. Data obtained from the comments section of the
survey appear in Appendix D. The demographic section of the
survey was designed to solicit nominal data from the sample
population.

The section of the survey relating to the seniors'
perceptions of advisement and student services, reasons why
African-American students leave or remain in school,
feelings about cultural needs, and assistance with personal

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problems were designed to solicit ordinal data from the
sample population.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Based on the returns of 90 respondents, the ETSU
response rate was (35) 58% and the MTSU response rate was
(34) 57%. The UT-Knoxville response rate was (21) 35%.
This indicated that ETSU and MTSU were oversampled when
compared to the total sample. Approximately 62% of the
respondents were females and 38% were males (see Table 8).
A review of the literature supports the findings that more
African-American females attend college than their male
counterparts (Allen, 1992). ETSU was the only university
that had an equal number of male (54) and female (54)
seniors enrolled in the 1998 fall semester. Middle
Tennessee State University and UT-Knoxville had
approximately 60% females and 40% males.

The grade-point-average (GPA), students' age at the
time of entering the university, current age, and parents'
level of education are reported on Table 8. Seventy-nine
percent were between the ages of 17-22 when they entered
college. Seventy-six percent of the respondents' current
ages were between 20-29. These ages are typical for
entering freshmen and seniors who are expected to graduate
within five years (NCES, 1997b). Ninety-two percent
reported a 2.0 or higher GPA, and only eight percent of the

students' GPA were not reported. The father's high school

educational level was reported at 54% while the mother's

level was 47%.

TABLE 8

STUDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographic	Grouping	N	%
Gender	Male	34	38
	Female	56	62
	Total	90	100
Grade Point Average	2.0-2.5	24	28.9
	2.51-2.99	31	37.4
	3.0-3.49	20	24.1
	3.5-4.0	8	9.6
	Total	83	100.0
Current Age	20-24	51	57.3
	25-29	17	19.1
	29+	21	23.6
	Total	89	100.0
Age Enrolled in College	17-22	68	79.1
	23-28	5	5.8
	29+	13	15.1
	Total	86	100.0
Father's Level of Education	High School	43	53.8
	Associate Degree	11	13.8
	Bachelor Degree	8	10.0
	Bachelor +	18	22.4
	Total	80	100.0
Mother's Level of Education	High School	36	46.8
	Associate Degree	15	19.5
	Bachelor Degree	7	9.0
	Bachelor +	19	24.7
	Total	77	100.0

Eighty-four percent of the population received some form of financial assistance, as displayed in Table 9. The data analysis in this study revealed that 83% of the students received 50% or more of financial support. Sixty-three percent of the respondents also reported an annual family income of $25,000 or above, while 23% reported family income of $55,000 or greater. In 1996 the average cost per year for attending a United States 4-year public institution ranged from $5,536 to $6,462 (NCES, 1997e), while ETSU, MTSU and UT-Knoxville ranged from $2,700 to $3,400 in 1998. These figures suggest that a family with an annual income of less than $55,000 may not have adequate finances to fully support their children to attend college without financial assistance from other sources. There was less than a one percent difference between the 15.6% who received no financial aid and the 16.1% of families who had an annual income of $55,000-$99,000.

Another key element in the students' ability to graduate is the extent of employment while attending college. The survey revealed that 68% of the respondents worked 20 or more hours per week, while in 1995 the national average for African-Americans was 23.7% and 47% for all full-time college students aged 16-24 who worked while in school (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1998a). Working in college can be both beneficial and detrimental to a student's academic success. Some studies

show that working long hours while in college may reduce a student's likelihood of completing college or lengthen the time it takes to complete a degree (NCES, 1997e).

TABLE 9

STUDENTS' FINANCIAL PROFILE

Demographic	Grouping	N	%
Athletic Scholarship	Yes	11	12.2
	No	79	87.8
	Total	90	100.0
Financial Aid	Yes	76	84.4
	No	14	15.6
	Total	90	100.0
College Costs Paid	75-100%	48	63.2
By Financial Aid	50- 74%	15	19.7
	25- 49%	8	10.5
	< 25%	5	6.6
	Total	76	100.0
Employment	> 30 hours	21	25.5
	20-29 hours	35	42.7
	10-19 hours	13	15.9
	< 10 hrs	13	15.9
	Total	82	100.0
Family's Annual Income	> $100,000	6	6.9
	$55K-$99,999	14	16.1
	$35K-$54,999	25	28.7
	$25K-$34,999	10	11.5
	< $25,000	32	36.8
	Total	87	100.0

The demographic portion of the survey also included a numerical count of the students' choice of major. Table 10 shows data responses in the survey collapsed into six major areas: Arts and Sciences, Public & Allied Health, Applied Science & Technology, Business, Education, and Nursing. Sixty percent of the respondents were Arts and Sciences and Health majors.

TABLE 10

STUDENTS' CHOICE OF MAJOR

Major	N	%
Arts & Sciences	48	53.3
Public & Allied Health	6	6.7
Applied Science & Technology	8	8.9
Business	8	8.9
Education	12	13.3
Nursing	8	8.9
Total	90	100.0

Seniors' Perception of Academic Advisement

The seniors' perceptions of academic advisement are presented in Table 11. Eight of the 10 items on questions one and two on the survey revealed that 70% or more of the

respondents agreed or strongly agreed. The survey question addressing personal counseling by advisors reported 54% agreed or strongly agreed responses.

TABLE 11

SENIORS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Items		SA	A	DA	SD	TOTAL
Being Available	N	31	45	8	5	89
	%	34.8	50.6	9	5.6	100.0
Personal Concern	N	29	38	16	6	89
	%	32.6	42.7	18	6.7	100.0
Provides Accurate Information	N	33	36	15	5	89
	%	37.1	40.4	16.9	5.6	100.0
Advisor Not Known	N	5	3	18	61	87
	%	5.7	3.4	20.7	70.1	100.0
Academic Concerns	N	49	25	12	4	90
	%	54.4	27.8	13.1	4.4	100.0
Registration Concerns	N	56	28	6	0	90
	%	62.2	31.1	6.7	0.0	100.0
Personal Counseling	N	25	23	24	17	89
	%	28.1	25.8	27.0	19.1	100.0
Career Planning	N	26	37	19	8	90
	%	28.9	41.1	21.1	8.9	100.0
Recommendation Letters	N	30	39	15	6	90
	%	33.3	43.3	16.7	6.7	100.0
Academic Counseling	N	39	38	7	6	90
	%	43.3	42.2	7.8	6.7	100.0

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, DA=Disagree, SD=Strong Disagree

Seniors' Perception of Why Other Students Left College

The African-American seniors' responses to perceived reasons they believe other African-American students left college prior to graduating are presented in Table 12. The top five reasons were money, personal problems, low motivation, small African-American population, and social isolation. The bottom five items were racially bias grading, difficult schedule, uninteresting courses, student racial bias, and faculty insensitivity.

TABLE 12

PERCEIVED REASONS AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS LEFT COLLEGE

Items		SA	A	DA	SD	TOTAL
Poorly Prepared	N	8	40	29	10	87
	%	9.2	46.0	33.3	11.5	100.0
Difficult Schedule	N	2	26	50	9	87
	%	2.3	29.9	57.5	10.3	100.0
Uninteresting Courses	N	4	26	49	7	86
	%	4.7	30.2	57.0	8.1	100.0
Racial Biased Grading	N	7	13	55	11	86
	%	8.1	15.1	64.0	12.8	100.0
Faculty Racial Insensitivity	N	16	22	44	5	87
	%	18.4	25.3	50.6	5.7	100.0
Student Racial Insensitivity	N	13	19	49	5	86
	%	15.1	22.1	57.0	5.8	100.0

(table continues)

TABLE 12 (continued)

Items		SA	A	DA	SD	TOTAL
Social Isolation	N	15	37	26	9	87
	%	17.2	42.5	29.9	10.3	100.0
Low Motivation	N	16	44	21	5	86
	%	18.6	51.2	24.4	5.8	100.0
Low Self-esteem	N	11	28	39	8	86
	%	12.8	32.6	45.3	9.3	100.0
Lack of Relevant Programs	N	16	27	37	6	86
	%	18.6	31.4	43.0	7.0	100.0
Lack of Money	N	41	28	16	3	88
	%	46.6	31.8	18.2	3.4	100.0
Transportation Problems	N	11	37	34	6	88
	%	12.5	42.0	38.6	6.8	100.0
Low Population AF-AM Students	N	26	31	24	6	87
	%	29.9	35.6	27.6	6.9	100.0
Personal/Family Problems	N	13	51	22	1	87
	%	14.9	58.6	25.3	1.1	100.0
Other	N	16	19	6	2	43
	%	37.2	44.2	14.0	4.7	100.0

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, DA=Disagree, SD=Strong Disagree

Perceived Reasons African-American Students Remain in College

The African-American seniors' responses to perceived reasons other African-American students remain in college are presented in Table 13. The items were constructed based upon the review of literature. The top five reasons were

strong personal commitment, family encouragement, class
attendance, friends' encouragement, and financial support.
The bottom three were mentoring programs, professors'
support, and study groups.

TABLE 13

PERCEIVED REASONS AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS
REMAIN IN COLLEGE

Items		SA	A	DA	SD	TOTAL
Mentoring Programs	N	10	35	35	6	86
	%	11.6	40.7	40.7	7.0	100.0
Professors' Support	N	10	44	25	6	85
	%	11.8	51.8	29.4	7.1	100.0
Friends' Encouragement	N	20	56	9	0	85
	%	23.5	65.9	10.6	0.0	100.0
Family Encouragement	N	43	40	4	1	88
	%	48.9	45.5	4.5	1.1	100.0
Class Attendance	N	31	48	9	0	88
	%	35.2	54.5	10.2	0.0	100.0
Study Groups	N	15	41	30	0	86
	%	17.4	47.7	34.9	0.0	100.0
Financial Support	N	21	48	15	3	87
	%	24.1	55.2	17.2	3.4	100.0
Work Part-Time < 20 Hrs/Wk	N	13	44	27	2	86
	%	15.1	51.2	31.4	2.3	100.0
Strong Personal Commitment	N	60	28	0	0	88
	%	68.2	31.8	0.0	0.0	100.0

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, DA=Disagree, SD=Strong
Disagree

Students' Satisfaction With Student Services

African-American seniors' satisfaction with students services is presented in Table 14. The items selected are a representative sample of the type of services provided at a typical university. The top three were tutorial services, counseling center, and admission office. The bottom three were housing services, student activities, and student government.

TABLE 14

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH STUDENT SERVICES

Items		SS	SA	DS	SD	TOTAL
Academic Advising	N	14	50	14	10	88
	%	15.9	56.8	15.9	11.4	100.0
Admissions Office	N	13	57	15	4	89
	%	14.6	64.0	16.9	4.5	100.0
Campus Ministry	N	8	54	16	3	81
	%	9.9	66.7	19.8	3.7	100.0
Career Services	N	8	52	22	4	86
	%	9.3	60.5	25.6	4.7	100.0
Counseling Center	N	7	59	13	3	82
	%	8.5	72.0	15.9	3.7	100.0
Financial Aid	N	12	48	11	18	89
	%	13.5	53.9	12.4	20.2	100.0
Housing Services	N	5	38	20	15	78
	%	6.4	48.7	25.6	19.2	100.0

(table continued)

TABLE 14 (continued)

Items		SS	SA	DS	SD	TOTAL
African-American	N	14	51	16	6	87
Services	%	16.1	58.6	18.4	6.9	100.0
Student Activities	N	6	45	24	11	86
	%	7.0	52.3	27.9	12.8	100.0
Student Government	N	3	44	31	8	86
	%	3.5	51.2	36.0	9.3	100.0
Tutorial Services	N	12	56	11	5	84
	%	14.3	66.7	13	6	100.0

Note: SS=Strongly Satisfied, SA=Satisfied, DS=Dissatisfied, SD=Strongly Dissatisfied

Students' Satisfaction With Cultural Programs

African-American seniors' satisfaction with cultural needs is presented in Table 15. A cumulative 87% of the 31 respondents were satisfied or strongly satisfied that their cultural needs were met by other activities. The actual percent was 58%. These activities were student organizations, honor society, black cultural programs, and other African-Americans. The other items on this table reported a larger percent of the respondents were satisfied or strongly satisfied that the college meet their cultural needs.

TABLE 15

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH CULTURAL NEEDS

Items		SS	SA	DS	SD	TOTAL
African-American	N	16	39	12	15	82
Fraternities/Sororities	%	19.5	47.6	14.6	18.3	100.0
Programs With African-	N	14	43	21	8	86
American Speakers	%	16.3	50.0	24.4	9.3	100.0
Black Student	N	16	39	18	12	85
Association	%	18.8	45.9	21.2	14.1	100.0
Other Activities	N	9	18	1	3	31
	%	29.0	58.1	3.2	9.7	100.0

Note: SS=Strongly Satisfied, SA=Satisfied, DS=Dissatisfied,
     SD=Strongly Dissatisfied

Groups or Individuals Who African-American Students Most or

Least Likely Turn to for Help

The groups or individuals that African-American

students most or least often turn to for help are presented

on Table 16. The top five receiving greater than 60%

support were family, African-American advisors, African-

American students, African-American administrators, and

African-American professors. The bottom two receiving less

than 30% were non African-American students and White

administrators.

TABLE 16

GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS MOST OR
LEAST LIKELY TURN TO FOR HELP

Item	N	%
Family	68	88.3
AA Advisor	54	74.0
AA Students	52	69.3
AA Administrator	51	68.9
AA Professors	44	61.1
White Advisors	36	49.3
White Administrators	22	29.3
Non AA Students	19	25.0

African-American Students' Perceptions of Instructors Classroom Profile

The African-American students' perceptions of

instructors classroom profile is presented on Table 17. The

top three perceptions of the instructors typical classroom

behavior of African-American students were: (a) willing to

talk to me about academic concerns (80%), (b) having the

same expectations as non African-American students (74%),

(c) giving proper recognition to ethnic African-American

experiences within the course content (59%). The bottom

four were: (a) frequently relying on black students to

explain African-American conditions and race relations

(47.8%), (b) assuming that black students are experts on African-American experiences (45.6%), (c) have less expectations of black students than non African-American students (24.4%), and (d) instructors do not rely on me enough (23.9%).

TABLE 17

AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF INSTRUCTORS CLASSROOM PROFILE

Items		SA	A	DA	SD	TOTAL
Assume I am an expert	N	17	24	41	8	90
on AA experiences	%	18.9	26.7	45.6	8.9	100.0
Rely on AA students	N	10	33	37	10	90
to explain AA	%	11.1	36.7	41.1	11.1	100.0
conditions, etc						
Do not rely on me	N	3	18	55	12	88
enough	%	3.4	20.5	62.5	13.6	100.0
Same expectations as	N	18	48	19	4	89
non AA students	%	20.2	53.9	21.3	4.5	100.0
Less expectations of	N	4	18	47	21	90
AA than other	%	4.4	20.0	52.2	23.3	100.0
students						
Willing to talk about	N	19	53	13	5	90
academic concerns	%	21.1	58.9	14.4	5.6	100.0
Give proper recognition	N	10	42	26	10	88
to AA experiences	%	11.4	47.7	29.5	11.4	100.0
within the						
course content						

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, DA=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Seniors' Perceptions Of College Life

The African-American seniors most rewarding experiences of college life are displayed in Table 18. An analysis of the query about the most rewarding experiences revealed academic programs, which was selected by almost 40% of the respondents. The top two were academic programs and developing new friends. Social climate and multicultural environment were selected by less than 16% of the sample.

TABLE 18

SENIORS' PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE LIFE

Item	N	%
Social Climate	11	14.5
Multicultural Environment	12	15.8
Academic Programs	30	39.5
New Friends	17	22.4
Other	6	7.9
TOTAL	76	100.0

Summary

This chapter has presented the analysis of research data obtained from the 90 surveys returned by African-American seniors enrolled in three predominantly White Tennessee state-supported universities. The survey instrument solicited student responses about their perceptions, university services, and experiences at those institutions. Chapter five presents the summary, comments, recommendations, and suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

FOR FUTURE STUDY

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the African-American seniors' perceptions of institutional supported at three predominately White Tennessee state supported universities to determine factors that supported their ability to persist to graduation. The review of the literature revealed that parents' education, income, financial support, employment while attending school and cultural climate were key contributing factors in the persistence of African-American students toward graduation.

The objective of this study was to explore the contributing factors that influenced African-American seniors to persist to graduation at three predominately White Tennessee state supported universities. The target population investigated consisted of African-American seniors at those institutions. Ninety of the 180 seniors responded to the survey which represented a return rate of 50%. The instrument used to collect data is the African-American Seniors Perceptions' of Institutional Support which was developed by the investigator of this study.

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Comments

The demographic findings in this study were not significantly different from information supported by the review of literature. Between 1990 and 1996, the higher the education level of the student's parents, the more likely the student was to enroll in college (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1998a).

The percentage of undergraduate students attending four-year institutions who borrowed from federal loan programs increased by 11% between 1992-1993. Federal loan programs are the major source of student financial aid (NCES), 1998a). The findings in the NCES 1998a report that one-half of the undergraduates stated that the primary reason for working was to help pay for their education.

The national average of high school graduates' family income ($75,000 or more) was 86% and 53% of low income families (less than $25,000) were academically qualified for admission at four-year institutions. Among high income families, 47% of Black and 68% of White students were academically qualified (NCES, 1998a).

Mentoring and advising is an integral part of retaining Black students and can have a major impact on their academic success. Often a first-year student may not know or be assigned to an advisor who may also serve as a mentor.

Personal issues and relationships may play a large role in the academic success of all students. Respondents

reported the reasons for other African-American students leaving college were being poorly prepared, lacking motivation or from social isolation. Certain family characteristics, such as family structure and poverty level, are associated with increased risk for high school graduates not attending college. These students may feel inferior to other students because they may lack adequate financial support and have been less successful academically in high school. Tinto (1993) indicated that the ability of students to assimilate and adapt to the campus culture is directly related to retention and persistence to graduation. Tinto (1975b) hypothesized that the decision to remain in school is a function of the success of experiences in the social and academic systems. According to Tinto, the academic systems of colleges and universities include the grade performance of students and the frequency and quality of their interactions with faculty and staff. Campus climate is not some intangible, abstract concept that just happens. More accurately stated, campus climate is the development of the beliefs and practices of the administration, faculty, staff, and students belonging to that institution. This study supports the theory researched by Tinto.

Recommendations

In order for recruitment and retention of African-American students to flourish, institutions of higher

learning must integrate key strategies for success. These strategies are institutional commitment, increased financial aid, increased faculty involvement, parental involvement when possible, and strong mentoring programs.

Key administrators must provide open lines of communication with deans, departmental chairs and faculty who have been delegated responsibilities in this process. Regular meetings are necessary to insure that financial resources and personnel effort are productive. Students must be informed fully of various financial assistance programs available to them.

The faculty must be engaged actively and possess knowledge of different programs and services offered by the institution. When appropriate, parental involvement may complement efforts made by faculty or the institution in the advisement process and persistence to graduation. A strong mentoring program may be a critical component of any recruitment and retention effort made by the institution.

As a result of the outcomes of this study and existing literature, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Institutions should examine and change the organizational culture to be more welcoming and supportive of diversity. Recruiting individuals and making visible the importance of a diverse faculty must accompany an analysis of how the organizational culture is experienced by faculty of color. This analysis should include both formal and

informal norms and practices that may create barriers to a minority faculty member's success, which may contribute to dissatisfying experiences, and in some instances, resignations.

2. Financial aid including grants, scholarships, loans, financial counseling, assistantship, or work study programs should be made available. It is equally important to disseminate the information, and increase the availability of grants and loan programs to students. A financial assessment allocation and management of resources should be part of this financial aid package.

3. Institutions should consider offering pre-college programs to high school students with an on campus living experience. Pre-college programs may provide the institution the opportunity to assess the student's academic ability. This will help develop the pipeline of students interested in attending college.

4. Institutions should consider implementing a regular and standard practice of academic advising required by each department to include monitoring students' attendance.

5. Institutions should consider offering diversity instruction including supplementary instruction programs that support learning preferences of the entire student audience. Universities can build a pluralistic environment by promoting diversity and multiculturalism through special programming and activities.

6. A social integration of African-American students within the institution is an important factor in their ability to persist to graduation. A positive campus climate, supportive of learning and human development should promote diversity on campus. This practice allows colleges and universities to better reflect the changes in society and promote pluralism.

7. Consideration should be given to the development of new classes or programs to enhance the students' interpersonal skills. This type of training would enable the students to promote a better understanding of self worth, create new friendships, and facilitate their academic potential.

8. Consideration should be given to the development of orientation programs that include the parents' involvement. Further consideration should be given to monitoring the parents' participation in the students' academic progress. The students should also be encouraged to keep the parents informed of their academic progress.

9. Institutions may develop courses or programs that will outline successful strategies for monitoring, retaining and graduating African-American students. This includes tracking each incoming student to graduation.

10. Consideration should be given to developing a mandatory campus wide cultural diversity program for administrators, faculty, and staff.

11. Campuses may consider required elective(s) for all
new and transfer students on cultural diversity and
awareness.

Suggestions for Future Study

Future studies may include exploring:

1. The relationship that may exist among the processes
of selection, type of student selected, and the level of
student success. Researchers have discussed the importance
of linking student expectations to the institutional mission
relative to student persistence. The role of the
Recruitment and Admissions Departments must be clarified to
identify, and admit students whose career and educational
goals are closely matched to the institutional mission. The
traditional practice of college admissions includes the
evaluation of a student to see if he/she fits the mission of
the institution. Colleges must accept the reciprocal
responsibility of ensuring that the institution fits the
needs of the student. Colleges should use several
assessment practices in the Admission Department to get a
clearer perception of student-institution congruence.

2. An investigation of the role that is played by the
academic support areas in the success of students. The
Academic Services component is the most diversified and
expansive component. The focus of Academic Services in
terms of student retention and persistence is on providing

supplementary support to students beyond lecture presentations. The college must evaluate the format for disseminating information to faculty, staff, and students. Academic advising is also important to the direction that students will follow during their college experience. To be effective, it is important that students receive guidance that reflects their needs while also incorporating the knowledge of campus programming and bureaucratic practices. Candidates for advising should be trained accordingly to handle the multifaceted issues that may come up during advising sessions.

3. The relationship of curriculum review and curricular practices on student success. Of primary importance to academic departments should be the continuous process of curriculum review and revision. With the revision of curricular and instructional approaches also comes the need for a revision of assessment practices on campus. If new curricular practices are focusing on a higher level of knowledge and understanding on the part of the learner, assessment practices must be able to assess this higher learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to Administrators

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April 14, 1998

Dr. Gordon E. Stanley
Director of Admissions
University of Tennessee-Knoxville
Knoxville, TN. 37996

Dear Dr. Stanley:

I am an African-American doctoral student at East Tennessee
State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, presently writing
my dissertation. As you may be aware, recruitment and
retention of African-American students in higher education
is still a concern. Many colleges and universities actively
recruit African-American students, only those institutions
with good retention strategies become successful in
graduating an increased number of African-Americans. I am
conducting a study to examine the parameters that support
their ability to persist to graduation. The findings will
allow me to assess the perceptions of African-American
seniors at predominantly white Tennessee supported-
institutions.

I am asking for your permission to survey *sixty African-
African seniors* randomly selected. If your entire African-
American senior population is less than forty then the
entire population will be selected. Would you please
provide me with the names addresses (and e-mail address) of
African-American seniors at your institution? **Participants'
name are not required on the survey; Therefore, complete
anonymity is assured.**

*Enclosed is a Permission Form and copy of the survey
instrument.* **By signing and returning the enclosed
Permission Form, you are consenting to your institution's
participation.** If you would like a summary of the results
specific to your institution, please indicate on the
permission form. Thank you in advance for your cooperative
effort and assistance in conducting this study.

Sincerely,

Delmar Mack

April 14, 1998

Dr. George C. Gillespie
Dean of Admissions and Records
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN. 37132

Dear Dr. Gillespie:

I am an African-American doctoral student at East Tennessee
State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, presently writing
my dissertation. As you may be aware, recruitment and
retention of African-American students in higher education
is still a concern. Many colleges and universities actively
recruit African-American students, only those institutions
with good retention strategies become successful in
graduating an increased number of African-Americans. I am
conducting a study to examine the parameters that support
their ability to persist to graduation. The findings will
allow me to assess the perceptions of African-American
seniors at predominantly white Tennessee supported-
institutions.

I am asking for your permission to survey *sixty African-
African seniors* randomly selected. If your entire African-
American senior population is less than forty then the
entire population will be selected. Would you please
provide me with the names addresses (and e-mail address) of
African-American seniors at your institution? Participants'
name are not required on the survey; Therefore, complete
anonymity is assured.

*Enclosed is a Permission Form and copy of the survey
instrument.* By signing and returning the enclosed
Permission Form, you are consenting to your institution's
participation. If you would like a summary of the results
specific to your institution, please indicate on the
permission form. Thank you in advance for your cooperative
effort and assistance in conducting this study.

Sincerely,

Delmar Mack

April 14, 1998

Mr. Richard Yount, Registrar
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN. 37614

Dear Mr. Yount:

I am an African-American doctoral student at East Tennessee
State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, presently writing
my dissertation. As you may be aware, recruitment and
retention of African-American students in higher education
is still a concern. Many colleges and universities actively
recruit African-American students, only those institutions
with good retention strategies become successful in
graduating an increased number of African-Americans. I am
conducting a study to examine the parameters that support
their ability to persist to graduation. The findings will
allow me to assess the perceptions of African-American
seniors at predominantly white Tennessee supported-
institutions.

I am asking for your permission to survey *sixty African-
African seniors* randomly selected. If your entire African-
American senior population is less than forty then the
entire population will be selected. Would you please
provide me with the names addresses (and e-mail address) of
African-American seniors at your institution? **Participants'
name are not required on the survey; Therefore, complete
anonymity is assured.**

*Enclosed is a Permission Form and copy of the survey
instrument.* **By signing and returning the enclosed
Permission Form, you are consenting to your institution's
participation.** If you would like a summary of the results
specific to your institution, please indicate on the
permission form. Thank you in advance for your cooperative
effort and assistance in conducting this study.

Sincerely,

Delmar Mack

APPENDIX B

Permission Form

91

PERMISSION FORM

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SENIORS' STUDY
Perceptions of Institutional Support

I _____ give permission
      Name & Title

to Delmar Mack to conduct a survey of selected African-
American seniors.

This institution would like a summary of the results.
Please indicate yes or no._____

Date _____

_____
      Official Signature

Institution   _____

Address   _____

                 _____

Return this form to:

Delmar Mack
ETSU Nave Center
Health Related Professions
1000 West E Street
Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643

APPENDIX C

Letter to Participants

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SENIORS SURVEY
PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT
Instructions and Informed Consent

Dear Participant:

I am an African-American doctoral student at ETSU and this study is necessary for me to complete my dissertation. Many colleges and universities actively recruit African-American students. Only those institutions with good retention strategies become successful in graduating a large number of African-American students. I am conducting a study to examine the parameters that support their ability to persist to graduation.

There are no risks to participants in this study. You may withdraw or decline to answer any question or decline to take part in this without prejudice or adverse repercussions. I will be visiting your campus this fall semester to administer the survey.

After the data has been collected, **all surveys will be destroyed and only conclusions will be reported.** Data analyses may be obtained by contacting me. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact me at (423) 547-4916 or e-mail address at mackd@usit.net. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Delmar Mack

APPENDIX D

Survey Comments

95

Comments from AASIP

Question #4-In my opinion, African-American students leave
this school for the following reasons:

Prepared properly for college

Courses not offered in major area

Lack of unity with other race

Suspension

Money and careers

Career options

Negative environment

Small AA population

Racism

Lack AA professors

Better future

Cultural shock--not used to interacting with different races

Conflict between education and immediate need for money

Racial insensitivity of community

Lack of AA restaurants, services and products

Question #5-In my opinion, African-American students remain
this school to complete their degrees because:

Obligatory

Sense of personal achievement

Question #7-School meets my cultural needs through:

Black people

Student organizations

Black culture programs

Honor society

Please write two positive and two negative experiences

Positive experiences:

Christian

Participation in preprofessional

White students friendly

Learn to interact

Professor helpful

Honor Society

Black Student Association

Other culture

Affirmative Action

Wife

Being able to interact with persons of various cultural backgrounds

When my grades started declining, the Black Affairs office was willing to help me.

Meeting new people

Scholarship

Meeting good people

Faculty

Knowledge from many sources

Good advisor--offered information on financial aid and scholarship without having to ask for it.

Graduating

Loves college

Having a black college president

First to be inducted in Collegiate 100 (sons of 100 black men)

Positive comment from white professor

Negatives experiences:

Tried to get advice from advisor for courses to take--advisor refused and said to refer to catalog

Small number of AA students

Being distanced from close friends

Racism by faculty

Lack of activities for whole campus

Not enough black professors/advisors

Racial bias

Reverse discrimination from black faculty

Discrimination from white faculty

Lack of financial aid and information

Racial sterotypes

Being the only black male and sometimes the only black student in my classes

The student's attitude in classes when I step on campus seemed like I was an outcast

Not very helpful professors

Black faculty and staff not unified

Professors assume older AA students will always need more help than others and ask for extra credit

Inadequate math and science background of AA students versus whites--blames on poor high school preparation

Low number of black students in class

Black students are not united

Professors need more cultural diversity training

Some classes geared around white study..or students

lack of encouragement from white professors
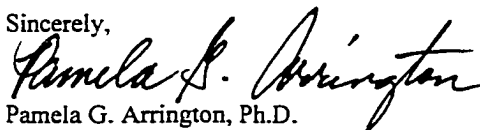
APPENDIX E

Permission Letter

100

October 14, 1997

Delmar L. Mack
Associate Professor
Respiratory Care Program
East Tennessee State University
1000 West E Street
Elizabethtown, TN 37643-2310

Dear Mr. Mack:

      This letter is written confirmation that I support your request to replicate the survey instrument that was the basis of my doctoral research. Please note the instrument that I developed utilized items from Burrell's (1979) *Perceptions of Administrators and Minority Students of Minority Student Experience on Predominantly White Campuses* and Hickey's (1979) *George Mason University Student Opinions: An Assessment of Services.*

Sincerely,

Pamela G. Arrington

Pamela G. Arrington, Ph.D.
Senior Staff Specialist
Planning and Academic Affairs

APPENDIX F

Survey Instrument

102

African-American Seniors'
Perceptions of Institutional Support

This survey is designed to assess factors that relate to the
educational experience of African-American seniors.

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to each of the following
statements below. Circle the number in the appropriate
column that represents your perception or opinion.
(Circle only one response for each reason)

Key: 1   2   3   4
                          Strongly   Agree   Disagree   Strongly
                          Agree   Disagree

1. In general, my academic advisor has:

                                        SA   A   DA   SD

    a.   been available................1   2   3   4

    b.   taken a personal concern in...1   2   3   4
          my academic development

    c.   provided me with accurate.....1   2   3   4
          information

    d.   I do not know my academic.....1   2   3   4
          advisor

2. I am comfortable approaching my academic advisor:

                                        SA   A   DA   SD

    a.   concerning my academic 1   2   3   4
          questions or problems

    b.   to sign my registration or....1   2   3   4
          other forms

    c.   for personal counseling.......1   2   3   4

    d.   for career planning...........1   2   3   4

    e.   to write for letters of.......1   2   3   4
          recommendation

    f.   for academic counseling.......1   2   3   4

3. When in the classroom, my instructors typically:

		SA	A	DA	SD
a.	assume that I am an expert....on African-American experiences	1	2	3	4
b.	frequently rely on me to......explain African-American conditions, race relaticns, etc.	1	2	3	4
c.	do not rely on me enough......	1	2	3	4
d.	have the same expectations....of me as non-African-American students	1	2	3	4
e.	have less expectations of me..as non-African-American students	1	2	3	4
f.	are willing to talk with me...about my academic concerns	1	2	3	4
g.	give proper recognition to....ethnic African-American experiences within the course content	1	2	3	4

4. In my opinion, African-American students leave this school for the following reasons:

		SA	A	DA	SD
a.	poorly prepared for college...	1	2	3	4
b.	difficult to handle schedule..	1	2	3	4
c.	uninteresting courses.........	1	2	3	4
d.	racially biased grading.......	1	2	3	4
e.	racial insensitivity of.......faculty	1	2	3	4
f.	racial insensitivity of.......students	1	2	3	4
g.	social isolation..............	1	2	3	4
h.	lack of motivation............	1	2	3	4

i.   problem of self-esteem.........1   2   3   4

		SA	A	DA	SD
j.	lack of relevant programs.....1	2	3	4
k.	lack of money.................1	2	3	4
l.	commuting/transportation......1	2	3	4
	problems			
m.	very small number of African-.1	2	3	4
	Americans on campus			
n.	family/personal problems......1	2	3	4
o.	other.........................1	2	3	4

Please specify _____

5. In my opinion, African-American students remain in this school to complete their degrees because:

		SA	A	DA	SD
a.	they are part of mentoring....1	2	3	4
	programs			
b.	professors provide support....1	2	3	4
c.	they have strong..............1	2	3	4
	encouragement from friends			
d.	they have strong..............1	2	3	4
	encouragement from family			
e.	they attend class.............1	2	3	4
f.	they are part of study groups.1	2	3	4
g.	they have financial support...1	2	3	4
h.	they hold a job 20 hours or...1	2	3	4
	less per week			
i.	they have made a strong.......1	2	3	4
	personal commitment to graduate			
j.	other.........................1	2	3	4

Key: 1   2   3   4
           Strongly   Satisfied   Dissatisfied Strongly
           Satisfied   Dissatisfied

6. How satisfied are you with the following student
    services?

		SS	S	D	SD
a.	academic advising.............1		2	3	4
b.	admissions office.............1		2	3	4
c.	campus ministry...............1		2	3	4
d.	career services...............1		2	3	4
e.	counseling center.............1		2	3	4
f.	financial aid.................1		2	3	4
g.	housing services..............1		2	3	4
h.	African-American service......1		2	3	4
i.	student activities............1		2	3	4
j.	student government............1		2	3	4
k.	tutorial services.............1		2	3	4

7. School meets my cultural needs through:

		SS	S	D	SD
a.	Black fraternities or.........1 sororities		2	3	4
b.	symposiums and workshops......1 featuring prominent Black speakers		2	1	4
c.	Black Student Association.....1		2	3	4
d.	other activities..............1		2	3	4

Please specify: _____

DIRECTIONS: Please check or fill in the appropriate response for the following information in Items 8-19.

8.   Your gender: male _____   female _____

9.   Your academic major: _____

10. What is your grade point average? _____

11. What is your age now? _____

12. Your age when you began college: _____

13. Do you receive an athletic scholarship?

    1. _____ yes

    2. _____ no

14. Do you receive financial aid?

    1. _____ yes

    2. _____ no

15. If yes to number 14, what percentage of your college costs are covered by financial aid?

    1. _____ 75 - 100%

    2. _____ 50 - 74%

    3. _____ 25 - 49%

    4. _____ less than 25%

16. Are you working on or off campus while you are attending school?

    1. _____ over 30 hours

    2. _____ 20 - 29 hours

    3. _____ 10 - 19 hours

    4. _____ less than 10 hours

17. What is your family's estimated annual income?

    1. _____ over $100,000

    2. _____ $55,000 - $99,999

    3. _____ $35,000 - $54,999

    4. _____ $25,000 - $34,999

    5. _____ less than $25,000

18. What is your parents' level of education?

    Mother _____   Father _____

19. Which one of the following areas has been the most rewarding part of your college life?

    1. _____ social climate

    2. _____ multicultural environment

    3. _____ academic programs

    4. _____ new friends

    5. other - please specify _____

DIRECTIONS: Listed below are groups of individuals you might ask for help with your academic, personal or financial problems. For each of these areas, identify the one group you Most Often or Least Often turn to for help. Write the appropriate letter for that group.

20.

		Most Often	Least Often
a.	other African-American students	_____	_____
b.	non African-American students	_____	_____
c.	African-American professors	_____	_____
d.	African-American advisors	_____	_____
e.	African-American administrators	_____	_____
f.	white advisors	_____	_____
g.	white administrators	_____	_____
h.	family	_____	_____

VITA

DELMAR LAMAR MACK

|	
Education:	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Health Education, B.S., 1975
	University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee; Technological Adult Education, M.S., 1986
	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D., 1999
Professional Experience:	Assistant Professor and Program Director, Respiratory Therapy Programs, East Tennessee State University. 1987-1996
	Associate Professor and Program Director, Respiratory Therapy Programs, East Tennessee State University. 1996-1999
Publications:	Mack, Delmar. Co-author, (1986). Case Report entitled "Foreign-Body Aspiration Presenting as Recurrent Pneumonia: A Case Report." Respiratory Care, Journal of the American Association for Respiratory Care.
	Mack, Delmar. (1994). "Placing A Value On The Quality Of Life." The Journal for Respiratory Practitioners.
	Mack, Delmar. Co-author, (1995) "Admission Significance Parameters in Radiographic Technology Programs" The Journal for Radiographic Technology.

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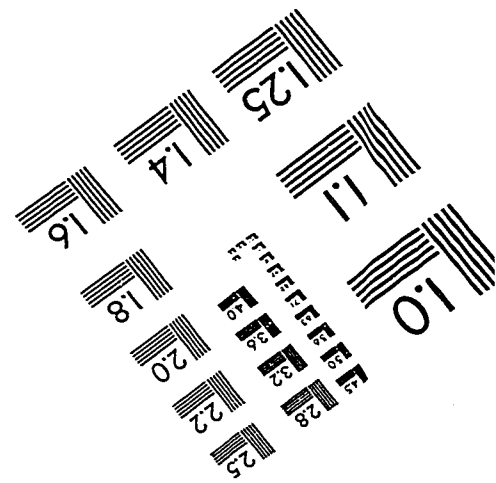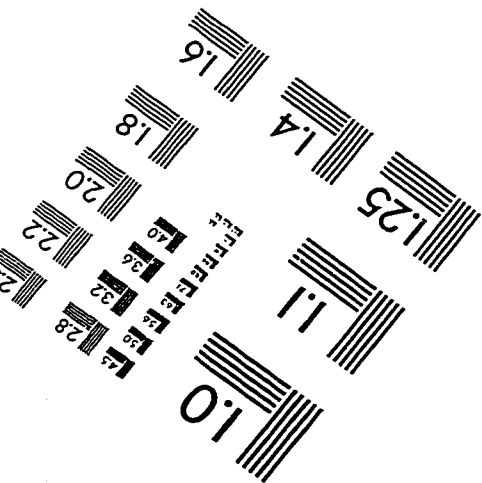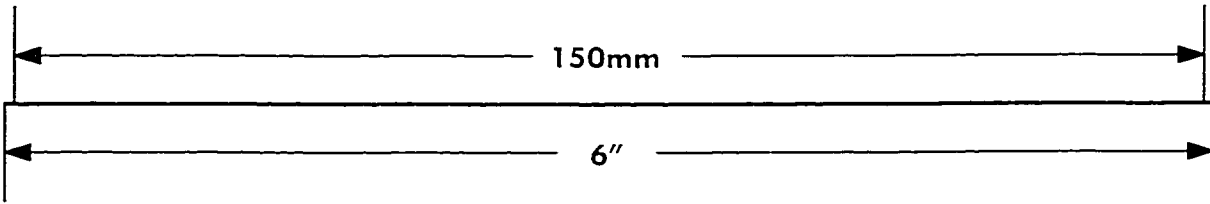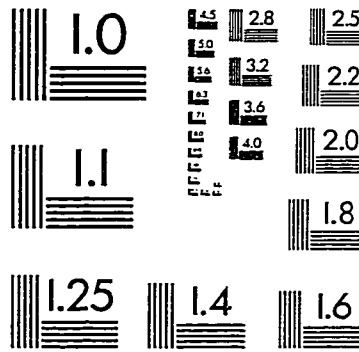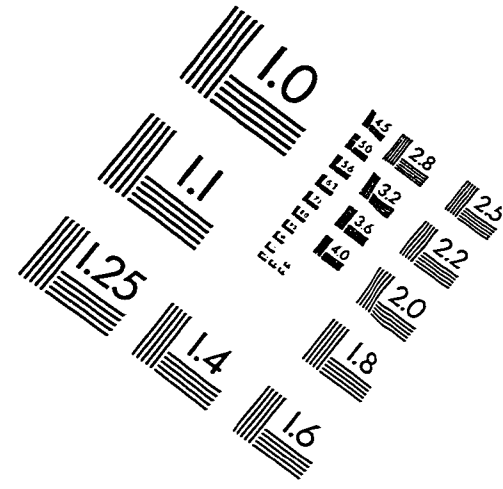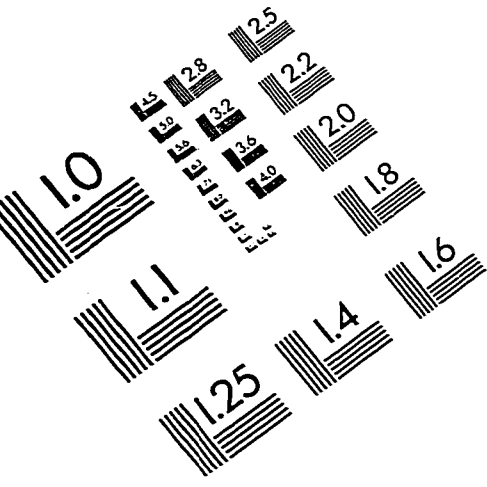
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