A NATIONAL CENSUS: STATE OF DISABILITY SERVICES AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University 2006

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This study examined the composition and status of disability support services (DSS) among Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). A national census was conducted via the dissemination of a web-based self-report questionnaire to 103 designated DSS administrators. Data was collected to capture the institutional landscape and availability of accommodation provisions for students with disabilities (SWD). Procedures were executed to control for the primary four sources of error (coverage, sampling, measurement and nonresponse) relative to survey research.

The two research questions posited were as follows: (1) What is the status and composition of support services for SWD at HBCUs? (2) How can services to SWD at HBCUs be developed and implemented? Analyses were guided by four primary research objectives that correspond to the research questions and produced results as follows: 1) A test of two proportion comparisons revealed significant differences in the organizational structure of DSS Offices and the variation in accommodation provisions. Results revealed a need for more centralized, formal DSS Offices and additional accommodation provisions. 2) Data suggested that the general distribution of types of disabilities (self-disclosed) in the population of SWD within HBCUs varied substantially.
3) A chi square test of independence was employed to evaluate the influence of accommodation provisions for SWD at public and private HBCUs. No significant difference was observed. 4) The general linear model was robust for performing the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of unweighted means. The ANOVA for differences within the types of institutions and organization structures of DSS Offices on eligible SWD revealed a significant main effect of the DSS structure, but no statistically significant main effect for institution type.

Findings of this study described and validated the efficacy of establishing DSS programs where absent or underdeveloped. Theoretical applications and practical approaches for crafting a blueprint to commence a formal DSS program or redesign existing infrastructures are discussed. This study may offer insight to postsecondary administrators desiring to shift from a remedial to proactive posture.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, the Rev. Solomon Joseph Cooper; my siblings, Tyrangi Dwight “Ronnie” and Taungia Cherrye Moore; and to my brothers- and sisters-in-law, Aaron, Dee and Marcus Cooper and Becky Cooper Ali for all their love and encouragement. My husband is my soul mate. He always supports, encourages and sacrifices unconditionally on my behalf. My siblings have given me a lifetime of support and I’m so proud to be their “baby sister.” This dissertation is also dedicated to my father- and mother-in-law, the Presiding Elder Samson Cooper and Mrs. Juanitta Cooper who have become another set of awesome parents. It is dedicated to my nieces and nephews; godchildren, god- nieces and nephews who inspire me.

It is also dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Mr. Willie L. Moore, who placed a high premium on family and valued teenage ambitions. It is equally dedicated to my extraordinaire mother, Mrs. Doshie (Cochran) Moore, who instilled an immeasurable degree of love, hope, faith and wisdom in her family to endure life’s challenges. She is my role model to whom I owe all that I am, or ever hope to be! It is through the lens of my parents that I learned to persevere, even in the face of adversity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I appreciate the support of my dissertation committee members: Drs. Bruce Growick, Antoinette Miranda and James Moore III. I am honored they served on my committee. Without the guidance and steadfast support of my dissertation chair/advisor, Dr. Bruce Growick, I could not have fulfilled this juncture of my scholarly pursuit.

I wish to extend my gratitude and affection to following for their ear-time, face-time, prayers and immeasurable support: my OSU, Wright State and Dayton Newspaper, Inc. colleagues; also special colleagues, Ms. Debra Moody, Ms. Angie Long, Ms. Marcella Glenn and Mrs. Shirley Speakman. I carry the “insight” Shirley eloquently bequeathed early in my career.

I am indebted to Drs. Cynthia Dillard and Robert “Bob” Ransom at OSU who secured P.R.O.F.S. funding that supported over 20 doctoral students from entrance to exit. I can only hope to emulate your dedication!

I wholeheartedly thank my Sinclair Community College family who avidly supported me. You know who you are! I am indebted to Mr. Shawn Gormley who provided me the technological savvy to implement the web-version of this project.

I thank my life-time comrades from the “hood,” who always cheered and expressed their support of my academic/professional pursuits. Thanks for acknowledging
that the academy didn’t make me forget where I came from. You have a special place in my heart, especially the Thomas, Lewis, Wilhoite, Person, White, Alexander, and Wayman A.M.E. Church families.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Stephen H. Simon, past employer and professor, colleague, mentor and confidant for your responsiveness to academic, professional and personal endeavors. I grew immensely from your wisdom. You taught me to be “fair, firm and consistent” and your analytical philosophy serves fluidly. You are the consummate professional whom I wish Godspeed.

Finally, I wish to thank my Historically Black College & University constituents who participated in this national census. Many of you offered such reverence for my humble attempt to undertake this project. Through these brief encounters, I garnered new collegial relationships and expanded my repertoire. I could not have conducted this study without your participation and I am truly grateful.
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

    Rehabilitation Services

Minor Concentration: Higher Education and Student Affairs
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The number of students with disabilities (SWD) matriculating at postsecondary institutions (PSI) in the United States has continued to increase (HEATH, 2001). According to HEATH Resource Center, the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for SWD, about 6% (66,197) of all first-year full-time freshmen enrolled at public and private four-year PSI in the fall of 2000 self-reported some kind of disability. The percentage of college freshmen with disabling condition(s) has more than tripled over a 20-year period (3% in 1978 to over 9% in 1998). The proportion of full-time college freshmen at four-year institutions who reported disabilities stabilized (6 to 8 percent) between 1988 and 2000.

Among the disabilities reported, learning disabilities (LD) were the most prevalent. By 2000, two in five incoming freshmen (40.4%) cited LD, which was an increase from 34.3% in 1998. The actual number of students with sight impairments declined from 1988 to 2000, students who are partially sighted or blind decreased from 30% to 16%. The self-report options of disability by college freshmen in the 2000 study also included
other (16.9%), health-related (15.4%), hearing (8.6%), orthopedic (7.1%), and speech (2.9%), respectively. Totals do not equal 100 percent, because students could list more than one disability.

Clear evidence suggests that increasing numbers of SWD represent a variety of invisible conditions (Henderson, 1999). A study in 1996 also revealed that 6 percent of all undergraduates reported having a disability (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999). Slightly more than half of students reporting disabilities attended public institutions (54%). Another 42% attended private PSI, and four percent chose Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HEATH, 2001).

In order to ensure equal access to SWD, legislative mandates have been put in place to compel institutions to provide adequate support services. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) as amended stipulates that

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States, shall solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

It should be noted that this statute applies to public and private recipients of federal financial aid which encompasses almost all public and most private colleges and is enforced in large part via the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in higher education. In addition, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is more commonly recognized and upholds Section 504. More specifically, Title II of ADA prohibits public entities (e.g., state government, public school and colleges) from denying qualified persons with disabilities access to participate fully in activities and programs.
Recently, the Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD) set forth program standards that represent fundamental expectations for postsecondary institutions that should be available to provide equal access for SWD (www.AHEAD.org, 2003). These standards from AHEAD were identified in research involving over 1,000 postsecondary disability professionals as necessary regardless of the type of school (two- or four-year), funding sources (public or private), location (U.S. or Canada), or admissions policy (open enrollment or competitive). In spite of well-documented literature (Gajar, 1998; Gajar & Smith, 1996; Hart, Gilmore, Zaffit, & Bose, 2003; National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports [NCSPES], 2000, 2002; Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993; Schuck & Kroeger, 1993; Simon, 2001; Stodden, 2001; Stodden, Whelley, Harding, & Change, 2001; Thomas, 2000) and mandates that serve as a compass for providing adequate support services for SWD, the majority of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, hereafter referred to as HBCUs, have received little attention in this domain.

Among the 103 HBCUs in the United States, perusal of each institutional website revealed that over half did not have an actual disability support services webpage. These institutions varied drastically in their capacity to offer support services for SWD and the others currently did not have formal services publicized via web. Larger HBCUs profiled centralized disability-related services, whereas the smaller institutions did not clearly publicize evidence or the extent to which services were available. Further exploration and actual contact with representatives at each institution revealed a great disparity across this entity in their institution’s capacity to provide services to SWD.
Like some other PSI, several reasons may attribute to HBCUs challenge to meet the needs of SWD, such as the lack of resources, financial support, or knowledgeable personnel specialized in the delivery of rehabilitation and disability services (Stodden, 2001). Key stakeholders at numerous HBCUs are often marginally aware of institutional obligations as well as the rights and responsibilities of SWD to make reasonable academic adjustments or programmatic, physical, and curriculum modifications (www.AHEAD.org; Simon, 2001).

Rhoads, Slate, and Steger (1994) investigated faculty and administrators' familiarity and knowledge of Section 504. The results yielded that university faculty and administrators (i.e., deans, department chairs, etc.) alike lack adequate understanding of service provisions of Section 504, but faculty do so to a greater extent. However, Rhoads et al. (1994) and Thompson, Bethea, and Turner (1997) contend that Section 504 includes the provision that institutions’ administration shall provide staff with comprehensive information regarding their responsibility to follow appropriate procedures relative to instructional modifications and classroom practices. The author of this research suspects that these types of positions are vacant at most HBCUs.

Statement of the Problem

Despite legislative mandates, irrefutably, qualified SWD encounter barriers that inhibit their ability to perform in an academic environment. Though colleges and universities bear legal responsibility for providing adequate support services to this population in their programs and activities, HBCUs may lag behind in the provision of
services. Among the vast research (Gajar, 1998; Gajar & Smith, 1996; Hart et al., 2003; NCSPES, 2000; Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993; Schuck & Kroeger, 1993; Simon, 2001; Stodden, 2001; Thomas, 2000) about postsecondary disability services for SWD, HBCUs have been seriously underrepresented in this domain while the literature has remained silent in addressing the current state of affairs.

Regardless of the rationale associated with existing shortcomings, PSI are liable for ensuring that qualified individuals with disabilities are provided full access and participation to programs and activities in a non-discriminatory fashion. Hence, this compels all PSI receiving federal financial aid to offer reasonable academic accommodations and services to students who have self-identified, provided appropriate documentation of their disability and requested such in a timely manner (Dukes & Shaw, 1999; Simon, 2001; Thomas, 2000; Yuen, 2003).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the state of disability support services (DSS) among underrepresented PSI, namely HBCUs. It was designed to collect data to establish a baseline of needs in order to proffer how institutions can develop a blueprint to commence a formal DSS program. This study described and validated the efficacy of establishing such a program where absent as well as enhance and/or redesign existing infrastructures to meet ADA compliance.
Research Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Describe the institutional characteristics and composition of the office designated to facilitate disability support services to students with disabilities (SWD) at American HBCUs.
2. Identify the prevalence and general distribution of types of disabilities (self-disclosed) in the population of SWD.
3. Determine the availability of academic accommodations and supports among HBCU public and private institutions for SWD.
4. Explain the differences within the types of institutions and the organizational structure of designated DSS offices on eligible SWD.
5. Ascertain whether or not there is an interaction on eligible SWD.
6. Broaden the sparse literature that currently examines DSS at HBCUs.

Significance of the Study

Increase of Students with Disabilities at HBCUs.

The number of SWD matriculating at PSI has increased dramatically with a strong and growing presence on HBCU campuses. The HEATH Resource Center statistical profile revealed that 4% (2,645 students) of first-time freshmen who cited a disability selected to attend an HBCU (HEATH, 2001).

At Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), among freshmen, approximately two in five (40%) reported a learning disability. Compared to other SWD, about one in six (16%) at four-year institutions reported being partially sighted or blind and 38% of
those were students of color. Of the 15% who reported a health-related disability (i.e.,
cystic fibrosis, cancer, lupus, multiple sclerosis), about one in three (34%) was a student
of color. Of nine percent of freshmen who reported a hearing impairment or deaf, 26%
were students of color. Of the 7% who reported an orthopedic impairment, 27% of these
were students of color. Relatively few freshmen reported speech impairments (3%).
Because of the small number of cases in the latter group, caution must be exercised
when comparing characteristics of these freshmen with others who reported disabilities.
Compared to any other group of freshmen with disabilities, 48% of those with speech
impairments were most likely to be students of color. Regardless of disability status,
freshmen with disabilities were more likely to be individuals of color (HEATH, 2001).

Studies relevant to the status of HBCUs have been well-documented in terms of
underrepresentation in rehabilitation academic programs and rehabilitation systems.
For example, in 2000, the National Council on Rehabilitation Education published a
Special Issue: Rehabilitation Education at Universities with Predominately Minority
Enrollments (Bolton & Cook, 2000). Authors cited in this volume of studies sought to
address numerous themes related to HBCUs. Their topics spoke to Section 21 of the
Rehabilitation Amendment Acts (Brown, Alston & Moore); Rehabilitation capacity
building project: Empowerment, inclusion, and integration (Kundu & Dutta);
Partnerships between minority and majority universities relevant to academic
opportunities and collaborations (Harley); Diversity in rehabilitation education and
desegregation challenges through majority student recruitment (Harley, Alston,
Fennessee & Wilson); Student experiences (Harley, Alston & Wilson); Faculty
experiences (Moore, Porter & Flowers); and Student recruitment issues in rehabilitation education and the dwindling applicant pool (Wilson, Rollins & Doughty), to name a few.

Other researchers have focused attention on improving services to African Americans utilizing public service delivery systems (i.e., vocational rehab system). Such discussions have included perspectives on enhancing professional preparation of rehabilitation counselors (Wright, 1988; Dixon & Wright, 1996) and African Americans with disabilities and equity issues in vocational services (Feist-Price, 1995). Examination of these domains reveals productive contributions to the field in terms of research publications addressing practical and theoretical issues within various contexts. However, there remains a serious void in the literature targeting support services for SWD at HBCUs.

Research Questions

The two primary research questions posited in this study were as follows:

1. What is the status and composition of support services for students with disabilities (SWD) at HBCUs?

2. How can services to SWD at HBCUs be developed and implemented?

For the second question, I sought to examine and discuss the utility of data to simultaneously proffer a blueprint on how disability-related services might be structured and implemented.
Clarification of Key Terms

**Academic Accommodation**

Accommodations include modifications to policy, procedure or practice and the provision of auxiliary aids and services that are designed to provide equal access to programs and services for qualified individuals with disabilities. Accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of the disability and maximize the classroom learning experience.

Accommodations are reasonable when they do not fundamentally alter the nature of a program or service and do not represent an undue financial or administrative burden.

**Accommodation Provisions**

Refer to postsecondary institutional obligations to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities through provisions that facilitate equal opportunities to participate in the institution’s courses, programs, and activities. This umbrella term indicate the facilitation of requisite services, used interchangeably with academic accommodations and support services, and auxiliary aids and services.

**Computer Technology and the Internet**

Colleges and universities must ensure meaningful access to computer technology and the Internet. Technology of any kind must consist of accessible information or a means to effectively transfer information (i.e., distance learning programs must provide accessible web sites). For example, libraries are obligated to utilize adapted technology.
Auxiliary Aids and Services

Auxiliary aids and services represent academic accommodations and support services available to SWD. Examples include, but are not limited to, note takers, sign language interpreters, human readers, Braille, large print materials, tape recording of classes, textbooks on tape or in electronic format. Also included are forms of assistive technology and adapted equipment: videotext displays, screen enlargers, talking calculators, electronic readers, braille calculators or printers, voice synthesizers; specialized adapted equipment such as modified calculators or keyboards, reaching devices for library use, raised-line drawing kits, assistive listening devices, assistive listening systems and telecommunications devices for SWD who are deaf and/or hard-of-hearing; accessible multimedia, such as closed caption decoders, open and closed captioning.

Disability

ADA defines a person with a disability as one who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; or any person who has a record of such impairment, or who is regarded as having such impairment. For this study, disability is also characterized by the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical, social, attitudinal and cultural barriers encountered by persons having physical, sensory, psychological, developmental, learning, neurological or other impairments (including the presence in the body of an organism or agent causing malfunction or disease), which may be permanent, temporary, episodic or transitory in nature.
Disability Documentation

Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. In the context of postsecondary education, documentation should provide a college decision-maker with a basic understanding of the individual’s disability and enough information to anticipate how the current impact of the disability is expected to interact with the institution’s structure of courses, testing methods, program requirements, etc.

Disability Service Provider (DSP)

Any individual(s) at an institution of higher education designated to provide services for students with disabilities. This includes the administrators/directors, counselors, etc., who fulfill this role.

Disability Support Services (DSS) Office

Any department, unit or program at a postsecondary institution designated to provide services for qualified individuals with disabilities.

Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs)

Refers to colleges or universities in the United States, historically and legally established prior to 1964 for African American students, where student populations continue to be predominantly African American or Black. Official membership into this category must be established.
Postsecondary Institution (PSI)

In this study, all two-year or four-year institutions of higher education that offers formal training beyond high school. This includes public, private and private-religious institutions. Also, this term may be used interchangeably with higher education, postsecondary educational institution, college and university, education enterprise and the academy.

Student with a Disability (SWD)

For this study, SWD refers to any student who meets the criteria under the definition of disability in this section. To receive services, the student must self-identify to the appropriate campus DSP and produce sufficient documentation to verify the disability.

Predominantly White Institution (PWI) or Majority Institution

This term represents all institutions of higher education in the United States with a student population that is predominantly White and of European descent. Often these institutions are referred to as “majority institutions.”

Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

One assumption asserts that the difficulty with web-based methodology is minuscule compared to those associated with conventional surveys (e.g., paper-based, face-to-face). For example, it is time efficient, eliminates a tedious paper trail while minimizing associated costs including multiple mailings, increases the efficiency of
data collection, and allows for participant responses to automatically load into a database by clicking the submit button at the end of the survey, to name a few (Mertler, 2002).

However, critical limitations rest in the fact that survey methodologists have not been at the forefront of designing and implementing surveys over the Internet. Instead, this medium has been influenced to a greater extent by computer programmers who rarely possess specialized training in survey methodology. This trend has created a call to action for survey methodologists to impart their knowledge of the causes and consequences of survey error relative to designing web surveys (Dillman & Bowker, 2001; Mertler, 2002). It is salient to reduce error which can inadvertently lead to invalid interpretation of findings.

All surveys, regardless of web-base design, mail, or interview, are subject to the following four major sources of error: (1) coverage error occurs when all units in a defined population do not have a known nonzero probability of being included in the representative sample drawn from the population; (2) sampling error is the result of surveying a sample of the population rather than the entire population; (3) measurement error occurs from inaccurate responses that stem from ambiguous questions, poor interviewing, survey mode effects, and/or some aspect of the respondent’s behavior; and (4) nonresponse error results from nonresponse of those people in the sample, who, if they had responded, would have provided different answers to the survey questions.
than those who did not respond. Yet, the implementation of web surveys suggests that coverage and nonresponse error have been commonly overlooked (Dillman & Bowker, 2001).

However, Dillman & Bowker (2001) indicate that under many circumstances “some populations --employees of certain organization, members of professional organizations, certain types of businesses, students at university and colleges and groups with high levels of education --do not exhibit large coverage problems” (p. 5). In essence, they contend that when most members of a population have a computer and Internet access, coverage is less problematic.

Thus, non-response error remains a concern for all surveys, both web-based and conventional. Bosnjak and Tuten (2001) asserted that “non-response is of particular importance to researchers because the unknown characteristics and attitudes of nonrespondents may cause inaccuracies in the results of the study in question” (p. 2).

Nonresponse to web surveys may also occur when participants encounter incompatible hardware or software and are not able to access the questionnaire or read the language (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Cautionary aspects include the lack of simple access to complete the survey and a complex web design. Additionally, some sort of security system needs to be in place in order to maintain the integrity of the data. Completion of the survey should only require minimal computer skills (Carbonaro & Bainbridge, 2000).

Mandated service provisions for SWD may tempt respondents to inflate services in response to the questionnaire. This would likely occur under circumstances where
disability-related services are underdeveloped or nonexistent. In addition, some respondents might view the survey itself as a tool to flag their institutions for noncompliance in accordance with Section 504 and ADA, where applicable.

To establish a DSS Office may invite stiff competition for dwindling funds given the recent budget cuts (Trombley, 2003) affecting numerous PSI. Understandably, most institutions typically cannot afford to earmark or redirect limited funds to subsidize new programs to include hiring qualified staff members who specialize in a disability-related field. Despite these potential challenges, an overarching assumption by this investigator is that a DSS Program can be developed in terms of minimal support regardless of mitigating factors such as size, type of institution, or admissions policy.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces landmark legislation, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, subsequent reauthorization, synchronized with the ADA and subsequent amendments that provide benchmarks for postsecondary educational institutions to develop and implement accessible programs and services for SWD. This study attempts to capture the institutional landscape of support services for SWD at HBCUs and simultaneously to proffer a blueprint on how services might be developed (structured) and implemented. The exploratory nature of this study seeks to illustrate the utility of shifting current trends of HBCUs as an underrepresented entity in this domain to a more fluid one.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Americans of every historical era and demographic group have acknowledged the power of education to transform the lives of people and sustain democracy. Trends in the labor market have rendered postsecondary education critical to professional stability and success (Frieden, 2003). A series of legislative mandates in the past thirty plus years have created access to higher education for SWD. In spite of this growing trend, SWD have not always been successful in fully participating in the college experience, and students of color even to a lesser degree. It is necessary to gain an appreciation for the significant interplay between cultural diversity and disability. Therefore, it would be relevant to provide discourse about the response of postsecondary disability services to the need for equality for underrepresented groups. Due to the complexity of issues and magnitude of dimensions in regard to service provision, the focus of this project has been placed on HBCUs and African American SWD.

For the scope of this chapter, disability supports that affect SWD at American HBCUs are examined. First, a brief synopsis of the exclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) and a comprehensive overview of postsecondary institutional accountability to
all SWD are presented. Second, a review of the contextual evolution and revolution of HBCUs are presented. The remainder of this chapter focuses on expanding the circle of inclusion via the examination and acknowledgment of the plight of African American SWD in the academy, namely HBCUs. Only a dearth of literature examines these dual perspectives together. Thus, themes and theoretical frameworks from the literature that emphasize cultural diversity and disability inclusion have been extrapolated to address this phenomenon. The impetus of systematic exclusion of SWD and students of color in higher education are interwoven throughout this chapter.

Exclusion of People with Disabilities

Patitu and Terrell (1998) pointed out the phrase “underrepresented” formerly understood in a racial and ethnic minority context, now includes SWD and other groups (i.e., female, part-time, nontraditional age, international, or alternative sexual orientation students). Despite multiple differences among these groups, they share a common thread, in that each entered higher education and found an unwelcoming environment (Jones, 1996; Levine, 1993).

For instance, in a study of perceived barriers that inhibit the reintegration of PWD, Boyle (1997) found that the barriers individuals encountered are typically the result of prevailing attitudes. Evidence from attitudinal research on professionals, specifically faculty, established that without special training, administrative support and contact with PWD, faculty are less likely to possess positive attitudes toward SWD (Bento, 1996; McCarthy & Campbell; 1993).
Attitudes that PWD need assistance in all areas or that physical limitation implies mental incapacity are potentially the most hazardous barriers for the inclusion of SWD in postsecondary educational environments. Wright (1983) coins this phenomenon “spread,” which results when disability has such a profound influence on perceptions that it leads to inferences about other aspects of the person (i.e., character, personality, abilities, potential, and motivation). Enright, Conyers, and Szymanski (1996) identified the two most critical factors of integrating SWD as “the ease of social interactions with peers and the receptiveness of faculty members to accommodate [SWD’s] needs” (p. 106). Furthermore, Conyers, Enright and Strauser (1998) argue that attitudinal barriers may hinder SWD self-efficacy belief and that they may need education and counseling about their entitlement to accommodation provisions and how to pursue these rights. The former is not surprising, considering Tinto's (1993) research on the general student population, which indicated that students' experiences when interacting with the environment affect their goals of and commitments to completing college. Educators need to understand the conditions and characteristics of SWD as well as the environmental conditions and characteristics these students inhabit.

Wright (1983) also contended that the extent of limitations is as much a function of physical and social environmental barriers, if not more so, than of personal disability. McCarthy and Campbell (1993) emphasized that attitudinal barriers often hamper effective service delivery, and it is imperative that appropriate personnel become well-versed to minimize misconceptions.
Despite these and other challenges, student affairs professionals and other members of the academy have worked diligently and strategically to champion the cause in welcoming traditionally underrepresented groups and taking the reins of institutional leadership in diversity efforts (Levine, 1993). Inclusion through reasonable accommodations widens opportunities for everybody and provides a strong counterforce against exclusion and prejudice. The negative stereotypes associated with one’s disability and the shortcomings in one’s environment must be contextualized, where positive forces can counteract the distorting power of negative-spread effects and the “just world” phenomenon (Wright, 1983). Understanding institutional barriers (both attitudinal and environmental), advocacy and ongoing dialogue about learning opportunities for all students must be woven into the fabric of the institution.

Postsecondary Institutional Accountability

Matriculating at postsecondary environments, direct from high school, have been regarded as complex and intensified by substantial differences. This observation appears to be reinforced by Schutz (2002), who conceded that in general, the higher education community makes a common assumption that most first-time freshmen experience difficulty transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education, and SWD even to a greater degree. This segment focuses on the legal, access, and accommodation ramifications in postsecondary education as applicable to SWD. Emphasis has also been placed on the contextual, social, and cultural implications that prevail in reference to HBCUs’ astute approach to educate students of color. Although the literature lacks a common theoretical perspective about the current state of affairs at
HBCUs in reference to postsecondary disability services, weight of evidence suggests that inclusion paradigms (see Jones, 1996; Shaw & Dukes, 2005; AHEAD at www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm) can assist practitioners in the successful navigation of this complex activity.

**Transition Issues**

Philosophically and practically, in high school, teachers and staff provide comprehensive intervention services for SWD who are identified and tracked. However, in postsecondary environments, SWD must seek out the disability services provider (DSP) and request assistance, articulate their needs as well as possible compensatory strategies (i.e., sign language interpreters, alternate print materials) that they found useful in the past (Schultz, 2002). In addition to competing philosophies, it appears that the transition dilemma in part may be attributable to confusion regarding four factors: (a) types of services needed by SWD; (b) services postsecondary environments are mandated to provide (and those institution-specific discretionary services); (c) expectation and behaviors of first-time freshmen SWD; and (d) behaviors that postsecondary services providers expect SWD to possess when they matriculate to college (Schutz, 2002). These aspects have been integrated throughout this chapter, but for starters, attention is directed to the legal aspects of transition.

Policy and curricular changes at the secondary level have been supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) IDEA and Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) under the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) NCLB and they call for evidence-based instruction and proven methods of teaching and
learning in public education for grades K-12 (Shaw & Dukes, 2005). These adjustments have focused on improving academic achievement and post-high school expectations for SWD with the hope of facilitating access to higher education. However, Simon (2001) and Scott, McGuire and Shaw (2003) remind us that prescriptive IDEA requiring a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment is a federal special education statute that does not apply to postsecondary settings.

For example, school districts must craft an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all SWD, which includes necessary transition services and annual updates for students 16 years of age (or as young as 14, if appropriate), able and inclined toward higher education. The IEP is developed by a multidisciplinary team, which typically consists of the regular education teacher, special education teacher, speech therapist, school psychologist, a representative of the local education agency (LEA), parents of the student, and any other individuals who have relevant expertise for the benefit of the student (Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, 2001). Hence, special education services, assessment, and personnel customarily are not available after high school graduation. In other words, IDEA requires only that special education services ensure a meaningful benefit from education, unlike Section 504 and the ADA, which are postsecondary education entitlements (Scott et al., 2003; Simon, 2001). In addition, there remains a lack of awareness among educators and parents regarding the policy contrast between IDEA at the secondary level and Section 504 and ADA at the
postsecondary level. Secondary schools lack a formal structure to assist student in planning to adjust to the highly discrepant laws governing postsecondary education (Stodden, Galloway & Stodden, 2003).

**Legal Provisions**

Simon (2001) asserted that since the passage of defining legal provisions, Section 504 and the ADA, “institutions have engaged in an ongoing effort to establish precisely how to balance the rights of SWD with those of the resources and obligations of PSI” (p. 69). To illustrate this point, she described the intent of legal statutes to prohibit actions that execute the following: (a) deny qualified SWD the opportunity to participate in programs or activities; (b) provide auxiliary aids and services that are not equitable or operative; (c) provide different or separate aids, services, or benefits negligible to those necessary for meaningful access; (d) give considerable assistance to third parties that discriminate against qualified SWD; (e) use methods of administration that adversely impact SWD; (f) use eligibility criteria that either inadvertently or deliberately excludes SWD; and (g) fail to provide reasonable accommodation provisions.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973 (reauthorized in 1992) was the first national civil rights legislation to provide equal access for SWD in public and private institutions receiving financial assistance. It emphasized services for individuals with severe disabilities which provided benchmark regulations for higher education. Section
504 guaranteed the right of equal access to programs receiving federal funding which significantly impacted the treatment of PWD and opened avenues to educational and career opportunities as stated:

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States shall solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) developed regulations for implementing this mandate in which institutions of higher education must adhere to a number of conditions that included the following: (1) admission limitation on the number of qualified SWD cannot be imposed; (2) preadmission inquiries as to a person's disability cannot be conducted; (3) students cannot be excluded from taking a course solely on the basis of their disability; (4) discriminatory requirements must be modified to accommodate SWD; (5) accommodation devices such as tape recorders must be allowed in the classroom; (6) devices that ensure the full participation of a student in the classroom cannot be prohibited; (7) alternative testing, when necessary, must be provided; (8) faculty must, when required, use adaptive devices; (9) SWD should not be counseled toward restrictive careers unless justified by certification requirements; and (10) SWD have a right to due process if they encounter discriminatory behavior.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is also a civil rights guarantee for PWD in the U.S. and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public services, public accommodations, telecommunications, and
miscellaneous provisions. The ADA extended disability law from federally funded programs and institutions to those funded by state and local governments as well as private institutions. The ADA defined disability with respect to an individual as (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (b) a record of such impairments; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment (42 USC 12101[2]). Hence, the ADA upholds and extends protection from discrimination to new settings and circumstances and substantially impacts accommodation provisions in higher education. Since the 1973 landmark legislation provided and emphasized access to students with significant disabilities, additional types of disabilities have been identified and included with the law. This requires campuses to understand diversity among SWD and respond in new ways to a wider variety of student needs.

To reiterate, a primary distinction between secondary and postsecondary statutes is the legal responsibility. Under Section 504 and the ADA, SWD must disclose disability to an appropriate college official, typically the DSS Office; provide appropriate disability documentation and request accommodation provisions. Students must become a self-advocate, as there is no statutory mechanism requiring parental involvement (Simon, 2001), and such involvement is discouraged and in some cases not even permissible.

For example, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), commonly known as the Buckley Amendment, is the primary federal statute affecting the disclosure of educational records, including records that may reflect disability and
related information in higher education. FERPA has guaranteed students access to their educational records and safeguarded against unauthorized disclosures to persons without a legitimate educational interest (Jarrow, 1997; Ramirez & Associates, 2005; Simon, 2001). “Access to psychological [and medical] treatment records is specifically exempted from such disclosure. Conversations with SWD and observations by faculty and staff are not within the reach of FERPA, but may be governed by the ADA, Section 504, or state confidentiality laws, as well as state laws regarding privileged communications, such as those between doctor-patient relationships that have overlapping protection” (Simon, p. 72).

In general, information regarding disability is considered highly confidential, is maintained in separate, secure files with limited access, and shared on a need-to-know basis (Jarrow, 1997). In this context, need-to-know could be interpreted as "needing to have knowledge in order to be prepared to take specific action." If the individual would not do anything differently as a result of knowing the information regarding disability, then it would probably be inappropriate to share such information (Jarrow, 1997).

Access to Postsecondary Education

SWD who access postsecondary education find the provision of assistance is no longer automatic or standardized under one federal rubric (Frieden, 2003). Legislation does not mandate specific accommodation provisions; rather, it leaves much to institutional discretion to interpret the legal parameters. Unfortunately, this gives way to
inadequate or disconnected resources. The type, range, availability of, and terms related to services are widely discrepant and poorly integrated, while access to technological training is either limited or nonexistent (Stodden, Jones & Chang, 2002).

Physical access must be provided for SWD with full access at the college’s remote sites that offer courses or extracurricular activities. With the explosion of distance learning in recent years, satellite facilities (i.e., high schools, YMCA) invite creative problem-solving and cost-sharing agreement to comply with ADA standards. This may involve the cost of renovations or adaptive equipment to ensure the same level of equal access (Simon, 2001).

Program access derives from Section 504’s provision that no person with a disability should be “subjected to discrimination under any program or activity” (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794). According to regulations under Section 504, the program includes residence facilities, club activities, field trips, transportation, counseling, and athletics. This inclusive language compels institutions to set the platform to facilitate accommodation provisions to SWD. However, legal mandates offer guidance on implementing accommodation provisions, but do not monitor to what extent. Thus, institutions have provided a gamut of accommodation provisions within the realm of legal specifications, but to varied degrees. Provision of services customarily originates with DSP to insure meaningful access in postsecondary environments.

**Key Accommodation Provisions**

Accommodations must be provided by postsecondary institutions to SWD. Reasonable academic accommodations create equitable opportunities for task
completion or environmental access, but do not compromise the integrity of higher education, fundamentally alter essential components to the academic program, nor impose undue financial hardship (Heyward, 1993; Simon, 2001). Faculty may be consulted regarding course requirements and student expectations to ensure that accommodations would not compromise the academic standards of the course.

Institutions must provide auxiliary aids and services, such as adaptive equipment, sign language interpreters, note takers, scribes, and alternative print material (e.g., Braille, audio tapes, tactile images). Institutions must also provide reasonable accommodations which refer to appropriate testing adaptations and instructional modifications to categorically include technological advances. These broad categories may include, but are not limited to the following: (1) alternative exam administration (extended time for exams; test proctoring in quiet, separate rooms; permitting use of spell checkers, thesauruses with word processing capability for writing assignments) and (2) instructional/classroom modifications (volunteer note taker, tape recording lectures, eliminate classroom distractions as excess noise, physical motion, flickering lights; notice and respond to nonverbal and verbal signs of anxiety or frustration. In addition, technological advances must be considered in the spectrum.

Full access to technological advances must be readily available. In other words, colleges must ensure meaningful access to computer technology and the Internet for all SWD. “Assistive technology” (AT) refers to equipment or systems that increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities (Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 1998). Examples include wheelchairs,
telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDD), devices that “speak” when words are typed or keys touched, captioning, audio descriptions that make technology accessible to people with sensory impairments, and accessible instructional software (on disks, CDs or other media) that enables SWD to keep pace with their peers in the instructional environment (Hasselbring & Glaser, 2000). A variety of AT devices and systems that help students with learning disabilities and other disabling conditions access information and learning opportunities, such as spelling and grammar check, screen readers, writing organizing software, and speech input.

While these supports may be available, students hold the responsibility to identify themselves to the designated DSS personnel, request appropriate accommodations, and articulate those needs to faculty. If a process does not work, students must report back to the DSS personnel for alternate assistance. Students should not be left in limbo due to systematic procedural failures (Heyward, Lawton, & Associates, 1995; Grossman, 2001).

Practically all American postsecondary settings bear institutional accountability for ensuring equitable access to programs and services for SWD. Compared to other PSI in the United States, HBCUs have a unique educational history. Without question, HBCUs have been firmly rooted in America's higher education landscape and provide a unique educational function that cannot be replaced. There exists sound educational justification for maintaining HBCUs (United States v. Fordice, 1992).
Evolution and Revolution of the HBCU

HBCUs are institutions founded prior to 1964 for the purpose of providing collegiate education to African Americans. As reported in Chapter 1, there are 103 public, private, four-year, and two-year HBCUs, clustered in 19 southern and border states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia), plus Michigan and the District of Columbia. Official membership into this category must be established. (Brown, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 1996).

In this study, HBCUs are distinguished from predominantly Black institutions. Brown and Davis (2001) point out that Predominantly Black Colleges and Universities (PBCU) are characterized by greater than 50% African American student enrollment. There are fifty-four PBCU. These institutions were not founded primarily for the education of African American students, and may or may not have been founded prior to 1964 and do not hold official membership as an HBCU.

Historically, due to slavery and segregation pre-civil war, most schools denied educational access and opportunity to African Americans. Among the few exceptions were Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio and Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Many Black colleges emerged from schools and training institutions founded by missionaries, abolitionists, progressive citizens and funded by liberal philanthropic entities (Brown, 1999).
The aftermath of the Civil War led to a proliferation of HBCUs, to over two hundred. Thus, the post-Civil War era brought state government sponsorship and mandated southern states to observe the Thirteenth, Fourteen, and Fifteenth Amendments by providing public education for former slaves and other Blacks. Supplementary Funding which accompanied the Second Morrill Act of 1890 mandated that funds be extended to institutions that enrolled Black Americans, unlike the First Morrill Act of 1862, which directed federal support for state education in agriculture, education, and military science. Segregation’s iron grip in the South prompted many states to establish separate public HBCUs for the sole purpose of having a legal beneficiary for federal support (Brown, 2003). “Inadvertently, the Second Morrill Act cemented the doctrine of segregation that prevails today. Separate and unequal patterns of funding persist” (p. 30).

Comparable to other American PSI, HBCUs vary widely in size, curriculum specializations, and a host of other characteristics. The one commonality across HBCUs is their historical responsibility as primary provider of postsecondary education for African Americans in social environments of racial discrimination (Brown & Davis, 2001). Garibaldi (1984) rearticulated this perspective and emphasized that HBCUs do not constitute one “academic monolith,” but share one uniform characteristic. Their unique distinction from other American PSI rests on the premise that they were founded and urbanized in environments marked by hostile legal segregation. Thus, dialogue pertaining to the contemporary situation and function of HBCUs necessitates a historical understanding of the context in which they were developed (Garibaldi, 1984).
Given the historical focus of HBCUs that marked progressive changes in the education of Black students, Allen (1992) identified six common goals for HBCUs which include the (a) maintenance of Black historical and cultural tradition (and cultural influences emanating from the Black community); (b) provision of key leadership for the Black community, given the important social role of members of the academy (e.g., HBCUs function as a paragon of social organization); (c) provision of an economic function in the Black community (e.g., HBCUs often have the largest institutional budget within the Black community); (d) provision of Black role models to interpret the way in which social, political, and economic dynamics impact this race; (e) provision of college graduates with a unique competence to address the issues between minority and majority population groups; and (f) production of Black agents for specialized research, institutional training, and information dissemination in dealing with the life environment of HBCUs and other minority communities.

Understanding the fundamental characteristics that have shaped HBCUs serves as a framework of analysis for meaningful equity and access. On the one hand, HBCUs have served to develop, create, and teach advanced knowledge to society. In this fashion, they have served to transmit and transform a society’s culture, while educating its citizens. On the other hand, these institutions have made critical gains in ensuring that growing numbers of African Americans will be competent to serve as leaders or knowledge workers in society. These roles call on HBCUs to aid all who enter their doors to gain knowledge (Brown & Davis, 2001).
Social and Cultural Capital

HBCUs have been proclaimed by many as the premier agency of African American educational attainment (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Brown, 1999; Brown, 2001, Freeman, 1998; Garibaldi, 1984; Merisotis & O'Brien, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). According to the U.S. Department of Education (1996), HBCUs have enrolled as many as 300,000 students and employed more than 60,000 persons. HBCUs have awarded degrees held by Blacks at the following rates: 28% of bachelor degrees; 16% of first-professional degrees; 15% of master degrees; and 9% of doctoral degrees. Vernon Jordan stated that HBCUs remain the undergraduate home of "75 percent of all Black Ph.D.s, 75 percent of all Black army officers, 80 percent of all Black federal judges, and 85 percent of all Black doctors" (Roebuck & Murty, 1993, p. 13).

HBCUs have had an egalitarian component among their myriad missions. Roebuck and Murty (1993) stated that "HBCUs continue to function as institutions necessary for the education of many students who otherwise would not obtain college degrees" (p. 202). HBCUs have facilitated the preparation and participation of African Americans in national and global life. The literature provides a large body of information on various factors that have been influencing the demand for higher education by Black high school graduates in the U.S. It should be noted that demographic trends affect the demand for higher education as well as the supply of high school graduates who attend the various PSI (Sissoko & Shiau, 2005).

The students’ choice to matriculate at PSI are influenced by the cultural and social capital on which individuals and families rely in order to meet certain established values
in American society (Sissoko & Shiau, 2005). Coleman (1988) described “social capital” as the networks that provide information, social norms, and achievement support. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) defined “cultural capital” as the system of factors individuals derive from their parents that defines their class status. Social and cultural capital are resources individuals may invest in order to enhance profitability (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), increase productivity (Coleman, 1988), and facilitate upward mobility (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985). Although social and cultural capital affect high school graduates' demand for college education, the process of deciding to invest in a four-year college varies among Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites (Jackson, 1990; Perna, 2000).

It has been well documented that economic and financial factors significantly impact high school graduates' demand for college education in the U.S. (Coleman, 1988, 1990; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Giles, 1995; HEATH, 1996). The demand for college education has been influenced by expected collateral benefits, including the additional social and intellectual amenities, and the additional lifetime earnings and economic self-sufficiency, two of the hallmarks of successful employment. Earning a college degree has been viewed as a symbol of achievement in American society because it provides the recipients with better employment opportunities and enhances the prospect of assuming leadership positions (Disability Rights Advocates, 2001; HEATH, 1996).

African American students, more than any other group, have faced incalculable barriers to higher education participation and attainment. These barriers include social
backgrounds that are incongruous with Eurocentric campus climates, limited financial resources, and trepidation of school failure. Even at the dawn of a new millennium, many African American students are the first-generation in their families to attend a four-year institution (Brown & Davis, 2001). However, HBCUs were designed to provide effective social and cultural support to facilitate a welcoming environment.

Where the broader academic communities have failed to respond to the particular educational needs of African American students, HBCUs have been successful in creating multiple institutional environments to support the educational attainment of these students (Stikes, 1984; Taylor, 1970). Stikes (1984), in particular, argued that African Americans "need something to relate to their experiences and culture that gives them legitimacy" (p. 126). The negative experiences that many African American students encounter at PWI can potentially have detrimental effects. Davis and Borders-Patterson (1973) posited that growing mistrust and alienation cause many students to take refuge in institutions that reflect their experiences (e.g., for African American students HBCUs). Chickering and Associates (1981) suggested that the college experience has the potential to facilitate and stimulate the development of the student. Any sudden changes in the environment may mean a change in the individual. Chickering (1993) also asserted that colleges which help students perform at their ability and readiness levels lay the foundation for developing competence. As detailed in Chapter 5, providing ongoing support for students’ intellectual and psychosocial development is both complex and important.
In a discussion of the mission and goals of HBCUs, Roebuck and Murty (1993) pointed out that HBCUs, unlike other colleges, have been united in a mission to meet the educational and emotional needs of African American students. Lamont (1979) added that for many African American students, HBCUs have been "culturally more congenial" (p. 32) than the traditionally mainstream university. Previous research has concluded that "there is also a general level of satisfaction and camaraderie among Black students at Black schools that is not found among Black students on White campuses" (Roebuck & Murty, 1993, p. 15).

Garibaldi’s (1984) salient commentary affirmed that HBCUs have not been monolithic. Although they have been similar to PWI in many ways, their historical traditions, levels, and types of support have made them distinct. Like many other PSI, HBCUs have reflected the diversity characteristic of the U.S. postsecondary education system. This diversity should always be remembered when considering HBCUs’ past, their current conditions, and their future roles in higher education (p. 6).

Expanding the Circles of Inclusion

We must always strive to establish and sustain the basic human and civil rights of all Americans and specifically Americans with disabilities. Discussions of disability have not been common in the African American community. In American society, disabilities have historically been associated with negativity. Stereotypical beliefs have been magnified by the perceived notion of African Americans as low-achieving and untrustworthy (Orange, 1995). Alston and Bell (1996) found that cultural mistrust has
emulated one of several characteristics that influence how African Americans approach rehabilitation and educational systems and how they interact with professionals.

Several authors (Alston & Bell, 1996; Herbert & Cheatham, 1988; Marshall, 1978) suggested that the combination of disability and membership in an ethnic minority group presents a double bias against many disability consumers. Marshall (1978) referred to these stereotypes as the “double whammy,” where one has encountered discrimination due to race and disability.

In the case of African American women, they have not only encountered the “double whammy,” but have been confronted with gender as well, to create a “triple jeopardy,” according to some scholars (Alston, Bell, & Feist-Price, 1996; Glenn, 1995; Herbert & Cheatham, 1988). Historically, African American women with disabilities have been excluded by the disability movement as well as the feminist movement. In order to eliminate at least one source of prejudice they would endure, African American women have remained silent about the rights denied them (Glenn, 1995). In reference to the challenges this group of women endured, McCowan and Alston (1998) affirmed African American women (with disabilities), unlike their white counterparts, faced intra group issues of sexism surrounding family and community interactions.

Knowledge about attitudes of racial identity have proved to be valuable for rehabilitation practitioners who wanted to understand African Americans, particularly those with disabilities (Alston, Bell, & Feist-Price, 1996). This same concept can be applied to postsecondary educators.
With the preceding overview as a backdrop, attention is directed to the status of African Americans with disabilities and the profound responsibility of HBCUs to play a vital role in empowering these individuals to be equal and productive citizens in the mainstream. Understanding these individuals with overlapping minority statuses and from various viewpoints can assist to chronicle the existing challenges and opportunities.

Social/Cultural Needs

The stigma associated with seeking disability-related services has discouraged many students in need of such supports (Berg-Cross, Craig, & Wessel, 2001). Although much of the available information can be applied to all colleges and SWD, the emphasis of the current study is on HBCUs and African American SWD because of the disproportionate number of African Americans identified with disabilities in the U.S. “The prevalence among disability of minority groups is one and a half times to two times more than that of the general population. In the age group of 16-64 years, African Americans constitute a larger segment of minority persons with disabilities than any other group” (Kundu, 1995, p. 45). Due to the large majority of African American students attending HBCUs, examining these institutions from a service delivery model is necessary and the responsible thing to do, in order to determine how historical strengths can be used. Haughton (1993) contended that fundamentally, this potential pool of SWD has been largely untapped by majority institutions and HBCUs. On numerous levels, it could be a
direct benefit to HBCUs to target and become the institutions of choice for African Americans with disabilities, given their rich cultural and social capital as discussed earlier.

The strong social inclusion exemplified by HBCUs has attracted African Americans students from all walks of life. To be successful in postsecondary transition, SWD need to understand their disabilities, make proper choices, and learn to articulate requests for support to appropriate personnel. Several scholars (Brinckerhoff, 1994; Durlak, Rose, & Bursuck, 1994; Morningstar, Kleinhammer-Trammill, & Lattin, 1999; Palmer & Roessler, 2000) have identified self-advocacy and self-determination as areas for skill development that are integral to success in postsecondary transition. Once students have gained and internalized enough knowledge about their disability and its relationship to their social and academic environment, they can establish and achieve goals more autonomously (Schutz, 2002).

Self-advocacy refers to students’ ability to speak on their own behalf with respect to disability-related needs associated with the postsecondary educational experience. From enrollment to the date of graduation, SWD can benefit from utilizing effective interpersonal communication skills, proficiency at listening and requesting clarification, knowing when and how to discourse the nature of their disability, learning to navigate the system, and ascertaining when and how faculty and other campus personnel can assist them in their academic endeavors (Schutz, 2002). Effective self-advocacy
requires assertiveness and problem-solving skills. Ultimately, students must assume responsibility for the attainment of reasonable accommodations that would provide them with access to necessary resources within the college.

Self-determination is composed of skills, attitudes and motivation, and the student’s social environment (Morningstar, Kleinhammer-Tramill, & Lattin, 1999). Field, Martin, Miller, Ward and Wehmeyer (1998) concluded that:

Self-determination is a combination of skills, knowledge and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations, together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society. (p. 2)

Fundamentals of effective self-determination endeavors prepare SWD to accept responsibility for initiating and ensuring their education accommodations and are critical to success in postsecondary and employment settings (Field, Sarver, & Shaw 2003). Given the importance of postsecondary SWD, self-determination must be the prime directive for postsecondary DSP (Cullen, Shaw, & McGuire, 1996). Students have required guidance to develop the requisite skills that have characterized self-determination. The inherent nature of HBCUs has served as a fertile cultivating ground for this type of development.

As elaborated earlier in this chapter, HBCUs’ inherent six goals include the following: cultural tradition, leadership, civic/academic negotiation, economic function, scholarship, and role model. These are implicit in assisting students to hone their skills in a proactive supportive environment (Allen, 1992). The dearth of literature in this area
underscores this issue, but no national body or focus has been devoted exclusively to
dealing with the myriad of problems that affect African Americans with disabilities in
postsecondary environments. Their collective action can be a visible demonstration of
distinguished institutions that understand Africans Americans with disabilities from a
holistic perspective (Haughton, 1993).

Hence, HBCUs have been positioned well to play a pivotal role to assist America in
empowering African Americans with disabilities in order to maximize their potential
and enhance the quality of their lives. HBCUs’ natural supports can offer redress to this
population. Despite the fact that some HBCUs have addressed postsecondary disability
services, others lag behind. As a collective entity, other HBCUs may need to expand
their circle of inclusion to integrate disability paradigms to complement their exemplary
plight of educating African American students. While there are many approaches, two
paradigms, in conjunction with the repertoire of information presented throughout this
document, can anchor the unique challenges of HBCUs to serve African American
SWD. These two disability paradigms are referred to as “social constructivism”
(interactional) and “standards of disability supports,” respectively.

Social Constructivism

Approaches designed and/or realigned to employ inclusion models have evolved
through the years in remote disciplines, as well. They are social constructivism
(interactional) and standards of disability supports. Each has been grounded in its
explanation of the problem and its notion of how the problem should be addressed. Each intrinsically alludes to proposals for appropriate interventions to understand the needs of African American SWD.

Social Constructivism, in the context of student development theory, represents an interactional model useful for understanding SWD. Referred to by Jones (1996) as “social constructivism” and by Aune (2000) as “the interactional model,” this framework emerged from an understanding that "much of what is believed about disability results from meanings attached by those who are not disabled and [it] challenges the assumption upon which those meanings rest" (Jones, 1996, p. 350). The social constructivist remedy to challenges of disability has entailed consciousness raising of those who experience, as well as those who observe disabilities, and has exposed oppressive social structures that have "created handicaps out of characteristics" (Jones, p. 351). This perspective (as cited in Aune, 2000) was first articulated by Lewin in 1936 in his classic formula—that behavior results from interaction between persons and their environment. It reflects a more complex view of human behavior than one from personal or environmental perspectives alone and requires understanding the interactions of students and their campus environments. Aune (2000) proposed that social and academic integration are needed for students to become successful in college, not normalization. In addition, she asserted such integration requires just as much adjustment by students without disabilities as by SWD.

The social constructivism framework placed credence on disability as a socially constructed phenomenon because it enabled stakeholders at HBCUs to adopt new
perspectives about disability and to reexamine services and programs, as needed. To integrate such a conceptual framework with another model of effectiveness, such as the standards for disability services, can lead to expanded research and bridge deficits.

**Standards for Disability Support Services**

AHEAD Program Standards across eight categories have been identified as essential by a large cross-section of the association’s membership regardless of the type of institution (two- or four-year), funding source (public or private), location (U.S. or Canada), or admissions policy [open enrollment or competitive] (2003). In reference to these standards, AHEAD issued the following:

> the standards reflect the maturation of the postsecondary disability services profession, describe the breadth of skills and knowledge required of personnel administering the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), and present a consensus among experts in the field regarding minimum essential services. These standards are intended to enhance service provision for college students with disabilities by directing program evaluation and development efforts, improving personnel preparation and staff development, guiding the formulation of job descriptions for OSD personnel, informing judges and requisite court decisions regarding appropriate practice and, lastly, expanding the vision of disability services at the postsecondary level (www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm).

The categorical standards and associated prescriptive sub-standards are listed below. Also, a breakdown of associated Performance Indicators can be found at www.ahead.org/about/Final%20Program%20Standards%20with%20Performance%20Indicators.doc. To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to SWD should:

1. Consultation / Collaboration
a) Serve as an advocate for issues regarding students with disabilities to ensure equal access.

b) Provide disability representation on relevant campus committees (e.g., academic standards, policy development).

2. Information Dissemination

a) Disseminate information through institutional electronic and printed publications regarding disability services and how to access them.

b) Provide services that promote access to the campus community (e.g., telecommunications devices (TDD) for the deaf, assistive technology for accessing materials in alternative formats).

c) Disseminate information to students with disabilities regarding available campus and community disability resources.

3. Faculty/Staff Awareness

a) Inform faculty regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, and curriculum modifications.

b) Provide consultation with administrators regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, physical, and curriculum modifications.

c) Provide disability awareness training for campus constituencies such as faculty, staff, and administrators.
d) Provide information to faculty about services available to students with disabilities.

4. Academic Adjustments
   a) Maintain records that document the student’s plan for the provision of selected accommodations.
   b) Determine with students appropriate academic accommodations and services.
   c) Collaborate with faculty to ensure that reasonable academic accommodations do not fundamentally alter the program of study.

5. Counseling and Self-Determination
   a) Use a service delivery model that encourages students with disabilities to develop independence.

6. Policies and Procedures
   a) Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding procedures for determining and accessing “reasonable accommodations.”
   b) Assist with the development, review, and revision of written policies and guidelines for institutional rights and responsibilities with respect to service provision (e.g., disability documentation guidelines, interpreter services).
   c) Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines for student rights and responsibilities with respect to receiving services (e.g., consistent practices and standards for documentation, course substitutions).
d) Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding confidentiality of disability information.

e) Assist with the development, review, and revision of policies and guidelines for settling a formal complaint regarding the determination of a "reasonable accommodation."

7. Program Administration and Evaluation

   a) Provide services that are aligned with the institution’s mission or services philosophy.

   b) Coordinate services for students with disabilities through a full-time professional.

   c) Collect student feedback to measure satisfaction with disability services.

   d) Collect data to monitor use of disability services.

   e) Report program evaluation data to administrators.

   f) Provide fiscal management of the office that serves students with disabilities.

   g) Collaborate in establishing procedures for purchasing the adaptive equipment needed to assure equal access.

8. Training and Professional Development

   a) Provide disability services staff with on-going opportunities for professional development.

   b) Provide services by personnel with training and experience working with college students with disabilities (e.g., student development, degree programs).
c) Assure that personnel adhere to relevant Codes of Ethics (e.g., AHEAD, APA). (Shaw & Dukes, 2005, pp. 16-19, also see AHEAD, www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm).

This protocol exemplifies a collaborative model. A common goal is to work together, not apart in this shared accountability for accommodating SWD. While there are both models of centralized and decentralized programs for SWD (Schuck & Kroeger, 1993), a coordinated approach to service delivery is critical in an effective student affairs organization that serves the needs of SWD (Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993). Part of the agenda for DSS personnel, faculty, and stakeholders must include knowledge of specific disabilities, understanding of institutional barriers, and advocacy and ongoing dialogue about learning opportunities for SWD (Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993).
Chapter Summary

This chapter on postsecondary disability legal mandates serves to educate readers regarding the barriers that need to be eliminated. For generations, our nation’s HBCUs have been concerned with systematic discrimination and oppression. To recap, these institutions first developed the specific ideas and theories leading to the programs of desegregation, integration, and diversity management. HBCUs have been at the forefront of the vital mission to make life better for African Americans, including SWD who can reap the benefits. HBCUs can open exciting academic opportunities for hundreds of African-American SWD in an environment where they can be free from the double or triple jeopardy of disability, race, and gender. They can help to remove the shackles of subtle and pervasive discrimination and the heel of paternalism. They can open the doors of opportunities for numerous isolated, dependent Americans to become college graduates, employees, taxpayers, and welcome participants in the life of their communities.

HBCUs are particularly well-suited to provide institutional leadership in responding to the needs of SWD by virtue of their historical commitments to differences and ability to meet the changing demands of current students. Both historical traditions and core values in conjunction with current trends anchor work with SWD. Theoretical progressive paradigms can help inform our understanding inside the box, and advance our understanding of societal reaction to individuals who reside outside the box. These paradigms of disability are rooted in disability laws and hold
promising implications for practice. The spirit of the law will continue to serve as our compass, while HBCUs can provide a compelling moral lens from which to operate.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Needs Assessment (NA) strategies can employ quantitative and qualitative methods. The uniqueness of a NA is that it focuses on the ends to be attained rather than the means, although data can provide a baseline to drive either (Altschuld & Witkin, 1995; 2000). These authors also pointed out that surveys compose only one part of NA strategies and suggest they be implemented after other, more exploratory methods have been employed. Applying elements of a NA, this chapter described a methodological design commonly referred to as Web or Internet survey (used interchangeably) research and was quantitative in nature. This Internet survey research is designed to inform key stakeholders about the necessity of disability-related services at HBCUs.

The primary aim of this study was to provide a scholarly examination of the current state of affairs relative to disability services among the nation’s HBCUs and how institutions can develop a blueprint to establish a formal program. In essence, it intended to demonstrate the need to establish and/or enhance support services for SWD
among HBCUs and offer practical solutions for accomplishing outcomes. This study was designed to ascertain ways to shift current trends among HBCUs as an underrepresented entity.

This study was executed by developing and using a simple self-report web-based questionnaire to determine the status and composition of this entity. I used a quantitative approach to in order to analyze responses of a larger sample (or entire population of HBCUs in the U.S.) that can be generalized to other situations.

Using the aforementioned methodological approach, the two research questions posited in this study can be addressed sufficiently: (1) What is the status and composition of support services for students with disabilities (SWD) at HBCUs?; and (2) How can services to SWD at HBCUs be developed and implemented?

Population and Sample

Population Profile

The target population consisted of all 103 HBCUs in the United States during 2004-2005. A list of these institutions was generated from the following Internet sources that are widely used directories: The Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU): Web Sites, The Afrikana Louisiana.com National HBCU Database, The San Diego BLAACK Pages (Basic Link to African American Community Knowledge) HBCU, The Historically Black Colleges and Universities, The HBCU Network, and The HBCU Connect.com. Participants in this study consisted of a representative from each HBCU responsible for facilitating disability-related services.
HBCUs represented an integral part of the education enterprise and also responsible for ensuring equal access to qualified individuals with disabilities. HBCUS are institutions founded prior to 1964. These institutions’ distinguished and profound history dated back to the 1800s with the oldest HBCU founded in 1837. HBCUs affiliation encompassed sectors of two-year community and technical colleges and four-year public and private institutions. Some have co-ed populations while others are gender specific. HBCUs nurturing heritage serves as a vital resource and attracts numerous students of color with and without a disability united in seeking a college education.

Research Design

The Web survey was completed by institutional representatives. Because the entire population of HBCUs in the U.S. was surveyed, it was referred to as a “census” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2002, p. 432). According to Dillman and Salant (1994), given this size population, conducting a national census was the best way to obtain precise information, particularly since the population was so small that sampling part of it would not provide accurate estimates of the whole. The survey was cross-sectional in nature as opposed to longitudinal. Hence, information was collected from the entire population at one point in time, although the time required to collect data, by definition, may range from one day to a few weeks or more. In contrast, longitudinal designs are utilized to collect data at different points in time in order to study changes over a period (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2002). Therefore, a cross-sectional national census of HBCU disability representatives was conducted.
Threats to Internal and External Validity

It was important to control for validity threats to the greatest extent possible. In this survey research design, internal validity encompassed the determination of whether certain threats systematically biased the results. Several researchers (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996, Dillman & Salant, 1994) pointed out that the major internal validity threat in descriptive survey is instrumentation, which can be controlled for by the researcher via the minimization of measurement error.

External validity applied to the extent in which results were generalizable to the accessible or target population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). It should be noted that nonresponse error poses a serious threat in survey research and can ruin the external validity even though all other errors have been well-controlled (Dillman & Salant, 1994). This researcher executed a protocol to control for the validity threats in this study which are evidenced in the next two segments about data collection (also, see Chapter 1, methodological assumptions and limitations; and Chapter 5, limitations).

Data Collection and Instrumentation

A simple self-report web-based questionnaire was used to gain information about the status and composition of disability-related services. In addition, this approach informed me on crafting a blueprint on how services can be developed and implemented at HBCUs.

Through this web-based questionnaire (Support Services for Students with Disabilities, see Appendix A) I intended to assess the status and composition of support services for SWD at HBCUs. Section one contained five questions which encompass
general college/university information to gather occupational and institutional structure feedback; section two consisted of six questions which pertained to incidence and prevalence of disability and office dynamics; section three referred to academic accommodations and supports for SWD; section four related to the provision of services; and section five encompasses socio-demographic questions related to educational data, employment status, gender, ethnicity and era born.

This simple web-based questionnaire was reviewed and field tested by a panel of five experts in the field of postsecondary disability services and/or rehabilitation services and well-versed in Section 504 and the ADA to assess its content and face validity. The feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire.

To implement this electronic survey methodology, I relied in part on my faculty adviser to acquire a university account (website) of which to post the web questionnaire and to electronically receive all of the HBCU participant responses. Mertler (2002) suggested if conducting university research when possible, create a university account. Such an association served as a way to validate institutional support for conducting the survey which may attract more participation. It also created a medium to analyze data. In addition, I sought guidance and assistance from an expert to handle the logistics for actually setting up and posting the self-report web-based questionnaire on the World Wide Web.
Data Collection Procedures

The following procedures were executed in this study to control for the primary four sources of error (coverage, sampling, measurement, and nonresponse) relative to survey research. As recommended by Dillman (2000) and Mertle (2002), reasonable efforts were made to control for error via (1) compiling the most accurate frame through perusing multiple internet directories and university websites to obtain information; (2) selecting a prudent process; (3) examining and piloting the existing instrument for obvious bias or vague questions; and (4) implementing a survey design to attract the highest response.

To control for coverage error, the names and web addresses of target institutions were generated from HBCU specific directories on the internet and cross-referenced with each institutions’ website. The researcher compiled the following information: names, job titles, departments, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail accounts of the designated campus administrator for SWD (e.g. director, coordinator, dean of students, ADA coordinator, etc.). Furthermore, this author contacted each institution by phone to clarify and/or verify information. For the most part it was relatively easy to reach the facilitator of accommodations when housed in a specific unit and/or department for SWD. However, some school phone systems were programmed to channel initial calls to the campus operator. On several occasions the operator found it very difficult to identify the person and/or department overseeing services for SWD. In some instances, I was transferred to more than four people in attempts to identify who was designated to facilitate disability-related services.
As previously stated, since the entire population of the nation’s HBCUs was included in this Internet survey, it represented a national “census” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2002, p. 432). However, for practical purposes, I have referred to a Web Census or Internet Survey interchangeably. With the use of Internet Surveys gaining popularity, the use of common jargon allowed respondents to readily understand participatory informational instructions. It also provided the best clarity for potential replication of this study.

In accordance with The Tailored Design Method (TDM) of mail and Internet survey research (Dillman, 2000) was adapted to satisfy preliminary proposed web-based principles (Dillman & Bowker, 2001) and to provide a systematic multimode data collecting method as noted by Dillman (2000), Fowler (2002) and Mertler (2002). Specifically, this multimodal approach consisted of a protocol that emphasized U.S. postal mail, e-mail and telephone follow-up procedures to contact potential respondents about participating in the Web survey (Dillman, 2000; Fowler, 2002). This process was intended to maximize response quality and quantity from respondents and to maximize the return rate. In addition, Fowler (2002) pointed out that key issues included access, motivation and cost in launching a Web survey. The next five waves detail the protocol for collecting data while attempting to control for threats to internal and external validity.

**First-wave.** I attempted to reach each disability campus representative by phone to confirm contact information. Of the 103 HBCU subjects, four were never reached personally, but information was confirmed through the vice president’s office of the
division responsible for disability-related services. This also served as a means to alert them about the forthcoming Web survey, its purpose and to express participatory appreciation. The rationale was to generate people’s interest in reading the forthcoming letter, accessing and completing the web-based questionnaire. Equally important, it was an opportunity to alleviate potential fears of the researcher’s role as a informant in search of flagging institutions for noncompliance with disability laws.

Second-wave. Approximately two weeks later, the Web Census was publicized through U.S. postal mail which Dillman (2000) and Fowler (2002) described as a highly effective to allow for tracking of an accurate response rate and the generalizability of findings. Each of the 103 subjects (disability representatives) at the nation’s HBCUs was sent a personalized written “Information Sheet” via postal mail. This letter was printed on the researcher’s university official departmental letterhead. It contained the researcher and adviser names, contact information (i.e., U.S. postal address, departmental e-mail addresses, phone numbers and fax numbers) an explanation of the web census content with specific instructions on completing the Support Services for Students with Disabilities Web questionnaire (see Appendix A). It also contained a web site address and personal identification (ID) code for accessing and completing the questionnaire.

The letter asked respondents to remain open-minded in their responses since data was used in an aggregate manner and responses were confidential. To ensure confidentiality, this was a secured website, accessible to the desired population only
through individual assignment of an access code. The rationale was to generate
participant’s interest in perusing the information at the designated web address and
completing the questionnaire.

**Third-wave.** Participants who did not log onto the web site within approximately 10
days were sent a personalized e-mail message containing the web address where the
questionnaire was posted. This e-mail served as a gentle reminder for those who had not
responded and to increase the response rate by attempting to convince participants that
they were individually important to this Web census (Dillman, 2000; Dillman &
Bowker, 2001; Mertler, 2002).

**Fourth-wave.** Approximately one week after the e-mail message reminder in the
third-wave, another, a simple email that included the deadline date (April 22, 2005) for
replying was sent to people who had not yet responded. The rationale was the same as
in the previous wave and also to establish an arbitrary cut-off deadline date in order to
distinguish early from late respondents on known characteristics in the analysis phase of
this study.

**Fifth-wave.** Approximately, one week later after the third-wave, I conducted a final
follow-up by telephone to all nonrespondents. This procedure also provided a final
means to increase the response rate and to observe any significant differences between
the early and late respondents on known characteristics (Dillman & Salant, 1994).

Past research (Miller & Smith, 2003) has shown that late respondents are often
similar to non-respondents. Late respondents were compared to early respondents, with
late respondents assumed to be typical of nonrespondents. If no differences were found,
then respondents may be generalized to the sample and target population (Miller & Smith, 1983). In a more recent study, Irani, Gregg and Telg (2004) found that a key implication, when comparing early to late online respondents, is the need to carefully consider the influence of the variables or characteristics of interest before undertaking this approach.

As many as five contacts were made, three by e-mail, one via U.S. postal mail, one by telephone over a period of about one month (Dillman, 2000). Of the 103 Information Sheets sent to HBCUs via U.S. postal mail that publicized the online web questionnaire, 67% were returned online. A similar protocol was utilized by Dillman (2000) that employed telephone, U.S. postal mail, e-mail to contact and encourage participants to access the survey at a designated web address. Five contacts were made of which four were e-mails over an approximate one month time frame. It resulted in about 76% of those who received these messages logged on to the Web site to access the questionnaire.

Data suggest that surveys on the Internet were perceived as being relatively new or as lacking proper design to the extent that data remains tenuous in predicting accurate return rates (Witmer, Colman & Katzman, 1999; Dillman & Bowker, 2001; Fowler, 2002). Estimates have been offered by Matz (1999) who compared a web survey response to that of traditional paper-pencil survey. He found that the overall response rate for the paper-pencil survey was 43% compared to 33% of the web survey group. Underwood, Kim, and Matier (2000) conducted an empirical study comparing web- and mail survey characteristics. When the data were compared, they concluded that women
responded at a greater rate than men, regardless of survey method, and underrepresented minority students generally responded at lower rates. This led the researchers to conclude that characteristics of the respondents may have a greater impact on response rates than the survey method used.

While Fowler (2002) believed challenges were likely to parallel those of mail survey, he had a different focus. He elaborated further that “the fit between the survey content and the surveyed population, plus the extent to which those sampled were facile users of the Internet,” (p.50) plays a pivotal role in the achievement of the endeavor. For purposes of this study, steps were taken to address a vital consideration in selecting the population of interest and survey content which I believe complemented one another. However, as a researcher, I had no control over who were unfamiliar users of the Internet.

Incentive to Participants

Those participants, who completed the entire survey and submitted it, had their institution entered into a drawing. An annual Full Professional Membership for the Association on Higher Education (AHEAD) was given away to the institutional representative who participated in the study. “AHEAD is the premiere professional association committed to full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. As an international resource, AHEAD dynamically addresses current and emerging issues with respect to disability, education, and accessibility to achieve universal access” (www.ahead.org).
The value of this membership is $185.00 and began January 1st through December 31st. As a full professional member, the recipient was entitled to 30% + discounts on registration for all conferences through AHEAD, 30% + discounts for all workshops, institutes, and online professional development programs offered through AHEAD. It also includes a 1-year subscription to the Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability and more; eligibility to apply for scholarships, professional development funding, focused initiative funding by AHEAD and much more.

The winner was contacted and extended the option of which time frame to receive their full professional membership: (1) January 1 to December 31, 2006; discount toward conference registration fee, July 18 to 22, 2006 in San Diego, California; (2) January 1 to December 31, 2007; discount toward conference registration fee, July 17 to 21, 2007 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Thus, this research had no control over conference dates or locations, but guaranteed one paid full professional membership regardless of any changes. For membership details please visit the website for AHEAD at www.ahead.org.

Chapter Summary

The primary goal of this chapter was to establish a protocol for gathering useful information to ascertain the state of disability support services at HBCUs and through the utility of data craft a blueprint on how services can be developed and implemented. The methodological design used in this research encompassed a web-based survey to conduct a census of all 103 HBCUs in the U.S.
An electronic survey methodology provided a means to collect data about the composition of DSS Offices from DSS administrators who were the participants of this study. Specifically, this multimodal approach consisted of a protocol that emphasized U.S. postal mail, e-mail, and telephone follow-up procedures to contact potential respondents about participating in the Web survey (Dillman, 2000; Fowler, 2002). This process was intended to maximize response quality and quantity from respondents and to maximize the return rate.

Altschuld and Witkin (1995; 2000) pointed out how NA strategies can employ quantitative and qualitative methods. The uniqueness of a NA is that it focuses on the ends to be attained rather than the means and that data can provide a baseline to drive either.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The results are presented in three sections. Data in the first section describes the characteristics of respondents; the second section illustrates the characteristics of participating institutions; and the third section employs the research objectives that produced analyses of respondent input about the state of disability support services (DSS) on HBCU campuses. Analyses in this chapter were guided by four primary research objectives that correspond to the first research question: What is the status and composition of support services for students with disabilities (SWD) at HBCUs? The results of the analyses are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Response Rate

Information Cover Sheets that cued the participants to the web-based questionnaire were disseminated via U.S. postal services. Of the 103 participants, 69 accessed and submitted the online survey at a response rate of 67%. Because the study was a national census by design, chi square analysis was performed to compare early to late respondents on known characteristics to determine whether the sample was
representative. An arbitrary cut-off date (April 22, 2005) was preset to distinguish early from late respondents as highlighted in Chapter 3 (also, see Appendix B).

Past research (Miller & Smith, 1983) showed that late respondents are often similar to non-respondents. Late respondents were compared to early respondents on known characteristics, with late respondents assumed to be typical of nonrespondents. If no differences were found, then respondents were generalized to the sample and target population (Miller & Smith, 1983). In a more recent study, researchers (Irani, Gregg & Telg, 2004) found that a key implication, when comparing early to late online respondents, necessitated careful consideration of the influence of the variables of interest prior to undertaking this approach.

The data did not support the research hypothesis that there are differences between early and late respondents based on some institutional characteristics. No significant differences \( \chi^2(2, N = 69) = 4.48, p > .05 \) were observed in regard to the pattern for two-year and four-year public and four-year private institutions. In contrast, significant differences were noted for the organizational structure of DSS Offices, as will be explained later in this chapter.

Characteristics of Respondents

As illustrated in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, respectively, the professional and demographic profiles of the respondents were observed. Approximately 52% reported a title of DSS director/coordinator, while 41% were known by another title (e.g., dean, manager, counselor, ADA coordinator, director of student support services/student development). Almost 7% of the respondents indicated titles atypical to those designated for
administrators who oversaw DSS Offices (e.g., vice presidents for academic affairs, executive assistant to the president and academic career coordinator). Of the 69 respondents, 69.9% were female and 30.4% male.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSS Director/Coordinator</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atypical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Atypical represent positions uncommon to DSS administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Position and gender of respondents’ information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Highest degree attained
Table 4.3 shows that the majority of respondents reported a master’s degree as their highest degree (73.9%) attained and 17.4% reported doctoral degrees. Not surprisingly, nearly 41% reported counseling as their field of highest degree compared to a distant second of 13% for higher education and student affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Counseling/Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education and Student Affairs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Personnel Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Field of highest degree
Within the institutional hierarchy as presented in Table 4.4, 31.9% of respondents indicated that they reported to the vice president for student services/affairs. An equal percentage of respondents identified a diverse group of student affairs administrators (e.g., president, vice president in area other than student or academic affairs, vice chancellor and dean). In contrast, only 10.1% indicated that they reported to academic affairs administrators who were all vice presidents. The remaining 26.1% of respondents reflected sole departmental directors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor/Division</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Student Affairs</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Director</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Other Student Affairs Administrators</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Reporting structure of respondents’ information

*excluding vice presidents for academic and student affairs divisions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 or more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreported</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Years of Professional Experience with Disability Populations

Respondents’ number of years of professional experience working with the disability population is presented in Table 4.5. Years of experience ranged from less than one year to more than 27 years. Thirteen percent of the respondents reported less than three years of experience working with individuals with disabilities and 31.9% reported between three to eight years.

The respondents were asked to report the number of full-time and part-time staff in DSS as evidenced in Table 4.6. Staff size ranged from zero to 30, with an average staff
of four. DSS Offices were comprised of professional staff, faculty, paraprofessional, technical and/or clerical support positions. Approximately 64% of the offices reported fewer staff than average, and 28% worked solo, where they were the only staff member. Approximately 12% of the respondents reported that their office did not have designated DSS staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DSS Program</th>
<th>No. of Staff</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Staff in DSS Program

Characteristics of Participating Institutions

The four geographical regions created by the U.S. Department of Education and the Postsecondary Programs Network (PEPNet) are used to describe the breakdown of HBCUs. These regions represent the South, Midwest, Northeast, and West, including
Alaska and Hawaii. Table 4.7 shows the percentages of HBCU respondents from each domain as well as a state by-state-breakdown. Overall, a substantial proportion of HBCUs are concentrated in the southern region (86.4%); a few in the northeastern region (8.7%) and even fewer in the Midwestern region (4.9%) and none in the Western region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwestern Region</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MI, MO, OH)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern Region</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DE, DC, MD, PA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>100 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Geographical Region of DSS Respondents at American HBCUs.

*Note: no HBCUs are located in the western region, Alaska and Hawaii
As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the organizational structure for DSS Offices varied among the population of HBCUs. This phenomenon emulated the state of disability services among institutions across the country.

As depicted in Figure 4.2, the respondents reported their institutional breakdown defined by size and type as follows: 48% were four-year public; 41% were four-year private independent and included church-affiliated status. One private institution was reported as being fully church-sponsored. Additionally, 33% was reported as two-year institutions which included a technical/vocational school. The taxonomy for participating institutions constituted four-year public and private HBCUs, which included baccalaureate colleges, comprehensive and/or research universities. Two-year colleges offered certificate and/or associate degree programs.
Figure 4.1: Organizational structure for the DSS Office

The two-year technical and vocational colleges included professional and trade schools (e.g., technical certificate and degree programs, adult learning opportunities, and business and industry training opportunities).

Campuses varied considerably in size as defined by overall student enrollment (see Figure 2). DSS representatives reported overall enrollment at their institution, which was partitioned into small, medium, or large, as defined by national standards in accordance with HEATH Resource Center, the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities (HEATH, 2001). Approximately 54% of the
institutions were categorized as small and enrolled less than 3,000 students. About 41% represented a medium size campus and had between 3,000 and 9,999 students. Only 5% represented a large campus with 10,000 or more students.

Figure 4.2: Public vs. private HBCUs by overall student enrollment

Institutional characteristics for the types of accommodations and supports and the types of disabilities noted within the population of SWD were observed from multiple
perspectives, so that HBCUs could be described and compared to each other within a relevant framework. The four research objectives outlined below were intended to capture the institutional landscape of DSS.

Research Objectives

I. Composition of DSS Office and Accommodation Provisions

The first objective pertained to the composition of the designated DSS Office and the types of academic accommodations and supports available at American HBCUs. Characteristics of this objective were defined by the organizational structure of the designated DSS office and specific types of academic accommodations and supports (see Figure 4.3). Because the objective concerned the proportion of institutions that had a DSS office and the variation in academic accommodation and supports offered, a test of two proportion comparisons and a confidence interval (CI) were suited to detect the difference with a degree of precision. The conventional 95% CI was calculated to estimate how much difference. The tests of proportions revealed significant differences in the institutional structure of DSS offices.

A notable difference was found in the proportion of institutions that reported a centralized specific DSS or combination DSS office compared to a decentralized adjunct office, \( z = 6.16, p < .05 \); compared to an office without any formal services, \( z = 11.13, p < .05 \). A notable difference was also found in a decentralized adjunct office compared to an office without formal services, \( z = 3.54, p < .05 \).

The true difference between the HBCUs with centralized, specific DSS and combined DSS versus decentralized adjunct offices, with reasonable confidence, were
estimated to be between 32% to 61%. The data suggested a difference of 46%, relevant to accommodation provisions, in favor of specific and combination DSS offices, but this difference plausibly ranged as low as 32%, or as high as 61%. Likewise, the true difference between the centralized DSS offices compared to offices that had no DSS, with reasonable confidence, were estimated between 55 to 78%. In this case, the data suggested a difference of 67%, in favor of centralized DSS offices, but this difference could plausibly extend from 55% to high as 78%.

Figure 4.3: Academic accommodations and supports
Also, the true difference between HBCUs with a decentralized adjunct office that had no formal services, with reasonable confidence, was estimated between 9 to 32%. In this case, the data projected a difference of 21%, relevant to accommodation provisions, in favor of the decentralized adjunct office, but this difference could plausibly range as low as 9%, but not above 32%.

II. Types of Disabilities in the Population of SWD

The second objective concerned the prevalence and general distribution of the types of disabilities in the population of SWD. The respondents were asked to identify the types of disabilities disclosed in the population of SWD at their institution. Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of SWD within HBCUs. There was a wide disparity in the number of SWD, which ranged from 0 students to 1,058 students. By comparison, SWD comprised only 2.7% of the total student enrollment. One hundred percent of the respondents from participating HBCUs reported the incidence of students with learning disabilities. The next most frequent types of disabilities that were reported included: attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorders [AD/HD] (84%), hard of hearing [HDH] (81%), orthopedic (77%), health-related conditions (74%), visual impairments (72%), emotional (psychiatric) disorders (72%), speech impediments (59%) and blindness (53.62).

Also noted in Figure 4.4, several categories of disabling conditions appear less prevalent. For these remaining categories (developmental disabilities/handicapped and mental retardation [DH_MR], Deaf, traumatic brain injury [TBI], health-related conditions), the incidences of the types of disabilities disclosed in the population of
SWD that were reported were less than 50%. A point of clarification, cognitive disabilities is the most recent term that refers to developmental disabilities/handicapped [DD/DH]. Examples of health-related conditions reported encompassed (i.e., sickle cell, narcolepsy, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), autoimmune disorders, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, epilepsy, cardiac, and Crohn’s disease. In the other category, a temporary disability was listed.

III. Accommodation Provisions by Institution Type

The third objective focused on the difference between the availability of academic accommodations and supports at public and private institutions for SWD. Chi square test of independence was used to evaluate the influence of accommodation provisions at public and private institutions, because the data was nominal in nature. An alpha level of .05 was adopted. There was no evidence that these two types of institutions had an influence on accommodation provisions offered at HBCUs. No significant differences [$\chi^2 (9, N = 69) = 13.41, p > .05$] were observed in the population for public and private institutions in regard to the availability of academic accommodations and supports for SWD.
Figure 4.4: Types of self-disclosed disabilities in the population of SWD

IV. Institution Type and DSS Structure on Eligible SWD

The fourth objective focused on the main effects for institutional type (two-year, four-year public and private) and the organizational structure of DSS offices on eligible SWD. It also ascertained whether or not there was an interaction between the former two factors. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to evaluate the effects of institutional type and organizational structure of DSS offices upon the number
of eligible SWD. A model I ANOVA, also called a Fixed-Effects model, was used to investigate this objective because of its properties. By definition, a model is “a representation or description of something (a phenomenon or set of relationships) that aids in understanding or studying it; a set of assumptions about relationships used to study their interactions” (Vogt, 1999, p. 178). For unbalanced data, it was impossible to calculate precise results from data entered as means, standard deviations, standard error of measurement, and the target population. Therefore, the general linear modeling (fixed effects) was robust for performing the ANOVA of unweighted means. Again, the standard alpha level of .05 was adopted.

Typical of this design, it allows the categorical data obtained from the population of HBCUs to be compared individually and collectively with one another. The data was collapsed across the levels of institutional type and organizational structure for DSS Office on eligible SWD to fit the model. The real advantage of combining two factors within the same study was the ability to examine the unique association explained by an interaction.

In this study, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the organizational structure of the DSS office \[F(3, 51) = 3.87, p < .05\]; no statistically significant main effect for the institutional type \[F(2, 51) = 2.76, p > .05\], but practical significance. Thus, the organizational structure for DSS had a very significant main effect for the number of eligible SWD at HBCUs. The institutional type had practical significance that produced a marginal impact on the number of eligible SWD found at four-year institutions.
However, it was not possible to test for an interaction between the organizational DSS structure and institution type utilizing the fixed effects model ANOVA. Therefore, the likelihood ratio chi-square test was used to evaluate the interaction between organizational structure and institution type. The chi-square test showed no interactions between these two characteristics \([F(6, 51) = 9.76, p > .05]\). No interactions were observed in the population between the organizational structure for DSS offices and institutional type on the number of SWD. Therefore, all of the mean differences between the organizational DSS structure and institutional type were explained by the main effects of the two factors (DSS structure and institutional type).

There were unusual observations in the cells for eligible SWD, but they did not affect the ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSS Structure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>344930</td>
<td>114977</td>
<td>3.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Type</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>163998</td>
<td>81999</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: ANOVA Summary – DSS Structure and Institution Type

*p < .05
Chapter Summary

The respondents in this study provided vital information about their demographic and institutional characteristics that included details about DSS Offices. The findings of this study strongly revealed that there was not a monolithic perspective or pattern that dominated all areas of inquiry, although there were common threads in response to the primary objectives.

The four primary objectives pertained to the (1) composition of the DSS Office and accommodation provisions; (2) types of disabilities in the population of SWD; (3) availability of accommodation provisions by institution type; and (4) the institution type and structure of DSS Offices on eligible SWD at American HBCUs. In addition, HBCUs are concentrated in the southern region, but also rooted in the mid-western and northeastern region of the country. In Chapter 5, all areas of inquiry are discussed.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Four primary research objectives guide this study, corresponding to the two critical research questions. The data provide a gateway endeavor to examine the state of disability services among HBCUs. The results of this study provide evidence to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the status and composition of support services for students with disabilities (SWD) at HBCUs?; and (2) How can services to SWD at HBCUs be developed and implemented? The constitutive foci of the second question evolve through prudent examination of the utility of data to generate a sample blueprint on how DSS might be constructed. In light of this notion, the results can be used to establish a baseline to craft a blueprint and commence a formal program or redesign existing infrastructures to meet ADA compliance.

Along this research inquiry, findings in this study validate that centralized specific and combination DSS offices provide more academic accommodations and support services and attract more SWD than decentralized structures. It is not surprising that a majority of the respondents (71%) represents HBCUs with centralized specific or combination DSS offices. In this study, these two types of offices represent a higher
proportion of HBCUs and differ significantly from institutions with decentralized structures where DSS exist through adjunct offices. Institutions with decentralized adjunct or nonexistent structures lack the capacity to provide adequate supports for SWD. With a reasonable degree of confidence, one can conclude that it is advantageous to have a formal DSS program for a number of reasons.

For example, the data suggest that institutions with either adjunct or nonexistent DSS offices did not have mechanisms in place to track SWD. Given the growing presence of SWD on college campuses, appropriate tracking methods are necessary to adequately forecast department needs. In spite of the status of DSS offices, results also indicate that while practically all of the institutions populate SWD, trends have shifted. A few of the disability groups (learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders; visual impairment and blindness; hard-of-hearing and deaf) have been collapsed for national comparisons. It should be noted that no comparative data from this source was available for cognitive or TBI. These two areas are assumed to be captured under “other.”

Similar to other PSI, over the last decade data reveal that those students with learning disabilities are consistently the most prevalent group. However, for other disability groups, findings in this study exhibit a different pattern among four-year HBCUs in comparison to those predictions from the HEATH Resource (2001) report. In contrast to the national standard projections, the types of disabilities reported within the population of SWD are represented categorically in descending order: 100% incidence
of learning disabilities (including attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorders); 83% hard of hearing or deaf; 77% orthopedic; 74% visual impairment or blindness; 74% health-related; 59% reported speech; and 38% fall in other categories.

According to national standards (Health Resource Center), the self-report options of disability by college freshmen in the 2001 Biennial Statistical Profile show the following patterns in descending order: LD (including AD/HD) (40.5%); other (16.9%); visual impairment or blindness (16%); health-related (15.4%); hard-of-hearing or deaf (8.6%); orthopedic (7.1%); and speech impairment (2.9%). National stats in this profile should not be compared verbatim percentage-wise to the population of SWD as reported by DSS representative, but rather, the data trends should be examined. They represent a comparable nature.

In this study, the top three categories include students with learning disabilities, those are hard of hearing or deaf, and those with orthopedic conditions. The results show a striking growth trend in the proportion of students who are hard of hearing. One explanation for the latter phenomenon may be that this group tends to gravitate toward HBCUs, due to assumptions about their nurturing and welcoming campus environments. Several researchers (Holcomb & Coryell, 1992; Leake & Cholymay, 2004; Dubois & Silverhorn, 2005) stress the importance of the campus social environment and emphasize that involvement in student activities, interaction with others and peer groups or mentors can influence student retention.

In terms of institutional size as defined by overall student enrollment, no significant differences were observed between public and private HBCUs in reference to academic
accommodations and supports. In contrast, The National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Education Reports (2000) indicates a distinct relationship between the size of student enrollment and the institution’s capacity to offer academic accommodations and supports for SWD. The larger the institution, the more frequently the services were made available. It should be noted that HBCUs are included in this sample.

By 2000, the overall projection for the number of SWD at HBCUs was four percent (2,645). Thus, the current investigation proffers a sharp contrast, whereas DSS administrators report more than double the number of SWD (5,995) since the college bicentennial statistical profile report (HEATH, 2001).

Given the aforementioned dynamics, past and current trends strongly suggest that institutions without formal DSS programs risk adequate accommodation provisions and/or compromise their capacity to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of SWD (Schuck & Kroeger, 1993; Grossman, 2001). These programs are typically characteristic of decentralized adjunct or nonexistent structures. To circumvent potential risks, this study asked the second research question: How can services to SWD at HBCUs be developed and implemented? Although, this study produced useful data to establish a baseline to inform a practical approach to craft a blueprint for formal services, DSS programs are setup in various ways which invalidate the notion of one homogeneous structure across institutions. Administrators may wish to use the following as a barometer to determine which areas need attention.
As noted in Chapter 2, based on legal provisions of Section 504 and ADA, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) regulations offer guidance. The OCR regulations dictate that PSI must adhere to the following conditions: (1) admission limitation on the number of qualified SWD cannot be imposed; (2) preadmission inquiries as to a person's disability cannot be conducted; (3) students cannot be excluded from taking a course solely on the basis of their disability; (4) discriminatory requirements must be modified to accommodate SWD; (5) accommodation devices such as tape recorders must be allowed in the classroom; (6) devices that ensure full participation of a student in the classroom cannot be prohibited; (7) alternative exam administration, when necessary, must be provided; (8) faculty must, when required, use adaptive devices; (9) SWD should not be counseled toward restrictive careers unless justified by certification requirements; and (10) SWD have a right to due process if they encounter discriminatory behavior.

Given the previous parameters, data from this study illustrate the need for formal DSS were absent or underdeveloped. Institutions affected by these phenomena may have administrators who wish to shift to a proactive posture. These results merely establish a baseline for crafting a DSS blueprint so individual institutions can commence a formal program or redesign existing infrastructures. There are numerous approaches to consider. However, to capitalize upon lessons learned from this research, it is prudent to evaluate institutions on their individual needs and merit.
Theoretical Applications

In choosing a framework, institutional administrators/professionals may contemplate theoretical models, evaluation standards, and logistical issues when they are evaluating DSS programs (Parker, Shaw, & McGuire, 2003). Of the entire population of HBCUs (N = 103), it appears that 57% lack formal centralized specific or combination DSS programs. This discovery prompted the use of a program needs assessment (NA) model versus a program evaluation approach.

Altschuld and Witkin (1995) pointed out that “need” is a measurable discrepancy or gap between “what is,” regarding the group/situation of interest, and “what should be” (p. 4). Hence, an NA seeks to determine such discrepancies, examine their nature and causes, and set priorities for future action. These strategies can employ quantitative and qualitative methods, but Altschuld and Witkin (1995, 2000) acknowledge the real uniqueness of an NA is that it focuses on the ends to be attained, rather than the means, although data can provide a baseline to drive either. In this context, an NA has the properties to assess the current state of DSS programs and offer practical solutions for accomplishing outcomes.

At the risk of oversimplification, note that these properties encompass three distinct phases: preassessment, assessment, postassessment. This process can be implemented in conjunction with university personnel at any PSI. In the initial preassessment phase, the needs assessor aims to obtain sufficient information from stakeholder viewpoints to identify salient issues to follow up during the assessment phase and to identify other key stakeholder group(s) (Altschuld & Witkin, 1995, 2000; Rodwell, 1995). Generally, a
small heterogeneous group of eight to ten pre-selected key institutional stakeholders (i.e., administrators, faculty, professional staff) are selected across constituencies (diverse group within academic affairs and student affairs division) to form the needs assessment committee (NAC). Patton (1990) points out that an intensity approach consists of information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely, as in best of worst cases). It aims to obtain a substantial introductory understanding of university operations and issues that can inform the investigation as it unfolds.

Next, in the assessment phase, the consultant uses targeted probing, as analysis from the previous phase allows general themes to emerge that require further investigation. The focus group, community forum, and semi-structured interviews are conducted with additional institutional stakeholders who have been selected for maximum variation of viewpoints and issues. According to Patton (1990), maximum variation allows the needs assessor/consultant to choose stakeholders from a wide range of variations on dimensions of interest and document unique patterns that emerge through adapting to different conditions. In essence, it identifies important common patterns that cut across variations.

The needs assessor/consultant seeks to gain perspectives from a cross-section of key institutional stakeholders in various constituencies (academic affairs division and student affairs division). In addition, all faculty members should be invited to engage in a community forum. Also, students should be recruited into the assessment via the following procedures:
1. Key institutional stakeholders identified above should refer those students who have self-identified a disability;
2. Any faculty, instructional administration and/or professional staff who interact with students and suspect that classroom difficulties may require special attention beyond the scope of what they typically provide;
3. Students who self-refer based on a suspected or diagnosed disability.

Finally, in the postassessment phase, the consultant includes two key institutional stakeholders and a panel of two experts bearing interest in this area (Altschuld & Witkin, 1995). Borrowing from Rodwell’s (1995) work, utilizing stakeholder input consists of a comprehensive “member check” to obtain confirmation from DSS program personnel that the final report captures the data as compiled by consultants.

To effectively implement the preassessment, assessment, and postassessment phases, it is imperative to involve faculty, staff, and students. Thompson, Bethea, and Turner’s (1997) study substantiated that a majority of faculty were only marginally aware of their rights and the legal rights of SWD to reasonable academic accommodations and modifications of institutional policies. The survey per se, raised consciousness among faculty to learn more about their responsibilities and students' responsibilities in providing equal access. Involvement of faculty as this process unfolds is likely to minimize future resistance to honor accommodation requests from SWD. Also, Gibson (1996) purported that the institution’s capability to meet social, moral, and legal obligations to SWD relies upon heightened levels of collaboration between the
university personnel and those students. Therefore, candid discourse is advantageous in crystallizing the needs of students across disability type and severity of impairment, visible and hidden, mild and severe.

The preassessment assessment and post assessment phases put the NA model into perspective. It complements this study considering that survey research also seeks to determine “what is”; however, causation may not be inferred. It should be prefaced that “causes” in the NA context are synonymous to explanations in survey research. An array of compelling evidence suggests that utilizing a program NA makes practical sense, particularly for institutions trying to commence DSS from grassroots.

In addition to theoretical models, institutional administrators/professionals may want to contemplate using two sets of standards adopted by AHEAD, a premiere national and international professional association committed to full participation of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary environments. This includes AHEAD Program Standards (Shaw & Dukes, 2001), also found at www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) (Miller, 1997, 2001).

CAS was founded as a profession-wide entity to establish standards to guide practice by student affairs, student development, and student support services providers employed by institutions of higher learning. Fundamental principles were derived from theories and conceptual models found in human development, group dynamics, student learning, management, and higher education administration that inform the work of student affairs administrators, student development educators, and student support
service providers. Contextually, the CAS standards do not dictate that students, individually or collectively, must conform to a prescribed standard of involvement or behavior. Rather, they necessitate that institutions and student support programs meet a standard of programmatic and organizational efficiency and effectiveness sufficient to provide an institutional climate conducive for students to maximize their potential (www.cas.edu).

CAS standards are partitioned into 13 sections: mission; program; leadership; organization and management; human resources; financial resources; facilities, technology, and equipment; legal responsibilities; equal opportunity, access, and affirmative action; campus and community relations; diversity; ethics; and assessment and evaluation (www.cas.edu). According to Parker et al. (2003), CAS standards have been the most widely used criteria in reference to DSS.

AHEAD promulgated program standards (Shaw & Dukes, 2001) and Dukes (2001) confirmed that “these standards were determined through a rigorous empirical process and reflect overwhelming consensus among postsecondary disability services providers” (p. 371) regardless of the type of institution, funding source, location, or competitiveness. In addition, these standards emulate the evolving postsecondary disability services profession and describe the breadth of skills and requisite knowledge of personnel administering DSS Offices. These standards are intended to enhance service provision for college SWD by directing program evaluation and development efforts, improving personnel preparation and staff development, guiding the formulation of job descriptions for OSD personnel, informing judges and requisite court decisions
regarding appropriate practice, and lastly, expanding the vision of disability services at the postsecondary level. Note the list of the broad categorical standards all of which have prescriptive sub-standards: (1) Consultation/Collaboration; (2) Information Dissemination; (3) Faculty/Staff Awareness; (4) Academic Adjustments; (5) Counseling and Self-Determination; (6) Policies and Procedures; (7) Program Administration and Evaluation; and (8) Training and Professional Development (www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm).

Although program standards offer invaluable guidance, one must avoid using them as a means for pigeonholing institutions. The needs assessor/consultant must understand the institutional climate and integrate those standards that address the entire spectrum of issues. Utilizing frameworks for viewing SWD in their full complexities, tailoring programs to meet institutional needs and forecasting change are the hallmark of effective DSS programs.

Another consideration when developing a framework pertains to the logistics (i.e., time, personnel and cost). From firsthand longevity in PSI and in accordance with Parker et al. (2003), summertime, ranging from June to August, offers more downtime for institutional personnel, versus the regular academic year, depending upon quarter or semester systems. In essence, this permits more time for faculty, staff, and students to engage appropriately in the NA process. The bleak financial forecast among PSI (Trombey, 2003) may present barriers to pursuing the program NA.

Brinckerhoff, McGuire, and Shaw (2002) suggest that critical decisions about hiring external consultants are frequently linked to personnel and cost considerations.
However, institutional administrators must evaluate their residence expertise and
determine whether or not external services would be more appropriate. In brief,
advantages of internal consultants include the individual’s expert knowledge of the
program and campus and saving consultant travel fees. Nevertheless, many institutions
prefer to hire external consultants for at least a portion of the assessment. They bring a
substantial level of expertise and objectivity to inform programs.

Blueprint Establishing DSS Programs

Highlights from a sample program NA at a small mid-western university are
presented to provide a more detailed illustration of the rationale, frameworks, logistics,
and outcomes of this process. The types of data to consider can be gleaned by readers
seeking applied examples.

In addition to considering the purposes of a program NA and identifying a suitable
framework, administrators/professionals should determine the utility of the data for
their campus. NA can generate formative or summative data. Several investigators
(Altschuld & Witkin, 1995, 2000; Brinckerhoff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002) describe
“formative” as the type of information collected throughout a program’s operations. In
implementing this NA model, university personnel choose to hire an external consultant
who in turn collects formative data to assess the program. The external consultant
predetermines mediums to use (e.g., interviews—one informal conversational interview
and several semi-structured interview; group processes to entail a NAC, focus group
and community forum) for gathering information about the university’s operations.

“Aside from the survey, group processes are the most widely used method for gathering
opinions and data for NA” (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, p. 153). Note that each session involving group processes parallels principles from three major stages: (a) planning; (b) implementation; and (c) and follow-up. Planning consists of establishing clear purposes for meeting. Specific purposes/outcomes inform stakeholders’ understanding of timelines, expectations, and guidelines for discussion content. Meeting sites, structure, processes, and leadership must be decided upon. Implementation steps vary for each type of process. Follow-up consists of analyzing data in light of decisions to be made. Results must be used and communicated to key decision makers and stakeholders in an appropriate and timely fashion. For simplification of the program NA model, the processes are implemented in waves.

Informal Interview. Prior to the first wave, the external consultant visits campus to meet with the administrator governing the program NA. The vice president (VP) for Academic Affairs is the key contact to commence the program NA. According to data from this study, a VP for Academic or Student Affairs or a departmental director could be a key contact. Patton (1990) calls this the informal conversational interview, which relies exclusively upon the spontaneous generation of questions during ordinary communication. Such topics as NA approaches, service patterns (including provision of services to SWD, barriers, and best practices), and the extent of and strategies for obtaining faculty involvement are discussed. Formulating an NAC is explored.

Needs Assessment Committee. In the first wave, the consultant visits campus to engage a NAC. The VP pre-selects a small heterogeneous group of eight to ten key university stakeholders (professional staff, faculty, and administrators) across
constituencies (diverse groups from within academic affairs and student affairs divisions). Such positions are represented in this study. The NAC is purposeful in working with the external consultant/needs assessor to set policy; assist with designing procedures and instruments, and provide general direction and support for the NA. This task-oriented team meets over a designated period, typically two to three weeks, to achieve specific goals, engage in identifying and generating solution strategies, and develop action plans (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, 2000).

**Focus Groups.** In the second wave, the external consultant visits campus to facilitate the focus group. More specifically, the nominal group technique (NGT) is used to explicitly engage stakeholders. It consists of a structured small group with limited interaction and comprises six to ten participants whose main purpose is to produce a list of ideas and group views regarding a topic in order of priority in a relatively short time span (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). Results from this current investigation also support the presence of a diverse group of administrators (by job title under the auspices of academic and student affairs divisions). Therefore, such a group can meet the criteria to form a small heterogeneous group of stakeholders to engage in a two-hour dialogue about disability-related services.

The lead institutional stakeholder for this sample program NA (vice president for academic affairs) designated the group of stakeholders regarding DSS. An external consultant provides explanations about the group structure to stakeholders, noting time frames for activity and discourse. The state of DSS and its impact on SWD is paramount. For edification, the external consultant frames the discussion in terms of
level of needs and employs specific questions: (1) What major challenges do postsecondary administrators encounter in preparing for prospective SWD? (level 2 – secondary needs focus on administrators or service providers); (2) What circumstances require departmental personnel to facilitate academic accommodations and support services to SWD (level 1 – primary needs focus on SWD); and (3) What institutional components or organizational features are in place to actually address known preexisting needs? (level 3 – tertiary needs focus on organizational resources or solutions).

The group is asked to form a round-robin, one person at a time to generate a list of group ideas. Participants clarify unclear ideas, vote on common items, and rank-order priorities from highest to lowest. After a short break, the group reconvenes and learns the outcomes. The external consultant reviews the information for clarity, prioritization, and emerging themes. The following action themes emerge from the guided questions in relation to the levels of need: (a) develop policies and procedures; (b) designate a department responsible for SWD; (c) develop a process for students to access services; (d) inform faculty on how to respond to SWD requests for assistance; and (e) increase knowledge about disability laws governing PSI. The external consultant summarizes and collates the results from this session with the other data.

Community Forum. In the third wave, the consultant visits campus to facilitate a community forum, which is a mechanism for involving and obtaining information from a definitive population (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995), and can easily be tailored to local situations. A forum is most effective with a heterogeneous group of 50 or more and in
this case is designed to engage faculty. For example, the forum was organized as part of the university’s Fall Faculty Institute, since faculty attendance was mandatory. The process captures a sample of faculty from a cross-section of academic disciplines. Based on mandatory attendance, the group may be large and at least two hours should be allotted. In this example, the audience seats theater-style and a portable microphone is used to enhance dialogue. Fundamentals from this forum provide a more in-depth illustration of the implications of disability laws as applicable to postsecondary settings, inclusive of faculty roles. For example, the forum includes a review of the ADA, Section 504, OCR regulations and IDEA. While IDEA governs special education for secondary institutions (K-12), it has relative value to postsecondary transition issues that affect SWD and PSI.

The second half of the forum consists of open dialogue. The external consultant entertains questions with scenario type responses when applicable, to offer in-depth insight to the complex issues that involve SWD. With prior permission, the external consultant tapes the meeting to allow for intense reflection. Multiple ideas, concerns, and fears surface during this session, and debriefing offers some straightforward solutions.

Semi-structured Interviews. In the fourth and subsequent waves, the consultant visits campus to complete a series of face-to-face student interviews. The external consultant designs a standardized intake interview form and utilizes a structured protocol to gather information from students who seek disability-related services. A formal process offer institutions a way to track SWD. It should be noted that data in the
current study revealed that 14.5% of institutions did not track SWD. The intake interview form captures SWD demographic information (name; student identification number; birth date; high school and other colleges attended; graduate or GED recipient; Individualized Education Plan [IEP]; educational goals; community agency contact (e.g., Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran’s Administration, Mental Health); referral source (who referred them for disability-related services); disability type (Developmental Disabilities, Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Speech Impediment, Visual Impairment, Blindness, Emotional, Orthopedic, or Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, Other); medication; functional limitations; recommendations; disposition (data base tracking dates related to eligibility for services). This illustrates one part of the eligibility determination process, while the other relies upon actual records.

Records Indicator. In the final wave, the consultant visits campus to review archival records. To further document the status of “what is,” the consultant utilizes a fact-type assessment, which refers to statements that can verify the independent views or previous conceptions of individuals. For example, the external consultant gathers archival material to establish past and present conditions related to need areas or issues, the “what is” dimension (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). Records pertain to psychoeducational reports, secondary school-generated Multifactored evaluation team reports (MFE), Individualized Education Plans (IEP), comprehensive evaluations from state vocational rehabilitation departments, mental health or other community agencies
that document students’ disability diagnoses. The external consultant gleans this data to determine students’ disability status and whether additional documentation is required.

Major outcomes of this NA indicate that the semi-structured student interviews and records indicators were adopted as the official process to determine a student’s eligibility for services. Requests for documentation from external schools and agencies were honored and yielded appropriate disability documentation. Administrators incorporated ongoing ADA training for faculty into the fabric of the university. A handbook was developed to address policies and procedures for SWD. In addition, a faculty and staff handbook was also developed to aid them in understanding the various types of disabilities, their roles and institutional obligations. And finally, institutional stakeholders explored how to best use graduate level rehabilitation counseling students to assist in the DSS program and what funding sources may be available in the future.

In summary, external consultants bring a level of expertise and objectivity in implementing an NA to construct a formal DSS program. Various techniques should be employed that complement the institutional climate, to the extent possible. In this sample program NA, the consultant chose to convene group processes, interviews, and observations to document qualitative accounts at the university for implementing an effective service provision model. O’Day and Killeen (2002) contend that qualitative inputs have properties to complement quantitative data (i.e., surveys) and are most effective when applied concurrently. These methods can be valuable in addressing areas that otherwise would be weakened by using a solo approach.
In addition to documenting qualitative accounts from the group processes, the consultant looked for main themes, the degree of support for issues or points of contention, and then compared perceptions of what transpired. The consultant was able to determine the level of training needed to educate faculty in providing instructional accommodations to SWD. Furthermore, in dealing with group processes, it is necessary to exercise caution in assembling the focus group to avoid forming a unit that consists of subordinates and superordinates. When the community forum involves a large-group discussion format (i.e., all faculty), the external consultant should monitor the pace in order to balance the discourse to engage everyone and warrant feasible outcomes.

On another dimension, when conducting semi-structured interviews, the external consultant gains an unambiguous perspective of the students’ disability status. Face-to-face contact allows for personal observation of functional limitations and opportunities to clarify discrepancies about the disability in question. Completing the standardized Intake Interview form assists tremendously in identifying pertinent and yet systematic information among SWD.

Similarly, the records indicator/analysis process allows the external consultant to substantiate individual claims of disability. Perusing records (i.e., psychoeducational evaluations, mental health or medical reports) allows the external consultant to interpret medical and psychological data, etc. and sharply compare and contrast findings with self-reports from students. A precautionary measure must be taken when interpreting reports, as the diagnostic professional may not present results in positive terms which can create a misperception of the individual. While standardized measures such as the
intelligence quotient (I.Q.) and achievement scores are salient, other influential background and observational data need to be operationalized, as well. Such records can shed light on severe behavioral aspects not addressed elsewhere.

Synthesis of data from these processes depicts the institutional landscape. At this point, the external consultant can develop processes and procedures and tailor them to the institutional need in regard to SWD, faculty, and DSS administrator designee. However, this is merely one type of program NA. The sample university in this study had decentralized DSS services that were delivered through an adjunct office. Recall that variations across institutions and the dynamics of SWD invalidate the notion that “one size fits all.” Hence, there is no solo blueprint to address all situations. Therefore, institutional stakeholders must explore developing, redesigning and/or evaluating infrastructures in accordance with their institutional needs and merit.

This type of program NA can also provide institutions with the data needed to compete for funds earmarked to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities on multiple dimensions. Hence, these funding sources can often be used to commence or improve postsecondary DSS programs.

Potential Applications for Funding

The dynamics of this research about the state of DSS at HBCUs offer substantive guidance to develop or redesign existing infrastructures. For institutions with decentralized adjunct and nonexistent DSS structures, allocation of resources can pose a barrier to proactive movement. Given the recent budget cuts affecting numerous PSI, establishing a formal DSS program may invite stiff competition for dwindling funds
(Trombley, 2003). Understandably, most institutions typically cannot afford to earmark or redirect limited funds to subsidize new programs to include hiring qualified staff that specializes in a disability-related field. Despite the potential challenges and mitigating factors such as size or type of institution and/or organizational structure, minimal supports can assist in developing DSS programs, as seen by the sample program NA.

This data-driven analysis can be an impetus for institutions to access competitive funding sources such as the federal TRIO Programs that encompass Student Support Services (SSS), the Office of Postsecondary Education Programs (OPE), and Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), authorized within the Higher Education Act. Other federal macro resources include, but are not limited to, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) comprised of the Office of the Assistant Secretary (OAS) and three program components: Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP); National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR); and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Below is a brief synopsis for some of the aforementioned resources to assist institutions in their endeavors to address DSS programming:

1. NIDRR, through numerous programs, projects and research, provides an array of grants and other funding opportunities to serve individuals with disabilities and their families, [http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html?src=mr](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html?src=mr).

2. OSEP provides discretionary grants to institutions of higher education and other non-profit organizations to support research, demonstrations, technical assistance, and
dissemination, technology, personnel development, parent-training, and information centers, 
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html.

3. OPE offers demonstration projects to ensure that quality higher education for SWD is available. Projects support technical assistance and professional development activities for faculty and administrators in institutions of higher education to improve their ability to provide a quality postsecondary education for students with disabilities. Authorized under Title VII, Part D of the H.E. Amendments of 1998, 

OPE also provides the FIPSE monies that support innovative postsecondary educational improvement projects that respond to problems of national significance. 
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/index.html

4. Student Support Services is one of the TRIO Programs that help low-income, first-generation students and those with disabilities to stay in college until they earn their baccalaureate degrees, 

Resources toward DSS may be allocated from multiple sources within an institution. The financial health of an institution and sustainability of programs in question is a factor considered among competitive criteria for grants. To that end, the following resources offer collateral benefits to HBCUs: (a) Higher Education Programs (HEP) which administer programs that increase access for disadvantaged students, strengthen the capacity of colleges and universities that serve a high percentage of students, and provide teacher and student development resources. HEP also administers international education and foreign language studies programs as well as the HBCU
Capital Financing Program. (b) OPE provides the Title III Part B, Strengthening HBCUs Programs. Discretionary grants are available from the Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education Service (IDUES) for the purpose of providing financial assistance to establish or strengthen the physical plants, financial management, academic resources, and endowments of HBCUs


Other organizations with collateral benefits include the Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD), www.ahead.org and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Department of Education,

http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html which are both informational in nature.

Also, state-wide Departments of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) are self-contained entities that support qualified SWD. These DRS possess collaborative components and are capable of offsetting institutional costs by paying for direct services relevant to SWD needs.

Limitations

Although thought provoking, caution is recommended in interpreting these findings due to several limitations of the study; the most critical being the inability to validate a representative sample with a degree of confidence. All designated DSS administrators at HBCUs were invited to participate in the study and a respectable proportion of 93 administrators were elected to do so (67%). However, a larger response rate would provide a greater confidence in the generalization of results. As evidenced in the
literature, past and current trends suggest that institutions with formal DSS office are better equipped to provide sufficient accommodation provisions for SWD (Grossman, 2001; Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993; Schuck & Kroeger, 1993).

Another limitation of the study concerns the interpretation of the DSS administrator’s self-reporting. In contrast, not all respondents had expertise in DSS, but rather, they were the institutional designees. Legal provisions for SWD may have tempted respondents to inflate services in response to the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire itself may have been a symbolic representation to flag institutions if they did not comply with Section 504 and ADA. This trend may have been a concern for respondents where DSS are underdeveloped or nonexistent. These factors may be attributable, in part, to the extremely low participation (2.9%) from institutions that did not have a DSS office.

Shaw and Dukes (2001) summarized it best in that participants responding to a solo questionnaire at one moment in time must be deliberated. Nevertheless, any generalization will be subject to exceptions, given that postsecondary disability services is an evolving field with a relatively a short history, and therefore, results have a limited shelf life.

While there are many advantages to using Internet surveys, some disadvantages may have compromised the response rate in this study. Several respondents reported difficulty with accessing the survey due to noncompatible computer systems. Others reported technical difficulty in submitting their responses. In essence, this may have contributed to some of the nonresponse error.
This study represents only a glimpse of the complexity and magnitude of dimensions regarding service provision. I hope these findings will be used to focus and guide service delivery endeavors and prompt other such research. Through a coordinated effort, where research and theory intersect, professionals can learn best how to enhance the processes that lead to formal DSS programs that meet the needs of all SWD.

Implications for Educational Administrators

Results of this study speak to the complexity of issues, and magnitude of dimensions regarding service provision. While there are models of centralized and decentralized DSS programs for SWD (Schuck & Kroeger, 1993), a coordinated approach to service delivery is critical to providing effective accommodation provisions and institutional access (Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993). Knowledge of the accommodation process, understanding of institutional obligations, policies, and procedures in reference to SWD and inclusive learning paradigms must be part of the higher education landscape (Nutter & Ringgenberg, 1993; Grossman, 2001; Heyward, 1993; Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2003).

DSS programs are not prescriptive nor does one size fit all. However, the lack of professional consensus on key issues of programmatic structures and understanding the unique needs of SWD create major disconnects among faculty and DSP. In this triage, SWD have their responsibility to self-identify, present appropriate disability documentation, and request accommodations and services from the designated DSS Program. Preferably, students should directly deliver an accommodation letter from the
DSP to faculty early in the quarter/semester. DSP must take a proactive stance in educating faculty and should serve as intermediary to assist students in honing self-advocacy skills and fostering self-determination to effectively communicate their needs.

Faculty need to understand their responsibility for assisting students to follow university policies, such as a requirement that requests for accommodations to be initiated via the DSS Program or designated institutional liaison. This type of policy protects students, faculty, and the institution by ensuring consistency and reestablishing the collaborative relationship in facilitating effective accommodations (Grossman, 2001, Heyward, 1995; Simon, 2001). Because faculty are well-versed in their course content and typically do not specialize in disabilities, they will and should raise valid questions, particularly requests that (1) represent a fundamental alteration of a educational program or course; (2) forge an undue financial hardship; and/or (3) address personal services, are not enforceable in accordance with federal statutes. In a misguided attempt to remedy such situations, note that raising questions is not always sufficient grounds to deny requests for accommodations, but may lead to more consistent and thorough institutional address.

**Shifting from Remedial to Proactive Posture**

The growth of SWD has created a new challenge to members in PSI. Innovative approaches to the field of postsecondary disability services and command of the latest techniques are especially desirable, and under some circumstances, required. This phenomenon compels all PSI to become more legally and fiscally accountable for educating SWD. Over the years, there has been considerable resistance to accommodate
SWD, particularly those with conditions of an invisible nature (i.e., learning disabilities). Although judicial interpretation of disability laws are still evolving, guidance is appropriate to enable higher education practitioners to better meet the needs of SWD and to protect themselves from unnecessary expenditure and litigation. More needs to be done by institutions to create greater access through enhancing the provision of services and reasonable academic accommodations to SWD. This research can be used to cultivate the following practices:

1. Hire qualified personnel who specialize in disability services or a related discipline;
2. Establish and publish reasonable and sufficient guidelines for students, faculty, and staff to follow, regarding reasonable academic accommodations and support services for SWD in postsecondary education;
3. Make reasonable efforts to keep abreast of new technologies and instructional methodologies that may assist SWD to be otherwise qualified;
4. Develop a faculty and staff guidebook that can be disseminated;
5. Engage in the in-service training of administrators, staff, and faculty regarding the need for accommodations and access;
6. Examine academic and disciplinary policies and procedures to eliminate those that would discriminate against SWD;
7. Handle inquires and requests for accommodation provisions in a timely fashion;
8. Utilize AHEAD Best Practices Disability Documentation in Higher Education web link at [http://www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm](http://www.ahead.org/resources/index.htm);

Findings from this study can also be used to formulate comprehensive guidelines to address the needs of SWD through systematic programming. This research can be used to foster the following:

a) development of a formal DSS program;
b) expansion of ongoing disability-related services;
c) development of policies and procedures for SWD recommendations and solutions for accommodation provisions facilitated via centralized department with a DSS administrator;
d) implementation/sustainability of processes relating to the roles and responsibilities of SWD in accessing services;
e) implementation of written procedures to inform faculty of their role in responding to students’ requests for instructional accommodations;
f) design of a formal process to alert faculty of qualified SWD eligible for accommodation provisions when they self-identify;
g) presentation of a standardized document (Self-Identification form, an accommodation letter) at the beginning of each quarter/semester to all instructors from whom the SWD needs to request instructional accommodations.

These are only a handful of ideas that should make integration of SWD less frustrating, less controversial for the faculty, and more efficient for PSI. In addition,
from an institutional standpoint, there are other implications associated with funding and collateral benefits to gaining this type of organizational information. As noted in this study, data-driven analysis can be the impetus for institutional administrators to access competitive funding.

Future Research Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the need for additional research in several areas. Foremost, it is unacceptable for PSI not to accommodate the needs of qualified SWD. Section 504 and ADA provides guidance relevant to PSI obligations. This legislation does not dictate how DSS should be structured, but rather emphasizes that institutions receiving federal funding must be prepared to provide reasonable accommodations and services to qualified SWD upon request. Given the data in this study, it appears that the lack of a designated formal DSS office/unit poses barriers to meeting the aforementioned criteria.

Second, qualitative research is also needed to capture the complexities of individual institutions’ plight to serve SWD. This observation appears to be reinforced by Collins and Mowbray’s (2005) discussion that “most of the quantitative data on services provided by DSS Offices are highly skewed and show extreme variability” (p. 312). Hiring a consultant to conduct a needs assessment to evaluate institutional needs would provide a more intensive observation. For example, in this study, the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) programs are interwoven throughout many HBCUs, but institutional personnel reserve discretion on how to best assimilate these programs.
In this study, SSS differed in functionality within HBCUs. Some institutions utilized this program as a strong vehicle to support SWD, while others had minimal influence in reference to SWD.

Third, other aspects include, but are not limited to, complex interrelationships among human and financial resources, institutional awareness and priorities, and knowledge about the population of SWD on campus. Like other PSI, several reasons may be attributed to some HBCUs’ challenge to meet the needs of SWD, such as the lack of resources, financial support, or knowledgeable personnel who specialize in the delivery of rehabilitation and disability services (Stodden, 2001). Key stakeholders at numerous PSI are often marginally aware of institutional obligations as well as the rights and responsibilities of SWD to make reasonable academic adjustments or programmatic, physical, and curriculum modifications (www.AHEAD.org; Simon, 2001).

Fourth, like many institutions, HBCUs vary on a continuum in their capacity to provide adequate accommodation provisions. Although federal regulations necessitate institutions to designate a liaison to address disability concerns, Collins and Mowbray (2005) found that the extent to which institutions meaningfully implement this mandate is extremely diverse. Demographic, legislative, economic, and social changes that brought us to this point are increasing the momentum to be more proactive in accommodating individual differences.

Understanding the extent to which HBCUs engage in activities that promote/create greater access for SWD is salient to improving the current state of affairs. Future
research questions might include the following: 1) Is there a relationship between high-
and low-engagement institutions on organizational structure for DSS offices? 2) Is there
a difference between high- and low-engagement institutions regarding institution type,
size, and SWD who are eligible (number of students with self-disclosed disabilities)? 3)
What is an institution’s capacity to meet the criteria of discretionary grants (i.e., FIPSE,
NIDDR) in relation to the dynamics of DSS?

Finally, there is still only a dearth of literature that addresses the state of disability
services among HBCUs. Therefore, investigations regarding SWD in PSI need to be
expanded to include HBCUs. Brown’s (2004) commentary about African American
student achievement states it best:

To achieve improved results for African-American students, wherever
they are educated, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners must focus
on efforts that make meaningful, long-term improvements at colleges
while also targeting programs toward individual students. Coordinated
institutional initiatives can assist particular students in areas where gaps in
achievement are most pronounced
(http://www.diversityweb.org/index.cfm)
APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET TO PARTICIPANTS
INFORMATION SHEET
FOR
A National Web Census of Support Services for SWD
at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

You are invited to participate in a dissertation research study needs assessment of support services for students with disabilities (SWD) at American Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This study is being conducted by Robin L. Moore-Cooper, Doctoral Candidate at The Ohio State University (OSU) under the supervision of Bruce Growick, Ph.D., Associate Professor. We hope to discover the capacity of HBCUs, as an entity of postsecondary education, to offer accommodations and support services as needed by SWD. You have been selected to participate in this study as the designated campus representative responsible for overseeing services for SWD.

If you choose to participate in this study you may go to the following web address provided in this notice:

http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/bgrowick/hbcu.htm

This link will take you to a secure website that contains the Support Services for SWD Questionnaire. **You will need a personal ID code to complete the survey.** This questionnaire consists of five short sections about general college/university facts, disability incidence and prevalence, academic accommodations and supports, provision of services and demographic information. It is estimated that it will take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey.

**Your personal ID code is:** xxx-xxx-xxx

The study may contribute to: 1) the discovery of the state of disability services at HBCUs and their capacity to provide support services to SWD; 2) the ability to document the needs of this entity nationally; 3) demonstrate the utility of information that can be constructive in developing a blueprint for establishing, enhancing and/or implementing formal disability services; 4) resources to enhance institutional programming and 5) broaden the sparse literature that currently examines disability support services at HBCUs.
I assure your identity will be kept in the strictest of confidence. To ensure confidentiality, the website has been constructed so that participant’s need a personal ID code to complete the questionnaire. The confidentiality of all information collected in this study will be safeguarded in a manner that participants cannot be identified directly or indirectly. Information collected and recorded from this study may be used to fulfill the educational requirements of my dissertation, publication in professional journal(s), conferences and other professional presentations, etc. AT NO TIME WILL I USE YOUR NAME NOR SINGLE OUT YOUR INSTITUTION.

In addition, there are no known or perceived risks or benefits to you as a participant in this study. Indisputably, you will be contributing to an underrepresented and vital body of knowledge among HBCUs in higher education.

Once again, your identity and the description of your institution will not be used in this study. Instead, you and your institution will be assigned an identity CODE by this researcher. Only I will know who the codes are assigned to. This code will be used for tracking purposes only. Data will only be reported in aggregate form. You may withdraw from participation at anytime while answering the survey by simply leaving the website. However, after you have completed the questionnaire and submitted your responses you will be unable to withdraw from participation.

We invite you to ask any questions you may have by contacting: Robin L. Moore-Cooper, moore-cooper.1@osu.edu, at (937) 545-3694. My faculty adviser is Bruce Growick, Ph.D., growick.1@osu.edu, at OSU (614) 292-8463. For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Responsible Research Practices (614) 688-8457.

If you complete the entire questionnaire and submit it, you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a one-year paid Full Professional Membership to the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) to enhance your knowledge about postsecondary disability services. The value of this membership is $185.00, beginning from January 1st and running through December 31st. As a professional member, the recipient will be entitled to multiple discounts to professional activities sponsored by AHEAD, selected journal subscriptions and much more. For more information on AHEAD see www.ahead.org.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. THE DATA YOU PROVIDE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE. THIS FORM IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Respectfully,

Investigator’s Signature
Doctoral Candidate

Principal Investigator’s Signature
Faculty Advisor

Date
Date

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APPENDIX B

E-MAIL REMINDERS TO NONSPONDENTS
Subject line: Web Questionnaire of Support Servs for Stu with Disabilities @ HBCUs

Dear Disability Services Representative:

Please allow me to interrupt your busy day. I mailed your Information Sheet on March 14. I noticed that you have not logged onto the Web site to participate in:

A National Web Census of Support Services for SWD
At Historically Black Colleges and Universities

In case you need to recall how to access it:
The Support Services for SWD Questionnaire is located at http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/bgrowick/hbcu.htm and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

If you have forgotten or misplaced your 9-digit personal ID code which is required to complete the survey, please email me at moore-cooper.1@osu.edu

Indisputably, you will be contributing to a vital body of knowledge among HBCUs in higher education. The results will offer suggestions to promote equitable access and enhance institutional programming in postsecondary education for SWD. Your input is core to this process!

Once you have completed the entire questionnaire, you are eligible for the drawing to win a free Professional MEMBERSHIP to AHEAD (valued at $185.00).

Thanks in advance,

Robin Moore-Cooper

________________________________________________________________________
Investigator’s Signature       Date
Doctoral Candidate

________________________________________________________________________
Faculty Adviser       Date
Associate Professor, Rehabilitation Services
Dear Disability Services Representative:

I need 15 minutes of your time.

ARE YOU HAVING PROBLEMS accessing the survey --

A National Census of Support Services for SWD
Among Historically Black Colleges and Universities

at this web address?

http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/bgrowick/hbcu.htm

If so, I apologize. It may be because OSU’s system is not compatible with yours. If you can access it, please do so. For your convenience, I have included your 9-digit personal ID code: which is required to complete the survey.

If you cannot, I invite you to email your fax number and I will fax the survey to you. You may complete and return via fax to me.

Your input is a valuable indispensable element to this study!!

If you have questions, please contact me at moore-cooper.1@osu.edu or (937) 545-3694.

Robin Moore-Cooper

In

vestigator’s Signature Date
Doctoral Candidate
3rd E-Mail Reminder to Nonrespondents

Subject Line: National Disability Survey HBCUs

A National Census of Support Services for SWD
Among Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Available at
http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/bgrowick/hbcu.htm

A Friendly Reminder as my April 22nd DEADLINE approaches:

- Takes approximately 15 minutes or less to complete
- Refer to previous email (4/6/2005) for 9-digit ID CODE
- Contact me if you are experiencing problems accessing and/or submitting the survey
- If you choose not to respond to the survey and do not want any future communication, reply via email “NOT PARTICIPATING”

Thanks for your support as we begin to chart a national research agenda,

robin

If you have questions, please contact me at moore-cooper.1@osu.edu or (937) 545-3694.

Robin Moore-Cooper

Investigator’s Signature Date
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX C

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WEB

QUESTIONNAIRE
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SWD)

QUESTIONNAIRE

This study will examine the status and assess the needs regarding the provision of services for students with disabilities at American Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Your input is vital to this process. This questionnaire consists of five short sections concerning general college/university facts, disability incidence and prevalence, academic accommodations and supports, provision of services and demographic information. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Directions for completing the QUESTIONNAIRE. For each question, click on your response(s) once. If you wish to change a response, simply click the new response for that question. If you choose “Other, Please Specify” proceed to type your response in the space provided. For questions that require more than one response, click on all boxes that apply. Please do not leave any question blank. At the end of this questionnaire, you must click on ‘SUBMIT’ to complete this process. NOTE: Some fields are required before you can submit this form. If you receive an error message redirecting you to complete a particular field, you must use the browser’s back button/arrow rather than clicking the “return to form” link. Otherwise, previous responses will be erased.

To navigate from question to question, CLICK on desired responses. DO NOT use the ENTER/RETURN key until you are ready to submit the questionnaire.

TYPE IN YOUR 9-DIGIT PERSONAL ID CODE in the box:
example 333-333-000

Section 1: General College/University Information

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

1. Title of Person Responding:
   o Director of Disability Services
   o Coordinator of Disability Services
   o Dean of Students
   o Other, Please Specify_______________________

2. Type of Institution:
   o 2-year or community college
   o 4-year private college/university
   o 4-year public college/university
   o Other, Please Specify_______________________
3. To whom do you directly report at your institution?
   o Vice President for Academic Affairs
   o Vice President for Student Affairs/Services
   o Director of a department
   o Other, Please Specify_______________________

4. Total student enrollment of your institution:
   o Less than 3,000
   o 3,000 – 9,999
   o 10,000 – or more

5. Your campus arrangement:
   o Residential (provides on and/or off-campus residence assignments)
   o Commuter (does not provide residence assignments)
   o A combination

IF A COMMUTER INSTITUTION ONLY, GO TO SECTION 2, QUESTION #2

Section 2: Incidence and Prevalance

1. What type of residential modifications do you afford students with disabilities SWD?
   o Daily assistance in Student Health Services (e.g., bathroom)
   o Personal Care Attendance (PCA)
   o Residence assignment for accessible facilities (e.g., room on first floor, shower)
   o Other (Specify______________________________)

2. Do you track the number of students with disabilities?
   o Yes
   o No

   If so, what is the total number of students with self-disclosed disabilities?_______

3. How are services for SWD structured at your institution?
   o An office specifically designated for students with disabilities
   o A combination office, inclusive of a specific unit for students with disabilities (i.e., Educational Support Services: Disability Services, Tutorial Center, English as a Second Language)
   o Support services are delivered through an adjunct office (i.e., student services/affairs, academic affairs, dean of students, resource center)
   o Other, Please Specify_______________________
4a. Including the department head (i.e., director), how many full and part-time staff work in the disability services program?

____ full-time? _____ part-time?

4b. What staff positions? (mark all that apply)
- Technical Support
- Clerical Support
- Paraprofessional (i.e., Interpreters)
- Professional Counseling
- Other, Please Specify_______________________

5. How many years of professional experience do you have working with individuals with disabilities? _____

6. Indicate the type of disabilities students have self-disclosed (mark all that apply):
- Developmental Disabilities/Mental Retardation (also know as Developmental Handicap [DH])
- Hearing Impairment
- Speech Impairment
- Deaf
- Emotional/Psychiatric Disorder
- Orthopedic (Physical Disabilities)
- Learning Disabilities (i.e., dyslexia [reading], dysgraphia [written expression], dyscalculia [math])
- Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Legally Blind
- Health Related Conditions (i.e., cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, sickle cell anemia)
- Other, Please Specify_______________________
Section 3: Academic Accommodations and Supports

12. At your institution, what academic accommodations and/or support services are available as needed by students with disabilities? (mark all that apply)

- Alternative Exam Administration (i.e., Extended Time, Test Proctor Reader/Scribe)
- Classroom Modification (e.g., Sign Language Interpreter, assistive listening device, permission to tape record lectures, note takers, use of calculator)
- Alternative print materials (e.g., audio tapes, Braille, tactile images, enlarged font print materials)
- Adaptive Physical Education Courses or Classroom Assistants
- Advocacy Support
- Assistive Technology/Software (i.e., Dragon Naturally Speaking, Text Aloud, JAWS)
- Assistive Listening Devices (i.e., FM amplification systems, directional microphones)
- Teletype Communication (TTY)/Telecommunication Device (TDD) (telephone communication for Deaf and hard of hearing)
- Adapted Workstations (e.g., in Computer Labs: Large monitors, CCTV (screen magnification); ZoomText magnifier software)
- Alternate Text Format (e.g., Textbooks on Tape, Textbooks in Electronic Format)
- Utilize Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D)
- Special Equipment (e.g., arrangement for furniture-table, chairs)
- Disability Resource Handbook for Faculty & Staff
- Tutoring
- Other, Please Specify_______________________
### Section 4: Provision of Services

Mark the appropriate box that best describes your current level of engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Almost always</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Serves as an advocate for students with disabilities to ensure equal access.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>2. Distribute information through institutional publications regarding disability services and how to access them.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Provide services that promote access to the campus community (e.g., TDD’s, alternative materials formatting, interpreter services, adaptive technology).</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Encourage faculty, staff and administrators to rely solely on their own judgment regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, physical, and curriculum modifications.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide individualized disability awareness training for campus constituencies (e.g., faculty, staff, administrator).</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Provide feedback to faculty regarding general assistance available through the office that provides services for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Develop written policies and guidelines for student rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality of disability information and for settling a formal complaint regarding the determination of a “reasonable accommodation.”</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Determine with students, appropriate academic adjustments consistent with the student’s documentation.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Develop and maintain written policies and guidelines regarding procedures for determining and accessing “reasonable accommodations.”</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Avoid the development of procedures for settling a formal complaint regarding the determination of a “reasonable accommodation” and handling confidentiality of disability information.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Collect data to monitor the use of disability services.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Attend professional conferences that specifically address disability-related issues.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<td>15. Prohibit the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) from overriding institutional decisions.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</table>

Section 5: Demographic Information

Directions: Please mark the appropriate box that best describes your attributes. All responses will remain confidential and are relevant to the unique perspectives involving postsecondary disability services.

1. Your Highest Degree:
   - B.A., B.S.
   - M.A., M.S., M.Ed.
   - Ph.D., Ed.D.
   - Other, Please Specify ___________________________

2. Your Employment Status?
   - Full-time
   - Part-time

3. Your Gender:
   - Male
   - Female
4. Your Racial/Ethnic background:
   - African
   - African American/Black (non-Hispanic)
   - European/White (non-Hispanic)
   - Hispanic/Latino
   - Asian American
   - Native American
   - Other, Please Specify_______________________

5. In which decade were you born?
   - 1930 – 1939
   - 1940 – 1949
   - 1950 – 1959
   - 1960 – 1969
   - 1970 – 1979
   - 1980 – 1989

6. Field of Highest Degree:
   - Counseling
   - Special Education
   - Rehabilitation Counseling/Services
   - Higher Education and Student Affairs
   - Student Personnel Administration
   - Social Work
   - Other, Please Specify_______________________

If you have completed the entire questionnaire,
you are eligible for the drawing to win a free Professional MEMBERSHIP to AHEAD

Your questionnaire is NOT complete until you click on “Submit”

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!!
LIST OF REFERENCES


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Schuck, J., & Kroeger, S. (1993). Essential elements in effective service delivery. In S. Kroeger & J. Schuck (Eds.), Responding to disability issues in student affairs (New Directions for Student Services, No. 64, Fall, 1993)

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