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## **Factors involved in the initial employment of African-American graduating seniors at a predominantly white university.**

P. Jane Hadley-Austin  
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FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN GRADUATING SENIORS AT A  
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation Presented

by

P. JANE HADLEY-AUSTIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1994

School of Education

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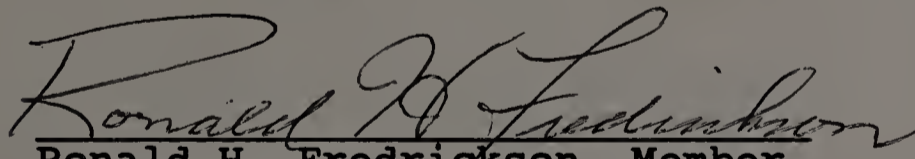
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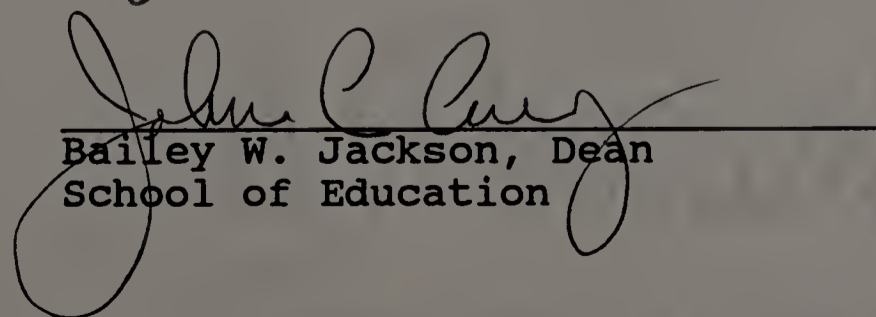
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me--For He has not given me the Spirit of Fear, but of Power, and of Love, and of Self-Confidence."

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN GRADUATING SENIORS AT A  
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 1994

P. JANE HADLEY-AUSTIN, M.Ed., CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE

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Directed by: Professor Norma Jean Anderson

This study was designed to investigate factors involved in the initial employment of African-American graduating seniors at a predominantly white university. More specifically, this study focused on examining the job activities which contributed to African-American seniors securing entry-level professional positions and the role played by the Mather Career Center in the job search of graduating seniors.

Questionnaires were sent to the graduating seniors of the Class of 1992. From the ninety seven respondents, a subset of twenty four were selected for indepth interviews. Theses interviews provided the primary data for the study.

Data was obtained by the use of two instruments. A survey was constructed using a Likert-type scale combined with open and closed form questions to assess how

many job-seeking activities the seniors participated in at the Mather Career Center. One thousand questionnaires were distributed; ninety-seven were returned completed. The questionnaire included four categories: Self-Development and Marketing Skills, Networking System, Career Planning and Placement, and Post-Placement Information.

Sixteen questions focusing on the individual experiences of twenty four African-American and white graduating seniors were used to determine those factors that may have been involved in securing an entry-level professional position.

The findings of this study revealed that several factors are a consideration for sampled African-American graduating seniors in their job search activities: networking with relatives and other support systems, lack of support from faculty, focus on race and ethnicity, heavy course and workloads, and spirituality.

A significant difference was found between African-American participants and white participants in the amount of hours worked during their college careers.

One important finding is that, while 66.6% of the African-American graduating seniors of this study did take advantage of the Mather Career Center, most relied upon

external resources outside of the University, such as their support systems to assist with actual employment.

The study suggests that there must be a collaborative effort among faculty, administrators, students, parents and the private and public sectors to facilitate a smoother transition for graduates in becoming future professionals.

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## On The Pursuit of Excellence

One should seek to do his life's work as if God Almighty called him at this particular moment in history to do it. And he must do it with a sense of cosmic responsibility, no matter how small it happens to be. He must do a little job in a big way.

If you can't be a pine on the top of a hill, be a scrub in the valley, but be the best little scrub on the side of the hill. Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be the sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.

Excerpt from a speech by  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,  
Chicago Sunday Evening Club,  
March 1965.

## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

In examining factors involved in the initial employment of African-American graduating seniors at a predominantly white university, it was necessary to explore the history of what were known as placement agencies before their transformation to what are known today as career services or career centers. It was equally important to explore the history of African-American placement and employment to comprehend the career paths that most African-Americans not only followed but to which they were relegated if they wanted employment in so-called "white-collar" positions.

The beginning of the literature review focuses on historical highlights of placement agencies at their inception and career planning and placement centers from an operational perspective. The next section explores the historical placement and employment plight of African-Americans, followed by the evaluation of some specific factors influencing the employment of African-American

students. The research methods, survey and interview data, bibliography and appendix will follow.

### Statement of Problem

The Chronicle of Higher Education (August 1992) reported that, in 1992, 61,074 African-American students graduated with bachelor's degrees from institutions of higher education. The University of Massachusetts conferred undergraduate degrees upon 125 African-American students from graduating classes of September 1991, February 1992 and May 1992 (University of Massachusetts Registrar's Office, 1992).

As competition for jobs continued to increase, due in part to the lagging economy, few positive signs for a recovery were manifested for the upcoming year. Many people holding degrees were unemployed and the disparity for African-American graduates produced an even wider gap. Studies indicated that African-American college graduates were twice as likely to be unemployed (Boaz, 1981), and that African-American college graduates continued to be paid less than their counterparts. According to Willie, Grady, and Hope (1991), African-Americans who were college graduates earn 22% less than the income received by college-educated whites. Racial inequity coupled with employment discrimination and fewer affirmative action

mandates being executed in the workplace presented major problems for the graduating African-American student entering the workforce.

These things considered, a recurring theme at many predominately white institutions was how to improve the participation of African-Americans and other racial groups in the career planning and placement process. In 1992, at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, less than 100 students who identified themselves as members of a racial/ALANA (African, Latino, Asian and Native American) group took advantages of the services at the Mather Career Center (hereinafter referred to as the "career center"). Of that number, many of these students were perceived as "stellar"--the "creme de la creme"--and they subsequently landed entry-level professional positions. The question that was often raised was, did they achieve employment from drawing upon their own resources, or did the role of the career center assist them in securing employment?

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine job-seeking activities which contribute to graduating African-American students' securing entry-level professional positions. More specifically, this study was designed to answer the following two important research questions.

1. What are the job-seeking activities which contribute to graduating African-American students at the University of Massachusetts securing entry-level professional positions?
2. What role (if any) did the Mather Career Center at the University of Massachusetts play in the graduating students' job search, and by what was it assessed?

According to a research study conducted by the Mather Career Center at the University of Massachusetts, the resources at the Mather Career Center are underutilized by graduating African-American students. A significant number of this population rely upon external career resources to secure employment. There was a need to examine those factors that have contributed to the success of these students receiving entry-level professional positions.

This dilemma brought attention to the job search and job-seeking skill techniques these students employ to secure permanent positions upon graduation from the University of Massachusetts.

Gardner, Chao and Walz (1989) list several factors that may contribute to graduating seniors obtaining successful employment:

1. parents/relatives;
2. classes/coursework;
3. networking systems;
4. career centers/employment offices;
5. organization representatives;
6. friends/peers;
7. counselors/advisors; and
8. observation of people.

The researcher believes that these and possibly other factors, such as environmental, academic, racial and institutional conditions, may also contribute to graduating African- American students at the University of Massachusetts securing entry-level professional positions upon graduation.

#### Significance of the Study

The Hudson 2,000 Report indicates that, by the year 2000, one-third of the workforce will be comprised of African, Latino, Asian and Native American groups (hereinafter referred to as "ALANA groups") (Megatrends, 1984). There is no doubt that total inclusion of ALANA groups in the workplace is inevitable. This reality raised several questions.

Do most African-American students take advantage of career planning and placement centers on predominantly-



white college campuses? Does the acquisition of job-seeking skills impact a student's ability to obtain a position? With over 50% of African-American students never completing their academic programs, together with declining enrollments and continuous budget cuts and other financial woes, it is hoped that this study may assist in the following:

1. enablement of college and university placement personnel to enhance or develop their career planning and placement programs;
2. provision of employers, recruiters and university personnel with comprehensive research that serves to increase their knowledge of the factors involved in many African-American students' securing employment;
3. evaluation of relative success of job-seeking activities; and
4. comparison of assessments made by African-American and white students of job-seeking activities.

There are many qualitative research studies (Lucas, 1986; Shingleton, 1989) available about the career planning and placement process of students. However, few studies explore factors involving African-American students career planning and placement at predominantly white institutions of higher education. It is hoped that

this study makes a significant contribution to the literature.

#### Limitations of the Study

Following are the limitations of this study.

1. The subjects were limited to African-American and white graduating seniors, as identified by university personnel, from one northeastern United States state university. Therefore, this study's findings are not transferrable to other institutions.
2. The study explored only specific factors involved in the employment process of African-American graduating students.
3. The study focused on specific majors and not on the total university population.
4. The researcher acknowledges the possibility of bias within the interview participants group. Participants for the interview were selected from the responses to the survey. In several cases the participants were familiar with the researcher in the role of a counselor. The pool of students from which interviewees were selected was not large enough for random selection. Also the researcher faced limited cooperation on the part of students to participate further in the study as well as time and financial constraints. These conditions made it difficult

to avoid this bias between the researcher and the graduating seniors in this study.

5. In analyzing the results from question 13 of the survey, the researcher realized the lack of clarity in the construction of the question. This question did not provide participants with follow up instructions. In order to compensate for this weakness, those responses by participants who said "no" to the uses of the Mather Career Center were not included in the analysis of the data.

#### Definition of Terms

**African-American:** native-born United States citizen of African ancestry.

**Factor:** something that actively contributes to a result, e.g., resume and interview preparation, job search abilities, communication and marketing skills, environmental, academic, racial and institutional conditions.

**Career Planning:** the total learning process that a person experiences in order to select, prepare for and obtain employment.

**Employment:** a paid entry-level professional position.

**ALANA:** African, Latin American, Asian and Native Americans.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

##### Historical Highlights of Placement Agencies

Placement services originated during this country's Industrial Revolution, when a group of people responded to the needs of workers--primarily immigrants and youths--in the decision-making process regarding occupational choice (Brewer, 1942; Brown & Brook, 1984). Frank Parsons--a lawyer, professor and social reformer also known as "The Father of Guidance"--believed in the perfectability of mankind and in a society moving towards perfection on earth (Rockwell & Rothery, 1961). Parsons was affiliated with the Breadwinner's College, the Civic Service House and the Vocation Bureau, three educational institutions of the time. He institutionalized vocational guidance via the Vocation Bureau, an agency of the Civic Service House. He responded to the needs of immigrant workers and youths by developing something known as the "Trait and Factor" approach.

Brewer (1942) writes that, during the period around 1908, Parsons developed a conceptual framework that later

became officially known as the "Trait and Factor Theory." The theory was intended to assist people in identifying their positive attributes and to determine how these strengths might be used in various jobs. The three-step Trait and Factor Theory includes a true knowledge of self, a knowledge of the principles of success and occupational information, and true reasoning on the relations of these two factors (Parsons, 1909). However, this theory was developed more extensively by Paterson, Darley and Williamson (1941) in the decades that followed. These psychologists expanded the fundamentals of this theory by including special aptitude tests, personality inventories and other devices (Paterson, et al., 1941.) Their work was specifically done to assist career counselors in aiding the unemployed during the Great Depression (Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1989).

Parsons advocated that personal and job analyses, coupled with matching through scientific advising, should be used as the basis for occupational choice-making. He believed that, if an individual would select a vocation as opposed to merely searching for a job, employee satisfaction and productivity would increase. Similarly, employer costs and inefficiency would decrease (Parsons, 1909). To date, America practices the Trait and Factor

Theory in most placement organizations, particularly in colleges and universities.

According to Ellen B. Lucas (1986),

The Depression produced a critical need to help dislocated workers retrain and find new jobs. World War II further reinforced the importance of placement in identifying, selecting and training people for various military positions. This called for the ability to assess individual skills, interests, and abilities and to match them with the same factors required in these positions. Placement centers in universities and colleges operated at this time in a manner akin to employment agencies using the "trait and factor approach" (p. 10).

It should be mentioned here that the sociological theory which developed out of philanthropic expression was designed to serve disadvantaged youth. Therefore, there was no correlation between the origin of the guidance movement and the creation of services for college students (Reed, 1944).

In 1917, the Division of Education at Harvard University assumed the management of the Vocation Bureau, and its name was changed to the Bureau of Vocational Guidance (Davis, 1969). A placement office was established at Yale University in 1919, after the end of the World War, to aid Yale alumni returning from the armed services. Other placement offices were started in the 1920s; again, the emphasis was placed on assisting men who

had fought in the war (College Placement Council, 1962). The principles, values and philosophy of placement offices of that era were directed to serving a homogenous group of white males. Placement directors implemented operations that today seem simple. Placement directors and counselors were responsible for contacting individual companies instead of representatives from companies who interviewed students on college campuses (CPC, 1962). According to Powell and Kirts (1980), college placement offices were informally directed by faculty members who practiced the concept of "the old-boy network" in the placement of their graduating students.

Service to the student. Service to the Employer.  
Service to the institution.

(CPC, 1962.)

This motto was supported by all colleges in the United States and Canada, whether publicly financed or privately supported. Placement directors developed six major functions.

Counseling and guidance should be offered to help students with their career decisions.

Materials should be furnished for students to carry with them to the company.

Students should have reading material on careers and employing organizations.

Stimulate and encourage students to pursue individual goals.

Students should have knowledge of ancillary programs or advisory services on/of campus.

Create a warm, friendly atmosphere that will stimulate students to take advantage of relationships with placement personnel after they become alumni.

(CPC, 1962).

### Career Planning and Placement Centers

The vocational guidance movement of the early and mid-1900s slowly transformed into career planning during the 1970s. This transformation occurred during tumultuous times when this nation experienced major developments in race relations, education, science and technology (Aubrey, 1977). Some obvious changes in the political, social and economic structure tremendously affected career planning and placement centers across the country. First, the number of college graduates doubled from 1960-1970; they "saturated" a job market in which skilled employees were in demand. Second, education was perceived as a way to enhance personal growth and explore career choice. Third, the combination of the impact of the civil rights movement and the sheer number of students majoring in liberal arts effected legislation that would promote hiring trends tantamount to the dominant culture (Powell & Kirts, 1980).

Some studies suggest that this era created a modus operandi for career centers. With a blending of personal



enhancement and growth emphasis of students from the 1960s to the focus on economic stability and advancement for the students of today, several questions may be raised concerning the role of the career centers. Should career centers act as change agents, focusing on assisting students with life survival skills? Or, should career centers continue to operate under the guise of a placement facility, linking students with potential employers?

As previously stated, our past and to a certain extent our future are shaped in a reactive way to the political, social and economic climate of the times. Clearly, philosophical perspectives influence the position career planning and placement directors take in executing their programs (Johnson & Figler, 1984).

Many career planning and placement directors have advocated that career planning and placement personnel can be catalysts for change in various ways. More career centers have grown from the myopic viewpoint that career planning and placement can only serve as a "placement" operation which focuses on placing students into specific jobs. Today, in most career planning and placement offices, services have expanded to provide a multifaceted array of services, including personal and career counseling, occupational information workshops,

experiential learning opportunities and self-assessment and exploration instruments (Lucas, 1986). However, in retrospect, we find that career planning and placement offices have reacted to the situation, as opposed to preparing for its future by creating and developing innovative approaches to serving the student population. The mission of career centers must be clearly identified as providing services essential to the campus community. Lucas suggests that the history of career planning and placement be properly explored so that university personnel can learn from the past and "understand the cyclical trends and build upon the foundation of skills acquired" (Lucas, 1986). An understanding of history and development is beneficial, as it "clarifies the struggle to delineate an identity and find a place in the college community" (Lucas, 1986). Nonetheless, most career center directors envision their operation as a bridge between the world of education and the world of work. How best to deliver their services is still a dilemma to many, due to the political, social and economic structure of a society which is integrally linked to the success of programs administered by university career centers.

The 1990s brought to America uncertainty and inequity

among many socioeconomic classes. Faced with a less-than-optimistic future, new college graduates will need to explore different job search strategies. With 50% of graduating seniors not finding jobs prior to graduation, and another 25% unable to find a position within their majors, students, university personnel and parents are quite understandably concerned (Taylor, 1984).

Organizationally, career centers must carefully examine their goals and objectives. The Eastern College Personnel Officers (hereinafter referred to as "ECPO") was organized in October of 1926 by five educators who met at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The meeting's objective was to promote professional improvement for the members through the examination and exchange of information regarding diverse placement problems and concerns. These pioneers of career planning and placement believed that, as an organization, three groups should be involved in promoting the concept of career planning and placement: faculty, constituencies such as students and employees, and the public (both local and national).

Shingleton (1985) further states that, to effectively serve this population, career planning and placement centers must carry out the following measures:

1. work at good public relations by "selling" their programs;
2. involve faculty and administrators in placement activities;
3. make a national effort;
4. solicit student involvement;
5. encourage employer participation; and
6. track the results of employers.

Still, some career planning and placement directors suggest that having a good career advising program provides the solid foundation needed to implement the goals of career or placement centers. According to Muha, et al. (1990), a good advising program should

- 1) help students develop self awareness, 2) enable them to clarify and evaluate their career and educational goals, 3) provide them with direction and career information on the job market and opportunities available, 4) help them develop a methodology to reach career goals and 5) assists them in the career decision making process (p.35 ).

Conversely, Shingleton & Fitzpatrick (1985) offer several ways in which a placement program can fail:

1. lack of leadership;
2. lack of administration support;

3. failure on the part of career planning and placement staff to recognize the contribution that an effective placement program makes to a college or university; and
4. inadequate communication with students, faculty and the employing public.

An eclectic involvement of university personnel (including the chancellor and faculty), public and private sector heads and students should play a role in the operational aspects of a career center. Namely, there must be commitment from the top down; university and organizational decision-makers should have a vital role. Directors and managers of the operation must have vision and compassion for the staff and students. And, the staff must be committed to executing the goals and objectives of that organization. The concept of education and work should go hand-in-hand and, from a national and global perspective, can strengthen the economic challenge faced by the United States.

The key to a successful career planning and placement operation lies within its staff and the leadership given by those responsible for the program. Strong support from top management, the board of trustees, college or university president is absolutely necessary (Shingelton, 1990).

## Historical Highlights of African-American Placement and Employment

At the onset of the 1890s, after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the Jim Crow period, it appeared as if African-American men could support themselves and their families better by working as farmers, laborers, waiters and bellhops, and in civil service and other similar positions, than they could in positions in higher education at the non-accredited African-American colleges. African-American women, however, were relegated to domestic jobs, later pursuing teaching positions at predominantly African-American schools. From 1890 to 1954, the African-American family would be tormented by economic oppression and cruel and abusive treatment from white Americans.

Employment discrimination became even more pronounced prior to World War I. The United States found it necessary to study labor problems as applied to certain groups. Knowing that war was inevitable, the country was concerned about ensuring that productivity and profit in industry and other organizations would not be interrupted. By 1911, the "National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes" arose from the merger of three groups formed to improve conditions and opportunities for African-

Americans. Today, this organization is known as The National Urban League (Borow, 1964).

Other organizations were forming to achieve racial balance in employment. In 1915-1916, the National Associations of Corporation Training appointed a committee to conduct a study on unskilled labor groups. The committee presented its results in a report entitled "Racial Adaptability to Various Types of Plant Work." They selected thirty-six groups composed of foreign or international groups, African-Americans and American-born whites; twenty-two fields were included in this study. The results indicated that welfare work (now called "personnel work") was developed to enhance the best traits of foreign and African-American groups. The study further suggested that the performance of foreign groups in speed, precision, day or night shift exceeded and used the same abilities for white Americans. However, the report suggested to employers that personality takes precedent over nationality.

It is important to remember that significant gains, with some semblance of choice in selected fields, did not occur for many African-Americans until the 1964 enactment of the Civil Rights Bill. This was an era in which positions in the private sector became more available to

African-Americans, and one in which they were finally more accepted in business, political and government positions. Additionally, African-Americans came to be represented in various occupations such as those of teachers (in predominantly white schools), secretaries, nurses and directors. Clearly the American political, economic and educational systems were changing from exclusionary to inclusionary tactics.

One notable reason for such a change in higher education is the enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights bill. The American government took a stand on desegregation and on educational equality with the enactment of the 1954 Brown Decison. African-Americans began the slow transition from attending historically African-American colleges to predominantly white schools. Prior to that time, African-Americans remained diligent in their quest for knowledge and achieved significant educational gains. From the 1930s to the 1950s, their enrollment in higher education rose to approximately 100,000. Approximately 90% of that number were enrolled in African-American colleges (Astin, 1982; Flemings, 1984). By 1984, the higher educational system had reversed from a high of 90% of African-Americans attending historically African-American colleges to 75% of African-Americans



attending predominantly white universities. Half of these students were enrolled in two-year institutions (Astin, 1982).

Much controversy exist today over the "advantages or "disadvantages" that stem from the desegregation of predominantly white colleges and universities. Some educators argue that this legislative action produced a serious backlash that has been detrimental to historically African-American colleges and universities. Despite declining enrollment, severe budget cuts, lack of financial aid and scholarship availability, African-American colleges offer role models and nuture and inspire academic and social development to a higher degree than has been reported at predominantly white institutions of higher education. Of predominantly white institutions, Gibbs states the following.

It has been reported that Blacks experience a greater range of problems than do Whites in their efforts to adapt socially, psychologically, and academically to the university (Gibbs, 1975).

Further, Flemings examines the intellectual and academic development of African-Americans and concludes that, not only do African-American schools produce greater intellectual prowess for African-Americans, but the "ambivalent treatment of Blacks in the North may set the

stage for the development of intrapsychic conflict" (Flemings, 1984). Given the number of African-American students who will actually graduate from historically African-American colleges and universities, this point is raised to suggest how critically important it is to provide academic, social, financial and career support for African-American students in their academic pursuit, particularly at predominantly white institutions of higher education. We must remember that historically African-American colleges and universities cannot solely accommodate the growing number of African-Americans who desire to attend higher education. Consequently, African-American students must attend, and have every right to attend, predominantly white colleges and universities. This is a reality--no longer can institutions of higher education ignore the needs and concerns of African-American students by promoting separatism in academic, social and career programs.

Factors Influencing the Career Planning and Placement of African-American College Students 1970s to 1990s

To the disappointment of many, since the timeframe of 1976 to 1989, the number of African-American college graduates has decreased from 59,122 to 54,766, a -7.4%

percent change (HEGIS, 1988). As mentioned before, during this period, there were several government-mandated programs designed to aid African-Americans with regard to education and employment opportunities. Scholarships and grants were readily available, and employers from both the private and public sectors initiated programs that solicited the hiring of African-Americans. While a significant number of career planning and placement offices have developed programs that assist these students in securing employment, these programming efforts are still lacking in providing sufficient and total support to this population. That is, programming designed for job preparation such as resume and interview development, job search processes and other career developmental programs are utilized extensively. The counseling and advising programs are, for the most part, utilized.

Ironically, the most underutilized services are on-campus and co-operative recruiting programs. Unfortunately, these are areas that are critically important in the career development of the student. More specifically, this is the time when a student can test his or her theoretical and cognitive development in his or her respective areas of study. In order to satisfy both the

needs of the student and the employer, the two should be integrally linked to solidify an agreement that is mutually respected by both for potential employment. However, there are several factors that interfere with and often prevent the potential hiree and employer from establishing those bonds that are necessary in selecting a student for employment.

Various studies have examined factors involved in the career planning and employment of African-American students. Some list psycho-social, environmental and background experiences as key factors contributing to the success or failure of African-American students at predominantly white institutions in gaining entry into the labor market.

#### Environmental Factors

Much research has been explored detailing the educational, political and social conditions and experiences that African-American students face on predominantly white college campuses. While 73% of African-American students attend these campuses, many do not graduate and are forced to seek employment opportunities on their own (National Center for Education Statistics, 1988). Historically Black college campuses

account for the remaining 27% of African-American college students, and produce a disproportionate number (51% in 1981) of the baccalureate degrees earned by African-American students (American Council on Education, 1985).

These students graduate and are forced to seek employment opportunities on their own. Allen, Blackwell & Abramowitz purport:

Black students on white campuses have experienced considerable difficulty in making the adjustment to an environment which is culturally different, academically demanding, and socially alienating. Compared to White students, Black students average higher attrition rates, weaker educational backgrounds, less satisfactory relationship with faculty, lower GPA, lower enrollment in post graduate programs and report more dissatisfaction and greater alienation (Allen, 1986; Blackwell, 1982; Abramowitz, 1976.)

Carter & Cook's (1989) study suggests another element that may contribute to factors involved in the employment of African-American students that concerns the dynamics of the systems theory. The following definition is offered for the systems theory.

Systems theory suggests that human systems can be thought of as organized structures and operations with interacting components constrained by or dependent on other components. These organized structures were seen as being "composed of mutually dependent parts and processes standing in mutual interaction." (Von Bertalanffy, cited in Okun, 1984, p.31.)

This definition suggest that the career process of African-American students is integrally linked to a system that governs and regulate policies. Moreover, the career process for all ALANA students is clearly a manifestation of the infrastructure of this society.

The systems theory has three basic components: boundaries, alignment and power. Boundaries are rules that regulate participation and roles; they are the manifestation of the system's rules and regulations, and they define the context in which communication occurs. Communication is the process and manner by which the rules and regulations of a system are transmitted (Carter & Cook, 1989). When examining the boundaries of a system, we find that the process of communication occurs in many forms to those who are culturally different. For example, stereotypes, ideas and beliefs are perpetuated within these systems. Institutional inclusion or exclusion of ALANA groups is another way the system may communicate social or occupational boundaries. Socio-economic resources distribution, or the number of ALANA groups within the labor force, may also serve as a boundary. Adhering to specific geographic locations in some areas (typically urban or rural ghetto), and adhering to governmental policies (such as Native Americans mandates

through the Bureau of Indian Affairs) are examples of boundaries. When these boundaries are challenged by ALANA groups, they are often subject to reprisals (Carter & Cook, 1989).

Another component of a system is alignment. Alignment is a pattern of subsystem connectedness. If we examine an institutional subsystem in the dominant society, it often functions as a separate subsystem. When separate subsystems join or align with one another to achieve sociocultural goals and to uphold basic cultural values, educational and occupational systems could collude and thereby restrict the success and participation of ALANA groups. A closer examination of this element indicates that fewer resources are offered by state, city and local governments to segregated communities, especially where ALANA groups live. The business community, as well as the general occupational world, aligns with the political bodies that frequently set standards of employment conflicting with educational backgrounds and lifestyle of ALANA groups (Carter & Cook, 1989).

The third element is power. Power is the ability of a person or a group within the system to change or determine the aforementioned elements, boundaries or

alignments. Occupationally, ALANA members are relegated to entry-level and middle-management types of positions. When boundaries are crossed, subliminal messages and subtle forms of communication are used to suggest that the individual is not conforming to standards. Consider the events of the reconstruction after the Civil War. During reconstruction, African-Americans began to participate more equally in the economic and social systems. This new way of living upset the historical, social and racial balance and led to legal and social backlash (in the form of Jim Crow laws and the creation of hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan). Some believe that the purpose of the Jim Crow laws and the Ku Klux Klan was to re-establish a racial inequality in America that still exist today (Carter & Cook, 1989).

Basically, the systems perspective calls attention to the internal (physiological and psychological) factors and external--or environmental--variables (economic and social status and living conditions) that sociocultural groups experience within this society.

Many career planning or development researchers have precepts about the correlation between college attendance and job success. Generally, cognitive development and socialization are two key components in insuring job



success (Akin & Garfinkle, 1977). If credence is given to the systems theory model, which, in the final analysis, hypothesized that the career process of African-American college students may be a manifestation of the infrastructure of this society, then, possibly, environmental and psycho-social factors could be an impediment for job success for the African-American graduate.

#### Academic Factors

As previously pointed out, African-American students at predominantly white college campuses have continually dealt with several issues that can affect job success, issues such as negative faculty-student relations, fewer educational resources, higher attrition rates, overall academic performance, dissatisfaction and greater alienation and lower grade point averages (Allen, 1986; Blackwell, 1982; Abramowitz, 1976). Perhaps one of the more pronounced issues among African-American college graduates is that the grade point average is perceived as a major factor in the hiring of students.

This is a disturbing phenomenon, since African-American students who enter predominantly white institutions initially represent those with high grade point averages in secondary school (3.0 and better), but

later experience lower grade point averages in college. The observable decline in academic performance from secondary school to college unequivocally suggests that there are factors which hinder the ultimate academic and career success of African-American college students.

Johnson (1982) looked at college grade point average, parents' socio-economic status on educational attainment, occupational status income level and job satisfaction for African-American students. The study revealed that the first job offers with the highest status and income levels were most likely to go to African-American graduates with the highest grade point averages. Further, Johnson (1982) found a relationship among the variables of characteristics of undergraduate institution, parent status, characteristics of graduates and post-baccalaurate career attainment. Additionally, the study suggests that the characteristics of the institution and the characteristics of the individual may possibly influence career status as well.

While the Johnson study presents statistics that are plausible, it is important to mention that few institutions (career centers and the employing organization) question the interview procedure and structure use by the recruiter. When a recruiter denies

an applicant a position, a student often acquiesces to the notion that she/he was not suitable for the position without asking the recruiter to share how to improve upon the interview.

Burton (1975) states,

. . . the standards that recruiters use to judge candidates are often inaccurate and inappropriate for evaluating minority applicants. For instance, recruiters continue to use college grade point average as a device to limit the number of students to be interviewed (p.71).

Additionally, it might be beneficial to consider student-faculty relations which should include an assessment of students' self-esteem and motivation to do solid academic work. Studies show that, when an individual is praised, s/he tends to feel good about her/himself, and s/he exhibits more positive or favorable actions towards reaching the desired goal. Noted psychologist Erik Erikson (1963) claims,

If children have learned to trust themselves and their world in the earlier stages, they identify themselves with the goals of their society and find great satisfaction in their own accomplishments. If they do not learn trust their feelings of inadequacy and mediocrity may be confirmed (p. 432).

At predominantly white college institutions, it is questionable as to the level of acceptance and subsequent

praise that African-American students receive from faculty and other university personnel. Boyd (1974) believes,

The major problem between Black students and faculty members involve assumptions about Black students, behavior toward Black students, and remarks to or about Blacks. Many Black students feel that professors view them as incompetent. For example, a student said "A professor told me I would probably need special help without knowing me or my abilities." The students feel that this injects self-fulfilling prophecy, if not outright inequality, into the grading process. Grades, then tend, to be lower than performance would dictate (p. 11).

Extensive research has also revealed that jobs with the highest status and income levels were likely to go to graduates with the highest overall grade point average (Johnson, 1982). Graduates of historically African-American colleges and universities are offered higher salaries in general than comparable African-Americans at predominantly white institutions (Solnick, 1989). This demonstrates that, based, on criterion of grade point average, African-American graduates of predominantly white institutions are not only faced with fewer job offers but are in constant competition with African-American graduates of historically Black colleges and universities. Further, African-Americans who attend predominantly white colleges report having more negative experiences with white faculty and staff. This trend is repeated with

students whose mothers achieved higher educational status (Solnick, 1989). However, African-Americans at predominantly white institutions tend to score higher on occupational examinations (Johnson, 1982) and, based on their experiences at college, are often said to have better social skills appropriate to performing well in a predominantly-white organization (Solnick, 1989).

Sufficient evidence has been provided to suggest that grade point average is a factor in determining whether or not a student will be hired by major companies and agencies within this society. However, we must remember that the grade point average of African-American students is only considered to be a major criterion in their hiring by a segment of the employer population. Other factors must be explored in order to provide greater validity to the subject area. Allen (1986) reminds us that:

How bright the student is, the level of background preparation, and the intensity of personal ambition and striving will all influence academic performance outcomes. Beyond these personal traits, however, is a set of more general factors--characteristics which are more situational and interpersonal in nature. Therefore, the student's academic performance will also be affected by the quality of life at the institution, the level of academic competition, university rules/procedures/resources/relationships with faculty and friends-support network (p.4).

## Racial Factors

While the previous theories continue to be examined in numerous platforms, there is yet another issue that is prevalent at predominantly white institutions on higher education that warrants some discussion regarding institutional racism. The notion that racism and discrimination exist in higher education in their various forms, impeding the academic and social development of African-Americans and other students of color, may indicate that African-American students are faced with serious inequities that could hinder them in the employment process. As such, racism and discrimination may very well be other factors that lead to occupational differentiation among African-American students.

A significant number of researchers have investigated inequities that exist between African-Americans and whites in occupational status. In examining these occupational differences, one element to consider is the relative size of the African-American population.

In a recent article, Shin & Lee (1990) cite Blalock (1967, 1979) who attempts to explain the relationship between competition and segregation as the consequence of racial competition. Blalock's position is that a relatively large number of African-Americans increase the

possibility for African-Americans to compete economically with whites. Blalock further states,

The fear of economic competition stimulates whites to discriminate against Blacks. This discriminatory behavior results in occupational differentiation between Blacks and Whites (p. 148, 1967).

Additional citations from this article highlight the perspective of exploitation. Glen (1963-1964) suggests that,

The larger the relative size of the Black population, the more chances there are for exploitation of Blacks by Whites. It assumes that concentration of the relatively Black population in a community leads Black to engage in jobs with low pay and low prestige (p. 53).

A study by Shin & Lee (1990) found that the relative size of the African-American population on occupational differentiation, when measured by the differences in the opportunities that African-Americans and whites have in being employed in high-status occupations, was greatly impacted by socioeconomic characteristics and educational level.

The disparity between the incomes of African-Americans and whites has been attributed for the most part to relatively lower educational levels of African-Americans. When assessing the improvement of economic status or stability of African-Americans, evidence points

to their increasing educational levels. However, it is questionable as to whether the educational level of African-Americans is the only factor in the disparity in incomes between African-Americans and Whites.

For example, Meisenheimer (1990) points out that,

. . . among college-educated men, Black graduates have substantially higher unemployment rates and lower median earnings than their white counterparts (p. 13).

In 1989, the unemployment rate for college-educated African-American men ages twenty-five to sixty-four was almost three times the rate for white men (5.6% vs. 1.8%). Also, in 1989, African-American men earned \$10,000 less than white men (\$27,966 vs. 37,234, respectively) (Meisenheimer, 1990). In terms of career paths, African-American men were less likely than white men to be selected for professional or management specialty positions.

Among college-educated men, the majority of whites work as engineers, mathematicians, computer scientists, lawyers, judges and doctors. While slightly more than one-third of college-educated African-American professionals work in these prestigious high-paying positions, most African-American professional men work in lower-paying occupations where a college degree is



typically not required: administrative support, service, precision production, crafts and repair, operators, fabricators and laborers (Meisenheimer, 1990).

In terms of women's career paths, it is interesting to note that, while women generally earn less than men, African-American and white college graduates have similar median earnings. Supporting this is the fact that there are more African-American women graduating from college than African-American men (54% in 1989), and there are more African-American women than African-American men participating in the labor force (85.7%). The unemployment rate in 1989 for college-educated African-American women is 3.9% (Meisenheimer, 1990).

Some obvious conclusions can be drawn from this study with respect to education and income disparity. One positive conclusion suggested by this data is that, while African-American college-educated men earn less than white college-educated men, they nonetheless earn more than non-college-educated African-American men. This would indicate that there is an advantage to earning a college degree. Also, there is concrete testimony that African-American women are steadily improving their financial positions and status within the labor force.

To this end, it would appear that no one factor is isolated when exploring the tremendous earning gap between college-educated African-Americans and college-educated whites. The amount of on-the-job training, labor market factors, educational level, job performance, size and financial strength of employers and racial discrimination could all be factors involved in the employment of African-American college-educated men and women.

#### Counseling Paradigms

It is not the purpose of this section to become involved in an in-depth analytical critique of counseling models. However, counseling paradigms must be explored to some extent to determine their impact on African-American graduates attending predominantly white college institutions. The question that is often raised is, have counseling centers influenced the personal and career development of ALANA groups?

There is little debate with regard to the criticism that most career development theory, research and practice are insufficient for ALANA students. One shortcoming of many counseling theories is the exclusion of sociodemographic variables, particularly issues involving race and social class. A review of the writings of Super, Holland & Roe clearly documents that little is mentioned

about racial/ethnic groups. As Brooks (1989) points out, most counseling theories neglect sociocultural, environmental and economic influences. These are serious omissions, since this study and other studies indicate that the aforementioned variables can influence the employment of African-American students. As such, Brooks (1989) reminds us that,

Effective career counseling with ethnic minorities requires an understanding of the limitations of career development models and their implications for counseling (p. 361).

Of the research studies focusing on counseling paradigms involving ALANA students, it appears to compare the counseling approach of ALANA students to that of White students. This means that, for the most part, factors are conceptualized and measured by white middle-class standards. The problem with this approach is that little is learned of the actual ethnic groups except that ALANA groups are different from white groups in certain ways (Brown, Brooks et al., 1989).

Further, there is concern about counseling methodology that inevitably guides ALANA students into overrepresentation in certain occupations. As previously mentioned, African-American male college graduates tend not to pursue mathematical and scientific careers. They

are instead employed in lower-level administrative and service occupations. And, many African-American women college graduates are heavily concentrated in the social and behavior sciences. This would indicate that a different counseling approach must be developed and implemented for African-Americans and other students of color that emphasizes the encouragement of students of color to consider other occupations. Although this writer does not necessarily believe that a person's ethnicity alone qualifies him or her to counsel someone of the same ethnic group, consideration should be given to the research data that suggests that most African-American clients prefer African-American counselors, and, more importantly, show a higher return rate with African-American counselors (Brown, Brooks et al., 1989).

Upon the advice of several national African-American organizations, the College Placement Council, Inc., (1970) suggests that the best way to develop an understanding of ALANA students that will foster and effectively instill trust and confidence is to hire African-American counselors. While the hiring of African-American counselors needs no justification as African-American students are deserving of advisors, role models,

mentors and individuals of support with regard to their own race, it is important to remember that 73% of African-American students attend predominantly white college institutions. Thus, counselors from the dominant culture have the responsibility of practicing counseling methodology that is effective for all students regardless of race, creed or color.

Therefore, the counseling model should specify to counselors that, when interacting with African-American college graduates and other ALANA groups, something more than qualifications and the recruiter's prescription for hiring an individual for a position should be considered. Developers of counseling models must take into consideration the restrictions caused by racism, psychosocial and economic conditions.

Lee (1982) reminds us that ALANA students face special obstacles in the labor force. One of which is racism--therefore, it is recommended that strategies be developed to help ALANA students deal with discrimination.

Moreover, counselors should be trained to consider the human factor even though many counseling models do not emphasize individuality among ethnic groups. Developers of counseling models should refrain from placing all students of color in the same category, and should

acknowledge that there are intergroup as well as intragroup differences among ALANA groups. For example, all African-American male college students do not aspire to careers in sports; neither are all Asian-American students suited for mathematical and scientific careers.

Fredrickson (1982) states:

Of course, there is danger in treating every member of a minority group uniformly. There are as many marked differences in family background, interests, abilities, achievements, and goals within a minority group as there are within the majority group. Every effort should be made to recognize those differences as well as the rich diverse cultural heritage from which they spring (Fredrickson, 1982).

Overall, one important factor that requires much thought and new innovation in developing counseling models and how they influence the counseling of African-American students appears to be related to the counselor's perception of the individual's environmental, psychosocial and racial conditions, as well as characteristics of the student and respect for valuing the differences of this particular student population.

#### Institutional Factors

There is the argument that, while people of color are in positions of power and subsequently might be strategically located in positions that would effect

American graduates, institutional and economic troubles can create problems in hiring trends.

As mentioned in Section A ("Career Planning and Placement Centers"), the challenge facing career centers is worsened by continuous change in political, social and economic structures. The issue of diversity with the College Placement Council (hereinafter referred to as "CPC") is worth some discussion. A study performed by the Hudson's Institute, Workforce 2,000, focuses on valuing cultural and ethnic differences particularly among ALANA groups, women and other non-traditional groups. The study suggests that diverse leadership among these group will be necessary and will directly impact this nation's workforce by the year 2,000.

Career centers throughout this country clearly represent a microcosm of this American society, in that the majority of their directors and staff are white. The College Placement Council's 1991 Career Planning and Placement survey of its members reported that 9.5% of career directors are people of color and 55% are women. Similarly, 12.8% and 41.6% of college relations personnel are ALANA and women, respectively. If we are to

improve and increase employment opportunities for students of color, it is imperative that members of the CPC and leaders in corporate recruiting invite more people of color as well as conscious people who are willing to make a difference in the lives of ALANA students to take on leadership positions within various organizations. Based on the Hudson report, this involvement is not only a measurement of treating college students equally, but the focus should call for a concerted effort to preserve and educate, and train our most important commodity: the young people of this society who are the leaders of tomorrow. However, this nation is besieged with problems that do now and will continue to affect the rise of African-American leaders.

The prolonged economic recession, for example, has devastated this country's growth and development, wreaking havoc for all people within its economic and social structure. Nine million people are unemployed; another ten million are underemployed. The Savings and Loan disaster and other corporate scandalous behaviors have tremendously affected all people of this country. But African-Americans suffer greatly because few are in positions of enough wealth to counteract hard economic



times. We must remember that there is a decline in college enrollment for African-Americans.

Consequently, when faced with a national crisis of this multitude, obviously a depressed and lagging economy cannot support the need to expand programs because expanding programs generally means expanding the budget. Subsequently, for those African-American graduates whose career centers have not developed adequate programming to promote career opportunity, there is reason for concern. More specifically, the financial problems experienced by the state of Massachusetts since the late 1980s have, to a large extent, influenced the programming and services rendered to students at the Mather Career Center, in that there has been a significant reduction in staffing. Currently, there is only one person of color who has been assigned to serve ALANA groups.

At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, budget cuts have had a tremendous impact on faculty, staff and students. In terms of actual dollar amounts, the University has been cut by \$55 million since FY 1987. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education,

Massachusetts is the only state in the nation with a decrease of (-9%) in state appropriations for Higher Education from FY 88 to FY 90 and is ranked 48th in the country (September 5, 1990).

These budget cuts have greatly affected tuition, class enrollment and programming for all students; but students of color have been impacted most with regard to the dismantling of Affirmative Action mandates and policies. At the University of Massachusetts Career Center, the budget cuts have resulted in twelve vacant positions, thus creating much difficulty in hiring more staff of color to advise and coordinate career programs for ALANA students.

Affirmative Action was developed to remedy the effects of past discrimination against ALANA groups and women. The University of Massachusetts Admissions Office reports the following statistics for ALANA enrollment first-year students: Fall 1989, 384 ALANA first-year students; 1990, 407 ALANA first-year students. It is important to remember that students of color as a whole within New England represent a relatively small minority population. At the University of Massachusetts, students of color total less than 10% of the student population. There are three major academic and support based programs designed to serve ALANA populations.

1. CCEBMS, The Committee for the Collegiate Education of Blacks and other Minority Students, serves

approximately 500 African-American, Cape Verdean, Asian and Native American students.

2. BCP, The Bilingual Collegiate Program, serves approximately 500 Hispanic, Asian, Vietnamese and Portuguese students.

3. United Asian Kingdom serves approximately 300 Asian, Vietnamese, Indian and Pacific Island students.

These programs have felt the debilitating results of budget cuts that have had a crippling effect on scholarships, financial aid and lack of internship and cooperative positions that ultimately lead to permanent positions for students of color. One possible consequence of this situation is that many students will not complete their educational programs. For those who do earn their degrees, without some exposure to the labor force, (e.g., internship and cooperative positions), it will be difficult to secure positions within their field.

Graduating from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1992 were 330 students of color. Of that number, 125 were African-American (University of Massachusetts Registrar's Report, 1992). During the 1991-1992 academic year, 231 ALANA students visited the Mather Career Center for services. Of that number, less than seventy African-American seniors participated in

counseling and advising programs, and only half of that number participated in the campus recruiting program. When this number is compared to the number of majority students who visited the Center (over 20,000) we must examine why this disparity exists (Mather Career Center 1992 Annual Report).

In an article written by McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa (1990), they cite an important finding by Wright (1987), who indicates that there are multiple reasons why African-American students must struggle with factors that are not faced by majority students.

Many minority students live and learn in bicultural/biracial/bilingual environments, which are different from and frequently in conflict with those experienced at college by White students (p.433).

This statement seems to suggest that African-American students who attend predominantly white institutions face situations that encompass a level of uncertainty and difficulty that are very much different from the experiences of white students attending predominantly white institutions. This may lead to a conclusion that the comfort level experienced by African-Americans in their academic and social environment at a predominantly white college institution is likely to affect the stages of their career planning and placement process.

### Summary

The conceptual framework that established career planning and placement offices was rooted in the need to assist immigrant workers and youth at the turn of the century. Frank Parsons is credited for developing the Trait and Factor Theory, which is still used today in many career centers.

During that time, there appeared to have been a moral fiber that energized philanthropists to assist disadvantaged individuals with respect to employment. In addition to the establishment of several institutions founded by Parsons, a cadre of employment initiatives were developed by several schools and colleges for majority women.

The genesis of placement and employment agencies for African Americans took on a different kind of developmental process.

After the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, few African-Americans were qualified to hold positions that would allow them to adequately support their families. This was due in part to the legalized slavery system that forbade African-Americans to learn to read and write. As an outcome, once freed from this apartheid system, African-Americans held jobs for which they had not

been trained. For example, most of these positions were those of farmers, laborers or service workers. African-American women were relegated to domestic jobs. Later, as African-American schools and colleges were established, many African-Americans struggled but tenaciously pursued teaching positions at these institutions. By 1911, African-Americans had three organizations that focused on employment, eventually merging to form what is known today as the National Urban League (Borrow, 1964).

This brief summation of the historical aspects of career planning and placement gives evidence to the plight that African-Americans have been subjected to in order to realize equal employment opportunity and to be seen as first-class citizens.

Even after the enactment of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964, the majority of African-Americans still remain in lower status positions receiving lower pay. By today's standards, they are viewed as undereducated, underemployed and unemployed.

Disturbingly, when we examined the goals of career centers, we began to see that most predominantly white institutions of higher education are still having difficulty in serving the African-American population. Philosophically, there have been discussions focusing on

the dichotomy between the career planning/development process and the placement process, generally in the context of which should take precedent. Added to this discussion are the political, social and economic aspects and their impact regarding the success of programs under the aegis of career centers.

This study seeks to understand two specific and basic questions: what are the job-seeking factors that contribute to graduating African-American students at the University of Massachusetts securing entry-level professional positions, and what role did the Mather Career Center play in the graduating student's job search? Muha (1990) purports that an advising program at Career Centers should:

1. help students develop self-awareness;
2. enable students to clarify and evaluate their career and educational goals;
3. provide students with direction and career information on the job market and available opportunities;
4. help students develop a strategy to reach career goals; and
5. assist students in the career decision-making process.

The overall goals of the Mather Career Center's Career Planning and Placement unit are similar.

1. Provide career planning, advising and support for all students who intend to enter the work force or continue their education.
2. Offer workshops and individual advising on careers, occupations and employment opportunities.
3. Provide information on how to research graduate study options.
4. Help students become effective job seekers by training them in job search skills (resume development, interviewing, etc.) and providing an introduction to some of the employment issues they will face as they embark on their careers.
5. Enhance the University's efforts to recruit and support ALANA students by involving those students in Career Center activities, through individual advising and by offering career development and pre-employment workshops.

In assessing these goals and comparing them to research studies cited in earlier sections of this dissertation, however, it appears that these goals are not being met for African-American graduating students at predominantly white colleges and universities. The studies



suggest that these goals are not being met primarily because of the negative influences of environmental, racial and counseling paradigms and institutional factors. These are important to assess because they bear a significant relationship to the self-development and marketing skills, networking systems and subsequent career planning and placement of graduating African-American students.

A random sampling of Career Placement Council members (CPC) found that the three top concerns of the profession currently are:

1. shrinking resources/budget coupled with increased demand for services;
2. a tight job market; and
3. computerization/new technology in career centers.

These are clearly areas of concern. However, while the issue of diversity was mentioned, it was not listed as a top priority. This oversight provoked a question: how could diversity not be a top priority when studies show that people of color--particularly Hispanics and African-Americans--are the fastest-growing groups in the United States and the most neglected in terms of academic and employment opportunities?

This myopic view point of career center directors is of grave concern because it suggests that some career center personnel refuse to see the implications of this travesty. The academic and employment inequities that exist for African-American and other ALANA groups must cease if career centers intend to properly prepare these students for the competitive work force. Organizations cannot afford racial division and disharmony among their employees if they are to reap the benefits of high productivity and achieve the goals and objectives of the organization and subsequently meet the economic and political goals of this nation.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF STUDY AND RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

The nature of this study was to examine job-seeking activities which contribute to graduating African-American students' securing entry level professional positions. The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology of the study. This chapter will include the introduction, research design, research population, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

To establish background information, this study used data from a survey administered to 1,000 graduating seniors of the class of 1992 at a public university in the eastern United States. The second source of data involved twenty-four interviews with African-American and white students of this class from the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Engineering, the School of Management and the College of Food and Natural Resources.

This type of research involves human powers of observation rather than a scientific method of inquiry. Qualitative research attempts to reconstruct reality from the frame of reference of the subjects. This form of

research is thought by some researchers to be more effective than quantitative research, since quantitative research with behavior orientations often overlooks the fact that much can be learned from human subjects by asking for their perceptions.

Qualitative research focuses on feelings, impressions and judgments in collecting data. There is a heavy emphasis on the researcher's understanding the meaning of the data for accurate interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The findings often are reported in the form of verbal descriptions. Qualitative research requires close interaction between the researcher and those involved in the study. The research data arise out of these interactions in terms of what people reveal to the researcher and the research impression (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

In fact, those being studied may be included as participants in the design of the study and interpretation of the results. As referred to in Borg & Gall (1989), W.R. Torbert calls this process "collaborative inquiry." Torbert argues that it improves the validity and usefulness of a study's findings, since many of the phenomena of interest to researchers are internal events such as perceptions and feelings. Some researchers feel

that the only way to get an accurate understanding of these internal states is to form a personal relationship with those being studied (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Using qualitative research usually means that individual cases are likely to be studied. Hypothetically, each individual has a set of values, feelings and beliefs that can only be discovered through intensive and interactive study of that individual. The way in which internal states affect behavior may vary from one case to another and from one historical period to the next (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

#### Sample Group

This study involved two participant samples in which a survey and interviews were used. The participants graduated from five major undergraduate areas including the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Engineering, the School of Management, the School of Education and the College of Food and Natural Resources.

Ninety-seven (9.7%) responded to the questionnaire that was distributed to 1,000 (12.5% African-American and 87.5% white) graduating seniors of the Class of 1992. Twenty-four respondents (twelve African-American graduating seniors and twelve white graduating seniors) were selected to participate in the interviews. In the

selection of participants, the researcher focused on creating a balance by examining racial identity of graduating seniors. Student selection was based on the following four specific categories of students:

1. those who did use the Mather Career Center and have received job offers (three African-Americans, three whites);

2. those who did use the Mather Career Center and have not received job offers (three African-Americans, three whites);

3. those who did not use the Mather Career Center and have received job offers from other resources (three African-Americans, three whites); and

4. those who did not use the Mather Career Center and have not received job offers (three African-Americans, three whites).

These twenty-four students were asked to participate in interviews involving sixteen specific questions of inquiry.

Telephone calls were made to the ninety-seven participants to generate interest in the interview study and to select the candidates. Appreciation was extended to the respondents of the survey followed by an explanation of the forthcoming interviews. Selections

were made based upon their College of matriculation, matching of appropriate category, and willingness to be a part of the study. Six respondents agreed to participate but were difficult to locate at the time of the scheduled interview. In those cases, therefore, the next respondent listed was called and invited to participate in the interviews.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher with participants having a time allowance of one hour. Individual meetings were conducted during the week at the convenience of the participant.

The researcher acknowledges the possibility of bias within the interview participants group. Participants for the interview were selected from the responses to the survey. In several cases the participants were familiar with the researcher in the role of a counselor. The pool of students from which interviewees were selected was not large enough for random selection. Also the researcher faced limited cooperation on the part of students to participate further in the study as well as time and financial constraints. These conditions made it difficult to avoid this bias between the researcher and the students in this study.

Twenty-one participants were Massachusetts residents. Three of the participants were from New York, New Jersey and Maryland.

Seventeen of the participants secured full-time permanent positions. Two received positions through temporary agencies, three (one part-time) attended graduate school, one enrolled in a paralegal program, and two were unemployed.

Fifty percent of the African American participants' parents had some college training as compared to 91.6% of the white participants' parents. The level of parental education is displayed on the next page.

<u>African-Americans' Parents</u>	
High School	12
Some College	2
Associate's Degree	1
Bachelor's Degree	4
Master's Degree	4
Professional (Law)	<u>1</u>
	24



White Participants' Parents

High School	2
Some College	4
Associate's Degree	4
Bachelor's Degree	9
Master's Degree	3
Ph.D	<u>2</u>

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Instrumentation

In designing the questionnaire, the writer sought to find an appropriate tool that measured attitudes, perceptions and experiences of graduating college seniors.

The questionnaire comprised open and closed form questions, and a Likert-type scale to measure the attitudes and perceptions of African-American and white graduating seniors.

According to Borg & Gall (1989), Attitude Scales were developed as a tool to measure the individual's attitude towards a particular group, institution, or institutional practice. An attitude consists of three components: an affective component, the individual's feelings about the attitude object; a cognitive component, primarily the individual's beliefs or knowledge about the attitude

object; and a behavioral component, the individual's predisposition to act toward the attitude object in a particular way. Open and closed form questions, Likert-type scales, and interviews are examples of methods used to measure attitude (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Eleven specific questions were devised to investigate the participants' psycho-social and economic experience at the University. Five demographic questions were added at the beginning of the interview that were helpful to the researcher in analyzing the data.

In designing a Likert-type scale, the researcher lists five possible responses to the following statement: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree. The questionnaire was divided into four parts: Self-Development/Marketing Skills, Networking System, Career Planning/Placement, and Post Placement Information. The participants were encouraged to check one of the five responses within each category. The contextual data were analyzed, tabulated, and displayed by tables without reference to individual names.

Another form of instrumentation was the use of open and closed form questions. According to Borg & Gall (1989), open form questions allow the participants to make any responses they desire in their own words. Evidence

suggests that both open form or closed form (when the question allows only certain responses) produce similar information. This information gathered provided a basis for understanding the range of participants perception of the Mather Career Center.

The intent of the questionnaire was to:

1. measure specific activities utilized by African-Americans and white graduating seniors in obtaining employment;
2. indicate how much support students received from their networking system such as parents, relatives, faculty, staff, counselors, mentors; and
3. enable the researcher to have a clearer understanding of the students' future and whether or not goals and aspirations were attained.

[Researcher's Note] In analyzing the results from question 13, the researcher realized the lack of clarity in the construction of the question. This question did not provide participants with follow up instruction. In order to compensate for this weakness, those responses who said "no" to uses of the Mather Career Center were not included in the analysis of the data.

After receiving a response rate from ninety-seven (9.7%) of the sample group, interviews were conducted with

a selected sample (twenty-four) of the participants for further clarification of these responses.

Chapter V involved a structured interview using a subset of the larger group, twenty-four graduating seniors (twelve African-Americans and twelve white participants). The purpose of these interviews were to examine specific data regarding what factors contribute to graduating African-American seniors securing entry-level professional positions.

Marshall & Rossman (1989) state that:

An interview is a method of data collection that may be described as an interaction involving the interviewer and the interviewee, the purpose of which is to obtain valid and reliable information (p. 85).

Kahn & Cannel (1957) describe the interview as "a conversation with a purpose" (p. 149). According to Selitiz (1959), a structured interview allows the subject to fully disclose in detailed explanation the personal and social context of his/her beliefs and feelings. This type of interview encourages simultaneous responses from the participant. Responses are not forced, but are highly specific, self-revealing and personal.

The respondents were called by telephone and interviews were scheduled individually. Since most of the participants had completed their studies by the time this

study was disseminated, it was necessary to make arrangements at a place the interviewee found convenient. Some interviews were arranged at the homes or work place of the participant. The responses were recorded by the researcher. Through a signed release form, interviewees were assured that their identities would be protected.

#### Data Collection and Analysis

Ninety-seven (9.7%) responded to the survey that was randomly distributed to 1,000 graduating seniors in 1992. From the 97 respondents, a subset of twenty four graduating seniors were selected for indepth interviews. This data served as background information regarding the participants.

Over half of the completed surveys were returned by mail several months after distribution. The low response rate from 9.7% of the respondents can perhaps be attributable to the time period of distribution. The researcher chose to distribute the questionnaire in May 1992 in order to contact as many potential respondents as possible prior to graduation and subsequent relocation. Since the survey was mailed shortly after graduation, it is presumed that a significant number of graduates had not yet secured employment. A second mailing was not implemented due to time constraints and given the few

resources available to locate possible candidates for this study. According to other survey mailings initiated by Career Center personnel, the probability of locating alumni greatly diminishes once their program of study is completed.

Chapter V focused on twenty-four of the respondents who were asked to participate in the interviews. The goals for the interview were:

1. to develop a rapport with the participant;
2. to provide a clear and concise explanation of the purpose of the study;
3. to allow sufficient time for clarification and explanation of the follow-up procedure; and
4. to ask eleven open and closed form questions that related to the subject matter.

During the course of the interview a tape recorder was used for accurate data-gathering and to facilitate retrieval of information for analysis. Notes were recorded and, following each interview, the researcher added any transcribed field notes of audiotaped conversations which appeared to tie together intriguing phrases connecting with the literature review or any themes or patterns that demonstrate relationship between recent data or analysis of previous data.

Once the tapes were reviewed for accuracy, explanation, motivation, categorization and management of the data occurred. Managing the data was achieved by creating a data file containing the responses by the subjects to the questions through the compilation of the background data and open-ended questions.

According to Marshall & Rossman (1989),

Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data; it builds grounded theory.

The first step was to organize and code the data according to four categories: (1) those who did use the Mather Career Center and have received job offers; (2) those who did use the Mather Career Center and have not received job offers; (3) those who did not use the Mather Career Center and have received job offers; and (4) those who did not use the Mather Career Center and have not received job offers. Once the researcher was thoroughly familiar with the data through extensive reading, pertinent information was listed on note cards. The data selected for retrieval was entered into a software program for management and analysis of the data.

Generating categories, themes and patterns was the next step. The researcher identified recurring ideas, themes and patterns that are believed to link the

participants together. This was perhaps one of the most challenging phases of the study as, according to Marshall & Rossman (1986), "it involves the process of testing hypothetical claims and evaluating the plausibility of such against the data."



## CHAPTER IV

### EXPLORATORY STUDY

#### Introduction

This exploratory study examines the factors which contribute to graduating African-American students' securing entry-level professional positions at the University of Massachusetts and determines the role the Mather Career Center played in the graduating seniors job search. The following chapter is a presentation of data reported by graduating African American and white seniors regarding factors involved in their initial employment search. This exploratory study was based on responses to a mailed questionnaire. African-American and white participants discussed the factors that influenced their job search during their senior year enrolled at the University.

The survey and interviews were the two major sources used to generate the data in the study. The discussion of the data will occur in two parts. First, the results of the survey will be used to provide background information on the 1992 graduating seniors perceptions and familiarity with job search skills and their utilization of the Mather

Career Center. The four categories which divide the twenty-one item questionnaires will act as the constructs for the discussion of the results of the survey which will be displayed. These categories are: Self Development/Marketing Skills, Networking System, Career Planning/Placement and Post Placement Information. The Likert-type scale and open and closed form questions which were used to measure the attitude and perceptions of the students will be displayed with questions along with the tabulation of frequencies of responses for each of the structured choice responses in a table format. The rating scale used included: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

The intent of discussing the responses separately is to show the views and attitudes held by the participants regarding their familiarity with job search skills and the use of the Mather Career Center.

The following chapter will examine first the data generated from a subset of the larger group involving twenty tables. Second, interviews of participants' responses have been categorized in the following manner: students who used the Mather Career Center and received jobs; students who used the Mather Career Center and did not receive jobs; students who did not use the Mather

Career Center and received jobs; and students who did not use the Mather Career Center and did not get a job. The eleven questions used in the interview will serve as a framework for the discussion of each the possible factors. Given that the purpose of the study is to identify the factors which contributed to a specific racial groups' securing an entry-level position, the responses of African-American participants will be identified within these specific categories. Attention will be given to the patterns, themes, similarities and differences between perceptions among the individual participants.

Summaries of the data will appear after the discussion of each section.

Using the responses of ninety-seven graduating seniors who responded to the 1992 survey, the data examined below are divided into four groups: Self Development/Marketing Skills (Tables 1 through 5), Networking System (Tables 6 through 9,) Career Planning/Placement (Tables 10 through 15) and Post Placement Information (Tables 16 through 20). They are designed to answer the following two important research questions.

1. What are the job-seeking activities that contribute to graduating African-American students at the

University of Massachusetts' securing entry-level professional positions?

2. What role (if any) did the Mather Career Center at the University of Massachusetts play in the graduating seniors' job search, and by what was it assessed?

### Self-Development/Marketing Skills

Tables 1 through 5 represent Self Development/Marketing Skills.

Table 1

Responses to the Question, "Did utilizing good marketing skills (e.g., verbal and written communication, interpersonal, and dressing appropriately) increase your chances of employment?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	54	55.67%
Agree	20	20.62%
Neutral or Undecided	17	17.53%
Disagree	3	3.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
N/A	1	1.03%
No response	2	2.06%
Total	97	100.00%

Research studies suggest that if a candidate meets the requirements of a position coupled with having good communication and interpersonal skills, job success is dramatically increased. Table 1 reveals that seventy-four (78.7%) of the participants strongly agreed (fifty-four) or agreed (twenty) that utilizing good marketing skills increased their chances of employment. Seventeen were neutral or undecided, three disagreed, no one strongly disagreed, one marked "not applicable" and two did not respond. The overall rating of 78.7% could mean that most students believe they will benefit from having adequate training in verbal and written communication, developing solid interpersonal skills and dressing appropriately during the job interview.

Table 2

Responses to the Question, "Do you feel that acquiring resume skills was an asset in preparing you for employment?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	53	54.63%
Agree	34	35.05%
Neutral or Undecided	6	6.18%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	1	1.03%
Not Applicable	1	1.03%
No Response	2	2.06%
Total	97	100.00%

Since a resume is a graphic representation of an individual, and is often a prerequisite for an interview, students are encouraged to develop a solid, comprehensive resume in preparing for the competitive workforce. Table 2 shows that eighty-seven (89.6%) of the participants strongly agreed (fifty-three) or agreed (thirty-four) that acquiring resume skills was an asset in preparing them for employment. Six were neutral or undecided, none strongly disagreed, one disagreed, one marked "not applicable" and two did not respond. The high response rate of 92.5%

could indicate that graduating seniors perceive the development of a resume as a necessary tool in securing employment.

Table 3

Responses to the Question, "Do you feel that acquiring interview techniques was an asset in preparing you for employment?"

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	45	46.39%
Agree	31	31.95%
Neutral or Undecided	13	13.40%
Disagree	3	3.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Not Applicable	0	0
No Response	5	5.15%
Total	97	100.00%

Most employment interviews are formal, organized, interactions or meetings between a candidate and the interviewer (Heads or recruiters of organizations, managers, supervisors, etc). Since the interview will determine whether or not a candidate is appropriate for a position, employment specialists and experts recommend

that effective interview skills be acquired to increase maximum results. Table 3 reveals that seventy-six (78.3%) of the participants strongly agreed (forty-five) or agreed (thirty-one) that acquiring interview skills was an asset in preparing them for employment. Thirteen were neutral or undecided, three disagreed, none strongly disagreed, none marked "not applicable" and five did not respond. The rating of 82.6% suggest that graduating seniors believe that having good interview skills could augment their chances of employment.

Table 4

Responses to the Question, "Do you feel that perseverance played a role in your securing employment?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	41	42.26%
Agree	2	2.06%
Neutral or Undecided	19	19.58%
Disagree	4	4.12%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Not Applicable	2	2.06%
No Response	4	4.12%
Total	97	100.00%



While good marketing skills, a resume and interviewing techniques may enhance a candidate chance for employment, individuals who are tenacious and persevere during the challenges of a job search can be successful in obtaining employment. Table 4 shows that sixty-eight (70.1%) of the participants strongly agreed (forty-one) or agreed (27). Nineteen were neutral or undecided, four disagreed, none strongly disagreed, two marked "not applicable" and four had no response. The rating of 70% of those who agreed would indicated that the participants do value the concept of perservance as a factor in the job search process. The 25.7% who were neutral, disagreed, or marked not applicable may mean that the concept has not been examined closely enough or experienced to adequately respond to the question.

Table 5

Responses to the Question, "Do you feel that your GPA was a factor for prospective employers in determining your qualifications for employment?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	21	21.64%
Agree	30	30.92%
Neutral or Undecided	26	26.80%
Disagree	10	10.13%
Strongly Disagree	6	6.18%
Not Applicable	2	2.06%
No Response	2	2.06%
Total	97	100.00%

Much controversy exists concerning the legitimacy and ethics of a 3.0 or better GPA requirement for employment. One standing argument is that, since GPA is not a definitive measure of a candidate ability to perform job assignments; then perhaps employers would do well by examining the validity of its purpose or to explore other factors such as work experience, leadership abilities, communication and interpersonal skills. Table 5 shows that fifty-one (52.5%) of the participants strongly agreed (twenty-one) or agreed (thirty) that GPA was a factor for

## Networking System

Tables 6 through 9 represent the Networking System.

Table 6

Responses to the Question, "Do you feel that faculty played an important role in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	12	12.37%
Agree	14	14.43%
Neutral or Undecided	26	26.80%
Disagree	25	25.77%
Strongly Disagree	13	13.40%
Not Applicable	0	0
No response	7	7.21%
Total	97	100.00%

According to Gardner, Chao & Walz (1989), some faculty advisors play a strong role in assisting students with their job search. Table 6 reveals that a total of twenty-six (26.8%) of the participants strongly agreed (twelve) and agreed (fourteen) that faculty played an important role in their job search. Twenty-six were neutral or undecided, twenty-five disagreed, thirteen strongly disagreed, and seven did not respond. The total number who were not in agreement was seventeen. This rating of 73.1% of the participants who were neutral,

strongly disagreed or disagreed with this claim would suggest that most of the faculty with whom the participants interacted with did not play an important role in their job search.

Table 7

Responses to the Question, "Do you feel that other university personnel at UMass played an important role in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	12	12.37%
Agree	25	25.77%
Neutral or Undecided	29	29.89%
Disagree	16	16.49%
Strongly Disagree	12	12.37%
Not Applicable	0	0
No Response	3	3.00%
Total	97	100.00%

Similar to Table 6, some college administrators, advisors and counselors have provided tremendous support to students in terms of the job search process. Table 7 shows that thirty-seven (38.1%) of the participants

strongly agreed (twelve) or agreed (twenty-five) that university personnel played an important role in their job search. Twenty-nine were neutral or undecided, sixteen disagreed, twelve strongly disagreed, none marked "not applicable" and three did not respond. Sixty (61.8%) were neutral, strongly disagreed, or disagreed with this notion.

Table 8

Responses to the Question, "Did your peer group play a role in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	20	20.61%
Agree	15	15.46%
Neutral or Undecided	10	10.30%
Disagree	25	25.77%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Not Applicable	5	5.15%
No Response	22	22.68%
Total	97	100.00%

Most studies show that among the leading factors central to students securing a job is the guidance and support of

their peers. Table 8 reveals that thirty-five (36%) of the participants strongly agreed (twenty) or agreed (fifteen) that their peers played a role in their job search. Ten were neutral or undecided, twenty-five disagreed, none strongly disagreed, five marked "not applicable" and twenty-two did not respond. Sixty-two (63.9%) were neutral or disagreed with this claim.

Table 9

Responses to the Question, "Did your class schedule conflict with the on campus recruiting interview schedule?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	11	11.34%
Agree	12	12.37%
Neutral	34	35.05%
Disagree	24	24.74%
Strongly Disagree	13	13.40%
Not Applicable	0	0
No Response	3	3.00%
Total	97	100.00%

Some students have suggested that the location of the Center does not warrant full utilization of its programs

and services given that the main building is off campus. Of further importance, there are problems with arranging interviews through the on campus recruitment program because there will be schedule conflicts due to the proximity. Table 9 shows that twenty-two (22.6%) of the participants strongly agreed (eleven) or agreed (twelve) that their class schedule did conflict with interviewing times. Thirty-four were neutral or undecided, twenty-four disagreed, thirteen strongly disagreed, none marked "not applicable" and three did not respond. Seventy-four (76.2%) were neutral, strongly disagreed or disagreed with this claim. The implications are that 22.6% of the participants may have had some difficulty in utilizing the On Campus Recruitment Program, or some could not take advantage of the program because of class conflict. However, attention must be given to the high percentage (76.2%) of participants who did not respond affirmatively to this question. It is possible that these participants did not chose to arrange interviews through the on-campus recruitment program for other reasons.

## Career Planning/Placement

Tables 10 through 15 represent Career Planning/  
Placement.

Table 10

Responses to the Question, "If you were a participant in Field Experience (Co-op/Internship) Programs or held a related summer position, did this experience enhance your chances of obtaining permanent employment?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	34	35.05%
Agree	16	16.49%
Neutral or Undecided	20	20.61%
Disagree	0	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.03%
Not Applicable	12	12.37%
No Response	14	14.43%
Total	97	100.00%

The lagging economy coupled with organizations' layoffs, early retirement and downsizing have forced CEOs and managers to create and implement innovative policy and procedure with regard to new hires. Many employers agree that one way to balance this situation would be to offer



a student a field experience with the company of their choice which would enable them to test their theoretical and hypothetical claims.

To facilitate this process, the organization would specifically introduce college students to the organization norms and behavior by offering a related, structured job experience prior to student graduation. Table 10 reveals that fifty (51.5%) of the participants strongly agreed (thirty-four) or agreed (sixteen) that having a Co-op or Internship contributed to their securing a permanent position. Twenty were neutral or undecided, none disagreed, one strongly disagreed, twelve marked "not applicable" and fourteen did not respond. Attention must be directed at the disproportionate number of participants, forty-seven (48.4%), who were either neutral or disagreed or marked "not applicable," and who did not respond to this question. This may suggest that, while 51.5% did benefit from participating in a field experience program or a related summer experience, 48.4% of the participants perhaps did not have a Co-op or Internship, or may have had a field experience but one that did not contribute to their securing permanent employment.

Table 11

As a graduating senior, how many interviews did you participate in? How many job offers did you receive?

(The data for question 11 and question 12 have been combined to display the data related to the number of job interviews and the actual number of job offers.)

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Interview(s)	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Offer(s)	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3
Participants	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	
Interview(s)	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	8	
Offer(s)	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	0	1	2	3	4	2	2	1	
Participants	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	
Interview(s)	8	8	9	9	10	10	10	11	12	12	12	13	13	15	15	15	19	20	20	22	22	25	30	
Offer(s)	3	6	2	6	0	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	4	3	4	5	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	

Table 11 displays 70 of the 97 participants who had job interviews and were offered positions or did not receive job offers. Twenty-seven gave no response to this question. Thirteen answered that they had applied to graduate school and, therefore, (it is presumed) did not feel a need to pursue the interviewing process for employment.

Table 12

Responses to the Question, "If you have accepted a position, what resources\* did you use to obtain your position?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Mather Career Center	16	16.49%
SOM Placement Center	6	6.18%
HRTA Placement Program	4	4.12%
Department	6	6.18%
Faculty	5	5.15%
Newspaper Ad	13	13.40%
Private Agency	7	7.21%
Self-employed	0	0
Friends/Family/Networking	32	32.98%
Contacted employer directly	22	22.68%
Other	5	5.15%

\*Some participants checked any that applied.

Several major resources for college student employment were cited in the first chapter of this dissertation. Some studies have suggested that the number-one way of finding employment is through one's networking system, the second-best way is through an employment agency or center such as the campus career center, and a third way is by personally contacting employers. Table 12 reveals the following responses: friends/family/networking (32), contacted employers directly (22), utilized resources in the Mather Career Center (16) and answered newspaper advertisements (13). These were the most popular resources for employment. Other resources were the HRTA (four) and SOM Placement (six), students' departments (six), faculty (five), private agency (seven), and "other" (five).

Table 13

Response to the Question, "Did the Mather Career Center assist you in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	36	37.11%
Agree	27	27.83%
Neutral or Undecided	0	0
Disagree	31	31.95%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Response	3	3.00%
Total	97	100.00%

The researcher believes that, if students utilized some of the available services at Career Centers, they will have a distinct advantage other those who do not. Further, it is theorized that the student will facilitate their job search process by participating in at least one career center program or service. Table 13 reveals that sixty-three (64.9%) of the participants strongly agreed (thirty-six) and agreed (twenty-seven) that the Career Center programs assisted them in their job search. None were neutral or strongly disagreed, thirty-one (31.9%) disagreed and three did not respond. These figures seems to reveal that the Mather Career Center did assist 64.9% of the participants in their job search.

Table 14

Responses to the Question, "If you did not use the Center, what factors\* worked as a deterrent in your not taking advantage of the Mather Career Center?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
On Campus Recruiting Program insufficient	5	5.15%
Staff seemed insensitive and non-caring	4	4.12%
Number of Workshops insufficient	0	0
Instructors seemed unprepared to conduct workshops	1	1.03%
Not enough publicity about Center's Programs	11	11.34%
Student had no knowledge of positions available in major	10	10.30%
Center's programs not well organized	1	1.03%
Services conflicted with class hours	10	10.30%
Services conflicted with work schedule	7	7.21%
Location	4	4.12%
Graduate School	2	2.06%
Other	13	13.40%

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\*Some participants checked any that applied.

One of the concerns of the researcher was that the Career Center does not attract all students. Table 14 displays possible factors that may work as a deterrent to students. The following responses were recorded: There was not enough publicity about the Center's programs (eleven), no knowledge of positions available in their majors (ten), services conflicted with class hours (ten), services conflicted with work schedules (seven), the quality of the services (six), dissatisfaction with the staff (five), location (four), graduate school (two students, and "other" received thirteen check marks.

Table 15

Responses to the Question, "What factors\* encouraged you to take advantage of the Mather Career Services?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
On Campus Recruiting Program	16	16.49%
Staff seemed experienced and caring	34	35.05%
Center's workshops seemed sufficient	32	32.98%
Instructors seemed knowledgeable	18	18.55%
Proximity and availability of workshops	15	15.46%
Workshops offered during the evening	3	3.00%
Center's Employer Information Sessions	10	10.30%
Rossman Alumni Career Forums	3	3.00%
Counseling Sessions	18	18.55%
Other	11	11.34%

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\*Some participants checked any that applied.

Since approximately 20,000 visits are made by students to the Center within a given academic year, Table 15 reveals the factors that encouraged graduating seniors to take advantage of the services. The following



responses were recorded: seventy (72.1%) were impressed with staff related issues (sensitivity, knowledge, counseling ability), seventy-three (75.2%) were impressed with the on campus recruiting program, availability and quality of workshops, and information sessions; six (6.18%) favored the workshops offered during the evening and career forums, and eleven (11.3%) marked "other."

Table 16

Responses to the Question, "Would you recommend the Mather Career Center to a friend or relative attending UMass?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	38	39.17%
Agree	37	38.14%
Neutral or Undecided	2	2.06%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	8	8.24%
Not Applicable	0	0
No Response	12	12.37%
TOTAL	97	100.00%

Seventy-five (77.3%) participants strongly agreed (thirty-eight) or agreed (thirty-seven) that they would

recommend the Center to a friend or relative. Only two were neutral or undecided, eight disagreed, none marked "not applicable" and twelve did not respond, for a total of twenty (20.6%). This seems to indicate that the Center does have its merits as a career resource for students.

Post-Placement Information

Tables 17 through 20 represent Post Placement Information.

Table 17

Responses to the Statement, "Please list the month and year you started full-time employment."

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Fall, 1991	10	10.30%
Winter, 1992	7	7.21%
Spring or Summer, 1992	70	72.16%
No Response	10	10.30%
TOTAL	97	100.00%

Ten (10.30%) secured employment during fall 1991 and seven (7.21%) over the winter. Seventy (72.16%) found employment during spring or summer 1992. It appears that most hiring is during the spring or summer when most of the participants graduated from the University.

Table 18

Response to the Question, "What was your major in college?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
College of Arts & Sciences (Sociology, Sociology, Political Science, Communication, English, Economics, BDIC, Economics, Psychology, English, Psychology, Political Science, Political Science, BDIC, STEPEC, Communication Disorders, History, Math, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, English, Political Science, Journalism, BDIC, Psychology, Art, English, Communication, Psychology, Communication, Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Spanish, Sociology, Sociology, Legal Studies, English, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Communication, Spanish Literature, BDIC, Journalism, Japanese, Journalism, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Biochemistry, Geology)	54	5.67%
School of Management (Accounting, Business Management, Accounting, Marketing, Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management)	7	7.21%
School of Education (Elementary Education, Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education)	3	3.00%
School of Engineering (Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science, Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science Engineering, Physics)	7	7.21%
College of Food & Natural Resources (Plant Pathology, Forestry, Environment Consultant, HRTA, Sports Management, Wood Technology, HRTA, HRTA, HRTA, Wood Techology, Landscape Architect, Sports Management, Consumer Studies, Landscape)	14	14.34%
No Response	8	8.24%
Other	4	4.12%
Total	97	100%

Fifty-four (55.67%) respondents were in the College of Arts and Science, seven (7.21%) were from the School of Management, only three (3.00) were from the School of Education, seven (7.21%) were in the School of Engineering, fourteen (14.43%) from the College of Food & Natural Resources, eight (8.24%) did not respond and four (4.21) marked "other." The high number of respondents from the College of Arts & Sciences could mean that graduating seniors may perceive exploring all resources as a necessary means to ensure employment within the competitive workforce.

Table 19

Responses to the Question, "What type of position did you accept?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Entry-Level Pofessional (Insurance/Banking, Financial Investment, Sales & Marketing, Administrative, other private sector)	26	26.80%
Teaching	6	6.18%
Management	8	8.24%
Engineering/Computer Science	10	10.30%
Human or Social Services	8	8.24%
Life Sciences & Natural Resources	16	14.43%
No response	23	23.71%
Total	97	100.00%

Twenty-six (26.80%) respondents accepted entry level professional positions in the insurance, banking, financial investment, sales/marketing or administrative fields. Six or (6.18%) accepted teaching positions, 8 or (8.24%) went into management positions, 10 accepted engineering or computer science related positions, 8 or (8.24%) in human or social services, 16 (16.49%) selected occupations in the Life Sciences, and 23 (23.71%) did not respond.

Table 20

Responses to the Question, "Have you been admitted to Graduate School?"

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	13.40%
No	62	63.91%
No Response	22	22.68%
TOTAL	97	100.00%

Although it is not known how many students actually applied to graduate school, sixty-two (63.9%) of the participants indicated they had not been admitted to graduate school at the time they completed this survey. Only thirteen (13.4%) responded affirmatively to this question. Twenty-two (22.68%) did not response. The data indicate that 63.9% of the applicants were able to participate in the job search process. It is possible that the job search may have been their top priority upon graduation.

#### Discussion of Tables

The previous four categories surveyed were Self-Development/Marketing Skills (Tables 1 through 5), Networking System (Tables 6 through 9), Career

Planning/Placement (Tables 10 through 15) and Post Placement Information (Tables 18 through 20).

Respondents seemed to have agreed that there are benefits to having good Self-Development/Marking Skills by demonstrating the following rating: seventy-four (78.7%) cited marketing skills, eighty-seven (89.6%) cited resume skills, seventy-six (78.3%) cited interviewing skills, and sixty-eight (70.1%) cited having the ability to persevere. Fifty-one (52.5%) rated Grade Point Average as a factor that may have increased their chances of employment. Forty-six (45.1%) were not in agreement with this claim.

Respondents' rating of the Network System show, only twenty-six (26.8%) participants felt that faculty played a role in their job search. Seventy-one (73.1%) were not in agreement. The respondents' perception of the role of other UMass personnel (administrators, counselors, professional staff) was slightly higher at thirty-seven (38.1%). Thirty-six percent believed that their peers did a better job in assisting them in their job search; sixty-two (63.9%) did not agree. As to whether or not class schedule conflicted with On Campus Recruiting arranged interviews, 76.2% said they did not have a conflict. The data suggest that 22.6% may have had experienced some difficulty in utilizing the On Campus Recruiting program

due to class conflict. However, attention must be given to the percentage (76.2%) who said they did not have a conflict. Several questions could be raised as to whether or not they chose to arrange interviews through the on campus recruiting program.

The Career Planning and Placement section comprised for the most part, mixed rating. Fifty (51.5%) of the respondents believe that a field experience or related summer position enhanced their job search for a permanent position. While this is an impressive number, forty-seven (48.4%) were either neutral or disagreed, marked "not applicable" or did not respond to this question.

In terms of actual interviews, there were varied experiences. Over half of the respondents (fifty-two) received at least one job offer. Those who had more than six interviews secured at least one job offer with the exception of one.

The resources that the majority of the respondents used to obtain positions was through their friends/family/networking (thirty-two), contacting employers directly (twenty-two), and utilizing the Mather Career Center (sixteen) and newspaper ads (thirteen). While the Mather Career Center was ranked third out of four of the top resources for obtaining a position, sixty-



three (64.9%) agreed that the Mather Career Center did assist them in their job search. Thirty-one (31.9%) disagreed.

The major factors perceived as deterrents were: "not enough publicity" (eleven), "student had no knowledge of positions available in major" (ten), "services conflicted with class schedule" (ten), "services conflicted with class hours" (seven), and "other" (thirteen). Conversely, the factors that encouraged respondents to take advantage of the Center were: "staff seemed experienced and caring" (thirty-four), "workshops were sufficient" (thirty-two), "instructor seemed knowledgable" (eighteen), "counseling sessions" (eighteen), "proximity and availability of workshops" (fifteen), "on campus recruiting program" (sixteen), "information sessions" (ten), and "other" (eleven). Overall, seventy-five (77.3%) would recommend the Mather Career Center to a friend or relative while attending UMass. Twenty (20.6%) were neutral (two), disagreed (eight), or did not respond (twelve).

Post-Placement Information revealed that seventy (72.1%) of the respondents begin employment during the spring or summer of 1992 when the majority of UMass seniors graduate. Ten (10.3%) started work in the fall and seven (7.21%) accepted positions during the winter.

Fifty-four (55.6%) of the graduating seniors of this study had matriculated from the College of Arts & Sciences, with fourteen (14.43%) from the College of Food & Natural Resources, seven (7.21%) from the School of Engineering, seven (7.21%) from the School of Management and three (3.00%) from the School of Education. Eight (8.24%) did not respond and four (4.21%) were from other areas.

In terms of the type of position accepted, twenty-six (26.80%) accepted entry-level professional positions in insurance, banking, financial investment, sales and marketing, administrative or other private sector positions. Sixteen (16.4%) went into Life Sciences, ten (10.3%) went into engineering or computer science, eight (8.24%) accepted management positions, eight (8.24%) entered the human or social services, six (6.18%) accepted teaching positions and twenty-three (23.71%) marked "no response," which would include both those who went on to graduate or professional schools, and those who did not receive any offers.

Nearly 64% (63.9%) of the respondents had not applied to graduate school at the time of this survey. Thirteen (13.45%) had been accepted and twenty-two (22.6%) did not respond.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

To amplify the results of the survey, twenty-four students--a subset of the larger population--were selected for interview. Their responses are presented and analyzed in this chapter. The same format is followed in the displaying of data as was followed in the previous larger group. Tables 21 through 40 reveal specific data taken from the initial survey of 1992, followed by data that gives the participants' perception of possible factors involved in the employment of graduating seniors.

Self-Development/Marketing Skills

Table 21

Responses to: "Did utilizing good marketing skills (e.g., verbal, written and interpersonal communication, dressing appropriately) increase your chances of employment?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African-American		White	
Strongly Agree	8	66.66%	5	41.66%
Agree	2	16.66%	2	16.66%
Neutral or Undecided	2	16.66%	3	25.00%
Disagree	0		0	
Strongly Disagree	0		0	
Not Applicable	0		0	
No Response	0		2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Ten African-American participants (eight strongly agreed and two agreed) and seven white participants (five strongly agreed and two agreed) for a total of 70.8% agreed that marketing skills increased their chances for employment. Two African-Americans and three white students (20.8%) were neutral or undecided.

Table 22

Responses to: "Do you feel that acquiring resume skills was an asset in preparing you for employment?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African-American		White	
Strongly Agree	7	58.33%	6	50.00%
Agree	5	41.66%	4	33.33%
Neutral or Undecided	0		0	
Disagree	0		0	
Strongly Disagree	0		0	
Not Applicable	0		0	
No Response	0		2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Twelve African-American (seven strongly agreed and five agreed) and ten white participants (six strongly agreed, and four agreed) for a total of 91.6% who agreed that resume skills help them in preparing for employment. Two (8.33%) white participants did not respond.

Table 23

Responses to: "Do you feel that acquiring interview techniques was an asset in preparing you for employment?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African-American		White	
Strongly Agree	7	58.33%	5	41.66%
Agree	4	33.33%	5	41.66%
Neutral or Undecided	1	8.33%	0	
Disagree	0		0	
Strongly Disagree	0		0	
Not Applicable	0		0	
No Response	0		2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Eleven African-American (seven strongly agreed, four agreed) and ten white participants (five strongly agreed and 5 agreed) for a total of 87.5% agreed that interview techniques help prepare them for the job search. One (4.16%) African-American was neutral, and two (8.33%) white participants did not respond.

Table 24

Responses to: "Do you feel that perseverance played a role in your securing employment?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	5	41.66%	7	58.33%
Agree	4	33.33%	1	8.33%
Neutral or Undecided	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Disagree	0		0	
Strongly Disagree	0		1	8.33%
Not Applicable	0		0	
No Response	0		2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Nine African-Americans (five strongly agreed and four agreed) and eight white participants (seven strongly agreed and one agreed) for a total of 62.5% agreed that perservance did play a role in their job search. Three African-Americans and one white participant (four, or 16.6%) were neutral or undecided. One (4.12%) white participant strongly disagreed, and two whites did not respond, totalling 29.1% who did not agree.

Table 25

Responses to: "Do you feel that your GPA was a factor for prospective employers in determining your qualifications for employment?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	4	33.33%	1	8.33%
Agree	3	25.00%	4	33.33%
Neutral or Undecided	2	16.66%	2	16.66%
Disagree	2	16.66%	1	8.33%
Strongly Disagree	1	8.33%	2	16.66%
Not Applicable		0		0
No Response		0	2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Seven African-Americans (four strongly agreed and three agreed) and five white participants (one strongly agreed and four agreed) for a total of 50% agreed that Grade Point Average was a factor for potential employers in determining their qualification for employment. Two African-Americans and two white participants (4, or 16.6%) were neutral or undecided, one African-American and two white participants (three, or 12.5%) strongly disagreed,



two African-Americans and one white participant (three, or 12.5%) disagreed, and two (8.33%) did not respond.

Networking System

Table 26

Responses to: "Do you feel that faculty at UMass played an important role in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	2	16.66%	3	25.00%
Agree	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Neutral or Undecided	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Disagree	2	16.66%	1	8.33%
Strongly Disagree	3	25.00%	2	16.66%
Not Applicable	0		0	
No Response	0		2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Three African-Americans (two strongly agreed and one agreed) and four white participants (three strongly agreed and one agreed) for a total of 29.1% agreed that faculty played an important role in their job search. Two African-Americans and one white participant strongly

disagreed, three African-Americans and two white participants disagreed, and two white students did not respond, totalling 41.6% who did not believe faculty played an important role in their job search.

Table 27

Responses to: "Do you feel that other university personnel at UMass played an important role in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	2	16.66%	3	25.00%
Agree	5	41.66%	5	41.66%
Neutral or Undecided	2	16.66%	1	8.33%
Disagree	2	16.66%	0	
Strongly Disagree	2	16.66%	1	8.33%
Not Applicable	1	8.33%	0	
No Response		0	2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Seven African-Americans (two strongly agreed, five agreed) and eight white participants (three strongly agreed and 5 agreed) for a total of 62.5% agreed that other UMass personnel (administrators, counselors, and

other professional staff) assisted them with their job search. Two African-Americans were neutral, one white participant was neutral, two African-Americans strongly disagreed, one African American disagreed, one white participant disagreed, and two whites did not respond, totalling 37.5% of the participants who said UMass personnel did not assist them with their job search.

Table 28

Responses to: "Did your peer group play a role in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	7	58.33%	3	25.00%
Agree		0		0
Neutral or Undecided	3	25.00%	5	41.66%
Disagree		0		0
Strongly Disagree		0		0
Not Applicable	1	8.33%	2	16.66%
No Response	1	8.33%	2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Seven African-Americans and three white participants (41.6%) strongly agreed that their peers helped them in their job search. Three African Americans and five whites were neutral or undecided, one African-American and two white participants marked "not applicable," one African-American and two white participants did not respond, totalling 58.3% who were not agreeable.

Table 29

Responses to: "Did your class schedule conflict with the on-campus recruiting interview schedule?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	4	33.33%	0	
Agree	3	25.00%	2	16.66%
Neutral or Undecided	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Disagree	2	16.66%	2	16.66%
Strongly Disagree	2	16.66%	3	25.00%
Not Applicable		0		0
No Response		0	2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Seven African-Americans (four strongly agreed, three agreed) and two white participants (37.5) agreed that their class schedule conflicted with the interview

schedule. One African-American and three white participants were neutral or undecided, two African-Americans and two white participants strongly disagreed, two African-Americans and three white students disagreed and two white students did not respond. There were 62.5% (African-American participants and white participants) who were not in agreement.

Career Planning

Table 30

Responses to: "If you were a participant in Field Experience (Co-Op or Internship) Programs or held a related summer position, did this experience enhance your chances of employment?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	3	25.00%	5	41.66%
Agree	2	16.66%	1	8.33%
Neutral or Undecided	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Disagree		0		0
Strongly Disagree		0		0
Not Applicable	2	16.66%	1	8.33%
No Response	1	8.33%	2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Five African-Americans (three strongly agreed, two agreed) and six white participants (five strongly agreed, and one agreed) for a total of 45.8% agreed that a field experience or related summer position helped them to obtain a permanent position. Four African-Americans and three white participants were neutral or undecided, two African-Americans and one white student marked "not applicable," and one African-American and two white students did not respond. A total of 54.1% of both groups did not agree with the question.

Table 31

Responses to: "As a graduating senior, how many interviews did you participate in? How many job offers did you receive?"

(The data for both Tables 31 and 32 have been combined to display the data related to the number of job interviews and the actual number of job offers.)

African-American	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Job Interview(s)	6	25	30	22	13	5	6	1	2	0	0	0
Job Offer(s)	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
White Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Job Interview(s)	10	10	3	1	12	11	0	19	0	0	N/A	N/A
Job Offer(s)	2	4	2	1	3	4	2	1	1	0	N/A	N/A

#### African-American Participants.

Nine African-Americans received job offers.

Two did not interview.

One did not interview, but was offered a position.

Five had ten or more interviews.

Two had more than one job offer.

Two interviewed more than twenty times; twenty-two and twenty-five, respectively.

One had thirty interviews.

#### White Participants

Eight received job offers.

Six had more than one job offer.

Five had ten or more interviews.

Four did not interview.

One had nineteen interviews with one offer.



Table 32

Responses to: "If you accepted a position, what resources did you use to obtain your position?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African-American		White	
Mather Career Center	3	25.00	3	25.00
SOM Placement Center	0		0	
HRTA	0		0	
Department	0		0	
Faculty	0		0	
Newspaper	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Private Agency	0		0	
Self-Employed	0		0	
Friends/Family/ Networking	4	33.33%	3	25.00
Contacted Employer Directly	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
No Job Offer	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Three African-Americans and three white students used the Mather Career Center to obtain a position. One African-American and one white student found their positions through newspaper ads. One white student

contacted a private agency, two African-Americans and one white student consulted their friends and used the networking system. Two African-Americans and two white students used their family contacts, one African-American and one white participant contacted employers directly, and three African-Americans and three white participants did not secure a job offer.

Table 33

Responses to: "Did the Mather Career Center assist you in your job search?"

Responses	Frequency & Percentages			
	African American		White	
Strongly Agree	0		0	
Agree	8	66.66%	9	75.00%
Neutral or Undecided	4	33.33%	1	8.33%
Disagree	0		0	
Strongly Disagree	0		0	
Not Applicable	0		0	
No Response	0		2	16.66%
TOTAL	12	100.00%	12	100.00%

Eight African-American and nine white participants (70.8%) agreed that the Mather Career Center assisted them

in their job search. Four African-Americans and one white student were neutral or undecided, and two did not respond. There were 29.1% who were not in agreement.

Table 34

Responses to: "If you did not use the Center, what factors worked as a deterrent in your not taking advantage of the Mather Career Center?"

Responses	Frequency	
	African-American	White
On-campus Recruiting Program insufficient	4	1
Staff seemed insensitive and non-caring	1	0
Number of Workshops insufficient	0	0
Instructor seemed unprepared to conduct WS	0	0
Not enough publicity about Center's Programs	2	1
Student had no knowledge about positions available in major	1	0
Center's programs not well organized	1	0
Services conflicted with class hours	1	0
Services conflicted with work hours	0	0
Other	1	3

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Some participants marked any that applied.

Responses were "Campus recruiting program was insufficient" (five); "staff seemed insensitive" (one); "not enough publicity about the Center" (three); "no knowledge of positions available in major" (one), "not well-organized" (one); "services conflicted with class hours" (one); and "other" (four ).

Table 35

Responses to: "What factors encouraged you to take advantage of the Mather Career Services?"

Responses	Frequency	
	African-American	White
On-campus Recruiting Program	4	3
Staff seemed experienced and caring	7	4
Center's workshops seemed sufficient	4	3
Instructors seemed knowledgeable	1	3
Proximity and availability of workshops	1	1
Workshops offered during the evening	0	1
Center's Employer Information Sessions	1	2
Rossman Alumni Career Forums	0	0
Counseling Sessions	7	3
Open House	0	1
Other	2	3

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Some participants marked any that applied.

Factors that encouraged participants to take advantage of the Center were the Campus Recruiting Program (seven), "staff seemed experienced" (eleven), the Center's workshops (seven) and the counseling sessions (ten).

Post-Placement Information

Table 36

Responses to: "Would you recommend the Mather Career Center to a friend or relative attending UMass?"

Responses	Frequency	
	African-American	White
Yes	12 100%	9 75%
No	0	1 8.33%
No Response	0	2 16.66%

Twenty-one (twelve African-Americans and nine white students) for a total of 87.5% said they would recommend the Mather Career Center, one white participant said he would not and two did not respond.

Table 37

Responses to: "Please list the month and year you started full-time employment."

Responses	Frequency			
	African-American		White	
Fall 1991	1	8.33%	8	8.33%
Winter 1991	0		3	25.00%
Spring or Summer	10	83.33%	4	33.33%
Not Applicable	1	8.33%	4	33.33%
TOTAL		12		12

One African-American and one white student (8.33%) secured employment during the fall, three white students (12.5%) obtained jobs during the winter, and ten African-Americans and four white students (58.3%) found employment during the spring or summer months of 1992. One African-American and four white students (20.8%) marked "not applicable."

Table 38

Responses to: "What was your major in college?"

Responses	Frequency	
	African-American	White
College of Arts and Sciences: Political science, economics, economics, communication, BDIC	10	8
School of Management: Operations management, accounting	1	1
School of Education	0	0
School of Engineering Electrical engineering, computer systems engineering, mechanical	1	2
College of Food and Natural Resources Plant pathology	0	1
Other	0	0
Total	12	12

Eighteen participants (ten African-Americans and eight white students) 79.1% were majors in the College of Arts & Sciences. One African-American and one white participant were School of Management majors (8.33%). One African-American and two white students (12.5%) were in the School of Engineering. One white student was from the College of Food & Natural Resources.

Table 39

Responses to: "What type of position did you accept?"

African American	White
Management	Management
Claims Adjuster/Ins.	Administrative
Claims Adjuster/Ins.	Financial Planner
Administrative/Ins.	Sales/Marketing
Administrative/Ins.	Laboratory Technician
Computer Training Instr.	Management/Retail
Computer Analyst	Personal Computer Analyst
Caseworker	No Offer
Administrative	Graduate School
Graduate School	No Offer
Graduate School	No Offer
No Offer	No Offer

Seven (five African-Americans and two white participants) (29.1%) accepted insurance, administrative and financial planning type positions. Three (one African-American and two white participants) (20.8%) accepted management positions. Two (one African-American and one white student) (8.33%) accepted jobs in the computer field. One African-American (4.16%) accepted a teacher/trainer position. One white student (4.16%) accepted a position as laboratory technician. One white



participant (4.16%) accepted a position in sales. Two African-Americans attended graduate school. Four white students did not have offers.

Table 40

Responses to: "Have you been admitted to Graduate School?"

Responses	Frequency			
	African American		White	
Yes	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
No	9	75.00%	11	91.6%
Total	12		12	

Although it is not known how many participants applied to graduate school, four participants (three African-Americans and one white students) (16.6%) had been admitted to graduate school. Twenty (nine African-Americans and eleven white students) (83.3%) had not been admitted to graduate school.

#### Discussion of Tables

The previous four categories surveyed were: Self Development/Marketing Skills (Tables 21 through 25), Networking System (Tables 26 through 29), Career Planning/

Placement (Tables 30 through 35), and Post Placement Information (Tables 36 through 40).

Participants indicated that there are benefits to having good Self-Development/Marketing Skills by illustrating the following participant ratings: seventeen (70.8%) cited marketing skills, twenty-two (91.6%) cited resume skills, twenty-one (87.5%) cited interview skills, seventeen (70.8%) cited perseverance, and twelve (50%) replied that their grade point averages were factors in qualifying for the position.

Participants' rating of the Networking System: only seven (29.1%) felt that faculty played a role in their job search. Seventeen (70.8%) did not agree. The participants' perception of the role of other UMass personnel (administrators, counselors, professional staff) was significantly higher, at fifteen (62.5%). There were 41.6% of the participants who agreed that their peers assisted them in their job search; 58.3 did not agree. As to whether or not class schedules conflicted with on campus recruiting arranged interviews, 37.5% said they did have a conflict. The data suggest that 62.5% of the participants did not have a conflict. However, this is a question that should be addressed to determine as to whether or not these participants actually interviewed through the Center's on campus recruiting program.

The Career Planning and Placement section comprised for the most part, mixed rating. Eleven (45.8%) of the participants believed that a field experience or related summer position enhanced their job search for a permanent position. While this is an impressive number, thirteen (54.1%) were either neutral or disagreed, marked "not applicable," or did not respond to this question.

Seventeen (70.8%) participants obtained interviews. Eleven (45.8%) had more than ten interviews. Three had twenty-two, twenty-five and thirty interviews. One did not interview but was offered a position. Fifteen (62.5%) received job offers.

Seven (29.1%) ranked friends, family and the networking system as the resource used to obtain a position. Six (25%) listed the Mather Career Center, two (8.33%) found their positions through newspaper ads, two (8.33%) contacted employers directly, and three (12.5%) did not receive job offers. While only six (25%) of the twenty-four participants actually found jobs through the Mather Career Center, seventeen (70.8%) agreed that the Center assisted them in their job search. Five participants were neutral and two did not respond. There were 29.1% who did not agree with the question.

Some factors worked as deterrents [some participants marked any that applied]. The responses are: The Campus

Recruiting Program as insufficient (5), not enough publicity about the Center (3). One response was marked for each of the following: "had no knowledge of positions available in major," "Center's programs not well organized," and "services conflicted with class hours." "other" (4).

The following are factors that encouraged participants to take advantage of the Center [some participants marked any that applied]: "staff seemed experienced and caring" (eleven), "counseling sessions" (ten), "Center's workshops seemed sufficient" (seven), "instructors seemed knowledgeable" (four), "proximity and availability of workshops" (two), "workshops offered during the evening" (one), "Center's employer information sessions" (three) "open house" (one) and "other" (three). Overall, 87.5% of the participants would recommend the Center to a friend or relative. One (4.16%) participant would not recommend the Center, and two participants (16.66%) did not respond.

The Post-Placement Information revealed that fourteen (58.3%) participants began employment during the spring or summer of 1992 when the majority of UMass seniors graduated. Three students (12.5%) obtained jobs during the winter, one student (4.16%) during the fall, and four students (16.66%) marked "not applicable."

Eighteen (75%) of the graduating seniors of this study had matriculated from the College of Arts & Sciences with two (8.33%) from the School of Management, three (12.5%) from the School of Engineering, and one (4.12%) from the College of Food & Natural Resources.

The types of positions accepted were divided in four categories. Seven (29.1%) accepted insurance, administrative and financial planning positions. Three (12.5%) accepted management positions. Two (8.33%) accepted jobs in the computer field. One student (4.12%) began work as a teacher. One participant (4.12%) became a laboratory technician. One student (4.12%) accepted a position in sales. Two students (8.33%) attended graduate school. Four participants (16.6%) did not have offers.

Although it is not know how many participants applied to graduate school, twenty (83.3%) said they had not been admitted to graduate school. Four (16.6%) marked "yes."

### Themes

In interviewing these participants, several significant themes were evident in their appraisals of factors that may or may not have contributed to their job search.

#### Perceptions of the Mather Career Center

One of the most common perception of the Mather Career Center is its focus on engineering, business and

science ("hard sciences") students. Many of the participants did not believe that the Center could assist them in their job search because their major was in other fields. While some knew about the other services offered such as the job seeking skills workshops on resume preparation, interview techniques, field experience, the hidden job market, and so on, most still associated the Center as being a "placement" operation.

Although a segment of this population was skeptical of the Center's programs and services with regard to their job search, six were challenged by the state of the economy and did take advantage of the on campus recruiting program, various workshops, career fairs, and other services to no avail.

Interestingly, although only twelve of the twenty-four had initially planned to utilize career services and many of the twenty-four had misconceptions about the Center as well as disappointments; all ultimately agreed that the Center was beneficial, or could be helpful, in some way in terms of their career growth and development. Overall, 100% of the African Americans; and 75% of the White participants totalling 87.5% would recommend the Center to a relative or other students at UMass.

### Center's Location

A central theme voiced by many students was their inability to utilize the Center's campus recruiting program. Many cited the proximity as a major problem, stating that it was difficult arranging interviews because of conflicts with class or work hours. Consequently, some did not bother to sign up or complete the required paper work for the on campus recruiting program. This seems to be particularly true for African-Americans. Over 58% stated it was a problem in terms of their class schedule conflicting with the on campus recruiting program. Since 91.6% worked more than twenty hours a week throughout their collegian years, some said they did not have the energy to maintain good academic standing and do all that was required for securing employment. Nonetheless, despite these perceived problems, those who searched for a job went on to secure a professional position shortly after graduation.

### Center's Staff Ratings by Participants

Consistent with the larger group, participants indicated that staff experience and caring, instructors' knowledge and ability to conduct workshops, and the counseling sessions were all factors that encouraged them to take advantage of the Mather Career Center.

## Job Search Workshops

Three workshops valued by all participants were: Resume Preparation (91.6%), Interview Techniques (87.5%), and Marketing Skills (70.8%). Despite their busy schedules, all who pursue the job search indicated that, without these tools, their efforts would have suffered some devastating consequences.

## Similarities and Differences

Six of the twelve African-Americans and two of the twelve white participants stated that they experienced difficulty in securing their first professional position.

Eleven African-Americans and three whites worked twenty hours or more during their college years.

Nine African-Americans and two white participants said their spirituality or inner strength helped them to achieve their career goals.

Nine African-Americans and eight white participants said that using the networking system enhanced their job search.

Seven African-Americans and eight white participants indicated that an advisor was instrumental in their job search.



## The Networking System

Of the seventeen who secured employment, eight found direct placements through the networking system which encompassed a friend, family member or through contacts. This figure was slightly higher than the Mather Career Center's placements of six participants.

It is not surprising that five (41.6%) of the African-Americans found positions directly through the networking system. Traditionally, African-Americans were forced to band together for survival reasons. As with any group, survival is dependent upon having the necessary means to feed, clothe, and provide shelter for its people.

For most people, employment is central to survival. As a race that is subjected to alienation, isolation and discrimination, African-Americans formed support systems that collectively invoke positive results. As the literature reveals, the National Urban League was established in 1911 to bring about a concerted effort in assisting African-Americans with employment.

The following section focuses on the second instrument that involved interviewing twenty-four graduating seniors who agreed to be participants in this study. Sixteen questions were constructed to examine four distinct groups:

1. those who used services and received jobs through the Mather Career Center;
2. those who used services but did not received jobs through the Mather Career Center;
3. those who did not use services at the Mather Career Center but received jobs; and
4. those who did not use services at the Mather Career Center and did not receive jobs.

The intent of these interviews was to assess what factors may or may not have been an intricate part of the participants initial employment. The first five questions were primarily demographic and was discussed in Chapter III. The remaining eleven interview questions follow.

Question 1: Did you (the participant) experience problems in securing an entry level professional position?

A growing concern that is believed to be a contributing source of student apathy is the state of the economy. Witnessing the rise of global enterprise and the subsequent decline of America's wealth, there is reason to question the stability of the job market and to expect job seekers to experience some anxiety.

Yet, an interesting phenonomen is that, despite the shrinking economy, not all graduating seniors experience difficulty in securing their first jobs. This question

was designed to identify the participants who did or did not experience difficulties during their job search.

Questions 2-6: Did any of the following factors (environment, academic, race, counseling paradigms, and institutional) play a role in your securing an entry - level professional position?

Research studies suggest that the African-American participants are faced with psycho-social and economic factors that some of the majority groups may not have experienced. These questions were developed to examine the hypothetical claims of these studies as well as to test the validity of these factors among UMass graduating seniors.

Question 7: What is the highest number of credits taken in any given semester?

Question 8: Did you work twenty hours or more in any given semester?

One assumption that is often made by many college administrators, staff and parents, is that most students can perform academic work within the prescribed four-year period. Given that there are a multitude of concerns students face today such as greater independence, the rising cost of a college education and a lagging economy, many students are graduating in five years rather than four. This question was formulated to assess whether there

is a relationship between a higher courseload combined with work and the job search process.

Question 9: What method of support helped you to achieve your employment goals?

Question 10: What person(s) assisted you in meeting your career or employment goals?

When college students enter the work force there are often techniques, resources or people that have contributed greatly to the job seeker's success. Question 9 asks for specific techniques and resources that enabled the participant to be successful in his/her employment search. Question 10 asks for specific persons who have assisted them in their job search. Studies show that the networking system, which usually involves someone known by the student or an associate of a family member or friend, takes precedent over all other job-seeking methods or techniques.

Question 11: What advice would you recommend for other students in making that transition from college to the workplace?

Students are most impressed with the opinions of their peers. Graduating seniors who enter the work force have much information to share about the job search process. Many of these participants discuss their experiences or perceptions of the importance or non-

importance of utilizing the Mather Career Center or other career resources.

Three African-American and Three White Participants Who Used Services and Received Jobs Through the Mather Career Center

African-American Participants. Participant A, BDIC/COINS major: participated in six interviews and received three job offers. He attended the following activities: Introduction to Career Services, On Campus Recruiting, resume and interviewing, Career Expo Job Fair, and career Counseling.

Participant B, Economics major: participated in twenty-five interviews and had one job offer. She attended the introduction to Career Services Workshop, On Campus Recruiting, did a Field Experience, attended the Career Expo, Graduate School and Professional Day, and Career Counseling sessions.

Participant C, Operations Management major: participated in thirty interviews and had three job offers. He attended the introduction to Career Services, On Campus Recruiting, Resume and interview workshops, Career Fair, and Career Counseling sessions.

White Participants

Participant D, Political Science major: participated in ten interviews and had two job offers. He attended the following: Introduction to Career Service Workshop, On

Campus Recruiting, Field Experience, Sigi Plus workshop, resume and interview workshop, Career Counseling, Career Library and the Career Fair.

Participant E, Sociology major: participated in ten interviews, eight on campus, and two off campus. She had four job offers, two on campus and two off campus. She attended the following workshops: Introduction to Career Center, Resume writing, job search skills, and she attended the Career Fair.

Participant F, Political Science/Japanese major: participated in three interviews, two on campus and one off campus. She received one job offer. She attended the following services: Introduction to Career Service Workshop, On Campus Recruiting, Resume Writing, Interview Techniques, Career Counseling, Career Library, Credentials Office, and the Career Fair.

#### Question 1.

1. Did you experience problems in securing an entry-level professional position?

Participant A: No.

Participant B: I was overwhelmed and did not feel the Career Center had enough company information to do sufficient research.

Participant C: Although I cannot respond to any of the problems you have listed, I believe my major was misunderstood by many employers which created difficulty during the job search.

Participant D: No.

Participant E: No.

Participant F: Yes. As a Political Science/Japanese major I couldn't find anything appropriate for my major; only overseas opportunities. Since I didn't want to go overseas I had opted to try the financial planning position.

Question 1 Summary.

Two of the three African-Americans experienced difficulty with their job search. One participant felt that the Center was limited in its resources. Another participant expressed concern over the recruiters ability to understand his major.

One of the three white participants also felt that the Center was limited in its resources.

Two white students and one African-American did not experience any difficulty with their job search.

Half of the participants (two African-Americans and one white student) did have difficulty with their job search). The other three (one African-American and two white students) did not.

Six participants--three African-Americans and three white students--had several consistent themes in utilizing the Mather Career Center.

All participants are natives of Massachusetts and work full time. Two are currently working out of state, in Connecticut and New York.

All attended at least five activities offered by the Center.

The four most dominant were: Resume Development, On Campus Recruiting, Interview Techniques and Introduction to Career Center.

Four of the six (Two African-Americans, Two white students) had ten or more interviews.

#### Question 2.

2. Did your social and cultural orientation influence your job search?

Participant A: Yes, I was concerned about it to a degree. But, my main focus was on securing the job.

Participant B: In terms of my accepting the position, I would say no. I was anxious to find a job.

Participant C: Yes, I've always desired to be in an environment with people of diverse backgrounds. I believe that cultural diversity promote the teamwork concept. Quite honestly, this is one of the problems (at my



current place of employment), the company has a long way to go in this respect.

Participant D: No. While it may be something desired, it was not an ultimate for me.

Participant E: If you mean did I search for an ideal job in an ideal place that would cater to my needs, no. I didn't think organization really cared about the employee needs.

Participant F: No. However, being a woman helped. I am one of only two women in my office. I would have liked more of a gender mix.

#### Question 2 Summary.

Two African-Americans expressed concern about social and cultural conditions influencing their job search, but did not see it as an impediment to their goal of securing the position. One African-American did not believe it to be a factor.

Three participants showed little concern for social and cultural influences within the workplace.

Two African-American participants out of the six participants expressed some concern.

#### Question 3.

3. Was a GPA of 3.0 or above a requirement for your position?

Participant A: GPA was not a requirement. I believe my academic preparation for the field, extra-curricular activities, communication and interpersonal skills, as well as my maturation level helped me to get the position.

Participant B: I don't know if it was really a requirement, but I was asked about my GPA and made to feel that it was a factor in my being hired.

Participant C: Since my position was very competitive and highly selective the company did require a 3.0 or above GPA.

Participant D: GPA was not a requirement for my position.

Participant E: I think the interviewer was impressed that my GPA was above a 3.0. I really do believe it gave me an edge over other candidates.

Participant F: GPA was not a requirement, in fact a transcript was never used throughout my search. Character seemed to have been the most important criteria.

#### Question 3 Summary.

One African-American said that GPA of 3.0 or over was not a requirement. Two African-Americans said they believed it was required.

Two white students said that a 3.0 GPA or better was not required. Only one white participant said it was required.

Only two of the six participants felt that GPA was a requirement.

Question 4.

4. Do you feel that your racial background influenced your chances of securing a position?

Participant A: Race was not a factor in my being hired.

Participant B: I would say yes. I was the only Black in the management trainee program. Now after almost a year on the job, I remain the only Black. There are few African-Americans in management positions here. As an African-American male, I think recruiters do look at us and wonder if we will fit in. I mean, I think there is a stereotype that suggest our culture or our environment is very different in a negative sense.

Participant C: Yes, but I believe it has hurt instead of helped. The company seems very nervous about equal opportunity. I question their upward mobility process. I mean, was I hired to meet their quota?

Participant D: Race was not a factor.

Participant E: I don't think race nor sex was important to the company. I think they wanted someone who would be a compatible match in a number of ways.

Participant F: No. Race was not a factor.

Question 4 Summary.

Two of the three African-Americans said race was a factor. One African-American participant felt that race was not a factor.

Three participants felt that race was not a factor.

Four participants including one African-American believed race to not be a factor.

Question 5.

5. Do you think your advisor contributed to your success in obtaining employment?

Participant A: My career counselor assisted me tremendously, and one professor from my department.

Participant B: Yes, my career advisor was wonderful. I don't know what I would have done after fifteen interviews (twenty-five total) I wanted to give up. But [she] gave me the encouragement to keep focus and keep my eyes on the prize.

Participant C: Two administrators and one faculty member was a great help.

Participant D: I didn't have any faculty to help me, but counselors at the Mather Career Center helped me greatly with my resume.

Participant E: The Mather Career Center Staff were very caring and key to my job search.

Participant F: No faculty assisted me in my job search, but the counselor at the Center helped with my resume and cover letter as well as developing interviewing skills.

#### Question 5 Summary.

All of the African-Americans stated that their advisors were of help during their job search.

All of the white participants said that the Career Center's staff were helpful during their job search.

All six participants believed their advisors contributed to their employment.

#### Question 6.

6. Do you feel that budgetary constraints impacted the quality of services offered by the career center?

Participant A: If budget had anything to do with the quality of the services, it certainly was not reflective in any of the services I used. The Center helped me out a lot.

Participant B: My only complaint was really about the library. I didn't get a sense that the budget cuts made a difference in the services the Center provides.

Participant C: Sometimes the Center appeared chaotic to me. Not enough people to do the job and if my counselor wasn't in, sometimes I couldn't get my questions

answered. In that regard if you had more staff the Center might run more smoothly.

Participant D: Although I benefitted from using the services there, I do think if the budget cut had not occurred more students could be better served.

Participant E: Things were pretty tough when we graduated. I think the budget cuts as well as the economy had a lot to do with so many people not being motivated to interview for positions.

Participant F: Yes. I think if there were more monies probably the Library and the On Campus Recruitment program would have more opportunities for students.

#### Question 6 Summary.

Two of the African-Americans did not think that budget constraints impacted the quality of services offered by the Mather Career Center. One African-American felt that if more staff could have been hired the Center would have been more effective.

All three white participants answered yes, the budget problems did have an impact on the quality of services offered by the Center.

Four of the six participants (three white students and one African American) answered "yes" to this question.

Question 7.

7. What is the highest number of credits taken in any given semester?

Participant A: twenty-one

Participant B: seventeen

Participant C: twenty-one

Participant D: eighteen

Participant E: fifteen

Participant F: twenty-two. I wanted to graduate on time and no one told me that I must average at least fifteen credits per semester.

Question 7 Summary

Two African-Americans took twenty-one credits in one semester prior to graduation. One African-American took seventeen credits.

One white student took twenty-two credits in one semester prior to graduation. Two white participants' highest number of credit in a given semester were eighteen and fifteen, respectively.

Three participants (two African-Americans and one white student) carried twenty-one credits or more in any given semester. Three participants did not (two white students and one African-American).

Question 8.

8. Did you work twenty hours or more in any given semester?

Participant A: Yes, all my life I have worked, and since I was without parental support, I had no choice but to work as many jobs as possible.

Participant B: Yes.

Participant C: Yes.

Participant D: Yes. I wanted to assist my parents with the educational expenses, especially since UMass is expensive.

Participant E: No.

Participant F: No.

Question 8 Summary.

All three African-Americans worked twenty hours or more in any given semester.

One participant worked twenty hours or more, and two white participants did not work twenty hours.

Four of the six participants (including one white student) worked twenty hours or more and two did not.

Question 9.

9. What method of support helped you to achieve your employment goal?



Participant A: I have to give credit where credit is due, since I landed the job through the resources at the Mather Career Center, it is first on the list and the faculty at the COINS Department were a tremendous help. Physical fitness, family/networking, and spiritual fortitude.

Participant B: Definitely networking with friends, family, and my career advisor.

Participant C: I would say physical fitness as far as being healthy. In terms of winning the job, inner strength and friends.

Participant D: I work out a lot and I think it enabled me to stay calm during difficult moments.

Participant E: The Career Center taught me much about the interview process and that kept me motivated. My friends were instrumental because I learned a lot about the job search process by discussing it with them.

Participant F: Being physically active, having lots of faith in a higher source that it would work out and the Center's staff were helpful.

#### Question 9 Summary.

All three African-Americans cited friends or family. Two mentioned physical fitness and each said spiritual fortitude and inner strength.

Two white participants cited physical activities, two praised the Career Center as a resource, one participant said "friends," and one participant said "having lots of faith."

Four of the six participants (two African-Americans and two white students) listed family or friends as a factor. Three (two African-Americans and one white student) mentioned spirituality and/or faith.

#### Question 10.

10. What person(s) assisted you in meeting your goals?

Participant A: parents, career counselor, friends. My father gave me a challenge years ago and I was motivated to graduate and ultimately secure a good position. You could say, I was determined to meet my father's challenge.

Participant B: A number of people helped. My parents saw me through all of my educational endeavors, and a career counselor was there for me throughout the job search. And my friends were somewhere in the middle.

Participant C: I guess I would have to say my parents/other relatives, counselor (MMEP), faculty, and friends.

Participant D: My counselor and friends. Having my friends to support my efforts and confide in gave me tremendous help in making it through my job search.

Participant E: Family and friends

Participant F: Parents.

#### Question 10 Summary

All three African-American participants said "parents," "counselor" or "friend."

Two of the three white participants said "parents" and/or "family." Two of the three white participants also said "friend."

All six participants said a parent or friend contributed to their employment.

#### Question 11.

11. What advice would you recommend for other students in making that transition from college to the workplace?

Participant A: Get involved with campus activities, I know my involvement helped me to develop some skills necessary for the workplace. I think the recruiters were impressed!

Participant B: Always have a sense of what you want because you will face many challenges. Be strong, be aware of as many opportunities as possible.

Participant C: Say what you want, say how you feel and be patient.

Participant D: Utilize the Center earlier on, come to know it as a place that can help you succeed in your goals. As far as the job search, send a lot of resumes, stick to it, and remember sales jobs are easier to get and the pay is great!

Participant E: Start early and don't be afraid to try different things. Stay open minded and understand that there's a real world out there.

Participant F: There is a big difference between school and work; you are never alone at school, but work can be very lonely. You can select friends at school, but you cannot select co-workers. In other words, You must deal with other people and there may be issues of sexual harassment or other problems.

Question 11 Summary.

Get involved with campus activities.

Know what you want and how to go out and attain it.

Say what you want, say how you feel and exercise patience is.

Utilize the Career Center earlier on.

Start early and be open minded.

Understand that there is a difference between being a student and a professional.

Three African-Americans and Three White Participants Who Used Services But Did Not Receive Job Offer Through the Mather Career Center

African-American Participants. Participant G, Political Science major: participated in twenty-two interviews, fourteen on campus and eight off campus. She accepted a position through family referral. She attended the following workshops and activities: Introduction to Career Services, On Campus Recruiting, Resume Writing, Interview Techniques, Career Counseling, Career Library, and the Career fair/Expo.

Participant H, Economic major: participated in thirteen interviews, six on campus and seven off campus. She accepted a position through family referral. She participated in the following activities: On Campus Recruiting, Resume Writing, Interview Techniques, Career Expo, Career Counseling, and used the CARP program.

Participant I, Communication major: Participated in five interviews; three on campus and two off campus. She accepted a position through the Career Expo. She participated in the following activities: On Campus Recruiting, field experience, Sigi Plus, CARP, career counseling, career library, career fair, graduate school and professional day.

White Participants. Participant J, STEPEC major: Did not participate in the on campus recruiting program. However, she did land a position shortly after graduation. She participated in the resume writing and interview workshops, the Rossman Career Forum, career counseling, and the career planning class for STEPEC majors.

Participant K, Computer Systems Engineer major: Participated in twelve interviews, seven on campus and five off campus. He received three job offers from companies that had advertised in the classified section of the newspaper. He participated in on campus recruiting, resume, and interviewing workshops; career counseling, career fair and the Graduate School day.

Participant L, Mechanical Engineer major: Participated in eleven interviews, four on campus and seven off campus. He received four job offers from temporary agencies. He utilized Sigi-Plus, and attended resume writing and interviewing technique workshops.

#### Question 1.

1. Did you experience problems in securing an entry-level professional position?

Participant G: I think a combination of resources and support system. Some positions may not be available or

they're not many companies or representatives from government coming to the Center looking for political science majors. Also, I would say lack of support on the part of the Center. I also found out that there was really nothing available in terms of related opportunities. I found out a little later during the semester that there were two people who perhaps could have helped me with government positions. But it was too late at that point. . . . maybe as a poly sci major it was too late to make appointments with these people about jobs with the government.

Participant H: I guess I would have to say it was basically experience. Being your first job it is very difficult to get a nice paying job when you have no experience. And that was the main thing. It wasn't so much jobs available or where to get help, or who to talk with for job preparation. It was basically what experience do you have.

Participant I: I think it was a number of things. Lack of resources mainly. The Career Center only has job listings primarily for western and eastern Massachusetts. There wasn't much to select from if you were planning to relocate. And I was looking to go to Washington and there wasn't anything I could use there. Because I did in fact use the on campus interviewing and there was not a

conflict with classes, because I arranged my schedule to accommodate the interviews.

What I found in interviewing through the Center was that the jobs that were advertised were specific towards either engineering or some kind of science-based background. And for those looking for liberal arts majors they had like Lady Footlocker, or, you know, some little retail chain. And then you had to go in there and try and convince these people that you wanted a job there when you knew in fact you did not want a job with CVS. But, it came down to I'll take anything to get a job.

Participant J: No, I did not experience a problem in securing my position. Perhaps it is because I did not interview until after graduation.

Participant K: No, I don't think I had any problems in securing a first time professional job offer.

Participant L: For me it was a number of problems: Too few resources, lack of support system, didn't start job search early enough, job search efforts conflicted with classes.

Question 1 Summary.

All three African-Americans experienced problems in securing a first time professional job offer.



One of the white participant experienced problems in securing a first time professional job offer, two participants did not.

Two of the African-Americans and one white participant felt the Center contributed to their attempt to secure a position through the facility.

Six participants--three African-Americans and three white students--had several consistent themes in utilizing the Mather Career Center.

All six participants are residents of Massachusetts.

All six went on to secure full time professional positions through other resources than the Career Center.

Five (three African-Americans and two white students) of the six attended at four activities or more at the Center. The most popular were resume development, career counseling, and on campus recruiting.

Four (two African-Americans and two white students) of the six had eleven or more interviews.

One African-American participated in twenty-two interviews.

One white participant had only one interview.

Question 2.

2. Did your social and cultural orientation influence your job search?

Participant G: No.

Participant H: No.

Participant I: Yes, in fact it did. You'll recall I did have a diamond in my nose. That was not for a fad although at the time quite a few people were wearing loops and things. But for me I was identifying with a part of my culture. And it was very important to me. So I wore that diamond to all of my interviews because I felt that, you know, if you're looking for an intelligent person to do a specific job, you know, if I'm dressed properly,, my cultural influences and my cultural identity should not have anything to do with whether or not I get the job. But that in fact was the case because I never got a call back for any of the interviews in which I did wear the diamond.

No one ever said oh, that's interesting or what's that in your nose. No. and I was just as intelligent and prepared for the interviews as I always am. In hindsight, I know that had a lot to do with it. In fact though I did wear my diamond to the Career Expo job fair where I incidentally did end up getting the job through Arbella, I don't think it was because he recalled meeting me in particular. He had a whole bunch of resumes on the table and mine was included. Later, this Black woman saw that I had some insurance background called me up for an

interview, and that's how I landed the job. But anyway my social and cultural orientation did impact my job search.

Participant J: I wanted to be in an environment that wasn't hostile. I would like all ethnic groups represented, however, my place of employment is very homogeneous. Viewpoints appear to be respected and valued.

Participant K: No.

Participant L: No.

Question 2 Summary.

Two of the three African-Americans answered "no."

Participant I answered "yes."

All of the white participants answered "no."

Five of the six participants answered "no."

Question 3.

3. Was a Grade Point Average of 3.0 or above a requirement for your position?

Participant G: My company never mentioned whether or not you had to have a specific grade point average in order to get the job. I am an average student, or was as the time I graduated. My GPA did not even go up. It's not a 3.0. And they (employer) looked at my transcript and saw my grades. Further, if that would have been the case (employers requiring a 3.0 GPA) I don't think I would

have gotten the job. I do think however, not having a 3.0 was a problem with on campus recruiting.

Participant H: My mother helped me to get my position so I by-passed much of the organizational politics. But the jobs at the Career Center had those requirements. Some of those positions were above 3.0, so I could not apply.

Participant I: I don't recall, but I don't believe so. I think my company weighed the interview because I had three very virgorous interviews. They grilled me basically. So, my personality broke the ice.

Participant J: I believe that my GPA did "come into play" because the employer indicated that I did not "fit the position." Consequently, either my GPA (which was over a 3.0) was a consideration, or that fact that I had owned my business influenced them to give me a chance.

Participant K: I don't feel that GPA was a problem for me in securing my current position, but I think it was a factor in my not getting a job through the Career Center.

Participant L: A GPA of 3.0 or above was a requirement for most of the position I was interested in. My GPA was only a 2.5.

Question 3 Summary.

None of the African-Americans felt that a GPA of 3.0 or better was a requirement for their current position. However,

1. two of the three African-Americans felt it was a problem in securing a position at the Mather Career Center;
2. two of the white participants felt that A GPA of 3.0 was requirement for most of the jobs in their respective fields;
3. one white student did not agree, but believed GPA was a factor in his not securing a positions at the Mather Career Center.

Five of the six participants perceived many of the employers who recruit at the Mather Career Center as having GPA requirements of 3.0 or above. One participant did not speak to this issue.

Question 4.

4. Do you feel that your racial background influenced your chances of employment?

Participant G: . . . Maybe in general as far as in my area because it is a really colorful department, backgrounds, as far as people of color. Mostly Hispanics more than Blacks. I am going to say yes because I felt as

though I was accepted and I was going to get a job, but it wasn't clear where? what department?

Participant H: Sometimes I feel like I probably filled the quota. I hate to say that. It's just that sometimes like my area, in my department, there are no Black people who have a degree at all. And no one started at the grade I started. So I think it's just to make it more, try to make it more balanced. Make it look like it has a little more color in my department-- event in other areas.

Participant I: No. In my office we have quite a few people of color. I don't think it was a significant factor at all. I think I was qualified and like I said, my personality broke the ice during the interview. They probably figured well, she'll do well. Because it's a stressful job and I think they probably tried to make the interview as stressful as possible to see how I would be under pressure. Although maybe Pat, the Black woman who's the supervisor at Human Resources had a special interest in attracting more Blacks to the company.

Participant J: That's a difficult question. I think that it's easier for a white employer to want to hire other whites. I couldn't say no, but I can't say yes, it simply is difficult to know until you get to know the individual.

Participant K: No.

Participant L: No I was not hired because of my race.

Question 4 Summary.

Two of the African-Americans believed they were hired because of their race. One participant said no, but indicated that there was a possibility.

Two of the white participants felt that race was not a factor in their landing the position. One participant was uncertain.

Two of the six participants believed they were hired because of race.

Two of the six participants did not believe they were hired because of race.

Two of the six participants (one African-American and one white student) were uncertain.

Question 5.

5. Do you think your advisor contributed to your success in obtaining employment:

Participant G: My counselor assisted me, both in terms of information or just being supportive.

Participant H: My counselor helped me a lot. And it's not like she helped me to get this position, but she encouraged me. Because there were many times it was very, very, discouraging. I just didn't think I was ever going

to find employment. So her belief in me encouraged me to keep trying.

Also, my Mom helped me to actually get the position.

Participant I: I think my counselor was most instrument in coordinating the Career Expo trip. I didn't utilize my advisors in my department. I'm a very independent person. So a lot of things that I did, I did on my own. But I used different people as sources of information, sources of, you know, where they could guide me in the right direction.

And a lot of that just came from casual contact with my counselor and casual contact with a professor from another department than my major. They were both my mentors, and so I used the advice that I got from my counselor and the professor. But I never really utilized the other people at UMASS because I didn't feel that they had my interests at heart. And I knew what I wanted to do with my life so I tended to only use people I trusted. My counselor and this professor became someone I trusted.

Participant J: Well, yes, as a matter of fact, I have to go back a couple of years before I got hired. While I was deciding on my major, I came to the career center for help because I wasn't sure whether or not I should continue my major. And, at one point I was considering applying for a Co-op. I got help through the program here



and had information for positions available in different areas of the state to try and get in touch with these people to arrange an interview.

Participant K: A career advisor at the Mather Career Center helped me.

Participant L: A career advisor and an administrator assisted me. In fact, a career advisor at the Center was a great help.

#### Question 5 Summary.

All six participants felt that a counselor or administrator played a part in their job search.

#### Question 6.

6. Do you feel that budgetary constraints impacted the quality of services offered by the career center?

Participant G: I don't think so.

Participant H: I'm not sure I can answer that question, I don't know enough about the Center before the cuts came. It seemed okay. I mean, it didn't seem that there was a money issue, I'm not sure.

Participant I: Oh definitely. There were a lot of cutbacks and I think our class felt it because it was the effects of the economy all over the country. It was a bad time. And people weren't hiring and the Center couldn't

spend a lot of money towards programs or things to help make our job search any easier.

Participant J: There didn't seem to be any major problems in implementing programs, the counselors though appeared overworked.

Participant K: No.

Participant L: Companies were constantly renegeing on promises--more money should have been allocated to the Career Center to hopefully provide a better partnership with private sector that would increase job opportunities for graduating seniors.

Question 6 Summary.

Two African-Americans answered "no." One African-American believed there were institutional factors.

Two white participants answered "no." One white student believed there were institutional factors.

Two out of the six stated that there were institutional factors.

Question 7.

7. What is the highest number of credits taken in any given semester?

Participant G: The most I have taken was fifteen.

Participant H: I've taken eighteen.

Participant I: Twenty-two my second semester junior year and twenty-one my senior year.

Participant J: Eighteen.

Participant K: Eighteen.

Participant L: Eighteen.

Question 7 Summary.

One African-American had taken twenty or more credits during two semester. Two African-Americans had not.

None of the white participants had taken more than eighteen or more credits in any given semester.

Only one out of the six participant had taken twenty or more credits.

Question 8.

8. Did you work twenty hours or more in any given semester?

Participant G: yes, I worked two jobs throughout my collegian years.

Participant H: Most definitely, I had three jobs on and off while I was at UMass.

Participant I: Probably more because I had four part-time jobs. And I was able to arrange my work hours with my classes. So, since I couldn't work a full time job because my class schedule was not accommodating, I had to have several. But some of them really benefited me. For

example, when I was an editor at the Collegian I got paid for that position. The most challenging work was the Newman Center and I worked at the Amherst Resource Center in town.

Participant J: No I did not work twenty hours or more.

Participant K: Yes, I did work twenty hours or more for two semesters.

Participant L: No, I did not work twenty hours or more.

#### Question 8 Summary.

All three African-Americans worked twenty hours or more in a given semester.

One white participant worked twenty hours or more for two semesters. Two white participants did not.

Four of the six worked twenty hours or more in given semester.

#### Question 9.

9. What method(s) of support help you to achieve your career goal?

Participant G: I'd say probably. . . . persevering in an indirect way, because if I didn't continue to go on, I wouldn't have found a job. I'll just say as far as continuing to have some hope to find a job in time . . . .

Participant H: Are you asking if I pray a lot? Yes. I mean I wouldn't say it helped me to get the job, but it helped me to maintain sanity. I would also mention resources because CCEBMS and my department gave me advice.

Participant I: Yes, some of those factors did come into play. The spiritually networking in particular; I used a lot of my mother's friends in her organization, the National Association of Professional Businesswomen's Club. While I was at the publishing institute, I think the spiritual aspect was more prevalent than when I got the job because it was so stressful. I thought, God, I can't stay here. But I had a lot of support when I came back and the publishing institute did not work out.

Participant J: Well, I had peace of mind because I did not interview until after graduation. I did exercise a lot.

Participant K: I maintain good physical fitness.

Participant L: None of the above.

Question 9 Summary.

All three of the African-Americans said "spirituality" or an "inner strength" helped them to achieve their career goals.

One white participant said a "peace of mind". Two said exercise or keeping physically fit.

One answered "none of the above."

Four of the six believed that spiritually or an inner strength helped them to achieve their career goals.

Question 10.

10. What person(s) assisted you in meeting your career goals?

Participant G: My parents, counselor and friends.

Participant H: My parents and counselor.

Participant I: Basically, I think I answered that question earlier. My parents, they tried as much as they could. But mostly it was the guidance I received from my counselor and a professor. But the initial search itself was basically of my own doing. You know, scanning the newspaper, making telephone calls, and sending out resumes.

Participant J : Two counselors at the Center were helpful.

Participant K: I have a mentor who supported me throughout my years at UMass.

Participant L: My Dad was of great help to me. He gave me a lot of support and solid advice.

Question 10 Summary.

All three African-Americans mentioned that their parents and a counselor were helpful during their job search.

Three of the white participants mentioned a counselor or a parent or a mentor as being helpful. [RESEARCHER NOTE: all six had previously mentioned a counselor in question 7-d.]

Four of the six gave credit to their parents.

Four of the six gave credit to a counselor.

One of the six gave credit to a mentor.

#### Question 11.

11. What advice would you recommend for other students in making that transition from college to the workplace?

Participant G: Students should be provided with more marketing skills and networking techniques.

Participant H: I would suggest networking because right now that's what getting people in. It's not, there's no one like (participant) for the position. No one knows these days. . . . but knowing someone there (at the organization) helps a lot. Networking helps a lot, especially now. That's how almost everyone is getting jobs now, by networking.

Participant L: I think this goes on a little before the transition from school to work. It would be good to take incoming freshmen up to introduce them to the Career Center so that they knew what it was, where it was, and be

introduced to people so that they didn't have this anxiety and fear when they see the building.

I just really feel that the students should be introduced to the Career Center a lot earlier on so they would take their studies very seriously. Also, Special attention needs to be paid to job opportunities looking for ALANA students and better advertisement.

Participant J: After my initial and horrendous experience with a male counselor from MCC, I would never have returned except for the fact that I took a Career and Life Planning Class offered by my major and developed a relationship with the instructor and found renewed faith in the University's ability to provide services to its students.

I would recommend specific counselors, but not the Center as a whole, unless I were talking to a business or engineering major, as MCC places too much emphasis on placement and on-campus interviews with large, undesirable companies to be of much practical use to most university students.

Participant K: Stay open minded and understand that there is a real world out there.

Participant L: The Career Center needs to adapt to new trends with regards to computer technology and to give lectures in class about the state of the economy and what



seniors should do to be best prepared. . . . mock interviews should be offered to every senior.

Question 11 Summary.

Learn marketing and networking techniques.

Learn how to use the networking system.

Use the Career Center and other resources earlier on.

Students should seek out specific counselor. The Center may not be for all students.

Stay open-minded.

The Career Center should offer more information about the economy, adapt to new technology, and students should be encouraged to participate in mock interviews.

All six participants would recommend the Mather Career Center even though they were not successful in finding a position through the Center.

Three African-Americans and Three White Participants Who Did Not Use Mather Career Services But Found a Job

African-American Participants. Participant M, English major: She did not participate in any on campus recruitment programs. However, she did participate in six off campus interviews. She listed the proximity and availability of the Career Fair and the Graduate School Day as programs that were of interest to her. No job offers were made prior to graduation.

Participant N, English major: Although he had talked with a counselor, this participant cited several reasons as to why he did not use the Mather Career Center on campus recruiting program. (1) Even though there may be persons of color among the staff, the Mather Career Center represents a system that is alien and oftentimes perceived as hostile to students of color, (2) relocated to another state and did not believe the Center could be of assistance, and (3) interest in attending graduate school.

Participant O, Sociology major: Felt that the on campus recruiting programs could not meet her needs, and was not motivated to search for a position prior to graduation. She did attend the Career Expo, sponsored by the Center.

White Participants. Participant P, Microbiology major: Was not concerned about interviewing prior to graduation, since she had worked in related positions (Laboratory Technician) and felt certain she could find a position when she was ready to enter the job search.

Participant Q, Accounting major: She did not utilize the Mather Career Center on campus recruiting program because she felt the School of Management (SOM) placement office would be more appropriate. However, she did not receive a job offer. Also, she did not take advantage of

the Center because she felt it was too far from central campus and the parking was limited.

Participant R, Plant Pathology major: Experienced a different job search approach than most of the participants in that she was offered a permanent position based on her job performance as a student employee.

Question 1.

1. Did you experience any problems in securing an entry-level position?

Participant M: No

Participant N: No. I did not experience any problems mainly because there wasn't stress over securing the "perfect job." My priorities probably contributed to lowering the stress because I understood my personal life would create the time needed to secure a decent job. Additionally, I lived with my aunt and did not have to concern myself with paying for my expenses coupled with having some savings that did last for a while.

Participant O: No

Participant P: No

Participant Q: No

Participant R: No

Question 2.

2. Did any of the following factors play a role in your securing an entry-level professional positions: [All six answered yes).

Question 3.

3. Did your social and cultural orientation influence your job search?

Participant M: After studying at a predominately white institution for four years, I was very serious about working in an environment that would be conducive to appreciating cultural diversity. However, I was not offered a position within an organization who is perceived to be politically and culturally correct.

Participant N: Since I work in an all Black environment, I'm not sure how to answer the question. Yes, this is what I thought would be an ideal job, but I didn't put a lot of energy into finding this position.

Participant O: No. It would have been nice--I'm not certain, though, if I could have found a job if I had focused on my cultural orientation.

Participant P: I don't think so. I think it was more than anything, an extreme need for the employer to fill the position.

Participant Q: No, my social or cultural orientation did not influence my job search.

Participant R: No

Question 3 Summary.

All three African-Americans indicated that they would have enjoyed working in an all African-American environment, but did not think their social or cultural orientation had anything to do with getting the job.

All three white participants answered "no."

Two African-Americans seemed to be uncertain about their social and cultural orientation impacting them during the job search.

Question 4.

4. Was a GPA of 3.0 or above a requirement for your position?

Participant M: Yes, a GPA of 3.0 was required. This type of position requires a keen and quick understanding of processing information as well as to make judgement calls about the clients, it's also education oriented.

Participant N: GPA was not a factor, rather having good communication and marketing skills were an asset. I believe that most companies who are looking for candidates with technical degrees require high GPA's.

Participant O: I'm not sure. I decided to show my GPA in my major because it was over a 3.0. It may have helped me to get the position, but I don't know.

Participant P: No. GPA was not a requirement. I am an average student or I was at the time I graduated. I don't think I would have gotten the job if that had been the case.

Participant Q: Yes. A GPA of 3.0 or above was a requirement for 75% of the positions I interviewed for.

Participant R: No. It was not a requirement, but since I had a high GPA I do feel it made a tremendous impact. I just don't know if my candidacy would have been such a sure shot. To my knowledge I had not competition.

#### Question 4 Summary.

One African-American said GPA was a requirement. One participant said "no," and one was uncertain.

Two white participants said "no," it was not a requirement and one said "yes," it was a requirement.

Two of the six believed GPA to be a factor. One was uncertain, and three participants said "no."

#### Question 5.

5. Do you feel that your racial background influenced your chances of securing a position?

Participant M: I do believe my race influenced my getting the interviews. So, in a sense, yes. However, I think the major focus was on whether a candidate meets the job requirements and how well you market the skills you have acquired. I believe my interviewing skills helped me land the position.

Participant N: That's difficult to answer. Again, since I work in an all environment I don't know if they were looking for an African American to be more homogenous.

Participant O: I definitely believe I was hired because of my race. My clients are Black and Hispanic. I am the only Black counselor. I mean, I don't think my race was the sole reason I was hired, but I do believe it was a factor. After I was selected for the position, I was told by a co-worker that they really wanted to hire someone who was Black.

Participant P: No, it helped that I am a woman.

Participant Q: No.

Participant R: It was not a consideration. Other than the TA's the staff is somewhat homogenous and since I would be working within a research unit there appeared to be no great concern to diversifying the staff on anyone's part. It was clear the emphasis is on research.

Question 5 Summary.

Two African-American said "yes" and one said "no."

All three white participants said "no."

Four out of the six participants said "no," one was uncertain, and one said "yes."

Question 6.

6. Do you think your advisor contributed to your success of obtaining employment?

Participant M: A CCEBMS advisor and the advisors from the English department assisted me.

Participant N: No, I did not have an advisor who helped me with either graduate school or securing this position.

Participant O: There were administrators who showed me a few employment opportunities.

Participant P: While my advisor did not help me obtain this particular job; she was excellent in writing me a good letter of recommendation.

Participant Q: My advisor in the department was a great help. I always knew I could stop by with questions.

Participant R: Although I had been a part of the department for years, I feel I secured the position on my own. I think I was able to built trust and confidence by being on time, implementing task assignments, being loyal



and committed to the department and acting as a professional.

Question 7.

7. Do you feel that budgetary constraints impacted the quality of services offered by the career center?

Since all of the participants had limited or no contact with the Center and its programs, none felt comfortable in addressing this question.

Question 8.

8. What is the highest number of credits taken in any given semester?

Participant M: Eighteen credits.

Participant N: Seventeen credits.

Participant O: Fifteen credits.

Participant P: Fifteen credits.

Participant Q: Sixteen credits.

Participant R: Twenty-one credits.

Question 8 Summary.

All of the African-Americans took eighteen credits or less.

One white participant took twenty-one credits; two white participants took sixteen credits or less.

Only two of the six took eighteen credits or more.

Question 9.

9. Did you work twenty hours or more in any given semester?

Participant M: Yes. I worked more than twenty hours throughout college to help supplement my educational expenses. As an out-of-state student, it was expensive attending UMass.

Participant N: My parents were very supportive financially, I only worked to be exposed to the workforce.

Participant O: Yes, I worked two jobs during school and maintain a job every summer while concurrently taking a few courses.

Participant P: No, I only worked ten hours or so.

Participant Q: No.

Participant R: Yes, I was very self-sufficient during my years at UMass.

Question 9 Summary.

Two of the three African-Americans worked twenty hours or more.

Two of the White participants did not work twenty hours or more.

Three of the six participants worked twenty hours or more.

Question 10.

10. What method(s) of support helped you to achieve your career goals?

Participant M: My commitment to succeed in my goals (an inner will).

Participant N: I think I have a good sense of self, I'm confident and I felt empowered to achieve my goals. I think because my networking system was together helped as well.

Participant O: I do meditate from time to time. And I believe my inner strength and ability to persevere helps me to meet life challenges.

Participant P: The Department of Employment and Training and the community (networking) were a big help.

Participant Q: I'm really not sure, I would have to give that question some thought.

Participant R: Well. . . . I feel if anything, it was my tenacity to succeed in the field.

Question 10 Summary.

All three African-Americans talked about an inner strength that enabled them to succeed.

One white participant answered it was her tenacious attitude, one listed a resource and one did not know.

Four of the six alluded to a spiritual power or self-empowerment that helped them to succeed in their goals.

Question 11.

11. What person(s) assisted you in meeting your career goals?

Participant M: I credit my parents for always supporting me in the good times and bad times. A CCEBMS advisor and the English department.

Participant N: My family members (aunt in particular), and fraternity brothers.

Participant O: My Mother.

Participant P: My Mother.

Participant Q: My advisor at the SOM.

Participant R: My relatives, faculty, and a graduate student.

Question 11 Summary.

All three African-Americans mentioned a family member who provided support in meeting their career goals.

Two of the three white participants also listed a family member. One mentioned an advisor.

Five of the six cited a family member who assisted them with their career goals.

Question 12.

12. What advice would you recommend for other students in making the transition from college to the workplace?

Participant M: Do well in school and take courses outside the major.

Participant N: Communicate with various people and keep all options open. Go through as many interviews as possible. If you see something that you don't feel qualified for, but you like the job and feel you can perform the duties, apply for the position anyway. That's how I got my job and you can succeed as well.

Participant O: Be active on campus and do coops or internships. Try to maintain at least a B average.

Participant P: It helps if you start searching early, even if you don't have plans to work right away. But if you start early you will know who to contact, how to write a resume, how to present yourself in an interview etc. It's more difficult once you are out on your own.

Participant Q: Graduating seniors should seek a field experience (although she was not in a formal program offered by the MCC, she did have a related experience that helped her to understand the corporate world). Utilize the resources at the Center and learn how to interview.

Participant R: Well. . . the Career Center is a resource. I would say first though, don't go to college if you are not serious. Work awhile and then return.

### Question 12 Summary.

Do well in your academic classes and take courses outside of major.

Communicate with others and go on as many interviews as possible.

Participate in Coops or internship programs and be active on campus.

Start job search early.

Participate in field experiences programs or related summer opportunities. Use the Career Center.

The Center is a resource--don't go to college if you are not serious about your future.

### Three African-Americans and Three White Participants Who Did Not Use Services and Did Not Find Jobs

Participant S, Electrical Engineering Major: Did not interview at the Mather Career Center. Considered it to be too much of a hassle between classes and other work conflict (worked 12 to 25 hours per semester). He was able to utilize a few of the workshops (at the satellite office).

Participant T, Psychology Major: Did not interview at the Center because she perceives it to be unfriendly and not having opportunity for her career aspirations. Her goal was to become a paralegal.

Participant U, Sociology Major: Was not interested in the interviewing at the Center, graduate school was her top priority.

Participant V, Speech Pathology Major: Did not feel that the Center had a lot to offer someone in her major. Additionally, her focus was on attending graduate school. She did however indicate that the workshops, career fair, and graduate school day helped her to prepare for graduate school.

Participant W, History Major: Did not participate in any of the services offered at the Center. He was interested in attending graduate school and therefore did not see the need to go through the interviewing process.

Participant X, BDIC Major: Had planned to stay in the area after graduation to pursue a four week training program. She did use the counseling services to become apprize of opportunities in her field.

[Since five of the six participants chose to further their education, and one decided to work with the family business, the interviews were modified to reflect their individual experiences. Five questions of relevance were specifically addressed.]

Question 1.

1. Did you utilize any of the services at the Mather Career Center?

Participant S: Actually, I did attend some of the workshops. However, I did not participate in the on-campus recruiting program. As an Engineering major, I started my job search at the end of my junior year. I distributed between 200 and 250 resumes on my own. Unfortunately, I only heard from one employer and didn't received any interviews. I am working with the family business, it's not related to major.

I really didn't make a decision to help the family out and not look for an engineering job. As a matter of fact, I feel I did both. I sort of knew that it was something I could fall back on. I graduated in Decemebr of 1991, and this is like an off season, you know for the employers, so you have to sort of go after them. At the time I was really feeling pressure from both ends. In other words, my family wanted me to come help them. They had just started the business a year and a half earlier. And so, I felt I should help them since they've been helping me for all these years. I felt I had put enough effort into finding an engineering job and it wasn't working out, the economy was bad--and so I decided to go



with my parents. Now that I've done it I think I made the right decision.

Participant T: I know this might sound trite, but when I went there (Career Center) staff were not friendly and acted disinterested. It was already enough to deal with the people in my department, I just didn't feel like going through that with a place that is suppose to assist us with jobs. Also, I don't think I was ready for the job search. I was a psych major with hopes of becoming a paralegal. I really didn't feel qualified to apply for any of these jobs--and I don't think the Center had anyone of interest in law-related fields.

Participant U: The Center appeared to be geared towards business, Engineering, and HRTA. I didn't feel it had a lot to offer someone in my field. Plus, I wanted to attend graduate school. I did go to the graduate school day and the career fair.

Participant V: I didn't feel like trying to match my backgorund with the jobs available there. I really wanted to graduate and purse something later on if I didn't get in to the graduate program of my choice.

Participant W: I had planned to pursue graduate studies, I plan to become a professor one day. Consequently, I didn't see the need to participate in any of the programs there.

Participant X: I made plans to stay in the area to do a training program at the EWC. Since I had made that commitment, and had some knowledge of the services, I wouldn't need to use the Center until I had completed that program.

#### Question 1 Summary.

Two of the African-Americans continued their education. One African-American is working with the family business.

Two of the white participants was in graduate school or making arrangements to attend. One was in a training program.

Four of the six continued their education, one was employed by his family, and one entered an unpaid training program.

#### Question 2.

2. What do you think was the major factor in your not getting a job or your not going through a job search?

Participant S: I think my GPA was fact. Actually, I've proud of it and by the way, it's a 2.23, I think. I should mention that I spent more than four years here. I spent . . . six and a half years . . . and some people might say, wow, that's a long time. But throughout those years I think I've built up character and also, I'm very

proud of that, although some people may not be. The reason that I am proud of it is because it's not like I was fooling around the first couple of years and then started to work hard. I worked hard from the start, but I must say it wasn't easy taking six courses and working twenty-five hours during the semester.

I also think I did not have all that was necessary. I knew I would be able to learn if I were given the job. But I felt I did not have all the skills necessary at the time I applied for the jobs. The skills needed weren't directly from the curriculum. They were like external things like extra courses or doing a Coop.

Participant T: As previously mentioned, I was not confident that I could find a paralegal position with just my undergraduate degree, so I applied to a paralegal institution for training.

Participant U: I wasn't focus on getting a job. Had that been a priority in my life at the time I think I could have found something professional.

Participant V: My goal was to go to graduate school. I knew job choices would be limited in my field (Speech Pathology) with only an undergraduate degree.

Participant W: In hindsight, now that I think about it, I didn't have a sense of direction. I am not in graduate school and perhaps it would have been a good

backup to have utilized some of the services there. I just didn't think it would be this important.

Participant X: I don't have any regrets, I think I did the right thing. I wanted to get the training at EWC, and now I am ready to pursue my career options.

#### Question 2 Summary.

Two African-Americans said they had planned to go for further training, consequently, there was not a need to focus on the job search. One African-American replied that his GPA affected his chances of getting a position in his field.

Two white participants felt that their main focus was on graduate school, and as such did not see the need to prepare for the job search. One white participant made plans to enter a training program.

Four of the six had planned to attend graduate school. One entered the family business, and one started a training program.

#### Question 3.

3. What is the highest number of credits taken in any given semester?

Participant S: Eighteen.

Participant T: Twelve.

Participant U: Eighteen.

Participant V: Eighteen.

Participant W: Eighteen.

Participant X: Fifteen.

Question 3 Summary.

Two of the African-Americans took eighteen credits in a given semester. One African American took twelve.

Two of the white participants took eighteen credits in a given semester. One White participant took fifteen.

Question 4.

4. Did you work twenty hours or more in any given semester?

Participant S: Yes, I worked as many as twenty-five hours a week.

Participant T: Yes, I worked two jobs.

Participant U: Yes.

Participant V: No.

Participant W: It was more like fifteen hours.

Participant X: Yes.

Question 4 Summary.

All three African Americans worked twenty hours or more in a given semester.

One white participant worked twenty hours or more in a given semester. Two white participants did not.

Four of the six worked twenty hours or more, two did not.

Question 5.

5. What advices would you give to students making the transition from college to the workplace?

Participant S: To develop a plan of direction to where you want to go, what do you want to do when you complete college. Don't just study and have good grades and that's it. But to be able to market yourself properly, you must have a plan that will give you essentially, direction.

So, in other words, when you graduate, if you don't get that job you were thinking of, if you have a plan you can move towards another focus. If you develop other skills you will be happy that you had a college career, cause there are people graduating from college and don't have jobs and some of them are wondering whether or not their college experience was worthwhile.

Participant T: They should use their networking system. It seems to work best for African Americans. I don't think any of my professors or academic advisors went beyond their classes to assist me in meeting my goals. I really had to do it on my own. I think my spiritually; God, parents and friends assisted me most.

Participant U: I think there should be more support at UMASS for students who are sort of confused about life planning. Maybe it ought to be addressed before the

senior year. I thin graduate school is a viable option because os many students don't know what to do with their undergraduate degrees.

Participant V: My GPA was definitely a factor in getting into graduate school. The faculty in my department was also very supportive. I was focused and I think that's the difference between me and those who are not getting on with lives. So I think if you are uncertain about you future it would make sense to talk with someone for guidance.

Participant W: I think it's important that student choose something that they feel is appropriate and that they will like doing. I have no anxiety about my future. My GPA will probably help get me into graduate school and I think my professors will be helpful as well. I should mention that some times there are problems that prevents people from taking a natural course of action. In my case, I have two major personal concerns: my step mother was sick and subsequently died, and my son was born. It was difficult trying to concentrate on either a job or graduate school.

Participant X: My background is different from most students. I have been independent most of my life. I left home at sixteen and my family lives in Saudia Arabia. For the most part, my friends have been my support system and

the BDIC advisors who were simply marvelous. I think I have a good confidence level and many of my friends say I'm very centered and calm, so I deal with life issues differently than most twenty-three-year-olds.

In Saudi Arabia, I took a life planning course that taught us everything from balancing checkbooks to appreciating self-help books. So I see things differently--I think we should take life one day at a time. To be honest, I didn't think that far ahead to use the Center. I really didn't know what I wanted to do until my senior year.

Question 5 Summary.

Plan a course of action, start early in this process.

Develop a networking system.

The school should offer a life planning course.

Seek career guidance.

Select an appropriate major, something that you will like.

Students should take a life planning course.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

It isn't the American white man who is a racist, but it's the American political, economic and social atmosphere that automatically nourishes a racist psychology in the white man. (The Autobiography of Malcolm X.)

The summary of results, conclusions and recommendation for future research are presented in this chapter. The summary of results is an overview of the interview data in Chapter V. Conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research are drawn from the information presented in Chapter V as well as the literature review in Chapter II regarding the subject matter.

#### Summary of the Results

This study examined two research questions: (1) What are the job-seeking activities which contribute to graduating African-American students securing entry level professional positions? and (2) what role did the Mather Career Center play in the graduating student job search and by what was it assessed? Answers to these two basic

questions were sought from college graduating seniors through a mail survey and 12 interviews.

The participants of this study were graduating seniors attending a public predominantly White university. The research reveals that The Mather Career Center assisted eight of the twelve African-Americans (three with direct placement and five through services and programs). Although three African-American participants did not utilize any of the services at the Center, all twelve African-Americans said they would recommend the Center to a relative or friend. Nine of the twelve white participants received assistance from the Mather Career Center. Nine white participants said they would recommend the Center to a relative or friend.

Responses from the survey data show a correlation between studies cited in the literature review. More specifically, the exploratory study which included the survey questions revealed that African-American graduating seniors believed that self-development/marketing skills and the networking system were necessary components for the job search.

The interview data explored the following factors to determine any possible involvement in the initial employment of 24 graduating seniors at the University of

Massachusetts. The following provides a summary of the interview questions.

#### Summary of Question 1

Half of the African American participants as compared to one-third of the White participants did experience problems in securing an entry level professional position. Those problems ranged from too few resources, lack of support from faculty and staff, lack of direction and personal problems to the job search efforts conflicting with classes.

#### Summary of Question 2

Only three of the African-American participants felt that their social and cultural orientation influenced their job search. None of the white participants believed it to be a concern in their job search. Carter & Helms (1987) suggest that racial identity attitudes influence the feelings, preferences and cultural values of African-Americans.

It seemed apparent that African-American participants of this study were most interested in finding a job, and their positions--relative to cultural and social identity at the workplace--seemed to be secondary. Given the slow recovery and the discrimination African-

Americans face in the United States, it is suggested that most African-American college graduates believe in prioritizing personal goals. One such goal is to attain employment.

While we live in a society that constantly speaks of "Workforce 2,000" becoming more diversified, the researcher would question how many students are encouraged to value their social and cultural norms during the job search.

African-American students (certainly this holds true for all students) are taught that the accepted approach to seeking employment is usually done in traditional form. R. Roosevelt Thomas (1990) states, "Corporate success has demanded a good deal of conformity, and employees have voluntarily abandoned most of their ethnic distinctions at the company door."

Since this approach to job-hunting is often geared towards assimilation and conformity to the organization culture and norms, African-American graduating seniors are instructed by members of their support system to "keep their eyes on the prize"; that is, to work diligently at winning the position which may exclude external personal concerns.

### Summary of Question 3

Half of the African-American participants who actively searched for employment believed that a grade point average of a 3.0 or above was a requirement for their current position while only one-third of the White participants felt that it was a requirement for their positions. While this is an issue of controversy--not all recruiters will require a 3.0 or better grade point average--the implication as stated in Chapter II is that, given that the job market is more competitive in the 1990s, African-American students must maintain a good academic record in order to qualify for many interviews, or they run the risk of settling for a more challenging job search.

### Summary of Question 4

Six African-American participants stated that their racial background influenced their job search as compared to most of the white participants who did not believe it to be an issue. One white participant was uncertain.

If race is a determinant for job hiring in the 1990s, perhaps it should not necessarily be viewed as negative. Some employers do value and appreciate ethnic diversity.

The larger concern, however, for African-American graduating seniors is the obvious stereotyping associated

with quotas. The myth of a perceived quota gives no credit to the intelligence, skills and qualifications of the individual. Thus, a recent hiree under those conditions may be perceived as "of little worth" to the organization, which is a direct affront to individual self-esteem.

#### Summary of Question 5

Fourteen participants (seven African-Americans and seven whites) believed that their advisor assisted them in some way during the job search. This is particularly significant for African-American graduates, as the literature suggest that their network system is often their number-one resource in securing employment.

The ratings of support from faculty was low, with four undecided. Only three African-American participants stated that a faculty member had been instrumental in their job search. This would add some explanation as to why African-American seniors find it necessary to seek assistance from their support system. The figure (four) was slightly higher for the white participants.

#### Summary of Question 6

Most of the participants did not feel comfortable in addressing the question regarding budgetary constraints impacting the quality of services offered by the Career

Center, given that they had little or no contact with the Center. Only two African-American and four white participants believed the budget problem at UMASS created less opportunity for students.

#### Summary of Questions 7 and 8

Six African-American participants as compared to three white participants took a course load of twenty or more credits in any given semester at the University. Eleven African-Americans and three white participants worked at a job for twenty hours or more throughout their college careers. The data indicate that some African-American students who worked long hours and took heavy courseloads may face difficulty in visiting and subsequently utilizing career center services.

Undoubtedly, this is an issue where more effort should be made by the administration to explore ways of assisting students with financial expenses to hopefully eliminate the need to work as many hours while a full-time student as well as to determine how best a student can avoid a heavy course load.

#### Summary of Question 9

Nine African-Americans and two white participants referred to a spiritual or inner strength that helped them meet their career goals. It is safe to assume that some

African-American graduating seniors believed that a higher spirit/force and perservance enabled them to succeed in their career goals. While there may not be a heavy emphasis on religion or spirituality at the University, it may be appropriate to survey those students who desire spiritual support. If students believe spirituality is a source that can sustain or empower them in realizing their academic and career goals, then it is possible that this could be another source that can ultimately help them to succeed in their job search.

McEwen, Rope, Bryant & Langa (1990) state:

Spiritual development needs to be incorporated in student development theories for a better understanding of African-American students. An additional support reported by Black students in Hughes's (1987) study was reliance on spiritual strength, with spirituality being a deeply rooted aspect of Afrocentric culture.

#### Summary of Question 10

African-Americans listed their networking system (support persons) more often than any external resource as those who supplied them with career assistance. White participants listed a combination of family members, faculty and other resources, such as the Center, as support systems.



### Summary of Question 11

Some advice from participants to students ranges from involvement with campus activities and utilization of Career Center counselors and other services, to doing well in academic classes and taking computer courses.

### Conclusions

It is apparent that, while 66.6% of African-American graduating seniors and 75% of the white participants of this interview study did take advantage of some of the services at the Mather Career Center, a small proportion of African-American and white students (25%) only secured positions from the campus recruiting program. The Mather Career Center's propensity to attract employers who are most in demand (engineering, business, and "hard" sciences) is not unlike other Career Centers across the country. The greater question is, will African-American students be served more expeditiously through this resource, or will they continue to depend upon external resources?

African-American students rely upon their support systems to meet employment goals. These support systems include mainly family members, friends, community and some university resources.

As referenced by Austin, Carter & Vaux (1990), Websters & Fretz (1978), found that African-American students utilized their friends and family as opposed to traditional sources on predominantly white college campuses when they experience vocational, social and academic problems. This study revealed that graduating African-American students also sought out family and friends for career and job search assistance as a primary resource as oppose to resources on campus.

Career Centers are not typically seen as a support system due in part to lack of ALANA representation (both in terms of career center staff and interest of the students) and the non-emphasis on multicultural issue.

Research studies suggests that African-American students may face situations in higher educational institutions that are perceived to be hostile and unfamiliar, whereas, white students at these same institutions may be experiencing developmental adjustments (Flemings, 1984). Further, although it is not known how many students requested career advice or assistance from faculty, the data show that few African-American graduating seniors of this study, received career assistance from faculty at the University of Massachusetts.

Colleges are a microcosm of the American society; as such, African-American students (as do all students) bring to college campuses attitudes, concerns, and perceptions about career counseling services from their cultures and home environments (Helms, 1984). If African-American students believe that administrators may not have their best interests at heart because very little outreach was extended to a relative or friend who preceded them, the common pattern is not to frequent that particular facility. This should not be surprising, since all people have a tendency to gravitate towards those things that makes them feel most welcome. This is perhaps one of the major reasons why African-Americans' career planning and placement is centered on their support systems. This is an important point because many African-American graduating seniors' majors fall under the aegis of the College Arts and Sciences.

Evidence indicates that liberal arts majors are challenged during their job search. Since the majority of the participants from both the survey and interview studies were from the College of Arts and Sciences, it would appear that liberal arts majors are just as concerned about the competitive workforce as business and technical majors. Otherwise, they would not have put

forth so much effort in their respective job search. Another impeding factor that can cause stress in seeking employment may be a relational issue between the academic major and fewer positions in demand (or available) for the field of interest.

For example, currently, a political science major who aspires to work in a government position may not necessarily find an available position. A history or English major who desires to work in human services may not meet the requirements of the organization without having a specific degree in the social or behavioral sciences. Conversely, neither will all social and behavioral science majors secure positions in private sector with a sales or management emphasis. (Although some do, usually those who are stellar). In most cases still, despite the acceptability of all majors in the aforementioned areas, the reality is that some private sector managers will have a preference for business majors for positions within the business industry.

No matter how much career center personnel may implore students to take advantage of their services and programs, administrators and staff must recognize that the workforce is constantly changing and is wrought with issues of complexity and uncertainty.

For African-American and white students, the emphasis cannot be placed solely on the campus recruitment program. It is simply not vast enough in programming and technology to effectively serve the multitude of students. Nor is it predicted to be the mainstay of college campuses. Most major companies have decreased their recruiting efforts by half; the average number of campuses visited by recruiters in 1986 was forty-two. Today that same recruiter only visits twenty-three campuses (referenced by Norris, "Behavioral Interviewing," U.S. News and World Report, May 31, 1993, p. 10).

Consequently, in examining factors facing graduating seniors during their initial employment, undoubtedly there is a strong agreement between both races. In this study, the factors for African-American and white graduating seniors include:

1. networking system (relatives, faculty, counselor and advisors;
2. career center/employment offices;
3. classes, coursework; and
4. responding directly to organization

It should be emphasized that these findings are ranked in the order of relevancy for African-American graduating seniors and white graduating seniors. The data

suggest that, while the factors may be similar, there are clearly some differences in the order of relevance influencing the job search process of African-American and white graduating seniors. These differences include for African-American students, but are not limited to:

- 1) networking with primary focus on relatives, counselors, advisors, and community;
- 2) a heavy emphasis on grade point average, work and courseloads;
- 3) a strong reliance on spirituality and perservance;
- 4) racial/ethnic considerations; and
- 5) the career center.

These factors appear to be challenging implications for the Career Center. Given the current concerns and demands of the American economy, social and political structures; an innovative and comprehensive career program must be developed in order to address the employment needs and job search strategies of African-American students as well as all students of the 1990s. Conceptually, this restructuring would involve Career Center personnel focusing more closely on the career planning process of students and working towards forming viable career goals earlier on as oppose to when students become juniors or seniors in college.

## Recommendations

This section list several suggestions that provide a more congruent, positive and supportive environment to African-American students. The researcher believes that, without campus-wide support, we fail to reach the masses of our constituents whom we take pride in serving. Emphasis is placed on administration, faculty and staff to develop a sound collaboration to ensure continued career succeed for students in their interaction with public and private sector employers.

1. There must be a concerted effort on the behalf of administrators, faculty and staff to encourage students to begin the career planning and placement process in their college education. Students should become aware of the career planning (development) and placement process ideally at the beginning of their first year on campus--or no later than the second semester.
2. It is suggested that Career Planning be an integral part of a student's development. Field trips, Cooperative education and internship programming should be made available to all students no later than their sophomore year of college. These experiences will expose them to experiential learning

where theories can be tested and new skills developed, and students can subsequently make informed decisions about their choice of study and future careers. It is highly recommended that students participate in as many as possible co-ops, internships or work-related experience to their major throughout their college career.

3. Mentoring and shadowing programs exist in a number of organizations, but more must be made available to African-American students. The research shows that African-American graduating seniors who seek employment do find positions largely through their support system. The researcher believes that Career Centers should be included as a viable resource to reduce the emotional stress that some African-American graduating seniors often experience by having limited resources during the job search.
4. It is highly recommended that a campus-wide life survival skills course encompassing career planning and placement be offered to all interested students. The Mather Career Center offers five courses in Career Planning. One course is entitled Self-Efficacy and Career Planning for Students of African Descent. A career planning course should award credits to



demonstrate to students that the faculty and administration are in total agreement that the students' future careers are just as important as the fundamental development of their academics.

The message should be unequivocally clear, that the University actively seeks to develop a partnership with private and public sector to guarantee available positions at graduation.

5. While it is imperative that Career Center personnel develop and implement innovative career programs; it is equally as important to recognize that students must be willing and committed to take advantage of career planning and placement information and programs. Students' lack of motivation exist in many forms which can influence the staff in planning appropriate Career Center programs. Therefore, when students take ownership in their career planning, successful partnerships can be formed between the student and the Career Center.
6. The staff at Career Centers (mandatory for directors, counselors, instructors or job developers) and other university personnel should be encouraged to increase

their understanding of the plight and experiences of African-Americans and other ethnic and cultural groups. As stated by Jackson (1976):

It is within the pale of white professionals to augment their understanding by reading journals that focus primarily on black clients, taking part in interracial group encounters, and finally possibly admitting to ignorance and doing an internship in a predominantly Black environment. Blackness of skin, on the other hand, is no immunity to ignorance; and consequently, Black professionals should not feel that there is a perfect correlation between being a black person and understanding clients (p. 304).

#### Suggestions for Future Research

More research is recommended to further assess other factors that may be a part of the African-American graduating senior job search. A larger African-American student population should be surveyed to gather more specific and comparative information. Using a larger sample group would increase the study's validity and reduce biases. While questionnaires and interviews are effective instruments to use for the study, it is important to realize that institutions are all different and as such offer a set of data which may be limited to that institution's environment. Therefore, each institution should examine its own particular problematic

issues, as well as study African-American career planning and placement.

Future studies regarding factors involved in the employment of African-American students might produce important data by comparing African-American students to other African-American students in a similar setting (predominantly white college) or in a historically Black college setting.

APPENDIX:  
SURVEY OF GRADUATING SENIORS AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

SURVEY OF GRADUATING SENIORS  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Student:

We need your help. We are trying to improve career services and would appreciate your participation in the following survey. The purpose of this brief survey is to determine your perceptions and feelings of the services provided by the Mather Career Center. This information will help us to enhance our present services and to determine the need for additional programming in career planning and placement, as well as field experience. However, the aspects of this survey are different from the Annual Survey we will be forwarding to you in September in that the results of this survey will be useful in designing a unique course on career planning and placement.

We value your opinion, please take a few minutes and share what your experience has been during your job search. For each item on the questionnaire please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree. There are five possible responses: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral or Undecided (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). There are no correct responses to the recommendations -- the best responses are those that truly reflect your opinions or feelings.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this worthwhile study. Thank you for your effort and congratulations on your graduation!

Sincerely,

---

Jane Austin  
Assistant Director

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

There are five possible responses:

Strongly Agree (A), and Agree (SA) Neutral or Undecided (N),, Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). Please circle appropriate response.

### SELF DEVELOPMENT/MARKETING SKILLS

1. Did utilizing good marketing skills (e.g. verbal and written communication, interpersonal, and dressing appropriately) increase your chances of employment?

SA   A   N   D   SD

2. Do you feel that acquiring resume skills was an asset in preparing you for employment?

SA   A   N   D   SD

3. Do you feel that acquiring interview techniques was an asset in preparing you for employment?

SA   A   N   D   SD

4. Do you feel that perseverance played a role in your securing employment?

SA   A   N   D   SD

5. Do you feel that your GPA was a factor for prospective employers in determining your qualifications for employment?

SA   A   N   D   SD

**NETWORKING SYSTEM**

6. Do you feel that faculty at UMASS played an important role in your job search? Please explain.

SA    A    N    D    SD

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7. Do you feel that other university personnel at UMASS played an important role in your job search? Please explain.

SA    A    N    D    SD

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8. Did your peer group play a role in your job search?  
If so, how?

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9. Did your class schedule conflict with the on campus recruiting interview schedule? If so, please elaborate.

SA    A    N    D    SD

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CAREER PLANNING/PLACEMENT

10. If you were a participant in Field Experience (Co-op /Internship) Programs or held a related summer position, did this experience enhance your chances of employment?

SA    A    N    D    SD

11. As a graduating senior, how many interviews did you participate in? \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ On Campus Interviews  
\_\_\_\_ Off Campus Interviews

12. How many job offers did you receive? \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Through On Campus Employers  
\_\_\_\_ Through Off Campus Employers

13. If you have accepted a paid position, what resources did you use to obtain this position. (Check one or all that apply)

- \_\_\_ A. Mather Career Center
- \_\_\_ B. SOM Placement Office
- \_\_\_ C. HRTA Placement Program
- \_\_\_ D. Your Department \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ E. Faculty
- \_\_\_ F. Newspaper Ad
- \_\_\_ G. Private Agency
- \_\_\_ H. Self-employed
- \_\_\_ I. Friends/Networking
- \_\_\_ J. Family Referral
- \_\_\_ K. Contacted employers directly on my own
- \_\_\_ L. Other \_\_\_\_\_



14. Did the Mather Career Center assist you in your job search?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No. If so, did you participate in any of the following:  
(Check as many as applicable)

- \_\_\_ A. Introduction to Career Services Workshop
- \_\_\_ B. On Campus Recruiting
- \_\_\_ C. Field Experience (Co-op or Internship)
- \_\_\_ D. Sigi-Plus Computer-Assisted Guidance Program
  
- \_\_\_ E. Resume Writing
- \_\_\_ F. Interview Techniques
- \_\_\_ G. Other Career Related Topics
- \_\_\_ H. The Computer-Assisted Job Referral Program (CARP)
- \_\_\_ I. Rossman Career Forum
- \_\_\_ J. Career Counseling
- \_\_\_ K. Job Search Skills Workshops
- \_\_\_ L. Career Library
- \_\_\_ M. Credentials Office
- \_\_\_ N. Career Fair
- \_\_\_ O. Graduate School and Professional Day

15. If you did not use the Center, what factors worked as a deterrent in your not taking advantage of Mather Career Services?

- \_\_\_ On Campus Recruiting Program seemed insufficient
- \_\_\_ Staff seemed insensitive and non-caring
- \_\_\_ Number of Career Center's Workshop seemed insufficient
- \_\_\_ Instructors seemed unprepared to conduct workshops
- \_\_\_ Not enough publicity about Career Center's programs
- \_\_\_ Student had no knowledge of positions available in major
- \_\_\_ Career Center's Programs not well organized
- \_\_\_ Services conflicted with class hours
- \_\_\_ Services conflicted with work schedule
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. What factors encouraged you to take advantage of the Mather Career Services?

- Impressive On Campus Recruiting Program
- Staff seemed experienced and caring
- Career Center's Workshops seemed sufficient
- Instructors seemed knowledgeable
- Proximity and availability of Workshops
- Workshops offered during the evening
- Career Center's Employer Information Sessions
- Rossman Alumni Career Forums
- Counseling Sessions

17. Would you recommend the Mather Career Center to a friend or relative attending UMASS?

- Yes     No

#### POST PLACEMENT INFORMATION

18. Please list the month and year you started full time employment.

19. What was your major in college? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What type of position did you accept? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Have you been admitted to Graduate School? Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes     No

#### COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Dear Participant:

I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in my survey in May, 1992. I invited your participation in the second part of this study which will consist of an indepth interviews to be audiotaped. This study will hopefully establish the groundwork of a three year project to include a career planning course for ALANA (African, Latino, Asian, and Native American) students.

This study is being conducted to evaluate factors involved in the initial employment of African American graduating seniors. As an educational and career advisor, I am interested in knowing if these factors influenced your job search. Participants in the study will be from two groups. The first group will be African American Alumni from the class of 1992. The second group will be Caucasian Alumni from the class of 1992.

Participants in this study will be asked to respond to the questions with honesty and frankness based on their own comfort level. As a participant, you may feel free to pass or not disclose any information that you deemed inappropriate without prejudice. I will make every effort to ensure and protect your confidentially and anonymity. Additionally, you may withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.

The information collected in the interview will not be shared with anyone other than the transcriber, individual faculty who will be assisting me in the analysis of the data, and members of my dissertation committee. The proceedings will be audio-taped and transcribed. Although the number of participants, approximately 24 is small, there will be little or no risk involved as all references to the names of individuals and location will be edited out of the transcriptions. In the data, the focus will be on themes and patterns of responses as oppose to individual response.

A summary of the participants' responses will be available to you for review upon request. In addition to the dissertation, materials obtained through this study may be used in journal articles, presentations within the Commonwealth and for national organizations, workshops and possibly a book. Use of these materials in the abovementioned methods carry the same proviso for protection for confidentiality and anonymity for participants.

University research guidelines require that when human subjects are used, a consent form from the participant will need to be obtained. On page two, you will find the consent form. In signing this form, you are authorizing me to use the data obtained as described above.

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above statement and agree to participate in this study under the conditions stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I will be happy to answer any of your questions. I can be reached at (413)545-6252 or 545-2225. Thank you for your participation and interests in this study.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
P. Jane Hadley-Austin  
Doctoral Candidate

JHA (May, 1993)

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your state of residence? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_ African or Caribbean American  
\_\_\_\_\_ White or European American
3. Are you currently employed? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no
4. If not, what is your status? \_\_\_\_\_ unemployed \_\_\_\_\_ graduate student  
\_\_\_\_\_ work part-time \_\_\_\_\_ other
5. What is the highest level of parents education?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Grade school  
\_\_\_\_\_ High school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than two years of college or vocational training  
\_\_\_\_\_ More than two years of college  
\_\_\_\_\_ College Graduate  
\_\_\_\_\_ Some Graduate work  
\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate Degree (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other
6. Did you experience problems in securing entry -level professional position?  
Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ Too few resources  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lack of support system  
\_\_\_\_\_ Didn't start job search early enough  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lack of direction  
\_\_\_\_\_ Job search efforts conflicted with classes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Personal problems  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other
7. Did any of the following factors play a role in your securing an entry-level professional position? If so, how?

Environmental: the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community.

Question: Did your social and cultural orientation influence your job search?

Academic: of, or related to, performance in educational courses.

Question: Was a GPA of 3.0 or above a requirement for your position?

Race: a class or kind of people unified by community of interest, habits or characteristics.

Question: Do you feel that your racial background influenced your chances of securing a position? Were you hired or not hired because of your race?

Counseling Paradigms (practiced by faculty and instructional staff): an advising model using psychological or sociological methods.

Question: Do you think your advisor contribute to your success of obtaining employment?

Institutional: a significant practice, relationship or organization in a society or culture.

Question: Do you feel that budgetary constraints impacted the quality of services offered by the career center?

8. What is the highest number of credits taken in any given semester?
9. Did you work 20 hours or more in any given semester?
10. What method(s) of support helped you to achieve your goals?  
 resources (Mather, Department, community)  
 networking (community)  
 spiritual (meditation, inner strength, physical fitness etc.)  
 other
11. What person(s) assisted you in meeting your goals?  
 parents  
 faculty  
 counselor  
 staff  
 friend  
 mentor  
 other
12. What advice would you recommend for other students in making that transition from college to the workplace?

jha

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