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I, Stacy L. Downing,
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This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Mark Gooden, Ph.D.
       Eric Abercrumbie, Ph.D.
       Vanessa Allen-Brown, Ph.D.
       Pat O'Reilly, Ph.D.
It takes a village: The academic and social integration of first year African American students at a predominantly white Institution

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By
Stacy L. Downing

B.A., University of Cincinnati, 1996
M.A., Xavier University, 1998

Committee Chair: Dr. Mark A. Gooden
ABSTRACT

Research has indicated that there has been an increase on work being conducted regarding retention and development of first year African American students at PWIs. The available research indicated many factors that contribute to the low academic achievement and social integration of African American students at these institutions. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the academic and social integration of first year African Americans at a predominantly White institution (PWI). Directed by Vincent Tinto’s model of student departure, which provides an explanation for why students leave the university factoring in their academic performance and social integration, a goal of the study was to find what academic and social integration factors cause this student population to withdraw before obtaining a college degree.

Logistic regression analysis was employed to investigate how peer group interaction, interaction with faculty, faculty concern for student development, academic and intellectual development and institutional and goal commitment predict retention. After conducting logistic regression analysis, two predictors were found to be statistically reliable in predicting retention of first year African American students, faculty concern for student development and teaching and institutional and goal commitment, indicating that academic integration is most difficult for first year African American students.
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Willie Ed Downing, my brother Arthur James Downing, my great grandmother Ollie Myles and my cousin Judy Sanders. Although you are not here in the physical, your spirit surrounds me and gives me what I need to navigate through my life’s journey and create the paths that will continue to leave a legacy of greatness.

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   Dow to it…
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   I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am – African proverb

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. – Isaiah 40:31
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

*Historical Overview of African Americans in Higher Education*

The earliest evidence of African Americans participating in the realm of higher education dates back to the post Civil War Era when efforts were implemented to organize the education of newly freed slaves in America after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. At this time, Black colleges were being established by missionaries who were vested in providing educational opportunities for African Americans (Fleming, 1984). Initial efforts to establish colleges for African Americans in the South were actively discouraged because it was illegal for slaves to receive an education. But with the fall of the Confederacy, missionaries extended their efforts into the South and the number of schools that were established for the sole purpose of educating African Americans continued to grow.

Despite the growing efforts to increase their access to higher education, it was still very difficult if not impossible for African American students to acquire an education that was of the same quality as their White counterparts. This can be attributed to several factors. Originally, Black colleges were established with the intent of providing African Americans with skills to become domestic workers. Very few developed advanced curricula and even fewer granted bachelor of art degrees (Fleming, 1984). In addition to the low standards of learning within the colleges, Whites in the South remained hostile towards the idea of African Americans becoming educated and continued to actively interfere in the process. These and other factors led to the perception that African
American students were “uneducated products of slavery, who had not attained the usual qualifications for college attendance.” (Fleming, 1984, pg. 4).

Improvements in the quality of education for African Americans were slow to come. These improvements can be illustrated through the Morrill Acts. The first Morrill Act of 1862 provided federal support for state-level public higher education, especially in agriculture, education and military services. This act made provisions “without respect to racial categorization” (Brown, 2001, pg. 35). The second Morrill Act of 1890 mandated that these funds include institutions that created facilities that were separate but equal for educating African American students. Many states in the South elected to establish separate facilities for the “sole purpose of having a legal beneficiary for the new federal support” (Brown, 2002, pg. 264). These institutions are often referred to as the “1890 institutions” (Brown, 2002).

Although the Morrill Acts stated that these institutions were to be equal, Black public colleges never did obtain resources, funding or facilities that were equivalent to those of White institutions. The persistence of inequality between Black and White institutions of higher learning eventually led to the Doctrine of Separate but Equal, which was instituted following the Plessy v Ferguson Supreme Court case in 1896. This decision made segregation legal by ruling that it was acceptable to develop racially divided social systems. States at this time had created “dual collegiate structures of public education, most of which operated exclusively for Caucasians in one system and African Americans in the other” (Brown, 1999, pg. 15). In addition, this case legalized the separate but equal doctrine with the intention of providing better educational opportunities for African American students.
Establishment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established and funded by black churches, the American Missionary Association, Freedman’s Bureau, local communities and private philanthropists (Brown, 2001). There are 103 HBCUs in the United States today. These institutions were founded with the mission of preparing and empowering African American students to succeed in society. HBCUs, collectively, became known as a “product of a racist and segregated society” (Brown, Donahoo & Bertrand, 2001, pg. 564). In addition, these institutions serve as a safe haven in a hostile environment. HBCUs guaranteed college access to African American students and provided them with an opportunity to pursue a higher education degree that they would not have had a predominantly White institution (PWI).

The early curriculum issues of HBCUs were debated and influenced by W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington. Both men assisted in giving leadership to African American students. W.E.B. DuBois believed that these institutions should develop an elite group, which he dubbed “the talented tenth,” that would challenge racism and lead the African American community to be socially, politically and economically independent. On the other hand, Booker T. Washington believed that HBCUs should be utilized to train African Americans to fulfill vocational roles. The establishment of Tuskegee Institute in 1881 was a result of his influence (Brown, 2001; Fleming, 1984). Even though their ideas were polarized, the curriculum of HBCUs reflects the influence of both Washington and DuBois, which is a combination of industrial and liberal arts.

In the social arena, HBCUs tend to be more accepting and emphasize black consciousness, Black history, racial pride, and mental health (Brown et al, 2001). These
institutions continue to function as a necessity to educate many students who would otherwise not have the opportunity to obtain a college degree (Brown & Davis, 2001).

The constructed environments of these institutions allowed African American students to help themselves succeed in life. These institutions serve a dual role, they must “meet the same curriculum standards as other institutions while also providing African American students with a culture-specific pedagogy” (Brown et al, 2001, pg. 559).

Brown et al (2001) stated that HBCUs have continued to promote academic superiority as well as cultural relevance. The establishment of HBCUs and their influence on higher education for African Americans has a distinguished timeline, which began in 1837 with Cheyney State University in Pennsylvania to Clark Atlanta University in 1989 in Georgia (Brown, 2001).

Beginnings of desegregation in education

Prior to Brown v Board of Education (1954), African Americans seeking to obtain equitable educational opportunities began filing lawsuits seeking admission to PWIs. In the case of Sweatt v Painter (1950), an African American student was refused admission to the University of Texas Law School on the grounds that its counterpart, Texas Law School for African Americans only, provided equal educational quality and offered the same degree. The student stated that the University of Texas Law School had more professors, resources, and prestige than the school for African American students. The Supreme Court decided that under the equal protection clause this student must be admitted because the school for African Americans did not afford equal facilities. In addition, the case of McLaurin v Oklahoma (1950) an African American student who was admitted into graduate school was given different treatment than White students based on
his race. The student had to sit in designated areas in the classroom, library and cafeteria. The Supreme Court also held that under the equal protection clause that this African American student must receive the same treatment as other students.

These and other cases served as stepping stones for *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) and the road to desegregation in education. Many more cases can be cited that defined valuable moments in American history that illustrated separate but equal had no place in the hallways and classrooms of the educational system.

The Civil Rights Era was the next period in which significant strides were made in regards to education for African Americans. In 1954, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v Board of Education* overturned the doctrine of separate but equal introduced by *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896). This ruling stated that school settings restricted by race was unconstitutional. In that same year, several other lawsuits were brought forth that challenged segregation in higher education. In the case of *Tureaud v Board* (1954), African American students brought suit against the Louisiana State University citing that the courses offered at Southern University, a college exclusively for African Americans, were not equal to the courses offered at Louisiana State University. The plaintiffs maintained that a degree obtained at Southern was not equal to a degree obtained at Louisiana State. In another case, *Wichita Falls v Battle* (1954), five African American students sued because they were denied admission into a junior college. The plaintiffs possessed all the qualifications necessary for matriculation, but applicants were denied admission based solely on their race and color, and they claimed that this constituted a denial of educational opportunities, facilities and advantages afforded to Whites students.
The latter two cases reinforced *Brown v. Board of Education* and the idea that segregation in institutions of higher education is illegal.

These landmark civil cases and decisions coupled with the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 increased the attendance of African American students at HBCUs as well as at PWIs.

*The Present: The Plight of African Americans at PWIs*

The enrollment profile of African American students in institutions of higher learning has continued to improve over the past several decades. African American students comprise the highest percentage of students of color in colleges and universities throughout the United States. Of the 28% of students of color enrolled, 11% are African American. The Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics reported that a higher proportion of African Americans are attending college than twenty years ago. In 2000, 31% of 18- to 24-year-old African Americans were enrolled in colleges and universities, up from 19% in 1980. And the number of African American high school graduates has also increased, from 28% in 1980 to 39% in 2000. As the number of African Americans enrolled in colleges and universities has increased, their overall percentage in the student body has increased as well. In 1980, African Americans represented 9% of all students enrolled in colleges and universities. Two decades later, they comprised 11% of the total enrollment. In 2000, 227,239 or 14% of the nations 1,730,318 African American college students were attending HBCUs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

In spite of the positive trend for African Americans in higher education, research findings suggest that African American students at PWIs have many more obstacles to
overcome than their peers who attend HBCUs (Fleming, 1984; Allen, Epps, Haniff, 1991; Townsend, 1994). In 1984, Jacqueline Fleming conducted a historical study examining the effects of intellectual performance and psychosocial adaptation of African American students at a HBCU and PWI. It was concluded that African American students who graduated from a PWI derived lower levels of intellectual and psychological development than their peers who graduated from a HBCU. Some scholars suggest that strong psychological and social factors will assist African American students with making the decision to attend a HBCU (Parker & Flowers, 2003; Williamson, 1999). Allen (1992) states that African American students at HBCUs display more positive psychological adjustment, more significant academic gains and greater cultural awareness because the fit between the institution and the student seems more auspicious at HBCUs. These students will have a desire to attend an institution that will support their student development in a non-hostile environment. Furthermore, African American students attending HBCUs feel more connected, engaged and supported at HBCUs than those who attend PWIs (Fleming, 1984).

Study Purpose and Research Questions

Research efforts regarding the retention and development of first year African American students at PWIs have increased over the last 30 years. (Fleming, 1984; Lang & Ford, 1988, Flowers, 2004; Robinson, 2003, Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). The available research has indicated that many factors contribute to the low academic achievement and social integration of African American students at these institutions (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1990; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999; Livingston & Stewart, 1987). Findings from these studies offered
guidance for the current study which focuses on the academic and social integration and retention of first year African American students at a PWI.

Successful academic and social integration of first year African American students are major determinants of whether these students return to campus for their second year. Because these students often find it especially difficult to make the transition from high school to college at PWIs, retention rates have reached a record low.

In this study, quantitative research methods have been used to explore the relationship between academic and social integration and retention of first year African American students at a state-supported, Research I institution located in the Midwest. These research methods were employed to provide a greater understanding of the academic and social dynamics of these students with relation to the institution, faculty, staff and other students and how these aspects impact retention.

The following research question guided the current study:

1. To what extent will academic and social integration variables predict retention of first year African American students at a PWI?

Peer-group interaction, interaction with faculty, faculty concern for student development and teaching, academic and intellectual development and institutional and goal commitment were used as the independent variables in this study to predict retention, the dependent variable, of first year African American students at this PWI.

*Significance of the Study*

Investigations have been undertaken to predict educational outcomes and determine the factors that contribute to the successful retention of first year African
American students at predominantly White institutions. These investigations have brought to the forefront the disparities between students of color and their White peers and have produced several theories about retention programs that can be implemented to increase the likelihood of students returning to campus for their second year (Schwartz & Washington, 1999). But it has also been suggested that more research be conducted in the area of retaining first year African American students due to the shortage of data available on the prediction of college success for African American students (Lang & Ford, 1992; Rice and Alford, 1989; Schwartz & Washington, 1999).

As previously mentioned, many students do not complete their matriculation because they experience difficulties integrating into the academic and social systems of the institution. The first aim of this study is to reveal the importance of successfully integrating first year African American students into the academic and social systems of a PWI. It is likely that the persons who develop and maintain academic and social systems have overlooked the necessity of integration. The second aim of this study is to provide PWIs with avenues to implement programs that would address issues experienced specifically by first year African American students. Research findings suggest that African American students have a tendency to rely on subcultures to help them navigate the university system during their first year (Williamson, 1999; D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Rice & Alford, 1989; Thompson & Fretz, 1991). This subculture plays an integral role in the student’s academic and social development.

Finally, this study is geared towards motivating university administrators who are interested in the success of these students and presenting them with an opportunity to explore and improve ways to integrate them into the academic and social systems of the
institution. With attention focused on the successful integration of African American students, the likelihood of increasing enrollment and graduation rates at PWIs will have a significant outcome for African American students.

Definition of Terms

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) - An institution of higher education comprised mostly of White students.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) – Colleges or universities that were established before 1964 with the principle and mission of educating African Americans who were excluded from higher education opportunities at PWIs.

Academic Integration – The assimilation of college students into the academic system of the institution. Academic integration involves the formal education of students. Academic integration can also be defined as a student’s perceived academic performance and intellectual development.

Social Integration – The assimilation of college students into the social system of the institution. This involves the daily life, personal needs and interaction of students with faculty, staff and peers. In addition, social integration is the quality of a student’s relations with peers, faculty and staff.

Retention – The number of students in a cohort enrolled at a college or university from one period of time to the next. Tinto’s model of student departure states that retention is a function of a complex series of interactions between a student and the institutional environment. It is the extent to which the individual becomes academically and socially integrated into the formal and informal systems of the institution. (Tinto, 1987).
Recruitment – The process of adding students, faculty, and staff to a university community.

Persistence – The ability to matriculate and graduate from a university in spite of academic and social problems. In addition, persistence is the product on-going behavioral and perceptual interactions between the student and aspects of the campus environment (Berger & Milem, 1999).

Perceptions – Gaining awareness and understanding of the environment through mental images with attention to details and behavior for the purpose of arriving at a judgment.
CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is Vincent Tinto’s (1993) model of student departure. This theory presents an explanation for why students leave the university factoring in their academic performance, social integration and perceptions of the campus climate.

Tinto argues that studies evaluating low student retention have been viewed in a one-dimensional form and universities have not taken the time to delve into the complex factors that influence a student’s departure. He emphasizes that 47% of all students who start at a four-year college fail to earn a degree from the college, and furthermore, 56% of those who dropout do so before they start their second year.

Tinto’s (1993) model of student departure explains that the decision for a student to leave is influenced by several factors both individual and institutional that suggest no one behavior or reason prevails. But he does cite several major causes that can contribute to student withdrawal from higher education. These causes are: (1) academic difficulty, in which students are unable or unwilling to meet the minimum academic standards; (2) adjustment difficulties, in which students find problems making the transition from high school to the demands of college; (3) goals, students begin college with vague notions of what they want to do, when goals go unresolved it undermines their willingness to perform the work required to stay in college; (4) commitments, some students have the ability to do the coursework required, but not the commitment, background characteristics can also interact with each other and influence the commitment of the student to the institution (McDaniel & Graham, 2001); (5) finances, most leave because
they cannot meet the financial obligations to stay; (6) fit, some depart because they feel as though they do not “fit” or do not “belong” socially or academically, resulting in a lack of congruence between the individual and the institution; and (7) involvement, some leave because they feel lonely, isolated and unable to establish connections (Tinto, 1993). All these causes of departure share a common theme, departure is “primarily the reflection of individual actions and therefore largely due to the inability or willingness of the individual to successfully complete the tasks associated with college” (Tinto, 1993, p. 85).

Tinto goes further to postulate in terms of subcultures within the institution. He emphasizes that White colleges are marked by a dominant culture, one that sets the tone for a student’s collegiate experience. For example, African American students do not normally conform to this culture in order to persist, but create a subculture, which is characterized by a group of individuals with similar values and beliefs. This notion adds to the concept that since the creation of subcultures is a pre-requisite for persistence, the absence of them will be a condition for departure.

Another component of the model of student departure focuses on the academic and social systems of the institution. Colleges are made up of these systems, which establish formal and informal structures and communities. The academic system is comprised of the formal education of the students while the social system is comprised of day to day interactions and personal needs of the students (Tinto, 1993). This model is useful for studying student departure in higher education because it not only distinguishes between the different types of individual departure, but also between the various forms of academic and social integration.
In addition, Tinto elaborates that one system can conceivably have no effect on the other. In other words, an African American student could achieve well academically and still depart because of his/her inability to establish an effective social system. Although the individual systems many not affect each other in some circumstances, they inevitably become interdependent because events in one system could possibly have an impact, in some way, on the other system (Tinto, 1993). On the other hand, many African American students continue to graduate while not integrating into both systems equally.

Another vital component of student departure deals with associations in external communities. Circumstances that happen outside the institution, which involve family and members of the student’s community, may play an important role in determining departure. The demands of external communities along with obligations and commitments may override the demands of the institution. When the academic and social systems are not strong, external systems undermine the persistence of a student, especially an African American student, to complete his/her degree or their first year of college.

The last aspect of Tinto’s model concentrates on the longitudinal aspect of departure. This aspect explains that students come to college with their own set of characteristics which contribute to their commitment to higher education. They come with a wide range of family backgrounds, skills, resources, and educational experiences and achievements, each having a direct impact on departure from the institution. While these students are attempting to integrate into the academic and/or social systems of a PWI, the aforementioned characteristics can deter or reinforce the student’s commitment to higher education.
Literature Review

African American Students Experiences at PWIs

A plethora of studies have been undertaken with the goal of understanding the experiences of African Americans students at PWIs (D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Fleming, 1984; Allen, et al 1991; Schwitzer, et al 1999; Douglas, 1998; Cabrera, et al 1990; Flowers, 2004; Schwartz & Washington, 1999, McDaniel & Graham, 2001). African American students come to college expecting more academic and social integration than they find and their consequent anger and despair contribute to a desire for separation and withdrawal. To understand the experiences of African American students at PWIs, institutions must take into account students’ social backgrounds, their adjustment to the academic and social climates of the campus in order to obtain an accurate portrait of these first year students and how they proceed through their collegiate experience (D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993). The perceptions that African American students conjure up at PWIs consist of psychological factors that pertain to the racial climate, discrimination, isolation, alienation, and stereotypes (Parker &Flowers, 2003; Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, Mugenda, 2000-2001; Wallace & Bell, 1999; Townsend, 1994).

Campus racial climate

Campus racial climate can be defined as the perceptions of a university’s faculty, students, support staff, professional staff, and administrators toward specific groups on the university’s campus and racial issues. Campus racial climate was developed under laws and or practices that have excluded African Americans since the establishment of formal education. This climate has become an integral component of the structure and the
fabric of predominantly White institutions (Jones, 2001). For example, the civil rights movement and the elimination of segregation have resulted in an elevation of enrollment of students of color at PWIs that has consequently increased the African American student population’s awareness of inequalities in education for African American students (Hurtado, 1992). Increased enrollment of African American students has also elevated awareness and evoked a response from the dominant group as they have been forced to defend their privilege. “Race relation theorists propose that racial conflict arises out of a sense of threat to group position, when the dominant group perceives the risk of losing power, resources, or other advantages” (Hurtado, 1995, pg. 545). This in essence created and continues to perpetuate a campus climate that embraces overt and covert racial tension. Hurtado (1992) further argues that campus racial conflicts are connected to elements in an institution's racial climate that dissuade the relationship between African American students and their White peers, faculty, and administration.

Furthermore, Wallace and Bell (1999) conducted a study in which they concluded that when the campus racial climate is negative, African American students struggle to succeed academically and socially. These students tend to tolerate their surroundings while missing out on crucial opportunities for development. For instance, Fisher and Hartman (1995) found that a majority of African American students experience difficulty in acquainting themselves with the resources and services that are provided to assist them with their academic, social and leadership development while attending college. These resources and services are critical factors in student development and play a key role in their successful matriculation.
Perceptions of discrimination

The campus racial climate can perpetuate real and perceived acts of discrimination for African American students inside and outside the classroom. Feelings of discrimination are considered unique in that they are present among students of color and are possibly heightened by the perception of not belonging at the institution (Hall, 1999; Douglas, 1998). These feelings may directly impact the decision to withdraw. To further explore this ideology, Fleming (1984) suggested that African American students’ perceptions of racism and discrimination can result in a mistrust of Whites, as well as feelings of alienation, isolation, and hostility that ultimately result in a desire to withdraw. Accordingly, Parker and Flowers (2003) go further to illustrate in their study that African American students perceive that PWIs are not receptive to their needs, dispositions or abilities. Moreover, they perceive these institutions as failing to adequately integrate them into the campus community and exerting minimal effort in assisting them to feel welcomed.

Additionally, African American students feel they are being “drowned in a sea of Whiteness” (Holmes, Embers, Robinson, & Mugenda, 2000-2001, pg. 95). They do not feel welcome to participate in student life organizations and activities; they describe themselves as being “appendages that are tolerated but not integrated into the whole” (Holmes et al, 2000-2001, pg 95). These students become further disenchanted with the low number of African American faculty members. This contributes to feelings of being underrepresented, isolated, alienated and unsupported (Fleming, 1984; Wallace & Bell, 1999; Lang and Ford, 1992).
Stereotypes continue to plague African American students at PWIs. The constant awareness of their minority status becomes disconcerting. Claude Steele’s theory of stereotypic threat illustrates these feelings. He elaborates that when “capable Black college students fail to perform as well as their White counterparts, the explanation often has less to do with preparation or ability than with the threat of stereotypes about their capacity to succeed” (Steele, 1999, pg. 147). African American students internalize these negative stereotypes as performance anxiety and low expectations for achievement, which they then fulfill.

**Social support systems**

Although African American students appear to have an abundance of negative perceptions regarding PWIs, most of them stay to complete their education because they have found effective ways to cope. They seem to connect with the campus environment by establishing social networks. They find it necessary to create their own social and cultural networks in order to remedy their exclusion from the wider campus community (Allen, 1992). For instance, social support is defined as the degree to which a person’s basic and social needs are gratified through interaction with others (Allen et al, 1991). Social support comes from family, significant others, peers, faculty and staff, and the community. Once social networks are established and African American students participate in them, they tend to find their environment to be more tolerable. When the environment is such, four elements are present: inclusion of African American students and faculty into the social and academic systems, a curriculum reflective of historical and contemporary experiences of African Americans, programs to support recruitment, retention and graduation of African American students and a mission that reinforces the
institution’s commitment to diversity (Solórzano, Ceja, Yosso, 1999). These positive elements can lead to positive academic outcomes and greater social integration.

_African American Student Experiences and How They Affect Academic Integration_

Although the experience of academic failure cuts across all racial and cultural boundaries, measures of student learning and academic achievement for African American students who attend PWIs consistently fall below those of other groups (Parker & Flowers, 2003; Sherman, Giles, Williams-Green, 1994; D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993). This suggests that African American students as a group are not successfully integrating into the academic system of the university. There are many factors that contribute to either the success or failure of academic integration of first year African American students. These factors are based on the positive and negative impressions the students develop at these institutions. Additionally, the socio-psychological factors mentioned previously contribute to the low retention rates of first year African American students at PWIs, which is a consequence of academic integration.

Academic integration has been defined in various ways and several factors are utilized to analyze it including: (a) freshmen year cumulative grade point average, (b) measurement of the student’s perceived level of intellectual development, and (c) measurement of student’s perception of faculty concern for quality teaching and student development (Allen, et al 1992). Early integration into the academic system becomes an important vehicle for a student’s academic growth during his/her first year in college. Academic integration into college is said to have the most direct influence on goal commitment (Lang & Ford, 1992; Tinto, 1993). Academic integration can be affected by
three major components, student/faculty interaction, study skills, and academic preparedness.

*Student-faculty interaction*

Student-faculty interaction is emerging as a leading factor in student satisfaction and is being viewed as a powerful retention dynamic. Students value the interaction with faculty outside the classroom because it illustrates to them that the faculty member is vested in their intellectual development. Social interaction between a student and faculty member could possibly develop into a mentoring relationship and lead the student to better understand the coursework, which has a positive impact on his/her intellectual development, leading to stronger academic integration (Lang & Ford, 1992; D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993, Berger & Milem, 1999; Borglum & Kubala, 2000; Robinson, 2003). Flowers (2004) cited a study by Dr. Ernest Pascarella, which stated that informal contact between students and faculty resulted in some positive educational outcomes. Other research suggests that the interaction of students and faculty ultimately effects the education of any student inside and sometimes outside the classroom (Kobrak, 1992). In addition, out-of-class interaction may increase the knowledge which faculty members have about their students’ academic abilities, interests, and life aspirations. A historical study conducted by Wilson, Wood and Gaff (1974) postulates that faculty members who have interaction with students beyond the classroom seem to reap personal educational benefits from this interaction. The tenets of this study hold true today.
Study skills and academic preparedness

Study skills are another major component of successful academic integration. Many African American students are entering college unprepared for the academic expectations of the university. This is due to the inadequate development of study skills during high school and the necessary training to help them persist during their first year of college. Tinto (1993) argues that there is a major disparity between African Americans and non-minorities regarding their academic preparedness. A student’s pre-college academic ability or level of academic preparedness has some influence on his/her overall academic performance, intellectual development and decision to return a second year. One study assessing the academic preparedness of African American students was conducted by Cabrera et al. (1990). The findings of their research suggest that African American students are leaving PWIs without degrees because of their lack of preparation and inadequate study skills. They concluded that one of the major causes for student departure centers on the student’s academic performance.

Academic preparedness is emerging as a recurring theme regarding the ability for African American students’ to successfully integrate into the academic system at PWIs. The article, Why students leave college, explains that this phenomena can be defined as a student’s pre-college academic performance as measured by one or more high school variables, i.e. GPA, SAT/ACT scores, class rank. Academic preparedness, or lack of it, is also a primary cause for underachievement of first year students, specifically African American students (Cabrera et al, 1990). Rowser agreed with this notion and contends “the better prepared achieve better than the less prepared and this is about as true for Blacks as Whites” (Rowser, 1997, pg. 718). Academic preparedness is one of the main
factors that determine persistence between African American and White. For example, African American students lack basic writing skills, communication, analytical skills, the ability to synthesize information and self-motivation, all of which are descriptors of academic preparedness. The absence of these basic skills necessitates the need for a segment of first year African American students to enroll in remedial courses where the credits do not apply to either graduate or enter a major college department (Rowser, 1997). This causes additional frustration because when these students are unable to meet their personal expectations, they may then perceive themselves as failures. This also increases incongruency between the student and the institution and how well the student integrates into the environment (Schwartz & Washington, 1999).

**African American faculty**

The low numbers of African American faculty at PWIs also significantly affects African American student retention. African American students already have formed perceptions that they are underrepresented and once the absence of African American faculty factors into the equation, their academic pursuits become even more difficult to achieve. Parker and Flowers (2003) suggest that when students are in learning environments with those who look like them, they find it easier to persist and excel, especially if the individual is a faculty member. In a study conducted by Hall (1999), he found that students were disappointed, but not unduly surprised, by the low percentage of African American faculty. This was, for many, a continuation of their high school experiences.

Lang and Ford (1992) contend that a key element in retaining African American students lies with having a significant proportion of African American faculty. African
American faculty members are under enormous pressures from various entities. In addition to serving as role models, mentors, facilitators, they must perform service activities, and perform additional duties to become tenured. Townsend (1994) suggests that African American faculty have a major impact on whether African American students ‘stick it out or drop out.’

Academic success of African American students is determined by how they respond to the campus climate and adjust to the academic environment. In order to have an active role in preparing students to persist, institutions of higher learning must resolve the problem of successfully integrating African American students into the academic system and assist them with their academic achievement (Jones, 2001; Holmes, et al, 2000-2001).

_African American Student Experiences and How They Affect Social Integration_

Social integration is a problem faced by many first year students, especially African American students at PWIs. African American students are more likely to experience problems with campus involvement, residential living, programming, and utilizing student-based services than their White counterparts (Wallace & Bell, 1999; Livingston & Stewart, 1987). According to the literature (Tinto, 1993; Schwitzer et al, 1999; Lang & Ford, 1992; Fisher & Hartman, 1995, Berger & Milem, 2000), college students face four major demands as they navigate the transition from high school to college: academic adjustment, institutional adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and social adjustment. Of these demands, integrating into the social system seems to be central to the success of African Americans students at PWIs. Social integration is defined in several ways. For example, Lang and Ford (1992) define it as a measurement
of the extent and quality of a student’s relationship with peers, a measurement of the quality and impact on student’s informal interactions with faculty, the opportunity to socialize informally and the ability to discuss campus issues or problems.

Other scholars (Parker & Flowers, 2003, Fisher & Hartman, 1995) have defined social integration as the degree to which a student perceives he/she is making positive adjustment to the social life of the university. This is accomplished when the student feels comfortable with his/her interpersonal and communication skills with faculty, staff and peers. Essentially it is a process by which students become acclimated to the university environment and view themselves as a member of the university community (Lang & Ford, 1988). Tinto (1993) defines social integration as the form of integration which results from personal affiliations and from day-to-day interactions among faculty, staff and students. Some factors that contribute to the social integration of African American students include student/student interaction, social networks, student involvement, satisfaction with college life and self-esteem (Schwitzer, et al, 1999; Wallace & Bell, 1999).

**Student-student interaction**

Student-student interaction in the form of residence hall living, peer influence, and study habits can have positive outcomes on social integration. If students surround themselves with other students who have high ability to achieve, this can positively influence study habits and academic achievement. Pascarella confirms the importance of student/student interaction on cognitive development and states that growth in academic development also is influenced by these interactions (Flowers, 2004). Likewise,
residential living experience and peer support are some of the best predictors of student persistence in college (Lang & Ford, 1992; Feagin, Vera, Imani, 1996; Douglas, 1998).

**Student-faculty interaction**

Student-faculty interaction is said to have a significant impact inside the classroom. Tinto’s model suggest that interactions with faculty outside the classroom is having the same if not greater impact on African American students integrating socially at PWIs (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Borglum & Kubala, 2000; Robinson, 2003). Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) conclude in their study that the quality and impact of student/faculty informal contacts may be as important to student’s integration and their likelihood to persist. In addition, students who have made positive informal contacts with faculty are said to have positive educational outcomes as a result of this interaction (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Schwartz & Washington, 1999; Flowers, 2004).

**Social networks**

Social networks are campus interpersonal networks with peers, faculty and staff, as well as on-campus experiences with extracurricular activities and African American support networks, i.e. male/female relations and unity. Allen et al (1991) explain that social networks are necessary for social integration. Some African American students find it necessary to create their own networks in order to remedy exclusion from the wider university community at PWIs. Social networks are key to the development of social bonding among African American students, which is also known as communalism. Communalism is the sense that an individual is tied to a group. African American
students with a high level of communalism may be more resourceful and persistent as they navigate through the social systems at PWIs (Thompson and Fretz, 1991). Essentially, establishing social support is critical to social integration and persistence.

**Student involvement**

Student involvement is increasingly being recognized as another vital component of social integration. “Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Flowers, 2004, pg 634). Students who invest their time and become involved are more likely to persist through to graduation. Alexander Astin’s theory of student involvement indicates that experiences that engage students physically or psychologically positively impact college student development in a variety of ways, i.e. moral and cognitive development and leadership skills (Flowers, 2004). He further explains that involvement occurs along a continuum and plays a key role in the effectiveness of any educational policy and/or practice. Involvement becomes a prerequisite to student development. For example, involvement in organizations helps prepare African American students for the realities of life they will encounter after graduation. They provide ways for students to practice leadership and to learn organizational skills. Students associated with organizations feel less isolated and more integrated into the campus social system. Orientation programs also provide optimal time and opportunities for students to get involved and integrated into campus life. These programs provide validation by reinforcing to students that they will be supported as they enter their collegiate experience. Students are introduced to current students, faculty and staff, support services, and extra-curricular activities that can aid them into socially integrating into the institutional system (Holmes, et al, 2000-2001).
In a study by Flowers (2004), he acknowledged that African American student involvement is important to their persistence. Additionally, Berger and Milem also state that students who are not involved early tend to stay uninvolved and are less likely to become integrated (1999).

Other components of social integration

Satisfaction with college life is defined by the extent to which students feel connected to mainstream campus social life, which is, how comfortable the student is in terms of their social integration. This facet of college life centers on the availability and accessibility of campus facilities that African American students can utilize to enhance social programs, i.e. student unions. In a study conducted by Livingston and Stewart (1987), they concluded that African American students have a strong need for a facility conducive to their needs. For example, students responding to the survey in this study indicated a need for special, social, and educational programming. Programming of this nature might be enhanced if a facility were designed for their use. These facilities can provide African American students outlets to connect with other African American students on a social level.

Self-esteem is another key ingredient of successful social integration (Schwiter et al, 1999; Holmes, et al, 2000-2001; Thompson and Fretz, 1991). When students are comfortable with and believe they can achieve inside and outside the classroom, social integration and persistence will occur. African American students form a mode of adaptation, referred to as affirmation, to help increase and stabilize high levels of self-esteem. Affirmation is exhibited by self-acceptance, positive racial identity, motivation
and self-actualizing behavior (Fleming, 1984). This leads to maximizing social integration and persistence.

Many African American students have a difficult time establishing interpersonal relationships with the dominant culture at PWIs (Smith and Moore, 2000). Establishing interpersonal relationships are central to matriculation and persistence of first year African American students and essential to their social integration. If these relationships are not established outside their own ethnic groups, the institution should provide outlets for African American students to interact in the mainstream of campus life.

Social integration is a fundamental component of the university system. It is quite likely that many first year African American students feel misplaced within the university and are unable to fit, by virtue of their youthfulness, into stable environments. For example, attempting to predict the behavior of an 18 year old is risky. Young people change as they mature and such change should be a goal of a college education. Nonetheless, what may have seemed the ideal institution for a high school senior may appear otherwise to the same person as a first year student. Therefore as they enter the institution, it becomes essential to establish social systems to assist them to stay connected and involved in order to persist and return their second year.

Retention of First Year African American Students at PWIs

Tinto indicates that student retention is a function of a complex series of interactions between students and the institutional environment. Research consistently indicates that a student who withdraws, do so after his/her first year (Tinto, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; McDaniel & Graham, 2001; Schwartz & Washington, 1999). The background characteristics of these individuals influence the commitment to
the institution and the goal of graduating with a college degree. Therefore, “retention is everyone’s business, not just that of the few administrative and support staff assigned to these programs” (Tinto, 1993, pg. 185). The goal of retention should encompass the education, social and intellectual development of students. These programs should be designed to assist students in learning and graduating, not just allow them to occupy a space in the student body population. (Tinto, 1993). When students are admitted into an institution of higher education, the responsibility lies with the institution to develop and graduate students who are psychologically and academically well adjusted and in so doing, provide an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance (Lett and Wright, 2003). With inclusion and acceptance, the likelihood of increasing student retention for African Americans can be actualized.

Student retention efforts in higher education have several focal points, one in particular is the retention of African American students at PWIs. This has become a crucial concern because of a major shift of African American students from HBCUs to PWIs beginning in the late 1960s (Lang & Ford, 1992; Fleming, 1984; Allen et al, 1991). The response to this period of ongoing admission expansion prompted PWIs to respond favorably to conditions of equality in educating African American students.

**Barriers to retention**

In spite of attempts to accommodate the needs of African Americans students at PWIS, institutional barriers exist that unintentionally harm retention efforts for African American students. These barriers include lack of orientation toward the culture of African American students, inability to respond to their needs, and perpetuation of negative attitudes formulated toward African American students, faculty, and staff
Other barriers are inclusive but not limited to alienation, isolation, unintentional racism, discrimination, intimidation, and problems associated with acquiring financial aid (Lett & Wright, 2003).

Institutions across the United States have begun to implement programs and strategies aimed at overcoming these barriers and improving and increasing the retention rates of African American students at PWIs. Tinto (1993) has suggested several effective principles that will ensure the success of these programs. These principles consist of: putting student welfare ahead of other institutional goals; commitment to educate all, not just some; and a commitment to the development of supportive social and educational communities, in which all students are integrated. Once principles are embraced, effective implementation can take place. These retention efforts must be consistent and extensive so that African American students receive the same message from various entities. Retention programs should be implemented in such a way that they meet the unique characteristics of the institution as well as that of the student.

Predicting who will stay in college is a challenge. The research reiterates that the relationship between the institution and the student are critical to retention (Robinson, 2003; McDaniel & Graham, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). The issue of retention is so important because institutions need to find antecedents for early withdraw.

*Implementation of retention strategies*

Student retention has become a challenging problem for the institutions of higher learning. Effective programs for student retention must be implemented in order to increase retention (Lau, 2003). In order to implement effective retention strategies, five conditions should be present. These conditions are to 1) illustrate that students are likely
to persist and graduate in settings that expect them to succeed; 2) provide clear and consistent information about institutional requirements and effective advising; 3) provide academic, social, and personal support; 4) involve students as valued members of the institution; and 5) foster learning.

Therefore, institutions must understand that there is no one retention program which they should invest in, no one type of program which provides the “cure for student retention.” (Tinto, 2001). Programs differ in structure, form, operation and focus because of the constituencies they serve. At the same time, there are some similarities that can be linked to successful programs in general, specifically in the way institutions think about retention, their efforts in terms of implementation and how members of the institution direct energy into the program (Tinto, 1993). Other key points of a successful retention program are financial aid, strong mentoring, faculty involvement, development of support services, equalizing the opportunity to succeed for minority students, and institutional commitment (Townsend, 1994; Rice & Alford, 1989; Wallace & Bell, 1999).

Effective retention strategies require the support, cooperation and financial commitment from the institution. If any of these are lacking, particularly financial commitment, the institution should re-evaluate their current efforts for retaining first year African American students (Rice & Alford, 1989; Tinto, 2001; Wallace & Bell, 1999; Thompson & Fretz, 1991). A lack of concern or involvement on the part of the institution can have detrimental effects because loss of student enrollment can result in loss of income (Lau, 2003).

Sherman et al. (1994) present other strategies, which should be used when the institution sets priorities to help African American students succeed. These strategies
include encouraging intellectual and psychological growth and implementing institutional adjustments in staffing and curriculum. Furthermore, institutions should actively promote hiring and retaining African American faculty and staff. “As fewer African American faculty are recruited and retained, the participation of African American students at PWIs is in doubt” (Lang & Ford, 1992, pg. 145). A strong retention program for African American students is one that will provide support systems in the form of same-group faculty (Jones, 2001; Fleming, 1984; Sherman, et al. 1994). Other strategies include, but are not limited to, assessing African American students’ academic and social readiness, assessing the institution’s ability to work with African American students and examining the basic philosophy and mission of the university and seeing how African American student retention fits into the grand scheme (Credle & Dean, 1991).

African American students are especially susceptible to problems associated with access, retention and achievement in higher education (Allen, 1992). PWIs need to address these problems with two goals in mind. The first goal is to increase African American student enrollment and the second goal is to increase retention by developing and supporting programs that support these students and encourage them to complete their matriculation. Rice and Alford (1989), conclude in their study that retention is necessary to preserve and broaden the function of higher education as a vehicle of social mobility. However, there are no quick or easy solutions to the issue of African American student retention at PWIs. Institutions must work toward providing meaningful learning environments so that students will be more connected to the institution, every effort must be exercised in order to reach this goal. In addition, PWIs should make a total commitment to retaining African American students and adopt a comprehensive plan to
do so. Ultimately the success of the institution’s actions on behalf of student retention depends upon the daily actions of all members of the institution, not the actions of those who are designated to operate these programs.

*Opposition to Tinto*

Tinto’s model of student departure has been mentioned in more than 400 citations and 170 dissertations (Braxton, Milem & Sullivan, 2000). Braxton et al explains that Tinto’s theory calls for more elaboration and additional application of new concepts borrowed from other perspectives, such as placing emphasis on organizational attributes of the institution, self-motivating factors for attending, student involvement and self-efficacy. Braxton et al further highlight that Tinto’s theory contends that if social integration is to occur, it must occur inside the classroom because this is the place where student involvement in the academic and social systems begins. Therefore, postulating that the college classroom constitutes an additional tool that can be used to influence subsequent institutional commitment and college departure. In addition, Berger and Milem (1999) also emphasize that the model can benefit from additional constructs from other theoretical perspectives that can assist and improve the power of the model and provide information about the sources of academic and social integration.

Opponents of Tinto’s theory are emerging as the theoretical framework is receiving more attention from institutions who are seeking to enhance student retention efforts. William Tierney is one of the leading opponents to the theory. Tierney challenges that this theory “misses the mark for minority students” (Tierney, 1999, p. 80). He asserts that the framework overlooks the historical oppression of minorities in America.
Tierney specifically takes issue with two points in Tinto’s theory, financial aid and assimilation into mainstream culture. Tinto’s theory states that the lack of access to financial aid is one of the main reasons why students depart higher education. Although he agrees that this is true, Tierney emphatically states that “financial aid, albeit important, is not a sufficient remedy to independently resolve the dilemma of college student access and retention” (Tierney, 1999, pg. 81). Tierney also takes issue with Tinto’s notion that in order to persist students must make a clean break from the communities and cultures in which they were raised and assimilate into mainstream culture of the institution. Students must physically and socially dissociate themselves from their communities in order to be fully incorporated in the life of the institution. Tierney explicitly summarizes Tinto’s theory by stating “not only are student’s cultural backgrounds irrelevant to their successful collegiate experience, if students are to succeed in college, those backgrounds must be discarded in favor of the dominant cultures of their institution” (Tierney, 1999, pg. 82). Tierney emphasizes that students of color at PWIs must be able to affirm, rather than reject, who they are and that asking students to renounce who they are and where they come from will only hinder them successfully obtaining their degrees. Berger and Milem (1999) further postulates that students who successfully integrate do so not at the expense of their backgrounds, but because of them.

Tierney provides a sound argument on certain aspects of Tinto’s model of student departure theory. As stated previously, this model is being used by many scholars who are conducting studies on student departure and institutions are using it as a blueprint to help resolve some of the issues of student retention. The model of student departure is a starting point to assist in getting to the root of problems involving student retention.
Tinto is providing one avenue where this theory can be expanded and utilized to provide institutions with a basis to explain the low percentage of students, specifically African American who return to college their second year. As Tinto and others have stated, there is not one retention model that will fit all institutions and the demographics that they serve. Retention programs must be tailored and his model is a springboard from which successful retention programs can be launched.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design

As previously discussed, the purpose of this research was to examine academic and social integration and investigate how these factors impact the retention of first year African American students at a predominantly White institution. Quantitative methods were employed to explore which factors had the greatest impact on predicting retention of these first year students. This chapter will describe the quantitative methodological approaches employed to collect and examine the data in order to answer the primary research question.

Research Question

The theoretical framework selected for this study was Tinto’s model of student departure. This model suggests that student departure from an institution of higher education is influenced by the personal experiences, interaction and involvement with academic and social systems of the institution, background characteristics and commitment to receiving a college degree. The quality of these interactions and the perceptions of experiences inside and outside the classroom, determines the extent to which students become integrated into their college environment. Positive experiences and perceptions are indicators of integration and can predict the likelihood of a first year student returning their second year. The primary research question addressed in this study is:
1. To what extent will academic and social integration variables predict retention of first year African American students at a PWI?

The specific aims of this study were to address the primary research question by investigating how academic and social integration of this particular student population impact retention at a PWI.

_Program of study_

Research was conducted on second, third, fourth and fifth year college students who were successful participants in a first year experience program whose purpose was to acclimate African American students and introduce them to all of the resources available to them at this PWI. This program uses rites of passage and forms developmental strategies to increase both retention rates and graduation rates for African American students. The program has three major initiatives including, 1) introducing students to the university in a way that makes them feel connected, 2) comprehensively enhancing college skills to help students emerge as scholars, and 3) celebrating success to affirm positive achievements. In addition, the program assists students with their adjustment to college by providing workshops, mentors, and other activities so that participants are successful during their first year of college. This first year experience program is an extension of an existing program, which is designed to focus on the academic, leadership, social and personal development of second, third, fourth and fifth year students.

The program was implemented as a response to a university-wide initiative that is consistent with a national trend of achieving higher retention rates among its students.
This university supports the idea that frequency and eminence of academic and social integration outweigh other personal, academic and social concerns involving retention. Therefore, the university has expressed a commitment to providing an environment that is academically and socially conducive for the success of all its students.

Participants

The sample population for this study was 145 (N=145). The study participants were second, third, fourth and fifth year college students who participated in the first year program described above. These students were members of different cohort groups designated as academic years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2003-2003 or 2003-2004, totaling 232 participants. The names of the students were obtained from a database in a Student Affairs office, which operates the program. The goal of this office is to encourage the successful matriculation and enhance the growth and development of students at the university, more specifically the mission of this office is to address the academic, social, spiritual and cultural needs of the African American student population.

Students were selected based on their completion of this first year program. Of the 232 participants who completed the program, 147 (63%) students are currently enrolled at the University, 25 students have graduated (11%), and 60 students (26%) who withdrew sometime after their first year. Of the 232, 145 participants agreed to participate in the study, 110 students (76%) are currently enrolled and 35 (24%) students who are no longer enrolled at this institution. Within this population, there were 85 females (59%) and 60 males (41%) (see Table 2).
Measurement

The Institutional Integration Scale (IIS) created by Drs. Ernest Pascarella and Pat Terenzini was administered to assess students’ self-reported levels of social and academic integration (French & Oakes, 2004). The IIS has been used in a variety of studies examining undergraduate student retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, Robinson, 2003, Fox, 1984; Borglum & Kubala, 2000, Schwartz & Washington, 1999). The IIS is especially compatible with Tinto's model of student departure in terms of social and academic integration. This scale consists of 33 items using a Likert scale on the following five scales: peer-group interactions (10 items) in which scores range from 10 - 60, interactions with faculty (5 items) in which scores range from 5 - 30, faculty concern for student development and teaching (5 items) in which scores range from 5 - 30, academic and intellectual development (8 items) in which scores range from 8 - 48, and institutional and goal commitment (5 items) in which scores range from 5 - 30.

The IIS is also compatible for investigations involving college students because it is relatively short and straightforward to administer (French & Oakes, 2004). Modifications to the instrument have been made in attempt to adapt the scale to this student population. There were changes made in the peer-group sub-scale, in which the researcher added questions assessing the extent of extracurricular involvement of students. In addition, the researcher inserted a section to the instrument to assess background characteristics of the participant (see Appendix A).
Collection of data

There were several methods employed in order to collect data from the population sample. It was necessary to use multiple collection methods because it was not possible to convene a meeting with all participants at the same time. Instruments distributed either electronically through email or in person contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, instructions on how to complete the survey and a consent form for participation in the study (see Appendices B and C).

The first collection method involved contacting potential participants through email, inviting them to fill out the instrument and submit the responses electronically. This method was used for both students who are currently enrolled and those who withdrew. This method was most useful for obtaining data from participants who were not available to fill out the instrument in person or at a designated time. Of the 145 participants, 27 who are currently enrolled and 12 who have withdrawn used this method, totaling 39 participants (27%) of the total sample population. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions via email or contact the researcher by phone.

The second collection method involved administering the instrument to students in person prior to exam week at study table sessions. Eighty-three participants selected to use this method. This was an optimal time to administer and collect the data because large numbers of students participated in the study table sessions. The researcher was able to verbally communicate with the participants the purpose of the study, provide instructions on how to fill out the instrument, the approximate time necessary to complete the instrument, explain to them their rights as participants and explain the purpose of the consent form. The researcher strongly recommended that the participant answer each
question and then provided the participants with an opportunity to ask any questions pertaining to the instrument.

The last method of collecting data was devised for those students who were no longer enrolled at the university. The researcher sent an email request asking them to meet at a common location for approximately 30 minutes to fill out the survey. At this time the researcher would explain the purpose of the study, provide instructions on how to fill out the instrument, the approximate time necessary to complete the instrument, explain to them their rights as participants and explain the purpose of the consent form (Appendix C). Again, the researcher strongly recommended that the participant answer each question and then provided the participants with an opportunity to ask any questions pertaining to the instrument. Twenty-three participants selected to use this method.

Emphasis must be placed on the fact that with each method employed to administer the instrument and collect data, the researcher provided the participant with a cover letter, which introduced the researcher, purpose of the study, and assurance of confidentiality to keep for their records. The data collection was very successful given the number of participants who responded to the request to participate in this study. Collection of the data occurred over a two week period. The number of students who participated in the study, in-person and electronically, provided the researcher with a representative sample of the population of students who participated in this particular first year experience program.

Data analysis

Several statistical procedures were employed to analyze the data obtained for this study. Data for the study was coded for analysis using the Statistical Program for the
Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. Logistic regression analysis was used in this study. The goal of logistic regression is to correctly predict the category of outcome for individual cases using the most parsimonious model. To accomplish this goal, a model was created that includes all predictor variables that were useful in predicting the dichotomous variable.

There are two main uses of logistic regression. The first is the prediction of group membership. Secondly, logistic regression also provides knowledge of the relationships and strengths among the variables. This method of statistical analysis was appropriate in this study because the researcher’s goal was find the probability of a first year African American student returning to the university their subsequent educational years based on the model.

Random sampling of this population was also conducted to assess the validity of the regression model. Two equal groups of students, 30 retained and 30 who were not retained, were selected from the participant pool and the regression analysis was conducted to ensure the model would be validated.

Descriptive statistics were also incorporated in the data analysis. These types of statistics are numbers that summarize sets of data (Kendrick, 2005). They aid in describing patterns that exists within sets of data. Some simply describe the prevalence of characteristics such as age, sex, others describe relationships between characteristics.

Assumptions and limitations of logistic regression

Logistic regression requires no assumptions be made, which makes the technique more robust. Logistic regression makes no assumption about the distribution of the independent variables. They do not have to be normally distributed, linearly related or of
equal variance within each group. Although no assumptions are required, certain conditions must be met for a logistic regression model to be valid: 1) dependent variable must be dichotomous; 2) model must only include relevant predictors; 3) outcomes must be statistically independent; and 4) a case cannot be in more than one outcome category at a time, and every case must be a member of one of the categories under analysis (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). The major limitation of logistic regression is that it is limited to the prediction of only two values of a dependent variable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998).

*Independent variables*

The independent variables in logistic regression may be either a continuous, discrete, dichotomous or a mix of any of these. The variables in this study are classified as continuous variables because they can take on any value in a certain range within each sub-scale. Essentially, continuous variables have no numeric value or ordering.

Within the theoretical construct of academic integration, the IIS specifically measures the student’s perception of his/her academic performance and general intellectual development (Robinson, 2003). It is composed of two subscales, academic and intellectual development and faculty concern for student development and teaching. Academic and intellectual development (AI) defines the extent to which a student views his/her academic and intellectual development, experiences and satisfaction of the quality of learning they received while attending this institution. Faculty concern for student development and teaching (FC) addresses the issues students have in terms of how they view the interest of faculty members concern for their development inside and outside the classroom.
Within the theoretical construct of social integration, the IIS specifically measures the quality of the student’s relationship with both faculty and peer groups. It is composed of two subscales, peer-group interactions and interactions with faculty. Peer-group interactions (PG) assess the extent to which a student has enhanced their interpersonal skills and interaction with their peers and their extracurricular involvement at this institution. Interaction with faculty (IF) addresses the non-classroom interaction between the student and faculty and what the impact of this interaction has on the student’s overall development. The last scale, Institutional and Goal commitment (IG) is concerned with the student’s personal commitment to obtaining positive educational outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

These five sub-scales are predictor variables based on the instrument and the research question. These predictor variables relate to the research question because they can provide possible explanations as to why students leave the university based on academic and social integration factors that are relative to this population.

*Dependent variable*

The dependent variable in logistic regression is dichotomous, meaning that the variable is one in which there are only two possible values, e.g. yes/no, pass/fail. The dependent variable is this study is retention, which, as stated previously, is a function of a series of complex interactions between a student and the institutional environment (McDaniel & Graham, 2001). The two levels of the dependent variable were whether the student was retained or not retained.
Measurement of independent variables

Descriptive statistics were used to provide a measurement of the minimum and maximum scores reported for the independent variables. This analysis also provided the mean score and standard deviation of each independent variable. Table 1 illustrates this data.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41.18</td>
<td>7.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.28</td>
<td>6.247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>5.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32.36</td>
<td>8.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.84</td>
<td>4.600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Control variables

Control variables are variables that are assumed to have an unwanted effect on a relationship between the independent and dependent variables for the purpose of the study (Huck, 2004, Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Several control variables were designated by the researcher for this study. These variables included gender, year in college, university grade point average, parent’s educational level and financial aid were controlled in order to assess the pure relationship between the remaining independent variables and the dependent variable (Huck, 2002). The reason the researcher controlled these variables is a substantial body of research suggests that the students’ interactions with the college environment are not independent of these particular characteristics (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, Robinson, 2003, McDaniel & Graham, 2001). Therefore,
it can be deduced that these characteristics are influential no matter what aspect of retention that is being examined in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR
Results and Analysis of Data

This study was designed to investigate the academic and social integration variables that impact retention of first year African American students at a predominantly White institution. The researcher employed preliminary statistical analysis to explore the broad theoretical constructs of academic and social integration using the Institutional Integration Scale (IIS). Descriptive statistics provided information on the characteristics of the population, gender composition, mean grade point average of all students, and parents’ educational background. The researcher used logistic regression analysis to determine what variables had a significant impact on whether a student will return to the university to continue his/her degree.

This chapter will be comprised of a descriptive summary of the characteristics of the population, analysis of the data organized around the research question and a summary of the details from the statistical analysis.

Research Question

African American students come to college with an array of demographic backgrounds and academic and social experiences. These elements prepare them for college life and influence the way they engage in particular opportunities and activities. The experiences inside and outside the classroom prompted the research question that guided this study:

To what extent will academic and social integration variables predict the retention of first year African American students at a PWI?
Demographic Description of the Population

One hundred forty five (N = 145) second, third, fourth, and fifth year students participated in this study. One hundred ten students are currently enrolled and 35 students have withdrawn, 48.3% were second year students, 35.9% were third year students, 13.8% were fourth year students, and 2.0% fifth year students. The data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants by Year</th>
<th>N = 145</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained Students</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn students</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year students</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third year students</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth year students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth year students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Percentages are rounded and may not equal 100%.

The gender composition of the sample included 85 females and 60 males. Within these populations, 66 females and 44 males were currently enrolled and 19 females and 16 males no longer attend this university. Demographic data on gender are presented in Table 3.
Table 3

*Gender Composition for the Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>N= 145</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retained Students</th>
<th>N = 110</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withdrawn Students</th>
<th>N = 35</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-tabulations were also conducted to provide demographic information on how many participants were retained or not retained based on year in college and gender. For those who withdrew, the year indicated below is the last time they were enrolled at this institution. Data are presented in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4

*Cross-tabulations of Retention and Year in College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retain</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth Year</th>
<th>Fifth Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

*Cross-tabulations of Retention and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 presents the mean grade point average of the entire population and a breakdown of those who are currently enrolled and those who withdrew. This table provides insight on the disparity of students who withdrew and those who are currently enrolled, demonstrating that there is an overall difference in GPA between the groups.

Table 6

*Mean Grade Point Averages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Point Average (GPA)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All participants</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained students</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn students</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 presents statistical information regarding the highest level of education completed by the students’ parent(s). According to the raw data for both group of students, parental educational background among fathers showed some variations. Remarkably among the mothers, educational backgrounds for each group of students were somewhat similar.
Table 7

*Parent(s) Educational Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than HS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>Lower than HS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>GED</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parent Educational Background For Retained Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than HS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>Lower than HS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9%</td>
<td>GED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parent Educational Background For Withdrawn Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than HS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>Lower than HS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>GED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistical Analysis of the Research Question*

This study sought to investigate which independent variables are predictors of retention of African American students. Prior to analysis, data were screened for missing data and outliers. This led to the elimination of two outliers. Table 8 presents these data. A preliminary multiple regression analysis was conducted to calculate Mahalanbois
distance and examine multicollinearity among the five continuous predictors.

Multicollinearity is a problem that arises when there exists moderate to high correlations among independent variables to be used in the analysis (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Participants with a Mahalanbois distance greater than 20.52 were eliminated. Multicollinearity was not violated since the tolerance statistics for all five independent variables were greater than .1. Tolerance is a measure of collinearity among independent variables. In addition, the variance inflation factor (VIF), which indicates whether there exists a strong linear association between an independent variable and the remaining independent variables, also confirms that there is no violation of multicollinearity because the statistic for each independent variable is not greater than 10. Table 10 presents the tolerance statistics and variance inflation factor for the five predictors.

Table 8
Outliers for Mahalanbois Distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mahalanbois Distance</th>
<th>Case No</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.22059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.29506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.41903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.68593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.68803</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 presents an explanation of variables that were used in this study. This table provides a point of reference that assists the reader in understanding the abbreviations throughout the remaining chapter in terms of the Institutional Integration Scale (see Appendix A).

Table 9
Table of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Corresponding Questions</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer-group Interaction</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>PG.1 - PG.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Faculty</td>
<td>IF</td>
<td>IF.1 - IF.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching</td>
<td>FC</td>
<td>FC.1 - FC.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic and Intellectual Development</td>
<td>AI</td>
<td>AI.1 - AI.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional and goal commitment</td>
<td>IG</td>
<td>IG.1 - IG.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About You</td>
<td>AY</td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.1(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.1(2)</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.2</td>
<td>Year in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.3</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.4</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.5(1)</td>
<td>Received financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.5(2)</td>
<td>Did not receive financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.6 (1) Lower than HS</td>
<td>Father’s Educational level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AY.7 (1) Lower than HS</td>
<td>Mother’s educational level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Examination of Multicollinearity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.564</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>-2.310</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td>-1.440</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>-2.545</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>-.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>-4.347</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td>-1.781</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In logistic regression, assessment of the logistic relationship between each independent variable was conducted and the scatterplots below illustrate this relationship as presented in Figure 1.

Peer–Group Interaction

![Peer-Group Interaction Chart](chart_url)
Interaction with Faculty

Faculty Concern

SUM_IF

SUM_FC
Figure 1. Logistic Relationship between Retention and the Independent Variables
After screening for data, forward logistic regression was then conducted to determine which independent variables (peer-group interactions, interaction with faculty, faculty concern for student development and teaching, academic and intellectual development, and institutional and goal commitment) were predictors of retention for first year African American students.

Forward logistic regression was applied to the dependent variable for each of the independent variables. Forward logistic starts with the best single predictor, then finds the next one to add to what exists, then the next best, etc. where all variables in each equation are checked again to see if they remain significant after the new variable has been entered (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Essentially, this approach is used to evaluate the contribution of a variable to the regression equation (Hair, et al 1998).

Regression results indicate the overall model of two predictors (faculty concern for student development and teaching, institutional and goal commitment) were statistically reliable in distinguishing between those students who are retained and those who are not at the p <.05 level. The p-value, probability value, is the likelihood that a test statistic of a particular magnitude computed from a sample is simply a chance or random occurrence rather than a consequence of a real association between variables in a population. The researcher set the p-value at .05. P-value of .05 (or lower) has emerged as standard practice in social sciences (Kendrick, 2005).

The –2Log Likelihood of 91.139, provided an index of model of fit, this value actually represents the sum of the probabilities associated with the predicted and actual outcomes for each case. The smaller the value of the-2LL, the better the fit of the model. The Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke, $R^2$, represent two different estimates of the amount of
variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the model (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). These measures are not goodness-of-fit tests, but rather an attempt to measure strength of association. The Cox and Snell was computed at .379 and the Nagelkerke was computed .565, which is illustrated in Table 11. With any given research in the social sciences arena, variance levels above .300 are considered a good fit for the model being tested (Huck, 2004).

The model correctly classified 87.5% of the cases, which is illustrated in Table 13. Classification compares the predicted values of the dependent variable, based on the regression model, with the actual observed values from the data. The predicted values were obtained by computing the probability for a particular case and classified it into one of the two possible categories based on that probability (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002).

Regression coefficients are presented in Table 12. The $B$, represents the unstandardized regression coefficient and represents the effect the independent variable has on the dependent variable. The interpretation for $B$ for faculty concern for student development and teaching (FC) and institutional goal commitment (IG) were negative, therefore, the odds of a student returning to this institution based on these variables are decreased. The $S.E.$ is the standard error of $B$, the smaller the estimated error is, the better the prognosis will be for the predictive effort (Witte & Witte, 2001). The Wald statistic is a measure of significance for $B$ and represents the significance of each variable in its ability to contribute to the model. The Wald statistic indicated that faculty concern for student development and teaching and institutional and goal commitment significantly predict retention. Degrees of freedom ($df$) is the number of deviations free to vary in any sum of squares term (Witte & Witte, 2001) and the level of significance (Sig) is the
degree of rarity of a test result. The odds ratio, Exp(B), is calculated for each variable, representing the increase (or decrease if Exp(B) is less than 1) in odds of being classified in a category when the predictor increases by 1 (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Basically, it is the odds of being retained based on the predictor variable. The Exp(B) for these variables indicated that the likelihood of a student returning to the university based on these two factors are decreased.

Table 11

*Model Summary of Academic and Social Integration Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>-2 Log Likelihood</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell $R^2$</th>
<th>Nagelkerke $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>99.368</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>91.139</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>.565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

*Regression Coefficients for Academic and Social Integration Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>-.393</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>29.238</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>5.891</td>
<td>1.290</td>
<td>20.863</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>361.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Step 2   |       |       |       |     |       |        |
| Faculty  | -.333 | .073  | 20.791| 1   | .000  | .717   |
| Concern  | -.168 | .059  | 8.003 | 1   | .005  | .846   |
| Institutional and Goal |       |       |       |     |       |        |
| Constant | 7.496 | 1.510 | 24.626| 1   | .000  | 1800.124|
### Classification Table for Academic and Social Integration Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
<th>Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 Retain Yes</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall percentage No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
<th>Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 Retain Yes</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall percentage No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Random sampling**

The validation of a logistic model is accomplished by doing a random sample of the population. Given the high percentage of retained students (76%) to those who were not retained (24%), creating equal groups among each set was necessary to validate the model. The interpretation for $B$ for faculty concern for student development and teaching (FC) and institutional goal commitment (IG) were negative, therefore, the odds of a student returning to this institution based on these variables are decreased based on random sampling and thus validating the model. Regression coefficients are presented in Table 14.
Table 14

Regression Coefficients From Random Sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Concern</td>
<td>-.441</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>14.900</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.795</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>10.920</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>893.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Concern</td>
<td>-.411</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>10.105</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional and Goal</td>
<td>-.311</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>7.183</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>11.448</td>
<td>3.258</td>
<td>12.345</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>9371.275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of control variables

Logistic regression was conducted to determine what control variables were predictors of retention. Stated previously, these variables already are assumed to have some relationship to the dependent variable retention. This analysis was conducted to illustrate to the reader that these variables bring little effectiveness when factored into the regression model. Regression results indicate the overall model had several significant predictors (financial aid and parental background) which were statistically reliable in distinguishing between students who are retained and those who were not. The Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke, $R^2$, for these variables was between .289 and .439, which is presented in Table 15. Table 16 presents the regression coefficients. Within this table, the data illustrated variables that being female, AY.1(1), show some relationship to the dependent variable. The model correctly classified 84.8% of the cases, which is illustrated in the classification table shown in Table 17.
Table 15

*Model Summary for Control Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>-2 Log Likelihood</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell $R^2$</th>
<th>Nagelkerke $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>96.477</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

*Regression Coefficients for Control Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV’s</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AY.1 (1)</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>2.784</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>2.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY.5 (1)</td>
<td>-3.042</td>
<td>1.027</td>
<td>8.775</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY.6 (1)</td>
<td>3.370</td>
<td>.1539</td>
<td>4.795</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>29.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY.7 (1)</td>
<td>1.462</td>
<td>1.462</td>
<td>4.063</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>19.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17

*Classification Table for Control Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall percentage</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

After examining all the predictor variables only two variables, faculty concern for student development and teaching and institutional and goal commitment, were found to be significantly reliable in predicting retention status for this sample population. The results of the data analysis suggest that even one factor of academic and social integration will cause students to make the decision not to return to this university to complete their degree. The results place a strong emphasis on academic integration indicating that what
transpires inside the classroom will have the most significant impact on whether a first year student will return to the university.
CHAPTER FIVE
Findings, Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

An increasing number of studies have been initiated in recent years in order to understand the experiences of African American students at predominantly White institutions of higher education in the United States. Participation and retention of first year African Americans in higher education have become a primary concern for those institutions that are committed to putting their university missions into practice. The declining retention and graduation rates of this specific student population have caused focus to be directed towards finding effective strategies to solve this dilemma. The present study contributes to the literature by examining and assessing the extent of academic and social integration factors that will influence the decision of a first year African American student at a predominantly White institution to return to the university in their subsequent educational years.

The model of student departure presents several major factors that may influence a student’s decision to not return to the university. These causes are academic difficulty, adjustment difficulties, goals, commitments, finances, fit and involvement. These factors will influence a student’s ability to successfully integrate into the academic and social systems of the institution. For first year African American students attending a PWI, integration into the academic and social systems of the university is being increasingly recognized as an element that is critical to their retention. Review of the literature suggests that students at an institution of higher education make the decision to depart the university shortly after their first year in college. Therefore, focusing on first year students is key to understanding the factors that influence student withdrawal.
This chapter will provide a discussion of the findings of this study by providing insight to the aims of the study, explaining implications and limitations to the study and providing recommendations for future research and how these institutions can increase academic and social integration and retention of first year African American students at a PWI.

Findings

This investigation was conducted as an attempt to determine what academic and social integration factors had the most influence on the decision of whether a student returns to the university to complete his/her degree based on the Institutional Integration Scale. Directed by Tinto’s model of student departure, the focus of this study examined the prediction ability of integration factors. Two statistical approaches were used for the purpose of this research study, descriptive statistics and logistic regression analysis. The results obtained from analyzing the data for this study were reported in this chapter.

The descriptive statistical analysis on the population sample provided a demographic glance at the population based on background information. This analysis revealed that there is significant difference among students who withdrew and those who persist in terms of grade point averages. The raw data demonstrated that parental educational level was relatively equal among both group of students. This variable also demonstrated that parents with an educational level lower than a GED had a significant relationship on retention within the control variables (see Table 14). This analysis also revealed that financial aid plays a critical role in retention, 92% of this population received or are receiving some form of financial aid, i.e. grants, loans, scholarships. Data on financial aid are presented in Table 18.
Logistic regression analysis revealed that faculty concern for student development and teaching (FC) and institutional and goal commitment (IG) were the main predictors of whether students returned to the university within this population of students. Results from this study reveal that the best predictors of retention center on academic integration. In other words, based on the responses of this population, what transpires inside the classroom with faculty and how committed students are to their educational outcomes determines whether a student will remain at this institution.

Peer-group interaction (PG), interaction with faculty (IF) and academic and intellectual development (AI) were not entered in the overall model, but demonstrates some relationship for explaining retention. Although, the significance is relatively low in predicting retention, these variables still explain that various forms of integration will have an impact on other students at this institution. These remaining variables illustrate that students have found effective ways to socially integrate.

*Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching*

The findings from this study illustrated that first year African American students are not likely to return to the institution based on integrating into the academic system. Self-reporting data revealed students feel that faculty do not have an interest in them as a student, are unwilling to spend time outside the classroom with the student, and/or show

---

**Table 18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Received financial aid</th>
<th>Did not receive financial aid</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
little interest in assisting the student develop in more areas than just academic areas. Participants also reported that faculty members are genuinely interested in students and teaching, although developing the student is not a priority.

*Institutional and Goal Commitment*

This study also revealed that African American students' commitment to the institution and their goals are another factor that will impact their decision to return to the university after their first year. Participants reported that they were unsure of whether this institution was the best choice for their educational outcomes and they reported that it was not important whether they graduated from this institution, but more important that they graduate from college. This predictor variable indicates that the lack of commitment to the institution and overall educational goal at this institution will cause first year African American students to depart.

*Aims of the study*

Three specific aims guided the investigation of the research question: 1) reveal the importance of successfully integrating first year African American students into the academic and social systems of a PWI; 2) provide PWIs with avenues to implement programs that would address issues experienced specifically by first year African American students; 3) motivate university administrators who are interested in the success of these students and present them with an opportunity to explore and improve ways to integrate these students into the two systems of the university.
Aim 1: Importance of integrating first year African American students

Academic and social integration for first year African American students is a primary concern that will have a noteworthy impact on retention. Tinto postulates that one can conceivably have no effect on the other, but inevitably each becomes interdependent on the other. Basically, students can function within an institutional environment and integrate into only one system, but there will be some consequences if integration into both systems is not successful.

Results from this study revealed that integrating into the academic system at a PWI is problematic for African American students. These results explain that what is occurring inside the classroom is having a significant impact on the decision students will make to return to the university. Whether it is academic and intellectual development or faculty concern with student development and teaching, a disconnect between the student and the academic system is having an influence on the student’s commitment to receiving a degree from the institution.

African American students are not experiencing a sense of belonging inside the classroom. This trickles over into the social system because if students are not making a connection with faculty inside the classroom then the chances of developing a relationship outside is slim-to-none. The literature does suggest that student/faculty interaction is a leading factor in student satisfaction and can be viewed as a powerful retention tool (Lang & Ford, 1992; Feagin, Vera, Imani, 1996; Douglas, 1998; Flowers, 2004). According to this study, the interaction with and concern of faculty is viewed as a major determinant of students making the decision to withdraw. Students in this study self-reported that there is low social interaction between faculty and themselves, which
results in a low probability of establishing mentoring relationships that could have a positive outcome on the student’s intellectual development. In addition, these students come from backgrounds that indicate that their academic preparedness is insufficient for the collegiate environment. These students realize once they enter a college classroom that their study skills and level of academic preparedness are not equivalent to that of their White peers. This sense of inadequacy coupled with the sense of not belonging inside the classroom can cause these students to withdraw from the academic system mentally, thus, resulting in low academic performance which is illustrated through the inability to pass their courses and their grade point averages.

African American students in this study are dissatisfied with their relationships with faculty and the academic environment. This coincides with the results of several studies reported in the literature. For example, Allen (1992) reported the lack of successful academic adjustment and/or achievement is related to the lack of fit between African American students and their institution of higher education, which coincides with the results of the study. Furthermore, academic success is determined by how African American students respond to the campus climate and adjust to the academic environment. If the environment is perceived as unapproachable and cold, the chances of a first year African American student returning their second, third, fourth or even fifth year will become increasingly desolate.

The literature states that social integration is problematic for African Americans at PWIs, but the results of this study refute this notion. The data obtained from the sample population indicate that students are integrating into the social system of this institution. Self-reported data demonstrated that these students have formulated
perceptions that they are making a positive adjustment to the social life of the university. Finding effective ways to acclimate themselves to the social environment and seeing themselves as members of the community have been accomplished by participants in this study. Many of these students feel a sense of belonging outside the classroom because they have formed subcultures among their peers, others have positive student/student interaction, and some are actively involved in extracurricular activities. The fact that African American students are able to form subcultures with those who have similar experiences provides evidence that African American students are engaging in positive social networks. These networks are essential to the survival of African American students at PWIs. While exclusion may bring about feelings that negatively impact the way students integrate into both academic and social systems, the ability to successfully develop social network, can promote interpersonal development resulting in a positive influence on intellectual and personal growth. Essentially, establishing social networks can be a primary determinant of why these students in this research study continue to persist or withdraw.

Student-student interaction can have similar positive outcomes. Interaction among students can influence day-to-day interactions, which can in turn influence study habits and ultimately academic performance. In previous studies, researchers indicate that peer support is one of the best predictors of student persistence or withdrawal (Flowers, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Allen, 1992). When students surround themselves with those who have similar aspirations, their motivation to achieve increases and so does the likelihood that they will persist and graduate from the institution.
Finally, student involvement seems to play an integral role in persistence. Involvement creates an array of avenues and opportunities for students to flourish in various areas of student development. It appears that African American students can integrate when they have the opportunity to participate in campus activities or organizations. Abercrumbie (1987) stated that African American students who are academically successful at a PWI, in order to feel part of the campus life, are involved in student activities and organizations. At this particular institution, students are participating in leadership roles and developing skills that will enable them to become well-rounded students, but many are still failing inside the classroom. Classroom failure does not allow these students to realize the full potential of these skills because they are unable to graduate and start a career in their chosen field of interest.

The reason for undertaking the first aim of this study was to reveal the importance of integrating first year African American students into the academic and social systems of the university. Most of the time African American students do not find a systematic way to be successfully integrated in both systems. Some stay because they are doing extremely well on the social end and others leave because they have not formed social networks to help them persist outside the classroom. As mentioned earlier, one system can conceivably have no effect on the other, but once you factor in all the variables that are necessary for a student to successfully matriculate it becomes clear that finding effective ways to equalize both systems is necessary in order to ensure that students persist and do not withdraw. This study also revealed that students are not having successful outcomes when it comes to adjusting to the academic system. In fact they are doing just the opposite in the social system. This by no means is acceptable especially
when it reveals that students are taking longer than required to complete degree requirements or doing just enough work inside the classroom to maintain GPAs that allow them to participate in activities and organizations and retain their financial aid. When students can excel inside the classroom, the services and resources available to them outside would only enhance the development they are receiving from their formal or informal contact with faculty, which would result in successful integration into the academic and social systems.

_Aim 2: Creating and implementing avenues to address issues of first year African American students_

The second aim of this study was to find and implement creative avenues for institutions to address experiences of first year African American students through programming. This study revealed that the services provided by various Student Affairs offices have been vital to the persistence of this student population. The responsibility of addressing the issues that students face inside and outside the classroom through various programmatic efforts has been directed to campus offices who are involved in helping students navigate and adjust to the demands of a college environment. In general, the primary mission of these offices is to provide students with social outlets while subliminally providing them with the necessary tools to achieve inside and outside the classroom.

Participants have suggested in their self-reporting that services provided by various Student Affairs offices have made significant contributions to their success. These offices provide advocacy, advising, counseling, cultural and educational programming. Therefore, it is critical that institutions realize the power that these offices
have in assisting with overall retention efforts. When asked about what services students use the most, overwhelming data exposed that the black cultural center, ethnic programs areas, women’s areas, recreational areas and educational services have been most beneficial for this student population. These Students Affairs offices provide students with the opportunity to enhance their development in ways that extend outside the classroom. This confirms the importance of the existence of these offices and the need for administration to place or re-direct support with the realization that they can be instrumental in retaining first year African American students. African American students entering a PWI will respond more favorably to the environment when services and resources are presented that reinforces the ideology that they can achieve at this institution which, again will make them more likely to persist and not withdraw.

The results of this study strongly suggest that creating and developing partnerships with these offices and the academic system can enhance the development of these students academically as well as socially inside and outside the classroom. It is evident that Student Affairs offices are working to create positive experiences for first year African American students. Institutions must also “ensure that other campus offices are providing the necessary services to meet the needs of these students and not rely solely on [student affairs offices] to accomplish this task” (Abercrumbie, 1987, pg. 117).

In order to increase the effectiveness of these offices, the institution should delegate additional resources to these entities thus allowing them to extend their student outreach efforts placing added emphasis on the academic development of all students they serve. In summary, strong collaborations with Student Affairs offices and academic
departments will encourage and equip students to achieve, while decreasing the possibility that the students will withdraw after their first year.

Aim 3: Motivating university administrators to increase retention efforts

This study provided evidence that persistence for African American students is primarily affected by their interactions with the institution. University administrators need to facilitate and implement strategies that can propel students to graduate. Administrators must nurture and encourage first year African American students by creating a hospitable environment. They must recognize that African American students come with a unique set of characteristics which calls for examination of current policies, programs and services that can facilitate successful integration.

Administrators must serve as consultants to academic units who are interested in the retention of first year African Americans and provide them with alternative approaches to aid in this endeavor. Providing awareness workshops to the university community which would inform those who aid students about the unique aspects this particular student population brings, thus promoting cultural awareness and understanding. Ultimately the success of administrators’ actions on behalf of student learning and retention depends upon the daily actions of all members of the institution, not on the sporadic efforts of a few officially designated members of a retention program.

Implications

Implications for programming

This study presented several implications for programming for individuals and departments within the institution who work with first year African American students.
While many PWIs are successful in recruitment and admission of African American students, the same is not true for retention efforts. To increase and enhance retention efforts, educational programs should be implemented to augment the factors that influence successful academic and social integration. These programs should consist of workshops that are specifically created to increase academic, leadership, social and personal development of first year African American student attending a PWI.

However, these “traditional” remedies to retention should complement another innovative approach to programming, which is based on an African centered approach. This approach places the student at the center of his/her cultural and historical existences (Harris, 1993). As new students show up as outsiders to the academic and social culture of the institution, it becomes evident that creative programmatic efforts be implemented early to ensure success of first year African American students at this institution. By using a rites of passage, the African centered approach to programming will bring about higher retention rates for first year African American students attending this PWI.

Paul Hill, Jr., founder of the Rites of Passage Institute, describes rites of passage as a developmental and traditional process that is culturally-specific, not universal. It is a process that recognizes that entry into adulthood involves the realization of social obligations and assumption of responsibility to meet these obligations. It not only provides self-development and cultural awareness, but fosters a sense of belonging to community life (Rites of Passage, 2003).

The rites of passage process incorporated in this first year experience program encompassed three stages. The first stage occurs when the student separates him/herself from their community. This could be a literal separation, meaning they leave home and
move into residential halls or a psychological separation. Separation does not entail
forgetting or eliminating ties to family and community, but students are encouraged to
engage in a separation that will propel them to achieve because of their bond to their
family and community. The second stage of the rites of passage is transition. This stage
assists students in becoming independent adult college students, moving from high school
student to a college student who must make significant choices that will have an impact
on their collegiate experience. The final stage of rites of passage is integration. The
outreach program at this PWI prepares first year African American students to
successfully integrate into the academic and social culture of the university.

The Student Affairs office that operates this program has designed a series of
programs that are guaranteed to increase retention rates for first year African American
students based on the conceptual ideology of rites of passage. These programs are based
on African traditions and values and are designed to intercept and embrace first year
students from the time they enter the institution until they have completed their college
degree.

The first series of programs introduce students to the university and provide in-
depth information about services offered by the university. This phase of programming
assists students with their transition from high school to college by introducing skills that
will help them navigate through the university system. During this first phase students are
provided with tools that equip them to be better students academically. For example,
students are introduced to educational services and are presented with workshops that
assist them in adopting effective study skills and providing them with tips to stay
connected in order to persist. This phase of programming welcomes them to the university and emphasizes that they are vital to the livelihood of the institution.

The next phase of programs offers students the opportunity to delve more deeply into the environment of the university. This program awakens the student’s responsibility to become aware of their ability to integrate academically and socially into the institution. During this phase of programming students are encouraged to attend leadership conferences, participate in community service activities and enhance their intellectual development. The pivotal point in this phase is when students participate in an African ceremony where they are given a charge to reach their highest potential. They are charged with the obligation to remember the past, focus on the present and prepare for the future. This series of programs affirms the student’s place at the university and reiterates that they have the capability to succeed.

The final phase of programs celebrates the accomplishments of students in the program. Students are recognized for their commitment to excel inside and outside the classroom. This phase completes the rites of passage for first year students in the program and elaborates on the commitment to complete a first year experience program that enhanced their academic, leadership, social and personal development. Students are encouraged to take the skills they have acquired and apply it to their remaining educational years at the university.

After completion of this program, students are encouraged to participate in another program, which is an extension of the first year experience program that focuses on second, third, fourth and fifth year students. Participation in this program will allow them to continue to develop both socially and academically and at the completion of their
collegiate experience, they are recognized for having endurance and the commitment to obtaining a higher education degree through an African graduation celebration.

Programming from an African centered perspective is beneficial in the retention of first year African American students. Investigating this first year experience program that implements programming from an African centered approach provided insight on the validity that these programs have in aiding retention of first year African American students at PWIs. This approach has emphasized first year students in this research and program because it reiterates the notion that African American students come with a unique set of characteristics and the need for special programs is in order if retention rates are to improve.

*Implications for academic collaborations*

This study revealed that first year African American students are having a difficult time integrating into the academic system at this PWI. Implications of promoting favorable partnerships with academic areas will assist with increasing the opportunity to fully integrated first year African Americans into the academic system of the institutional. This can be accomplished by incorporating in the curriculum issues that address race and ethnicity, promoting and encouraging formal networks with faculty, and working diligently with Student Affairs offices to design programs, outside the classroom, that address the academic needs of this student population.

Although collaborating and creating partnerships are important, the importance of encouraging first year students to enroll in African American studies courses also has significant implications. Providing a foundation to help these students understand their cultural identity and assimilate at a PWI can be an effective way to assist them to
integrate into a culture that is dominated by mainstream ideology. Understanding the curriculum that African American studies can provide will equip students to be able to psychologically deal with the pressures of being underrepresented in the student body population and also provide a sense of pride in knowing and understanding who they are. African American studies can help alleviate the conflict between maintaining cultural identity while simultaneously integrating successfully into the dominant culture.

*Implication for practice*

The results of this study presented several implications for practice that institutions can consider in order to explore and improve integration of first year African American students into the academic and social systems of the institution.

1. Institutions must work to enhance the experiences these students have inside and outside the classroom. These institutions must promote and highlight Student Affairs offices whose missions are to assist in the academic, leadership, social and personal development of first year African American students. Not only should these institutions rely on Student Affairs offices to assist students to persist, they should also ensure that other student-based services and offices are playing an active role in retaining these students.

2. The findings of this research suggest that the creation of a research instrument(s) that targets first year African American students. The instruments in other studies, this one included, are geared toward the general student population. As the literature suggests, African American students come to institutions with a different set of characteristics than those of their White peers. Therefore, the
creation of a research instrument to analyze the relationship of first year African American students and the institution is highly recommended.

3. The adjustment from high school to college can be made more swiftly by providing services that assist students in adapting to their new environments. To ease this adjustment, and consequently increase retention, institutions can make the following resources and/or services available:

   a. Funding – The ever increasing cost of tuition, coupled with diminishing federal funds, grants and loans, has resulted in an increasing number of students who are working either part time or full time jobs to pay for their educational expenses. Providing various sources of funding for those who are at risk to withdraw will increase and maintain enrollment status of first year African American students. Institutions should re-evaluate the necessary resources needed to retain first year African American students because financial assistance is a key factor in their persistence, as indicated in this study.

   b. First year Experience Programs – It is very evident that African American students at predominantly White institutions have a unique set of concerns that need to be addressed in order for them to persist and obtain a college degree. Implementing first year experience programs from an African centered perspective that establishes learning communities for first year students will address many of these concerns and help them to adjust to campus life. These programs have been found to increase student satisfaction, academic achievement and retention (Lau, 2003). First year experience
programs have had a noteworthy impact on retaining African American students at this institution at which this study was undertaken. These programs have increased retention of first year African American students and have therefore proven to be a vital component to the institution.

c. Campus facilities – Residential living facilities, black cultural centers, student/student interaction, and formation of social networks are all necessary for integration. These elements increase the opportunity for students to interact and must be facilitated by providing environments that are conducive for programming and social gatherings. African American students find it difficult to implement programs and social events on campus because facilities are often not sufficient or readily available. In order to maintain current enrollment and increase future enrollment, campus facilities need to be evaluated and plans implemented to provide these students with a space necessary and adequate for programming and other interactions tailored to meet their specific needs.

4. Faculty – This study provided insight on how important it is for students to establish relationships with faculty inside and outside the classroom. For the purpose of this study, it became evident that a mentoring program at this institution must be established with faculty who are concerned with increasing the retention rates of first year African American students and assisting them to successfully integrate into the academic and social systems of this university. This was the best predictor of retention, therefore, it is of the utmost importance that
this institution establishes a program and/or opportunity that entice faculty to become more involved with students outside the classroom.

Limitations

Although efforts were made to control for limitations, this research study presented fixed parameters that created boundaries of exploration. When observing this study, readers should be mindful in making broad generalizations in terms of the results due to the investigatory nature of the research. A critical limitation was the small sample size, due to the fact that only African American students who participated in a first year experience program were surveyed. Some had graduated and some were not enrolled during the time the instrument was administered, which limited the amount of responses that could account for the possibilities of why students leave this institution before graduating. In addition, the subjects were not randomly selected from this population and were limited to the institution and one particular population. The convenience of the sample size also limited the effectiveness of the Institutional Integration Scale. This scale is normally administered to very large populations from various institutions.

Another limitation was the time the instrument was administered. Students were asked to complete the survey during final examination week. Levels of anxiety in preparing for examinations while at the same time evaluating their future status as a student at this institution based on the outcome of their final examination could cause for vagueness of answers.
Recommendations for future research

The numerous citations of Tinto’s model of student departure present clear evidence of the need to continue exploring the dynamics of academic and social integration and how these factors impact retention of first year African American students at PWIs. The connection between integration and retention of these students warrants further exploration and future research in this area should be supported.

1. Examining the link between first year experience programs, targeted towards African American students and integration and retention would better assist institutions in finding effective strategies to ensure that this population persists and obtain a college degree.

2. Incorporating other theoretical models dealing with specific experiences within the classroom, student involvement and informal contact with faculty must be undertaken to explain student departure specifically for African American students. This will give a clearer vision of why individual student departure occurs.

3. Creating various programs that involve faculty will have a significant impact the retention and persistence of African American students. The researcher previously alluded to the fact that a mentoring program must be implemented to correct any misconceptions between what these students perceive is transpiring inside the classroom and what is actually taking place. Implementation of such a program will increase the likelihood that first year African American students will persist because the establishment of faculty-student relationships will demonstrate
there is a vested interest in the intellectual and personal development of this student population.

4. An exploratory investigation should be conducted on the background characteristics of first year African American students participating in this particular first year experience program. Research indicates that background characteristics are relevant in determining whether students will persist or withdraw after their first year in college. Therefore, identifying which background characteristics that these students bring to this particular institution will provide better guidance in implementing effective retention strategies.

5. Conducting a replication of this study is in order to understand the entire population of first year African American students and not just those who are involved in this first year program. Replication in this manner is important because it will allow an institution to assess whether the findings in this study are valid across the board.

_ Institutional recommendations_

The following recommendations were based on the responses of African American students who participated in this study. These are recommendations for institutions who are interested in increasing retention rates of first year African American students at PWIs.

1. Creating an office that is specifically geared towards implementing and operating first year experience programs. These programs are having a profound effect on retention, therefore, creating an office that emphasizes the institution's
commitment to ensure that first year students, specifically African American
students, continue their education.

2. Establishing black cultural centers. The mission of black cultural centers is to
enhance the student development of African American students and assist the
university community with understanding the experiences of African Americans
in America. Institutions can demonstrate their commitment by establishing these
centers and providing the necessary resources, especially financial, to ensure their
success. Cultural centers have a proven track record in terms of maintaining
enrollment status of African American students and enhancing overall student
development of this population.

3. Creating a mentoring program and/or learning communities between student and
faculty. Two important themes are relevant in terms of retention of African
Americans students: academic integration and White faculty. Given African
American students are experiencing problems inside the classroom and given the
fact that the majority of faculty they encounter are white, creating opportunities
for interaction with these two populations are imperative if retention rates are to
increase. Opportunities to interact informally will increase the sense that African
American students know that White faculty members are interested in their
student development.

4. Establishing programs and curriculum that emphasize an African centered
approach. This approach guarantees success for first year African American
students inside and outside the classroom.
Conclusion

The purpose of education is to provide students with the opportunity to extend the boundaries of their familiar settings by exposing them to a world composed of people with opinion and attitudes differing from their own (Tinto, 1987). Far-reaching, enduring change in higher education for African American students will only come about when universities feel more intensely about their responsibility for implementing strategies that encourage first year African American to continue their collegiate education. While it is important to recognize the need to design programs for different groups of students, we must never forget that college is an individual experience, one that is similar but never exactly the same for a particular individual regardless of their unique social or ethnic background. There are no quick or easy solutions to the issue of student retention. Nor is there any ready substitute for the institutional commitment to students that is the foundation of successful retention programs.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine what academic and social integration variables were the best predictors of retention for first year African American students at a predominately White institution. The importance of both forms of integration was reinforced by this study. The issues of peer-group interaction, interaction with faculty, faculty concern with development and teaching, academic and intellectual development and institutional and goal commitment are critical issues for first year African American students. These issues suggest that first year students need to be supported, encouraged and integrated early in their collegiate experience or external factors will encourage them to withdraw based on the lack of commitment by the institution.
The role of students cannot be ignored. Students play a vital role in helping themselves integrate into the academic and social systems of the institution. They must also take the initiative to explore the opportunities that a college environment provides. We must take into account that retention rates for first year African American students is likely to be a function of their self-determined goals as well as to the extent that the environment presents itself as welcoming.

Retention of first year African American students has solely been the responsibility of a few staff members, usually African Americans, who are designated to implement these programs. This study revealed the importance of fully integrating these students into both systems of the institutions. The development of academic, leadership, social, and personal skills in a manner that enhances the ability for this student population to achieve inside and outside the classroom has proven to be vital in order for African American students to exist cohesively at PWIs. As stated previously, “retention is everyone’s business, not just that of the few administrative and support staff assigned to these programs” (Tinto, 1993, pg. 185). Therefore, this study reinforces that it takes a village (entire institution) to aid in the academic and social integration of first year African American students at a predominantly White institution.
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Why students leave college. *Retaining Minority Students in Higher Education*.


APPENDIX A

Institutional Integration Scale
The Academic and Social Integration of African American Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Research Study by:
Stacy L. Downing
The instrument is based heavily on the Institutional Integration Scale created by Drs. Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini
For each of the following statements, circle the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience: **PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 = Very strongly agree</th>
<th>5 = Strongly agree</th>
<th>4 = Agree</th>
<th>3 = Disagree</th>
<th>2 = Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1 = Very Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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**Peer-Group Interactions**

1. Since coming to this University I have developed close personal relationships with other students

2. The student friendships I have developed at this University have been personally satisfying

3. My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, attitudes, and values

4. My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas

5. It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students

6. Many of the students I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem

7. Most students at this university have values and attitudes different from my own

8. I have experienced a sense of belonging at this university

9. I have sufficient opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities

10. This university is a very friendly campus

**Interactions with Faculty**

1. My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values and attitudes

2. My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas

3. My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations

4. Since coming to this University I have developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member

5. I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members
Faculty concern for student development and teaching
1. Most faculty members I have had contact with are generally interested in students
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
2. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are generally outstanding or superior teachers
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
3. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to students
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
4. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
5. Most faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in teaching
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)

Academic and Intellectual Development
1. I am satisfied with the extent of my intellectual development since enrolling in this university
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
2. My academic experience has had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
3. I am satisfied with my academic experience at this university
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
4. Most of my courses this year have been intellectually stimulating
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
5. My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since coming to this university
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
6. I am more likely to attend a cultural event (i.e. concert, lecture, art show) now than I was before coming to this university
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
7. Academic quality is a high priority of the faculty at this institution
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
8. I have performed academically as well as I anticipated I would
   ![Likert Scale](1 2 3 4 5 6)
Institutional and Goal Commitments

1. I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to attend this university
   1 2 3 4 5 6
2. It is likely that I will register at this university next fall
   1 2 3 4 5 6
3. It is important to me to graduate from this university
   1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I have no idea at all what I want to major in
   1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Getting good grades is not important to me
   1 2 3 4 5 6

About You

This purpose of this section is to obtain some basic background information about you as a student at this university.

1. Female ____ Male ____
2. Year in college _______
3. University GPA _______
4. Major _______________________________________
5. Do you receive financial aid? Yes____ No ____
   If yes, what type? (i.e. grants, loans, scholarships) ________________________________
6. What is the highest level of education did your parents receive:
   Father: Graduate degree College degree Some College High School Diploma GED Lower than High School
   Mother: Graduate degree College degree Some College High School Diploma GED Lower than High School
7. What student-based services do you use the most (i.e. tutorial services, minority student office, student activities office, recreational facilities, etc)
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey
APPENDIX B

Raw Scores for the Institutional Integration Scale
The Academic and Social Integration of African American Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Research Study by:
Stacy L. Downing
The instrument is based heavily on the Institutional Integration Scale created by Drs. Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini
For each of the following statements, circle the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience: PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 = Very strongly agree</th>
<th>5 = Strongly agree</th>
<th>4 = Agree</th>
<th>3 = Disagree</th>
<th>2 = Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1 = Very Strongly Disagree</th>
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**Peer-Group Interactions**

1. Since coming to this University I have developed close personal relationships with other students
   - 1 = 4 (208%)
   - 2 = 3 (92.1%)
   - 3 = 7 (4.8%)
   - 4 = 37 (25.5%)
   - 5 = 34 (23.4%)
   - 6 = 60 (41.4%)
   Total responses = 145

2. The student friendships I have developed at this University have been personally satisfying
   - 1 = 4 (2.8%)
   - 2 = 3 (2.1%)
   - 3 = 10 (6.9%)
   - 4 = 40 (27.65)
   - 5 = 46 (31.7%)
   - 6 = 42 (29%)
   Total responses = 145

3. My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, attitudes, and values
   - 1 = 3 (2.1%)
   - 2 = 5 (3.4%)
   - 3 = 10 (6.9%)
   - 4 = 43 (29.7%)
   - 5 = 44 (30.3%)
   - 6 = 40 (27.6%)
   Total responses = 145

4. My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas
   - 1 = 5 (3.5%)
   - 2 = 6 (4.3%)
   - 3 = 10 (7.1%)
   - 4 = 50 (35.5%)
   - 5 = 47 (33.3%)
   - 6 = 23 (16.3%)
   Total responses = 141

5. It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students
   - 1 = 57 (39.9%)
   - 2 = 32 (22.4%)
   - 3 = 30 (21%)
   - 4 = 12 (8.4%)
   - 5 = 6 (4.2%)
   - 6 = 6 (4.2%)
   Total responses = 143

6. Many of the students I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem
   - 1 = 4 (2.8%)
   - 2 = 8 (5.5%)
   - 3 = 19 (13.1%)
   - 4 = 46 (31.7%)
   - 5 = 44 (30.3%)
   - 6 = 24 (16.6%)
   Total responses = 145

7. Most students at this university have values and attitudes different from my own
   - 1 = 5 (3.4%)
   - 2 = 13 (8.3%)
   - 3 = 43 (29.7%)
   - 4 = 46 (31.7%)
   - 5 = 22 (15.2%)
   - 6 = 17 (11.7%)
   Total responses = 145
8. I have experienced a sense of belonging at this university

1 = 12 (8.3%)  2 = 4 (2.8%)  3 = 19 (13.2%)
4 = 46 (31.9%)  5 = 37 (25.7%)  6 = 35 (24.1%)

Total responses = 144

9. I have sufficient opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities

1 = 6 (4.1%)  2 = 4 (2.8%)  3 = 12 (8.3%)
4 = 41 (28.3%)  5 = 47 (32.4%)  6 = 35 (24.1%)

Total responses = 145

10. This university is a very friendly campus

1 = 12 (8.3%)  2 = 9 (6.2%)  3 = 29 (20%)
4 = 63 (43.4%)  5 = 27 (18.6%)  6 = 5 (3.4%)

Total responses = 145

Interactions with Faculty

1. My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values and attitudes

1 = 7 (4.8%)  2 = 13 (9%)  3 = 20 (13.8%)
4 = 47 (32.4%)  5 = 39 (26.9%)  6 = 19 (31.1%)

Total responses = 145

2. My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas

1 = 11 (7.6%)  2 = 8 (5.5%)  3 = 21 (14.5%)
4 = 48 (33.1%)  5 = 36 (24.8%)  6 = 21 (14.5%)

Total responses = 145

3. My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations

1 = 10 (6.9%)  2 = 12 (8.3%)  3 = 18 (12.4%)
4 = 48 (33.1%)  5 = 37 (25.5%)  6 = 20 (13.8%)

Total responses = 145

4. Since coming to this University I have developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member

1 = 11 (7.6%)  2 = 14 (9.7%)  3 = 11 (7.6%)
4 = 42 (29.2%)  5 = 35 (24.3%)  6 = 31 (21.5%)

Total responses = 144

5. I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members

1 = 11 (7.6%)  2 = 14 (9.7%)  3 = 18 (12.4%)
4 = 46 (31.7%)  5 = 37 (25.5%)  6 = 19 (13.1%)

Total responses = 145
Faculty concern for student development and teaching

1. Most faculty members I have had contact with are generally interested in students

   1 = 6 (4.2%)  2 = 15 (10.5%)  3 = 21 (14.7%)
   4 = 58 (40.6%)  5 = 29 (20.3%)  6 = 14 99.8%)

   Total responses = 143

2. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are generally outstanding or superior teachers

   1 = 6 (4.2%)  2 = 7 (4.9%)  3 = 38 (26.8%)
   4 = 53 (37.3%)  5 = 26 (18.3%)  6 = 12 (8.5%)

   Total responses = 142

3. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to students

   1 = 6 (4.2%)  2 = 18 (12.5%)  3 = 28 (19.4%)
   4 = 60 (41.7%)  5 = 22 (15.3%)  6 = 10 (6.9%)

   Total responses = 144

4. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas

   1 = 9 (6.2%)  2 = 12 (8.3%)  3 = 29 (20%)
   4 = 50 (34.5%)  5 = 24 (16.6%)  6 = 21 914.5%)

   Total responses = 145

5. Most faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in teaching

   1 = 6 (4.2%)  2 = 7 (4.9%)  3 = 20 (13.9%)
   4 = 57 (39.6%)  5 = 44 (30.6%)  6 = 10 96.9%)

   Total responses = 144

Academic and Intellectual Development

1. I am satisfied with the extent of my intellectual development since enrolling in this university

   1 = 6 (4.2%)  2 = 13 (9%)  3 = 18 (12.5%)
   4 = 48 (33.3 %)  5 = 41 (28.5%)  6 = 18 (12.5%)

   Total responses = 145

2. My academic experience has had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas

   1 = 4 (2.8%)  2 = 15 (10.4%)  3 = 10 (6.9%)
   4 = 49 (34%)  5 = 46 (31.9%)  6 = 20 (13.9%)

   Total responses = 144
3. I am satisfied with my academic experience at this university

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Total responses = 144

4. Most of my courses this year have been intellectually stimulating

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Total responses = 144

5. My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since coming to this University

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Total responses = 145

6. I am more likely to attend a cultural event (i.e. concert, lecture, art show) now than I was before coming to this university

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<td>1</td>
<td>9 (6.2%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 (5.5%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17 (11.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>39 (26.9%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36 (24.8%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36 (24.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses = 145

7. Academic quality is a high priority of the faculty at this institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 (4.8%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 (7.6%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 (8.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>55 (37.9%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37 (25.5%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23 (15.9%)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses = 145

8. I have performed academically as well as I anticipated I would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 (11.7%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45 (31%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32 (22.1%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9 (6.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses = 145

Institutional and Goal Commitments

1. I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to attend this university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 (6.3%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19 (13.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37 (25.7%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29 (20.1%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37 (25.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses = 144

2. It is likely that I will register at this university next fall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22 (15.3%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 (6.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25 (17.4%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25 (17.4%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>58 (40.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses = 1454
3. It is important to me to graduate from this university 1 2 3 4 5 6
   1 = 19 (13.3%)  2 = 1 (.7%)  3 = 15 (10.5%)
   4 = 16 (11.2%)  5 = 25 (17.5%)  6 = 67 (46.9%)
   Total responses = 143

4. I have no idea at all what I want to major in 1 2 3 4 5 6
   1 = 87 (60.4%)  2 = 20 (13.9%)  3 = 16 (11.1%)
   4 = 12 (8.3%)  5 = 6 (4.2%)  6 = 3 (2.1%)
   Total responses = 144

5. Getting good grades is not important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6
   1 = 98 (68.1%)  2 = 12 (8.3%)  3 = 6 (4.2%)
   4 = 10 (6.9%)  5 = 9 (6.3%)  6 = 9 (6.3%)
   Total responses = 144

About You
This purpose of this section is to obtain some basic background information about you as a student at this university.

1. Female 85 (58.6%) Male 60 (41.4%)

2. Year in college
   2nd 70 (48.3%)
   3rd 52 (35.9%)
   4th 20 (13.8%)
   5th 3 (2%)

3. University GPA
   0.0 – 1.5 = 6 (4.2%)
   1.6 – 2.0 = 12 (8.4)
   2.1 – 2.5 = 36 (24.5%)
   2.6 – 3.0 = 44 (30.9%)
   3.1 – 4.0 = 45 (30.3%)

4. Major  SEE ATTACHED

5. Do you receive financial aid? Yes 133 (92.4%) No 11 (7.6%)
   If yes, what type? (i.e. grants, loans, scholarships)
      Grants 73 (54.8%)
      Loans 79 (59.3%)
      Scholarships 67 (50.3%)
      Other (work study) 2 (.2%)
   * Please note that some students may receive more than one form of financial aid
6. What is the highest level of education did your parents receive:

Father:
Graduate degree = 5 (3.8%)
College degree = 2 (1.5%)
Some College = 50 (37.5%)
High School Diploma = 26 (19.5%)
GED = 30 (22.6%)
Lower than High School = 20 (15%)

Mother:
Graduate degree = 6 (4.2%)
College degree = 2 (2.1%)
Some College = 32 (22.5%)
High School Diploma = 29.6%)
GED = 40 (28.2%)
Lower than High School = 13.4%

7. What student-based services do you use the most (i.e. tutorial services, minority student office, student activities office, recreational facilities, etc)

- African American Cultural and Research Center = 42
- Ethnic Programs and Services = 64
- Educational Services = 33
- Library/Labs = 6
- OneStop Services/Financial Aid = 4
- Recreational Center = 31
- Student Activities and Leadership Development = 29
- ADVANCE/Career Development Center = 6
- Women’s Center = 37
- Student Government = 3
- Student Support Services = 5
- Residential Hall Association = 1
- Admissions = 2
- Writing Center = 2
- None/NA = 2

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
### Majors of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>AA Studies</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting/Finance</td>
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<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace Eng</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
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<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology/PreMed</td>
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<td>CAT/Business Ad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry/PreMed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Communication/Law</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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March 14, 2005

Dear participant:

I am currently in the process of collecting data my doctoral dissertation in Urban Educational Leadership. My dissertation topic is on the academic and social integration of African American students at a predominantly white institution. I am seeking your assistance in helping me reach this goal.

Please take approximately 10 minutes to complete the attached survey. I am sure you will find the questions both interesting and informative. The information you provide will be held in strict confidence and the data reported will be anonymous. Attached is a consent form describing the details of the study and advising you of your rights as a participant in this study.

To show my appreciation for your willingness to take part in this study I will make available a summary of the results for you. If you are interested, this summary will be available at the end of summer. Simply contact me and I will tell you where you can pick it up. Thank you again for assisting me with this very important research project.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 513-556-1177.

Sincerely,

Stacy L. Downing

Stacy L. Downing
Doctoral Student
University of Cincinnati
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
College of Education, Criminal Justice, Human Resources

Stacy L. Downing
556-1177 (work)  481-3125 (home)
Email: Stacy.L.Downing@uc.edu

Title of Study:
“The academic and social integration of first year African American students at predominantly White institutions.”

Introduction:
Prior to consent of participation in this study, it is critical that the following explanation of the proposed procedures be read and understood. This describes the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the study. It also includes the right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of the study.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to assess the academic and social integration of first year African American students at PWIs. I will attempt to gather valuable information that will assist colleges with their ability to enhance their programs and services to first year African American students that will increase the likelihood that these students return to college their second year.

Duration:
Your participation in this study may last from February 2005–May 2005.

Procedures:
Participants in this study will consist of first year African American students and upper-class students who participated in the Transitions Program their first year at this university. It is estimated that 45 first year African American students, ages 18-19, will complete a survey and 10 upper-class students, ages 19-22, will participate in a focus group. During the course of this research, the following will occur: students will agree to participate in the data collection, in which they will be given a survey that deals with their academic and social integration; upper-class students will be asked to participate in a focus group that allows participants to elaborate on their experiences as a first year African American student at a PWI. The Principal Investigator and authorized research staff will seek permission to access to student grades to track their academic progress and will also have access to mid-term grade reports.

Risks/Discomforts:
By having permission to access grades and mid-term reports, this research may cause some discomfort to the participant. In order to minimize this discomfort, the Principal Investigator will work closely with the authorized research staff to ensure that only these individuals will have access to your grades and mid-term reports.

**Benefits:**
The benefits to you for your participation in this research may include social activities (i.e. pizza party, movie pass). However, you may receive no direct personal benefit from participating in this study, but your participation can assist with enhancing academic and social integration of first year African American students at predominantly White institutions.

**New findings:**
You will be notified if there is any new information that becomes available during the course of this research that may affect your willingness to continue your participation in this research. If for some reason you no longer wish to participate in the study, this will not have an impact on your participation in the Transitions Program.

**Confidentiality:**
All information will be held in strict confidence and that the information obtained will only be viewed by those involved with the research. The data from this research may be published; however, you will not be identified by name.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw:**
Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation AT ANY TIME, without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. The investigator has the right to withdraw you from the study AT ANY TIME. Withdrawal from the study may be for reasons related solely to you or because the entire study has been terminated. In addition, if for some reason you no longer wish to participate in the study, this will not affect your participation in the Transitions Program for any reason.

If you have any other questions about this study or discomforts you may contact Dr. Mark Gooden at (513) 556-3533 or by email at Mark.Gooden@uc.edu or Margaret Miller, Chairperson of the University of Cincinnati Human Subjects Protection Committee (IRB) at (513) 558-5212 or by email at Margaret.Miller@uc.edu.

“I have read the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.”

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________

Stacy L. Downing ___________________________ Date __________

Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent