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## An Exploration of the Effectiveness of High Impact Practices as it Pertains to First-Year Non-Traditional Transfer Student's Academic Success

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AN EXPLORATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES  
AS IT PERTAINS TO FIRST-YEAR NON-TRADITIONAL TRANSFER  
STUDENTS ACADEMIC SUCCESS

By

JANICE D. MALONE

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Accepted by:

Linda Lyons, Ed.D., Chair

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to determine if High Impact Practices (HIPs) influence the academic success of first-year non-traditional transfer students. Additionally, through the study certain HIPs were identified as most effective for this particular group of students. Furthermore, the research has provided higher educational professionals with a better understanding of the learning need of first-year non-traditional transfer students, allowing us to better support them on their journey.

The significance of this research will better equip future higher education administrators and other clinicians in the field, to revisit Kuh's high impact practices and view them in a different lens as they pertain to first-year non-traditional transfer students and their need to achieve academic success.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, throughout America, college campuses are becoming ever more diverse. The traditional aged 18 to 24-year-old young adult, plunging headfirst into higher learning straight out of high school is no longer the typical college student. The term “college student” is quickly shifting to encompass a more non-traditional group of students. Non-traditional college students, according to the National Center for Education Statistics defines non-traditional students as meeting one of seven characteristics: delayed enrollment into postsecondary education; attends college part-time; works full-time; is financially independent for financial aid purposes; has dependents other than a spouse; is a single parent; or does not have a high school diploma (Brooks and Simpson 2014). These students are comprised of parents, veterans, retirees, caregivers and full-time employees all with diverse backgrounds and prior experience in the workforce. According to a study conducted by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), an estimated 40 percent of the current undergraduate population at American colleges and universities are non-traditional. The non-traditional college student is rapidly becoming the new majority, and many of these students are coming from two-year community colleges and other similar institutions. However, despite the rapidly growing number of non-traditional college students, four-year colleges and major universities are still catering to primarily the traditional students, who are at least 18 to 24 years old, financially dependent on their parents, in college full-time and living on campus.

Transfer students make up a large percentage of the student population at American universities. Among those transfer students, many these students are non-traditional students. There is a considerable amount of time and resources allocated to supporting the transition of incoming first-year students (Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schul, J.H., & Whitt, E.J., 2005). These

initiatives are not typically directed at first-year, non-traditional transfer students. These students may not understand or have access to the resources that can help them connect to their new institutions during their first year (Kuh 2008). As a result, first-year non-traditional students may feel invisible or lost in the shuffle at their newly chosen institutions. It is important to locate gaps in intentional and integrative support programs available to first-year students. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (2009) defines integrative learning as an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

This kind of analysis can help create a smoother path for first-year, non-traditional transfer students as they transition from their starting institutions to a four-year college. Furthermore, according to Shapiro, Dundar, Ziskin, Yuan, & Harell, 2013, “it is expected that enrollment of students aged 23-49 will increase at a faster rate than traditional-aged students through 2020 (p.49)” Often, non-traditional students are, interchangeably referred to as adult learners or non-traditional adult learners. Each of these populations can share some overlapping characteristics (U.S Department of Education, 2015).

Non-traditional transfer students, a growing population in the United States postsecondary education system, experience distinct barriers to academic success. Some examples of barriers these students face include but are not limited to financial constraints, time constraints, childcare challenges and a lack of institutional assistance administratively. Unfortunately, higher education institutions are not moving quickly enough to change outdated policies that favor traditional college students. Therefore, it is important for administrators of higher education institutions to understand the academic barriers that non-traditional transfer

students face as they work toward academic success. Furthermore, the obstacles to academic success this unique group faces will be unlike those of a traditional student. These obstacles include inter-role conflict, social isolation, lack of academic flexibility, and barriers to persistence and completion (Hittepole, 2017). As mentioned briefly earlier, first-year non-traditional students are not only students. They have a variety of roles ranging from parent to full-time employee. These roles may conflict at times, causing one or the other to be unfulfilled or unmet. This inter-role conflict may hinder their ability to function as a student. Practices and programs must be in place to assure these individuals do not fail in their role as a student.

Due to age differences and generational gaps, first-year non-traditional transfer students may also struggle with connecting with traditional college students, which can affect their sense of belonging. This lack of connection may result in social isolation which can adversely influence course performance overall. Barriers to persistence and completion are yet another major obstacle for the non-traditional student. Since many universities devote programs and resources to the traditional incoming first-year students. Specific attention to academic success as it relates to the needs of first-year, non-traditional transfer students is lacking, and this population may not understand or access all of the resources available to them to assist in connecting to their new institution during their first year (Kuh 2010). This acknowledgement leads to discovering and further examining where the gaps may lie when students move from one school to the next and what intentional and integrative non-traditional support programs are or are not in place to create a smooth exit from the starting institution to their completion or senior institution.

Ensuring the success of all students should be the primary goal for colleges and universities alike. Many four-year colleges and major universities have implemented the use of

“High-Impact Practices” (HIPs) which have been widely tested and shown to be beneficial for college students from diverse backgrounds (Kuh, 2008). Kuh lists ten high impact activities or practices that will enhance student engagement and increase student success: (a) first-year seminars and experiences; (b) common intellectual experiences; (c) learning communities; (d) writing-intensive courses; (e) collaborative assignments and projects; (f) undergraduate research; (g) diversity/global learning; (h) service learning/community-based learning; (i) internships; and (j) capstone courses and projects.

According to Kuh, HIPs are curricular and co-curricular activities that aid in enhancing student engagement which can increase student success academically (2008). This then would greatly increase the potential for graduation from an undergraduate program. HIPs are used in higher education, to raise student learning and ensure students are prepared for the next step of higher education and the workforce. However, these practices, are geared more toward the traditional college student rather than the non-traditional transfer student. While the landscape of the college campus rapidly transforms to encompass non-traditional student populations, the programs and practices must evolve to fit the needs of diverse students.

In order to implement programs for student success in the world of higher education, colleges and universities must understand their students. For decades, institutions of higher learning have had an influx of traditional-age college students gaining acceptance and enrolling shortly after their graduation from high school. Subsequently, they have had decades to adjust to and evolve with this student population and understand their reasons for enrolling. The non-traditional student may have very different life experiences and a variety of complex reasons for enrolling in or returning to higher education. According to Bauman, Wang, DeLeon, Kafentzis, Zavala-Lopez and Lindsey (2004), some students enter colleges and universities in order to

reenter the workforce, for intrinsic reasons such as self-improvement and a desire to increase knowledge, as well as to meet family needs. Creating practices and programs that will enable this group of students to succeed will be markedly different from traditional college students. Due to time commitments and other obligations, many of these students struggle with the ability to stay focused and engaged on completing their tasks as students.

Lastly, a lack of academic administrative support, after business hours, makes it difficult to find the necessary resources or administrative assistance that fit into their schedules and other life roles. Most academic administrative support offered by colleges and universities, are designed to fit the schedule of the traditional college student. This lack of administrative support is particularly difficult to get around especially in the evening time when many non-traditional students are free to attend courses (Gonclaves & Trunk, 2014). Again, the mindset and obstacles to the academic success of the first-year non-traditional transfer students are markedly different from those of traditional college students. While the HIPs developed by Kuh and colleagues claim to be beneficial for college students from a variety of backgrounds, they are not potentially applicable in the academic success for the first-year, non-traditional transfer student.

### **Purpose & Significance of the Study**

The higher education system in America has been largely successful, due to institutional diversity, which has allowed post-secondary institutions to more effectively serve a diverse population and their needs. According to Chen (2017), institutional diversity provides an important basis for colleges and universities to make decisions that both increase and accommodate a diverse student population. Chen goes on to state that the non-traditional transfer student, is often neglected. This concept of the invisible non-traditional transfer student can be seen in a study conducted by the American Council on Education, which found that only

33.7percent of first-year non-traditional transfer students completed their degree, compared with 54.1percent of first-time students (Shapiro, Dundar, Ziskin, Yuan, & Harrell, 2013). Retention rates and successful completion of degree requirements are critical issues for this population. If the HIPs that are being implemented in colleges and universities throughout the country are positively contributing to retention and progression to graduation, why are non-traditional students not performing as well as their traditional counterparts? The purpose of this study was to determine if HIPs influences the academic success of first-year non-traditional transfer students. Additionally, through the study certain HIPs were identified as most effective for this group of students. Furthermore, the research will provide higher educational professionals with a better understanding of the learning need of first-year non-traditional transfer students, allowing us to better support them on their journey.

The significance of this research will better equip future higher education administrators and other clinicians in the field, to revisit Kuh’s high impact practices and view them in a different lens as it pertains to first-year non-traditional transfer students and their needs to achieve academic success.

### **Research Questions**

There is an abundance of literature pertaining to adult learning theory and adult education however; the translation of these scholarship areas into actual education administration and subsequent teaching practice is quite limited (Cruce & Hillman, 2012). This fact further emphasizes the lack of academic resources and guidance made available to first-year non-traditional transfer students. HIPs have improved student learning and success in traditional college students, but are these practices beneficial for the non-traditional student? By creating and utilizing a questionnaire targeting the exposure and participation in high impact practices at

both two-year and four-year institutions, the necessary data for this research was collected with the goal of determining the effectiveness of HIPs on first-year non-traditional transfer student success. This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What high impact practices influence first-year non-traditional transfer students at 2-year institutions?
- What high impact practices do first-year non-traditional transfer students believe contributed the greatest to their sense of belonging?
- What do first-year non-traditional transfer students indicate are the high impact practices at Kennesaw State University that have the greatest impact on their unique needs?

## **Limitations**

There are several limitations for this work. One noticeable one is that the survey was not created to gather data on all ten HIPS. Only six of the ten were used to create the survey. The questionnaire used was author constructed. The terms used in the questionnaire were defined for participants for better understanding. It is possible the questions do not really measure what was intended and written to measure.

Another limitation was the results of this study were based off self-reported data. Participants in this study answered questions in a manner that was subjective and based off their understanding of the questions and their interpretation of their experiences. While this research did yield information on whether participants were exposed to and participated in specific HIPs, the participants could have, unknowingly been exposed to other HIPs not discussed in this study. In this regard, the findings would have likely been different. Another limitation in this study was participants were from only one four-year higher education institution. A wider range of institutions across the United States would potentially lend more weight to the findings.

## Definition of Terms

1. Academic Success: In an evaluation of Kuh's (2008, p.21) definition, student success is defined as academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational outcomes, and post-college performance.
2. Traditional Student: Traditional mold: 18- to 22-years-old, financially dependent on parents, in college full time, living on campus. Traditional college students—first-time, full-time degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate students (FTFT) who, generally, enrolled right after high school.
3. Non-traditional Student: The National Center for Education Statistics defines non-traditional students as meeting one of seven characteristics: delayed enrollment into postsecondary education; attends college part-time; works full time; is financially independent for financial aid purposes; has dependents other than a spouse; is a single parent; or does not have a high school diploma (Bidwell 2014). Those criteria fit a plethora of today's college students. Within the non-traditional cohort, of course, are a great number of adult students—a pool often defined as those 25 or older. According to Renn and Reason, more than 47 percent of students who are currently enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States are older than 25 years of age (2014).
4. Non-traditional Transfer Student (NTS): For the purpose of this study the term non-traditional transfer student will be defined as any student who is 23 or over with less than 30 credit hours transferring to or reenrolling into a four-year college or university. Furthermore, NTS will also be used interchangeably with the term non-traditional adult learners (NAL) which is defined by Horn and Carroll (1996) as students aged 25 and

over, also include those under 25 but who have characteristics indicative of adult responsibilities, such as working full-time, being financially dependent, having non-spousal dependents, is a single parent, as well as having a non-traditional educational trajectory, such as delayed enrollment into higher education or not completing high school.

5. **Adult Learner:** These students often referred to as “non-traditional,” constitute a significant proportion of the undergraduate student body. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data indicate that 38 percent of the 2007 enrollment of more than eighteen million college students were 25 years of age or older (2009). NCES projections of higher education enrollment from 2007–2018 suggest that the number of students over twenty-five will remain stable or increase during the current decade (Hussar and Bailey 2009). Although the focus of this issue of Peer Review and the remainder of this article will be on adults beginning or continuing their enrollment as college students at a later-than-typical age, a 2002 NCES report has frequently been cited as noting that when the term “non-traditional student” is defined more broadly to include seven characteristics not typically associated with participation in college, a full 73 percent of students may be viewed as non-traditional (Choy 2002). These characteristics include:

- a. entry to college delayed by at least one year following high school,
- b. having dependents,
- c. being a single parent,
- d. being employed full time,
- e. being financially independent,
- f. attending part time, and
- g. not having a high school diploma.

6. Persistence: Persistence is the action whereby students continue their undergraduate education to the point of graduation whether from the institution where they started or from another (Renn & Reason, 2012). An outcome of students attending college is attaining a degree leading to either gainful employment or access to further education. Persisting through enhanced academic and social connections aids students in accomplishing their objective of graduation. Students completing college can then gain access to further educational opportunities and higher paying jobs by obtaining their college degree.
7. Sense of Belonging: A student's perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group or others on the campus (Strayhorn, 2012).
8. High Impact Practices (HIPs): According to George Kuh (2008), high impact practices are curricular and co-curricular structures that tend to draw upon high quality pedagogies and practices in pursuit of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and are beneficial for college students' increased rate of retention and student engagement. Kuh lists ten high impact activities or practices that will enhance student engagement and increase student success; (a) first-year seminars and experiences; (b) common intellectual experiences; (c) learning communities; (d) writing-intensive courses; (e) collaborative assignments and projects; (f) undergraduate research; (g) diversity/global learning; (h) service learning, community-based learning; (i) internships; and (j) capstone courses and projects.

For this study, the following six high impact practices were identified and defined as key practices that promoted academic success, based upon my own experiences as a non-traditional transfer student. Below are definitions for each HIP according to Kuh (2008):

- **Learning Communities:** The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link “liberal arts” and “professional courses”; others feature service learning.
- **First-Year Seminars and Experiences:** Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members’ own research.
- **Writing-Intensive Courses:** These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

- **Collaborative Assignments and Projects:** Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.
- **Service Learning, Community-Based Learning:** In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students must both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life (Kuh 2008).
- **Diversity/Global Learning:** Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

**Conclusion:**

College students have changed over the years, as various forms of demographic, personal, academic and social analysis can confirm. With this change in student demographic and dynamic, administrators, faculty and staff must rethink student programming for first-year non-traditional transfer students. A new structure should be formulated, providing a solid foundation for students. This structure should include several objectives that would increase student interaction amongst other students and faculty as well. An increase in student involvement and student time on campus would certainly increase the level of activity for students on campus, which could increase opportunities for curriculum and co-curriculum activity. High impact practices provide a strong link to obtaining these objectives and determining whether these practices are beneficial to first-year non-traditional students in aiding them toward graduation, would be paramount.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The first-year, non-traditional student, while rapidly becoming the new majority on many college campuses throughout America, is an almost invisible population to educators, instructors, and administrators. A lack of knowledge about this population has led to high attrition rates, leaving some schools, especially in the for-profit sector, struggling to stay afloat (Macdonald, 2018). It is of paramount importance that as the landscape of postsecondary classrooms change, so too must the ways in which college and university faculty and administrators evolve in their methods for ensuring non-traditional students' success. According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2015), 14 percent of non-traditional students are enrolled in community colleges, with 10 percent attending public four-year colleges, eight percent attending private four-year colleges, two percent attending four-year programs at for-profit institutions and one percent attending courses for one year or less at for-profit institutions. Non-traditional students not only make up a large percentage of the modern postsecondary student population; they are in virtually every type of postsecondary classroom. Acceptance and enrollment into postsecondary institutions of all kinds are high; however, retention and graduation are low with 67 percent of non-traditional students dropping out of college before receiving a degree (Macdonald, 2018). Furthermore, this staggering statistic postdates the implementation of HIPs. It is of the utmost importance that HIPs elevate the level of learning for traditional students while also ensuring the success of non-traditional students. Moreover, if high impact practices (HIPs) are not suitable to fit the needs of non-traditional students; other supportive approaches must be in place to aid this population's academic success.

To better understand HIPs and their effectiveness on first-year non-traditional student's academic success, it is necessary to understand the many barriers to their success. Because first-

year non-traditional students are older and typically balancing jobs, families, and school, they face different challenges than their traditional counterparts (Bidwell, 2014). While there are several different obstacles non-traditional students must face on their path to academic success, Erisman and Steele (2012) explain that family and work responsibilities are the two highest-rated barriers for non-traditional students to return to the classroom. Work-life balance is crucial for first-year non-traditional transfer students. These students must maintain a delicate balance between the many roles they juggle. This balancing act must incorporate the ability to manage their already taxed time. It can be difficult to juggle family and financial obligations while trying to perform well academically. Without the work-life balance, it is inevitable that something in their life will suffer. As researchers Gilardi & Guglielmetti (2011, p. 36) explain, “the challenge for non-traditional students lies ... in striking a balance between their academic and external commitments that enables them to reach a level of engagement sufficient to achieve academic success.”

Ross-Gordon (2011) explains that only about 18 percent of adult learners do not work while they are in school causing many adult learners to struggle with what Hittepole (2017) defines as inter-role conflict -- the variety of roles that clash with one another. The various roles in which many first-year non-traditional students inhabit may conflict with one another at times, causing one such role to go unfulfilled or unmet. In fact, the primary purpose for many first-year non-traditional transfer students, returning to or enrolling into postsecondary education is to advance in their current life standing. Many first-year non-traditional transfer students return to higher education, seeking educational opportunities to advance their careers. This may ultimately have a positive impact in many areas of their respective lives such as being a caregiver, for example. In the long-term, the commitment and effort needed in the short-term in

adopting the responsibilities of a student, often comes in conflict with familial and/or work roles (Chen, 2017). First-year non-traditional transfer students may find it difficult to meet the demands of multiple life responsibilities and subsequently their role as student suffers. This is largely due to the student's work-based identity, which is one that is most likely to be non-negotiable, and they have very little control over it (Chen, 2017). Universities and Colleges must have practices and programs that speak to and address the specific needs of first-year, non-traditional transfer students as it relates to the many multiple roles and responsibilities they face. This would aid in ensuring these individuals do not fail in their role as students.

Transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education can be an extremely stressful time for many new college students. Some of these students come to college with an unrealistic idea of what will work for them academically and what they will need to do to succeed (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot and Associates 2005). Many first-year, non-traditional students take this one-step further as they transition from a two-year institution to a four-year institution. This can be quite challenging as well and could affect the student's academic success tremendously.

Transitioning into postsecondary educational programs can be socially challenging as well. Due to age differences and generational gaps non-traditional students may also struggle with connecting with traditional college students, and therefore lack a sense of belonging. According to Hittepole (2017), the administration of postsecondary institutions has taken little to no care regarding the social incorporation of non-traditional and transfer students, and many feel as though they are not part of their campus community. This social isolation has significant impacts on a student's success, for students are more likely to be satisfied and successful if they actively engage with their campus community (Bowl 2001).

In addition to social isolation, many first-year non-traditional transfer students experience various anxieties related to the classroom like attending classes with younger students and low self-esteem (Erisman & Steele, 2012). Furthermore, given their length of time out of school, most non-traditional students struggle with transitioning back into the classroom facing problems with skills like notetaking, test-taking, reading textbooks, time management, and teacher expectations (Ross-Gordon, 2011). Some non-traditional students suffer from feelings of intellectual inadequacy when faced with having to use newer technologies geared toward a younger generation of college student. Ultimately, these feelings of anxiety, intellectual inadequacy, and a lack of social connection with other students and professors may lead many first-year non-traditional students to withdraw from their postsecondary education early. In some cases, as found in a study conducted by the Lumina Foundation, more than half of the students surveyed explained that fear kept them from even trying to return to school (Erisman & Steele, 2012).

Lastly, academic flexibility is yet another major barrier for non-traditional student success. Many first-year non-traditional transfer students face the conundrum of working a full-time job in many instances face taking evening courses. Often times, the courses they are in need of, are unavailable during the evening course selections, making it difficult for them to complete the courses they need in a timely fashion to graduate. This is a form of academic flexibility or inflexibility in this case. A lack of academic flexibility could make it difficult to find the necessary courses that fit into their schedules and other life roles. Many of the courses offered by colleges and universities are designed to fit the schedule of the traditional college student. This lack of course availability is particularly difficult to get around especially in the

evening time when many non-traditional students are free to attend courses (Gonclaves & Trunk, 2014).

According to the National Student Clearinghouse, out of 852,439 students who first enrolled at a community college, 31.5 percent (268,749) transferred to a four-year institution within six years. Furthermore, among those students, about one-third (34 percent) transferred after receiving a credential (either a certificate or associate degree) at the starting school. In addition, 42 percent of those who transferred earned a bachelor's degree within six years of starting in the community college (2017). What we do know from the literature is that the more the institution engages students in high impact practices and co-curricular programming, the better success they have in obtaining a degree (Kuh 2008). The problem to further explore, is although the number of transfer students are increasing, why is this subpopulation's ability to persist and obtain a 4-year degree is not very successful.

According to a study conducted at Colorado State University, transfer students desire a very specific and detailed form of support to make their transitions less overwhelming and more productive during their first year at the new institution. In the study conducted by Davies and Kratky at Colorado State University, students expressed the desire for the communication to be more productive and structured. They are not interested in a "show and tell" during the orientation and campus visit, but instead felt that a workshop setting would be far more beneficial. The students want to have direct involvement with the services, programs or supports available to them, versus receiving the information by means of a lecture format (Davies & Kratky 2000). One perspective of how faculty and staff at higher institutions of learning can bridge this gap of direct interaction, according to Braskamp, Braskamp, and Glass (2015), is by offering and developing intentional transfer programs in the first year that foster a sense of

belonging. Their research revealed that “transfer students rated their sense of connection to the university lower than did non-transfer students” (p. 24).

Academically and socially integrating First-year non-traditional transfer students through intentional first-year programming should consider the multitude of characteristics of this subpopulation and their expressed needs. Lester, Leonard, & Mathias delve further into what models of student engagement and retention could be used to address transfer students in their article “Transfer Student Engagement: Blurring of Social and Academic Engagement”. The authors’ findings question how universities are supporting transfer students once they are attending the university. There is a need to further research how to facilitate engagement specific to transfer students once they are enrolled in a 4-year university, due to the vastness of literature that focuses on the factors that lead students to transfer, not their experiences once attending the 4-year institution (Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013).

First-year non-traditional transfer students are as diverse as first-year incoming traditional students and their transitions do show many common themes, yet the research and data are not displaying what purposeful programming is doing to intentionally fill those gaps of support necessary for this subpopulation. This opening for additional research is examined by Kranzow, Hinkle, and Foote (2015) who noted that “there is a limited amount of literature that disaggregates data to examine the different experiences by student and/or type of transfer, and these data could contribute to a greater understanding of various population of transfer students” (p. 217). This subpopulation is so unique and complex in its characteristics that it cannot be best supported by traditional modes. Further research is necessary to identify if first-year non-traditional transfer students are an underserved subpopulation and if specialization during their

first-year transitions is necessary for optimal continued success and greater sense of belonging to the university community.

The AAC&U identifies “techniques and designs for teaching and learning that have proven to be beneficial for student engagement and successful learning among students from many backgrounds” (AAC&U, n.d.). These High Impact Practices, referenced as HIPs, include opportunities such as (a) First Year Seminars, (b) Writing-Intensive Courses, (c) Collaborative Assignments, (d) Diversity/Global Learning Experiences, (e) Internships, and (f) Capstone Courses. As examples, first year seminars are designed to develop critical inquiry skills, assisting students in developing their cognitive abilities, while collaborative assignments intend to help students work in teams while learning more from and about the insights of others (AAC&U, 2015). The AAC&U advocates assessing underserved student engagement in High Impact Practices in order to increase access, student learning outcomes and success (Finley & McNair, 2013) of all students, including non-traditional students. Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, and Pascarella (2015) found that participation in HIPs such as active participation in collaborative learning resulted in positive demonstrations of growth in areas such as critical thinking and intercultural effectiveness. Overall, their study affirmed the AAC&U’s assertion that participation in HIPs aids student learning, growth, and persistence to graduation. In another study, McMahan (2015) review HIPs at a regional, comprehensive university whose goal it was to engage at least 75percent of their students to participate in HIPs.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to determine if high impact practices (HIPs) influence the academic success of first-year non-traditional transfer students. This study will help to identify which high impact practices, if any, are most effective for this group of students. Furthermore, the research will provide higher educational professionals with a better understanding of first-year non-traditional transfer students and their specific needs in reaching academic success. This study could, potentially fill a gap in the existing literature of the needs of first-year non-traditional transfer students because there does not seem to be enough literature about the effectiveness of HIPs as it relates to this population of students. This research sought to determine (1) what high impact practices influence first-year non-traditional transfer students at 2-year institutions; (2) what high impact practices do first-year non-traditional transfer students believe contributed the greatest to their sense of belonging; and (3) what do first-year non-traditional transfer students indicate are the high impact practices at Kennesaw State University that have the greatest impact on their unique needs.

### **Setting**

The study took place at Kennesaw State University (KSU), which is a public, multi-campus, comprehensive university. KSU is a member of the University System of Georgia and is the third largest public university in the state. This study took place across both campuses. KSU offers more than 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees with an enrollment of more than 35,000 students across two campuses in the metro Atlanta area (Kennesaw State University, 2019). KSU has two sites, one in Marietta, Georgia and the other is located in Kennesaw, Georgia.

## **Participants**

Participants in this study were first-year students who were at least 23 years of age and had transferred from a two-year institution with less than 30 credit hours. A Data Request Form (Appendix A) was submitted to the Office of Institutional Research requesting the email addresses of all students currently enrolled at KSU that fit the criteria for this study. Obtaining this information from the Office of Institutional Research allowed the researcher to gain access to students across both campuses, which allowed a greater participation pool. An email (Appendix B) was sent to students, inviting them to take part in this research study. This email was sent via Kennesaw State University's survey tool, Qualtrics, a web based, online survey platform that allows the researcher to create surveys and generate reports based upon the information received. Included in the email was a link to the survey.

## **Procedures: Data Collection**

Students self-elected to participate in the study and completed the questionnaire through Qualtrics. Students were notified through their school email account and could complete the questionnaire at any time during the two weeks the survey was open to collect responses. An Informed Consent form was provided for students to opt in to participate in the survey (Appendix C).

## **Study Design and Data Instruments**

The study is a quantitative research study design, specifically using a researcher-created questionnaire (Appendix D). This research approach is ideal for collecting a large amount of information from students in a format where students are provided the same questions with definitions to help them understand the data being collected.

The questionnaire begins with an online survey consent form, which includes a description of the project and why the student is receiving the request for their participation. The questionnaire included three questions that allowed the student to elaborate on specific aspects of their college experience, adding more depth to the study, as well as collecting qualitative data responses: (1) do you feel that your college experience was negatively or positively impacted by the decision to start your matriculation at a two-year institution? Please explain; (2) do you feel that Kennesaw State University provides resources that meet your unique needs as a non-traditional student (i.e., a student over the age of 23)? Please explain; and (3) do you feel that Kennesaw State University provides resources that meet your unique needs as a transfer student? Please explain.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study was conducted, using the Qualtrics data analysis and reporting tools. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the results of the questionnaire students took for this research study. During the data analysis process there were emergent themes and patterns that revealed themselves as a result of the final three questions asked on the survey, which will also be discussed in Chapter Four: Results.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

This study was to determine if High Impact Practices (HIPs) influences the academic success of first-year non-traditional transfer students. Much attention is directed to the traditional student that are 18 to 22 years of age, financially dependent on parents, in college full-time and living on campus. The data gathered through this study allowed the researcher to examine where the gaps may lie when students move from one institution to another during their first two years of matriculation. The study further revealed what affects or influences, HIPs has had in first-year non-traditional transfer students' academic success. The research questions in this study were:

- What high impact practices influence first-year non-traditional transfer students at 2-year institutions?
- What high impact practices do first-year non-traditional transfer students believe contributed the greatest to their sense of belonging?
- What do first-year non-traditional transfer students indicate are the high impact practices at Kennesaw State University that have the greatest impact on their unique needs?

### **Demographics**

A total of 78 students started the questionnaire and 56 students completed the questionnaire, rendering a 78 percent completion rate. There were no demographic or academic status items collected on the questionnaire.

## Analysis

The first six questions of the survey targeted participation in HIPs at the student's two-year institution. Six specific HIPs were introduced to the student, to include a definition of each for clarification purposes.

Question one of the questionnaire asked if the student participated in a learning community at their 2-year institution. Of the 40 participants, (72.73 percent) indicated they had not participated in a learning community, while 11 (20 percent) said yes and only four (7.27 percent) were unsure. Question two of the questionnaire, asked if the student participated in a first-year seminar/first-year experience at their two-year institution. There were 42 respondents (76.35 percent) which indicated they had not participated in a first-year seminar/first-year experience, 11 (20 percent) said yes and two students (2 percent) were unsure. Question three of the questionnaire asked if the student participated in a writing-intensive course at their two-year institution. Of the 40 respondents, 16 (29.09 percent) indicated they had not participated, 38 (69.9 percent) said yes, and one (1.82 percent) was unsure. Question four asked if the student participated in collaborative assignments and projects at their two-year institution? In response to this question, 20 (36.36 percent) indicated they had not participated in collaborative assignments and projects, 30 (54.55 percent) said "yes," and five (9.07 percent) were unsure. Question five asked if the student participated in any service learning or community-based learning at their two-year institution. There were 39 participants (70.91 percent) which indicated they had not participated in any service learning or community-based learning, while 13 (23.64 percent) said yes, and three (5.45 percent) students were unsure. Question six asked if the student participated in diversity/global learning. In response to this, 36 (65.45 percent) of the participants indicated they had not participated in diversity/global learning, 16 (29.09 percent)

said yes, and three (5.45 percent) were unsure. Based upon the 56 respondents that completed the survey, on average, 74.54 percent of the respondents had been exposed to, or participated in at least one of the six HIPs listed in the questionnaire. Only 11 percent, overall, were unsure if they had been exposed or participated in any of the six HIPs listed.

Students were then questioned about their experiences with HIPs specifically at Kennesaw State University. Question seven asked students if they had been exposed to any of the six HIPs listed, at Kennesaw State University. Table one details the number of students exposed to each of the aforementioned HIPs and the overall percentage of the total number of respondents.

Table 1

*High Impact Practices Exposed to at Kennesaw State University*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage
Learning Communities	16	30.77%
First-year seminars & Experiences	22	42.31%
Writing Intensive Courses	32	61.54%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	40	76.92%
Service Learning/Community-based learning	15	28.85%
Diversity/Global learning	25	48.08%

Participants in the survey were further questioned about whether or not they felt any of the six listed HIPs contributed to (1) their academic success, (2) their sense of belonging, and (3) their persistence in continuing to graduation at their two-year institution. The tables below represent the number of students out of the total 56 student respondents that have indicated if a

specific HIP influenced their academic success, sense of belonging and/or their persistence to continuing to graduation. Tables two, three and four indicate the number of students exposed to (a) learning communities, (b) first-year seminars & experiences, (c) writing intensive courses (d) collaborative assignments & projects, (e) service learning/community-based learning, and (f) diversity and global learning, at a two-year institution.

Table 2

*High Impact Practices Contributing the Most to Academic Success at 2-year Institution*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage of contribution
Learning Communities	7	16.28%
First-year seminars & Experiences	5	11.63%
Writing Intensive Courses	17	39.53%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	16	37.21%
Service Learning/Community-based learning	4	9.30%
Diversity/Global learning	8	18.60%

Table 3

*High Impact Practices Contributing the Most to Sense of Belonging at 2-year Institution*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage of contribution
Learning Communities	8	21.05%
First-year seminars & Experiences	4	10.53%
Writing Intensive Courses	6	15.79%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	15	39.47%

Service Learning/Community-based learning	7	18.42%
Diversity/Global learning	9	23.68%

Table 4

*High Impact Practices Contributing the Most to Persistence at 2-year Institution*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage of contribution
Learning Communities	7	19.44%
First-year seminars & Experiences	7	19.44%
Writing Intensive Courses	8	22.22%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	12	33.33%
Service Learning/Community-based learning	8	22.22%
Diversity/Global learning	9	25.00%

Participants in the survey were also asked, about whether they felt any of the six listed HIPs contributed to (1) their academic success, (2) their sense of belonging, and (3) their persistence in continuing to graduation at Kennesaw State University. The tables below represent the number of students out of the total 56 student respondents that have indicated if a specific HIP influenced their academic success, sense of belonging and/or their persistence to continuing to graduation. Tables five, six and seven, indicate the number of students exposed to (a) learning communities, (b) first-year seminars & experiences, (c) writing intensive courses (d) collaborative assignments & projects, (e) service learning/community-based learning, and (f) diversity and global learning.

Table 5

*High Impact Practices Contributing the Most to Academic Success at KSU*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage
Learning Communities	13	26.53%
First-year seminars & Experiences	10	20.41%
Writing Intensive Courses	17	34.69%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	19	38.78%
Service Learning/Community-based learning	8	16.33%
Diversity/Global learning	12	24.49%

Table 6

*High Impact Practices Contributing the Most to Sense of Belonging at KSU*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage
Learning Communities	9	19.57%
First-year seminars & Experiences	10	21.74%
Writing Intensive Courses	8	17.39%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	18	39.13%
Service Learning/Community-based learning	10	21.74%
Diversity/Global learning	13	28.26%

Table 7

*High Impact Practices Contributing the Most to Persistence at KSU*

HIP	Number of Students Exposed	Percentage
Learning Communities	13	28.26%
First-year seminars & Experiences	8	17.39%
Writing Intensive Courses	9	19.57%
Collaborative Assignments & Projects	19	41.30%
Service Learning/Community-based learning	9	19.57%
Diversity/Global learning	13	28.26%

**Additional Data Analysis**

The final three questions were designed to allow the respondents to elaborate on specific aspects of their college experience, in the hope adding more depth to the study. While the students were not interviewed personally, the final three survey questions enabled the researcher to collect and analyze each respondent’s answers to identify any similarities between the participants’ answers. The researcher utilized Microsoft Word to list each of the last three qualitative questions and copied and pasted each respondents’ answer to each specific question respectively. Axial coding was then used to group similar responses which allowed the researcher to develop key concepts, followed by themes that became evident while coding. Out of the 56 participants that completed the survey, only 42 participants answered the remaining three questions in the survey.

Do you feel that your college experience was negatively or positively impacted by the decision to start your matriculation at a two-year institution? Please explain. Of those that responded, 20 of the 42 students indicated their college experience was positively impacted, as a result of attending a two-year institution. Six of the 42 students indicated a negative impact and 10 respondents reported having neither a positive nor negative effect. Emerging themes on the positive effects included saving money while deciding on what they really wanted to do in life at that time. Participants reported having a smoother transition from their two-year institution to Kennesaw State due to their experiences at the two-year institution. On the side of negatively impacting the student, emerging themes were students had difficulty in getting their course work transferred from one institution to the other. Students also stated they felt like they wasted their time attending the two-year institution because they had to repeat courses they had already taken at the two-year institution.

Do you feel that Kennesaw State University provides resources that meet your unique needs as a non-traditional student (i.e., a student over the age of 23)? Please explain. Twenty students answered yes to this question, 15 students answered no while 5 students were not sure and 3 indicated they did not have any specific needs. Emerging themes for this question were clear, pointing out on the positive side that they did have a sense of belonging and felt valued as a student. Supportive services were available that supported needs for tutoring and writing assistance. Students felt like they were being treated equally with respect to opportunities to help them succeed by providing additional resources that assisted with their lapse in education. On the negative side, students felt that the institution needs better guidelines to follow as it relates to a transitional student. The lack of general education courses during the evening and weekend hours was absent and indicated that while services may be available to assist students with

advising, extended hours for this assistance is missing. Another theme emerging from students' answers was that students felt that they should be treated differently than the traditional first year student, paying closer attention to their needs.

Do you feel that Kennesaw State University provides resources that meet your unique needs as a transfer student? Please explain. Of the participants, 20 students again responded yes, 10 responded no while three were not sure and four indicated they did not have any specific needs. However, there were 4 students indicating both yes and no, with no definitive reasoning for why they chose both answers. Emerging themes were feeling isolated, not having enough support from administration of faculty, poor service from an admissions standpoint, and course work not being transferrable. Consolidation was a strong topic of discussion for this question indicating that consolidation negatively impacted needed resources for students as students felt there was a decrease in services during the consolidation period.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### Introduction

Based on demographics of today's postsecondary institutions, non-traditional is the new norm, regardless if these individuals are first-year, older than your typical 18-22-year-old student, adult learners or any other category. While this paradigm shift is creating a more diverse college campus, student services, programs, and administration are challenged to evolve alongside their student body. The first-year non-traditional transfer student or adult learner faces many barriers to student success such as inter-role conflict, social isolation, lack of academic flexibility, and barriers to persistence and completion. This lack of understanding of non-traditional students by higher educational systems conveys a sentiment of neglect and subsequently makes adult learners invisible in the world of higher academia. Identifying programs and services such as high impact practices that influence retention, degree completion, and overall academic success for this student population in postsecondary education was the primary focus of this study. By investigating the following questions, this study provided some interesting findings on this unique demographic.

- What high impact practices influence First-year non-traditional transfer students at 2-year institutions?
- What high impact practices do First-year non-traditional transfer students believe contributed the greatest to their sense of belonging?
- What do First-year non-traditional transfer students indicate are the high impact practices at Kennesaw State University that have the greatest impact on their unique needs?

While there are ten high impact practices, reflecting at my own experiences as a first-year non-traditional transfer student, there were only six that made a difference in my decision to complete my degree program. At both my two-year institution and KSU, I have been exposed to first-year seminars and experiences, collaborative assignments and projects, service learning and community-based learning, as well as diversity/global based learning. Each of these HIPs have molded my academic success in some way to include retention, progression and ultimately graduation. Learning communities are a large part of KSU's teaching and learning best practices and as a first-year, non-traditional student, this would have been a great way to be more engaged with other students; however, this practice was not well advertised during my tenure as an undergraduate.

### **Summary of Findings**

Of the 78 initial student participants, 56 of the participants completed the study. When asked which High Impact Practices (HIPs) contributed most to (1) Overall academic success, (2) Sense of belonging and (3) persistence at their 2-year institution, the HIP *Collaborative Assignments & Projects* obtained the highest percentages in two of the three categories (Sense of belonging and Persistence in 2-year institution). The HIP *Writing Intensive Courses* obtained the highest percentile as it pertains to overall academic success in 2-year institutions. Of the 56 participants that completed the survey, 74.54 percent had been exposed to or participated in at least one of the six HIPs listed. Eleven percent of study participants overall were not sure if they had been exposed or participated in any of the six HIPs listed. While exposure to HIPs is a positive aspect, the six HIPs listed are not specifically geared toward the population being studied. Rather they are designed more for the traditional college student. *Collaborative Assignments & Projects* do help to socially incorporate and integrate first-year non-traditional transfer students

with their counterparts. This enables first-year non-traditional transfer students to overcome their social isolation by ensuring they are an integral part of the campus community.

This specific HIP seems to be one in which both traditional and non-traditional students can benefit from and has been found to be the most effective in both 2-year and 4-year institutions. When asked which HIPs contributed most to their overall academic success, sense of belonging and persistence at their 4-year institution, specifically KSU, *Collaborative Assignments & Projects* was once again the most effective HIP recognized by the participants.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One of the major limitations to this study was the population and sample size. Initially, there were 78 students that started the online questionnaire, with only 56 students completing the instrument, rendering a 78 percent completion rate. While KSU is a large university, it is in no way a large enough institution to garner a sample size that would compare to studying students nationally, at a larger number of institutions, in which to accurately draw a sampling population. A study utilizing multiple universities would have yielded a larger pool of participants and perhaps richer data and results. Furthermore, the number of participants to fully participate and complete the study is relatively small in comparison to similar studies of this nature at other institutions that is comparable to KSU's student population. The demographics of the study is yet another limitation that could have played a significant effect in the results and overall findings. There were no demographic questions for students to answer, soliciting students' gender, age, current academic status, working status, and number of credit hours completed. Research has shown that gender and culture play a significant role in academic success, especially about how students of different gender and culture interact with their fellow students

and instructors (Finley & McNair, 2013). These crucial demographic elements were not included in the research, due to an oversight by the researcher.

Additionally, the tool used in the study is a limitation. The questions used to collect the data were developed by the researcher, making it subject to faults in validity and reliability. Furthermore, the terms and concepts may not have been clearly defined for the participants, making their responses less reliable than most self-reported data. Lastly, and quite possibly the biggest limitation to this study is the fact that the survey was not created to gather data on all HIPs, which are ten in total. Only six of the ten HIPs were used when the survey was created. While this research did yield information on whether participants were exposed to and participated in specific HIPs, the participants could have been exposed to others that were not listed in the study. In this regard, the findings would have likely been different.

### **Implications**

The findings of the study suggest that out of the six HIPs the only one that was of benefit to first-year non-traditional students was the *Collaborative Assignments & Projects*. This HIP was beneficial for students in both two-year and four-year institutions and contributed most to their overall academic success, sense of belonging and persistence, within their 2-year institution. It would appear that HIPs developed to bring students together to work toward a common goal is an innovative way to help first-year non-traditional students overcome the barrier of social isolation and instill a sense of community within them.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There is a vast amount of literature that focuses on the factors that lead students to transfer, however; there is limited study on their experiences once attending the 4-year institution (Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013). Furthermore, there is an abundance of literature pertaining

to adult learning theory and adult education (Cruce & Hillman, 2012) . However, there is no literature or research conducted on how to better meet first-year non-traditional transfer students' unique learning styles. This lack of research has led to challenges for many in this population of students, as they continue to tread through the waters of transition from one institution to another, at times slipping through the cracks. Continuation of using, *Collaborative Assignments & Projects*, and further research dedicated to developing and implementing other HIPs with similar outcomes. Additionally, first-year non-traditional transfer students should be studied at more than just one institution, but nation-wide, to better understand their unique needs as students.

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## APPENDIX A

data@kennesaw.edu  
Fri 2/8/2019 4:23 PM  
Janice Malone,

Your Data Request Form submission has been successfully submitted.

Please note that the amount of time needed to complete data requests depends on complexity and staff availability; however, most are completed within three weeks (15 business days).

If you need further assistance with this request please reply to this email.

Thank you,  
Institutional Research

## APPENDIX B

[View Email Campaign](#)

To:

New Contact List (2/25/19 4:01 PM)

447 Contacts

From:

From Address

From Name

Reply-To Email

When:

Custom...

MDT

Subject:

Message:

[Load Message](#)

[Save As](#)

Greetings,

My name is Janice Malone and I am currently completing my Master of Science in First-Year Studies at Kennesaw State University. I am writing to you to request your participation in a brief survey. As a non-traditional transfer student, you can provide crucial information about your experiences transferring from one institution to another. Your responses to this survey will help us evaluate high impact educational practices and whether these practices serve the needs of non-traditional transfer students at both two-year and four-year institutions.

As a result of your taking the time to complete this survey, the data can be used to ensure that practitioners developing high impact practices for non-traditional transfer students are targeting the needs and experiences of this underserved population.

The survey is very brief and will take about 10 minutes to complete. Please click the link below to be directed to the survey and begin and thank you so much for your participation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [jmalon17@kennesaw.edu](mailto:jmalon17@kennesaw.edu).

**Follow this link to the Survey:**

[\\${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${1://SurveyURL}](#)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:  
\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

## APPENDIX C

### ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Study:** High Impact Practices that Effect Student Success among Non-Traditional Transfer Students

**Researcher's Contact Information:** Janice Malone, 404-455-9755, jmalon17@kennesaw.edu

#### **Introduction**

You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted by Janice D. Malone of Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to participate in this study, you should read this form and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

#### **Description of Project**

The purpose of the study is to assess whether high impact educational practices serve the needs of non-traditional transfer students at both two-year and four-year institutions.

#### **Explanation of Procedures**

The participant is being asked to complete the online survey by answering the listed questions in order that data can be collected from students who are 23 and older, transferring from a two-year institution, with less than 30 credit hours.

#### **Time Required**

Total time to complete the survey should take no more than 30 minutes.

#### **Risks or Discomforts**

There is minimal anticipated risk or discomfort to participants participating in the survey.

#### **Benefits**

There are no direct, specific benefits to participants.

#### **Compensation**

There is no compensation to participants for taking part in this research.

#### **Confidentiality**

The results of this participation will be confidential. To help ensure confidentiality, no specific personal identification information will be used in the study write-up. Data collected online will

be handled in an anonymous manner and Internet Protocol addresses WILL NOT be collected by the survey program. Raw data will be stored on the Principal Investigator's password protected, KSU approved Qualtrics account. Data analysis will be stored on the Principal Investigator's password protected OneDrive account.

### **Inclusion Criteria for Participation**

To participate in this study, you must be 23 years of age or older, have transferred to Kennesaw State University from a 2-year transfer institution, and have earned less than 30 credit hours.

### **Use of Online Survey**

Data collected online will be handled in a confidential manner. Internet Protocol addresses will not be collected by the survey program.

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 585 Cobb Avenue, KH3417, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (470) 578-6407.

PLEASE PRINT A COPY OF THIS CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS, OR IF YOU DO NOT HAVE PRINT CAPABILITIES, YOU MAY CONTACT THE RESEARCHER TO OBTAIN A COPY

- I agree and give my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.
- I do not agree to participate and will be excluded from the remainder of the questions.

## APPENDIX D

### Survey Instrument

#### High Impact Practices that Effect Student Success Among Non-Traditional Transfer Students

Janice D. Malone, MSFYS Candidate  
Department of First-Year and Transition Studies

#### Survey Questions

1. At your 2-year transfer institution, did you participate in a **learning community**? (i.e.: two or more linked courses that explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lens of different disciplines)
2. At your 2-year transfer institution, did you participate in a **first-year seminar/first-year experience**? (i.e.: a class or program that brings small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis, emphasizing critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and/or other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies)
3. At your 2-year transfer institution, did you participate in a **writing-intensive course**? (i.e.: a course that emphasizes writing and revision at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum).
4. At your 2-year transfer institution, did you participate in **collaborative assignments and projects**? (i.e.: assignments of projects that combine two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences)
5. At your 2-year, institution, did you participate in any **service learning or community-based learning**? (i.e.: field-based, experiential learning with community partners that give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community)
6. At your 2-year transfer institution, did you participate in **diversity/global learning**? (i.e.: opportunities for students to explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own)
7. Out of the above listed high impact practices, which have you been exposed to at Kennesaw State University? Check all that apply.
  - Learning Communities
  - First-Year Seminars and Experiences
  - Writing-Intensive Courses
  - Collaborative Assignments and Projects
  - Service Learning/Community-based Learning

- Diversity/Global Learning
8. Out of the high impact practices you have been exposed to at your **2-year transfer institution**, which do you believe has contributed most to your **academic success**?
  9. Out of the high impact practices you have been exposed to at your **2-year transfer institution**, which do you believe has contributed most to your **sense of belonging**?
  10. Out of the high impact practices you have been exposed to at your **2-year transfer institution**, which do you believe has contributed most to your **persistence** in continuing to graduation?
  11. Out of the high impact practices you have been exposed to at **Kennesaw State University**, which do you believe has contributed most to your **academic success**?
  12. Out of the high impact practices you have been exposed to at **Kennesaw State University**, which do you believe has contributed most to your **sense of belonging**?
  13. Out of the high impact practices you have been exposed to at **Kennesaw State University**, which do you believe has contributed most to your **persistence** in continuing to graduation?
  14. Do you feel that your college experience was negatively or positively impacted by the decision to start your matriculation at a two-year institution? Please explain.
  15. Do you feel that Kennesaw State University provides resources that meet your unique needs as a non-traditional student (i.e.: a student over the age of 23)? Please explain.
  16. Do you feel that Kennesaw State University provides resources that meet your unique needs as a transfer student? Please explain.