**An Investigation of the Relationship between Four Factors and Their Influence on
the Persistence of African American Students at a
Southeastern Historically Black University**

by

TaShara Yvonne Smith-King

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Approved by

David C. DiRamio, Chair, Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology
Ivan Watts, Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology
James Witte, Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of four factors that influence African American students to remain enrolled at a southeastern HBCU. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). This study was designed to identify whether or not student involvement, in addition to the quality of academic advising, instruction and customer service contributed towards student retention and persistence.

Furthermore, this study is intended to increase literature as it relates to student retention particularly among African American students who attend HBCUs. The data analyzed in the study was collected using student responses from the Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) and withdrawal survey data reported by the university. The top four reasons that affected students' decision to withdraw by those students who voluntarily completed the withdrawal survey and were a part of the 2007 to 2011 cohort were identified. According to the data, students listed the lack of quality customer service and lack of quality social activities as the top two reasons why they chose to withdraw from the university. The lack of quality academic advising and lack of quality instruction were both noted equally as reasons the students decided to leave the university. The top four reasons for remaining at the university as identified by those students who were enrolled in the Fall 2011 semester and completed the SLIS were also identified. According to the data, students listed quality of social activities and quality of academic advising as the top two reasons why they chose to remain at the university.

what a true support system is and I am forever in debt to you for putting up with me during this process. To my dearest friends Ginger Raife and Tina McNear, all though you may not have known it, through your strength, encouraging words and motivation you reminded me that I could be a mother and still complete other goals in my life and I love you dearly for this. To Jameelah Brown, thank you for allowing me to see the light at the end of the tunnel each time you called me "Dr. King". A special thank you to Tara Foster and Tonya Sims for that extra push you all gave me toward the end during our special writing sessions at Panera Bread. I can't wait to celebrate this same accomplishment with you all soon. To my family members who have played an integral role in solidifying the foundation that has allowed me to grow into the woman that I am today, this is "our" degree and I would not have made it this far without your love, encouragement, and talks of wisdom. To all of my friends, loved ones and cohort members at Auburn University who have encouraged me along the way, thank you.

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List of Abbreviations

HBCUs   Historically Black Colleges and Universities

PWIs   Predominately White Institutions

SLIS   Student Life Involvement Survey

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The need for a postsecondary education is critical in contemporary life. Recent research emphasizes that adults with higher levels of education earn higher average salaries and are less likely to be unemployed than their less-educated peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Moreover, Beaulieu and Gibbs (2005) identified the importance of having a well-educated workforce. They suggested that in order to be able to compete for jobs in a dynamic global economy, Americans are finding it essential to earn a college degree. Kittredge (2009) remarked that "Now more than ever, Americans need affordable, quality education opportunities to help make our economy strong and competitive again" (p.1). As reported in Day's and Newburger's (2002) research, future income earnings are statistically tied to level of education. Over the course of an adult's working life, a high school graduate earns an average of $1.2 million; a person earning an associate's degree makes nearly $1.6 million; and a bachelor's degree holder earns approximately $2.1 million (Day & Newburger, 2002). President Obama (2008) noted "To really compete, they need to graduate high school, and then they need to graduate college, and they probably need a graduate degree too. An eighth-grade education doesn't cut it today." (p. 237). Saxton (2000) confirmed the need when stating, "The more education individuals acquire, the better they are able to absorb new information, acquire new skills, and familiarize themselves with new technologies"(p.1).

During this time of economic recession and recovery, the value of a college education has become even more critical. There is a national effort afoot to eliminate poor performance in the classroom and increase the quality of education across the United States (Stoops, 2004). Kingsley, Edmonson, and Slate (2010) expressed the importance of leaders and educators preparing the next generation so that they are able to carry on the responsibility of the United

States continuing to lead the world. From an economic point of view, higher education and degree attainment leads to decreases in long-term poverty, higher personal per-capita income, a higher state tax base, and a stronger economy (McMahon, 2000). President Obama (2008) urged that "A highly-educated and skilled workforce will be the key not only to individual opportunity, but to the overall success of our economy as well" (p.246). Berger and Lyons (2005) advocated that "Academic success not only has an impact on the individual and his or her family, but also produces a ripple effect on the post secondary institutions, the workforce, and the economy" (p.102). How can Americans improve their chances for postsecondary academic success?

One vital factor in academic success and degree attainment is retention, which is defined as an institution's ability to retain a student from their first point of admission through the graduation process (Seidman, 2005). Carter (2006) affirmed that "Understanding student retention is not only important for campus leaders, practitioners, and researchers, but it also has long-term effects on society" (p. 34). Researchers have studied retention from the perspective of student characteristics and found that contributing factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, commitment to earning a degree, and social and academic involvement, all influence degree completion (Astin, 1993; Cabrera & Nora, 1996; Tinto, 1993). This study focuses primarily on social involvement.

In addition to a college education contributing to an individual's economic growth, studies have been conducted that showed a significant correlation between a college education and positive values, including public and individual social benefits (Cohn & Geske, 1992; Davis, 1998; Watts, 2001). For example, in their study "The Private Nonmonetary Returns to Investments in Higher Education," Cohn and Geske (1992) examined how individuals who attended college viewed their time spent as an investment to improve other areas of their life.

For example, with regard to healthy family dynamics, they identified a connection whereby women who obtained a degree were more likely to spend increased time with their children and use the time to prepare their children for the future (Cohn & Geske, 1992). A study to identify the individual and social benefits of higher education by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (1988) found that not only do the college attendees benefit, but the public also benefits economically from those who achieved higher levels of education. Watts (2001), found similar results, identifying that both individual social benefits and public social benefits, were gained when individuals attained higher levels of education. Clearly higher education policy makers and administrators must find effective ways to increase not only college access but also retention and graduation rates, in order to maximize the public and individual benefits to be achieved (Dumas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams, 2001). The problem is that college enrollments continue to increase, yet graduation rates lag behind.

College Access and Graduation Rates

In order to ensure that a diverse pool of Americans gain economic status through college attendance, it is important that access is available and, once enrolled, that students are given the tools they need in order to graduate (Nagaoka, Roderick, & Coca, 2009). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2012), Total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased from 7.4 million students in fall 1970 to 13.2 million in fall 2000 and 18.1 million in fall 2010. When examining public institutions, undergraduate enrollment increased from 10.5 million students in 2000 to 13.7 million in 2010, a 30 percent increase. Private institutions experienced a higher rate of growth over this period, increasing 67 percent, from 2.6 to 4.4 million students. Undergraduate enrollment of U.S. residents generally increased between 1980 and 2010 for each racial/ethnic group. Specifically,

Hispanic enrollments increased a staggering 487% and went from representing 4% of total

enrollment in 1980 to 14% in 2010. The number of black students enrolled in degree-granting

institutions increased significantly as well. Black enrollment increased between 1980 and 2010

from 1.0 million to 2.7 million students, an impressive 163% increase. The good news is that

college access appears to be improving for all students.

Unfortunately, graduation rates remain significantly lower than rates of enrollment at

colleges and universities (Fisher, 2007). Research by Swail, Redd, and Perna (2003) indicated

that nearly half of all students who enter college drop out before they complete a degree. When

trying to pinpoint the most frequent time that students leave college, over half of all students who

leave college do so before their second year (Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange,

1999). Moreover, "The number of white students matriculating through college until completion

continues to be higher than minority students" (Kingsley, Edmonson, & Slate, 2010, p.5).

Stoney (2005) examined student retention and explained that African American students'

enrollment rates in higher education are exceeding their retention and graduation rates. For this

reason, student retention, particularly among African Americans, continues to be a leading

concern at colleges and universities (Creighton, 2010).

African American Enrollment, Graduation, and Dropout Rates

According to Kingsley et al. (2010), higher education administrators have found ways to

increase minority student enrollment; however, the struggle remains to find ways to retain these

students through graduation. Fisher (2007) reported that African American student enrollments

are at an all time high. However, African American students' persistence at a college or

university is beginning to decrease at greater rates than in the past. Zea, Reisen, Beil, and

Caplan (1997) asserted that "The graduation rates for ethnic minority and white students in U.S.

colleges differ dramatically" (p. 149). NCES (2002) reported that the nationwide college graduation rate for black students is only 42%. This is a troublesome statistic, especially as student populations continue to become more racially diverse due to changing patterns of diversity in the United States. A recent report from NCES (2008) revealed that during the 2006 to 2007 academic year, white students earned 72% of all bachelor's degrees awarded, while black students only earned 10% of all bachelor's degrees awarded. In addition to these findings, Bernanke (2007) reported that "In recent years, more than one-third of whites aged 25 to 29 had at least a bachelor's degree, compared with less than one-fifth of same-aged blacks and around 10% of Hispanics" (p. 2). A study on College Graduation Rates (2007) by the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education found more than 80 colleges and universities where the black graduation rate was at least 25 percentage points lower than the graduation rate of white students. Pope (2009) studied graduation rates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). At these HBCUs, as reported by Pope (2009), an *Associated Press* analysis of government data on 83 of the federally designated four-year HBCUs shows just 37% of their black students finish a degree within six years.

Trotter and Roberts (2006) wrote that in order to insure dropout rates and retention are addressed efficiently; university administrators should gear their focus toward the issues that are within their power to alter that have a direct impact on retention. As noted earlier, failure to obtain a college degree can have long term lasting effects on any student, particularly with economically vulnerable and historically underserved African American students. While considering the current context of enrollment, graduation, and dropout rates, this study investigates the academic success of African American college students.

African American Males

Degree attainment statistics can be disaggregated into several categories, particularly by gender. When gender is considered in examining African Americans' educational experiences, the discussion often focuses on the discrepancy between males and females in terms of educational attainment and completion (Cohen & Nee, 2000). Strayhorn (2008) agreed that "In recent years, attention to the experiences of African American males in higher education has grown" (p. 71). In this regard, African American males face unique challenges as college students and Pope (2009) categorized these challenges as fewer role models, the thought of more opportunities without a college degree, and the notion that black men cannot succeed as a result of the cultural factors that affect them. Nationally, only 38% of African American males graduate from college and this figure is significantly lower when compared to the national average of 50% of African American females that graduate from college (Pope, 2009). This noted decline in African American males enrolling in institutions of higher education and graduating from these institutions has become a concern of policy makers as well as educators (Hefner, 2004). For example, one of these concerns is that "As the education level of black men falls in relation to the rest of the labor force, their economic position will also deteriorate" (Hefner, 2004, p. 71). Additionally, Pope (2009) noted that from those 38 out of 83 HBCUs, less than one in four men who started in 2001, completed a bachelor's degree by 2007.

According to Chavous (2004), "The fact that African American males are represented less in higher education than females is one of no small importance" (p.142). This is particularly relevant given that, even among African American students who enter college, consistent gender differences have been found over the years in both achievement and attrition (Fleming, 1984; Hare & Hare, 1991; Pope, 2009; Harper, 2009). In addition to overall graduation rates at

colleges and universities, research showed a significant difference between graduation rates among male and female students who attend HBCUs. When examining national statistics, Harper (2006) noted that an overwhelmingly more than two-thirds of black men who start college do not graduate within their first six years, this accounts for the lowest college completion rate among both males and females as well as all ethnic groups in higher education. When examining graduation rates for all HBCUs combined, Pope (2009) reported that only 29% of African American males attending an HBCU completed a bachelor's degree within six years, compared with 45% of females. A disparity that is unique among African American students is that of females enrolling and graduating from college at a tremendously higher rate than males (Hefner, 2004).

African American Females

Researchers often compare African American male graduation rates to those of African American females. For example, Peltier, Laden, and Matranga (1999) found that African American women had a higher rate of persistence, which is defined as the likelihood a student will sometimes return to the institution semester by semester in order to complete a degree (Berger & Milem, 1999) when compared to African American males. Peltier et al. (1999) also reported that social experiences had a significant impact on the likelihood of persistence among African American women. Cohen and Nee (2000) added that social as well as educational barriers that affect men and women differently can be attributing factors to why women attain higher education at increased rates than men do. When addressing African American females Specifically, Pope (2009) indicated that:

Black women as a group have improved their [national] college completion rate 16 percent in less than 20 years going from 34 percent in 1990 to 50 percent in 2009.

However, there is a significant gap between the number of female graduates versus male graduates from HBCUs, as well as a decrease in the number of females graduating from HBCUs compared to the percentage of those graduating nationally. In 2007, the graduation rate for females at these institutions was 43.1% when compared to males whose graduation rate was 28.5% (p.1).

Therefore as Pope (2009) suggested, addressing the discrepancy of female versus male retention and persistence is of importance.

Statement of the Problem

In order to better understand the phenomenon of degree attainment, it is important to first comprehend the concepts of retention and persistence. Moreover college administrators must assess retention and persistence levels at their institution and conceive of ideas to address them (Nagaoka et al., 2009).

Identifying Retention

Retention is an important concept related to academic success, and several researchers have defined retention in similar ways. Berger and Lyon (2005) defined retention as an institution's ability to retain a student from their first point of admission through the graduation process. Trotter and Roberts (2006) defined retention as the ability of an institution to retain a student from admission through graduation, typically at a single institution, versus a student transferring among two or more colleges. Mortenson (2005) suggested that "Retention is one of the most common ways students, parents, and stakeholders evaluate the effectiveness of colleges" (p. 103). Hutto and Fenwick (2003) identify that "Retention is a major factor in an institution's maintaining credibility and financial stability" (p.2) and, thus, administrators are finding new approaches for addressing retention, including among African American students.

Unfortunately, some students are not completing college at the rate of their majority counterparts. Certain special populations in college, such as minority students (Attinasi, 1989; Randon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000; Tirney, 1992) and first generation college students (Chory, 2001; Ishitani, 2003; London, 1989; Terenzini, Rendon, Upcraft, Millar, Allison, Gregg, & Jalomo, 1994) are more likely to leave college than others. Empirical studies that explored the nature of student departure decisions are used to inform campus personnel about how colleges and universities can more effectively help students, particularly minority students, meet their educational goals (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Carter, 2006). Carter (2006) argued that "The gap between underrepresented minority students and other groups is mainly detrimental because it affects individuals' long-term social mobility" (p. 33).

Seidman (2005) reported that numerous programs can help recruit, retain, and graduate minority students. Based on Siedman's (2005) work and research by others (Astin, 1984, 1993; Fischer, 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) by addressing retention, administrators can develop programs geared toward student involvement among African Americans students, including those at HBCUs. Student involvement at an HBCU is the basis for the study presented here. Seidman (2005) further advised that "Even though there are a plethora of programs and services to help minority students succeed, a disparity in minority and majority retention rates remains" (p. 20).

Identifying Persistence

Interestingly, when compared with retention, there is little agreement among higher education scholars on a standard definition for persistence. Mortenson (2005) defined persistence as a student's conscious effort to continue his or her enrollment at a higher education institution. However, Berger and Milem (1999) identified persistence as "institutional data that indicates

whether the student returned to the university the following semester" (p. 650). Captivatingly

Thomas (1990) noted that circumstances such as a student's level of confidence, as well as

academic and social integration, can increase the likelihood of persistence. Despite conceptual

and definitional differences there is agreement about ways to improve persistence.

Research showed that persistence has often been linked to student involvement. "It is

commonly believed that the more students involve themselves with college life, the more likely

they will be to persist" (Reason, 2009, p.674). Tinto (1993) identified a correlation between

learning and persistence that has a direct relation to student involvement and the quality of

student effort. He wrote (1993) that, "Involvement with one's peers and with the faculty, both

inside and outside the classroom, is itself positively related to the quality of student effort and in

turn to both learning and persistence" (p. 71). Additional research has been conducted that

points to student involvement among college students as a major determining factor in whether

or not a student decides to persist in college. In their landmark study, Pascarella and Terenzini

(2005) reported that the level of student involvement, both academically and socially, can be a

critical factor in student persistence decisions.

This study was designed to identify the impact of four factors that influence African

Americans to remain enrolled at a southeastern HBCU. The study presented here is an

investigation of whether or not student social involvement in addition to the quality of academic

advising, customer service and instruction, play a significant role in student retention and

persistence among African American students. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are

institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the

intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). According to Allen (1999), African

American students are more likely to persist when they become a part of the social environment

through involvement in social activities. Bean and Eaton (2000) added that when students become both academically and socially integrated they form positive attitudes about the institution and as a result the students are more likely to persist. Ultimately, findings from the study will substantiate the role student involvement plays in the retention of African American students who attend HBCUs. The intent here is to inspire college administrators to create programs that are more specifically geared toward African American student social involvement, and thus, retention and persistence.

<div align="center">Social Involvement and Retention</div>

Since both student persistence and retention are widespread concerns in American Higher Education, what can be done to ensure students' academic success? Boling (1997) suggested "It is of interest to colleges and universities as to whether participation in extracurricular organizations inhibits or enhances the academic performance and retention of students" (p.1). In fact additional research findings have suggested that students' decisions to withdraw are significantly affected by the degree of their intellectual and social integration into the campus community and life of the institution (Tinto, 1982; Trotter & Cove, 2005). In his study using the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen, Fischer (2007) explained, "Having more formal (i.e., extracurricular) and informal (i.e., friends) social ties are positively related to college satisfaction and these social ties are also significantly related to leaving college" (p. 126). Moore, Lovell, McGann, and Wyrick (1998) also found that the majority of student involvement research supports the notion that collegiate extra-curricular involvement positively influences moral development and cognitive development, as well as vocational and academic aspirations after graduation. Additional research conducted by Suarez-Orozco and Paez (2002) affirmed the theory that once students become involved with the campus community they are likely to learn

best, as well as persist. While researching Hispanic student retention, Creighton (2010) noted that there are several factors that promote ways to get more students involved within the college environment. Creighton (2010) identified some of these factors, such as the opportunity to participate in student organizations as well as student-faculty interactions.

These studies reported a connection between student retention, persistence, and student involvement. For example, Reason (2009) reported that "Focusing on the interactions of students and environments, particularly those environments most proximal to students' lives, provides promises in the arenas of research and practice of student persistence" (p.679). Schwartz and Washington (2002) conducted a study involving 229 African American freshman which examined the extent to which pre-college, as well as, college experiences impacted retention. They concluded that students' perceptions of their social adjustment on campus were strong predictors of retention, adding that those who felt more socially connected to the institution were more likely to return for the following semester.

What about student involvement, African American students' persistence, and retention at these HBCUs? As previously stated, understanding this linkage is critical need is because of the disparities among graduation rates of black students who attend HBCUs and the national graduation rates of their white counterparts. Due to a lack of studies addressing the issue of minority retention and involvement, more research must be conducted that addresses specifically African American students. This study investigates the role student involvement plays in the retention of African American students attending an HBCU. Allen (1999) and Swail, Redd, and Perna (2003) pointed out that very few studies have been conducted addressing retention of African American students enrolled at HBCUs. Furthermore, there has been limited research conducted as it relates to African American students attending HBCUs and the role student

involvement plays on retention. Most studies that investigate African American retention and persistence focus on black students who attend Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). In order to add to the limited research on HBCU students and retention, this study addressed the influence of student involvement with campus life on the retention and persistence of African American students enrolled at a southeastern HBCU

Purpose and Description of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of four factors that influence African Americans to remain enrolled in college. The study presented here is an investigation of whether or not student social involvement in addition to the quality of academic advising, customer service and instruction, play a significant role in student retention and persistence. African American students are the population under study due to the disparities in graduation rates discussed earlier; and this study will focus on African American students attending a southeastern HBCU.

The dependent variables in this study are the retention and persistence of the student. For this study, Trotter and Roberts' (2006) definition will be used to identify retention. Retention is whether or not the student has progressed to enroll in the second year of their program study. As an extension of Mortenson's (2005) definition for persistence-the conscious act by students to maintain their status in education and continue their enrollment in higher education institutions-students in this study will be identified as persistent if they have not withdrawn and have been actively enrolled at the college or university.

The independent variables for this study were the quality of social life/social activities, academic advising, instruction and customer service. Social involvement, as defined by Astin (1975), is the amount of energy both psychological and physical that a student dedicates to the

college social experience. In this study two research instruments were used. A Student Life

Involvement Survey (SLIS) was used to gather information from students regarding their

participation in these activities and organization. The SLIS is the researcher-adapted instrument

used in this study. The SLIS was five pages in length, included 13 items and three sections: (1)

background information such as gender, race, age, enrollment information, GPA etc., (2) level of

participation in student life, (3) four reasons that may have influence the student's decision to

remain at the university, and (4) two questions regarding students' perception of persistence and

student involvement. In addition to the SLIS, the secondary research instrument used in the

study was the university's Official Withdrawal/Exit Survey. The University's Office of Records

and Registration Student Withdrawal/Exit Survey questionnaire was one page in length, included

15 items and two sections: (1) demographic and enrollment information, and (2) 13 reasons why

the student chose to leave the university and whether or not the university can assist the student

so that they may remain at the university. For this study the withdrawal survey administered by

the university was used to analyze students' perception of the overall quality of customer service,

academic advising, instruction, and student activities. These categories will be identified as

possible reasons why students desire to remain or leave the university.

This study examined the influence of student involvement with campus life on the

retention of African American students enrolled at a southeastern HBCU. This study will

identified to what extent is social involvement with student and auxiliary organizations related to

retention and persistence among African American students enrolled at a southeastern HBCU.

Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of this study the following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of social life and student activity programs?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of academic advising?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of customer service?

Significance of the Study

Research and scholarly writing support the theory that student involvement plays a significant role in student success. However, there are a limited number of studies that examine the impact of student involvement as it relates to retention and persistence of African American students, especially those who attend HBCUs (Stith & Russell, 1994). Most empirical studies of African American college students have focused primarily on students from predominately white institutions (Cabera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Nora & Cabera, 1996).

Prior research revealed that student involvement with campus life has a direct and positive relationship on student retention and persistence. This study used past research on student involvement and persistence as a conceptual framework (Reason & Terenzini, 2005) and applied it to an investigation of the retention of African American students who attended an

HBCU. This study is designed to fill a gap in the literature examining the relationship between student involvement and persistence among African American students attending an HBCU.

Limitations/Delimitations of the Study

As with all research, there are both limitations and delimitations and research imposed limitations associated with this study. These included:

- This study was conducted at a southeastern HBCU. The findings of this study should not be generalized to other geographic locations, colleges, or university settings. Any assumptions, conclusions, or applications outside of this study should be made with caution.

- This study focused on African American students at one institution only. Therefore, the results of this study should not be generalized to fit the needs of all African American students at other institutions of higher education.

- The use of the SLIS in this study was delimited to students currently enrolled in the 2011 Fall semester at an HBCU. The study included students who participated in some extracurricular activities at this particular institution and those who did not participate. The study also included students who were randomly sampled.

- The use of the withdrawal survey in this study was delimited to students who were included in the 2007 through 2011 cohorts and voluntarily completed a survey upon withdrawing from the university.

- The study was further delimited to the data collected through the use of a quantitative survey questionnaire with two open-ended questions and data collected from a quantitative survey questionnaire provided by the participating university.

Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

- The participants of this survey responded truthfully and accurately to the best of their ability.

- The Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) was used to assess to what extent is social involvement with campus life, quality of instruction, customer service and academic advising are predictors of persistence of African American students enrolled at a southeastern HBCU.

- The student data provided by the institutional research office at the university was accurate and valid.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of better understanding this study, the following terms are defined:

Academic class standing – enrollment based categories of freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate students.

Academic success – the pursuance of high academic achievement and/or being retained by the college or university as a student.

Campus Residence – refers to where a student resides (eats and sleeps) while engaged in an academic program at an institution of higher education.

Ethnicity–self-reported category of belonging to a particular ethnic group.

Extracurricular/co-curricular activities – a form of recreation in which a student participates outside the academic classroom which contributes to student involvement.

Gender-self-reported category characterized as either male or female.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) – institutions of higher education in the U.S. that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001).

Involvement – the amount of physical and mental energy applied to the learning experience [extracurricular] (Astin, 1984).

Participants – individual students who participate in extracurricular activities.

Participate – to take part in a university sponsored organization's activity/event.

Persistence–is the conscious act by students to maintain their status in education and continue their enrollment in higher education (Mortenson, 2005).

Retention-refers to the ability of an institution to retain a student from admission to the institution through graduation, most often related to a single institution, as opposed to a student's transfer between two or more colleges (Trotter & Roberts, 2006).

Student/Social involvement–is the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the college social and academic experience.

Student – one who is currently enrolled and actively attending classes in a school, college, or university.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by presenting the problem statement, the null hypothesis, the instrument used, the significance of the study, the limitations and delimitations of the study, assumptions of the study, a listing of

terms with corresponding definitions, and concludes with the organizational structure of the study. Chapter two contains a historical overview of educating African Americans, the establishment of higher education systems for African Americans, the origination of HBCUs, conceptual frameworks by Astin, Tinto, and Reason and Terenzini, the social identity development theory, a review of literature pertaining to empirical research regarding student retention and persistence, and a review of literature pertaining to students' perception of the quality of customer service, academic advising and instruction.

Chapter Three addresses the methods that were used to conduct the study, including the sampling methods and the research questions. Chapter Four presents the results of the study and an interpretation of the data analysis of the study, while chapter five provides a summary of the study, conclusion, implications, and recommendations for future studies pertaining to the research topic.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of four factors that influence African American students to remain enrolled at a southeastern HBCU. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). This study was designed to identify whether or not student involvement, in addition to the quality of academic advising, instruction and customer service contributed towards student retention and persistence. Furthermore, this study is intended to increase literature as it relates to student retention particularly among African American students who attend HBCUs.

This chapter will review literature related to the influence of student involvement on the retention and persistence of African American students who attend an HBCU. This chapter provides a historical overview of educating blacks and the formation of HBCUs. Reviews are provided for several theoretical models that identify student involvement as a source for student retention and persistence. These models have significantly enhanced research on student persistence and retention. This chapter also includes a discussion of the research literature as it relates to the student development identity theory. Earlier studies of student involvement are discussed along with studies that focus on student retention and persistence. Student's perception of the overall quality of customer service, academic advising, and instruction will also be analyzed. This chapter concludes with an analysis of recent research that has been conducted to enhance the previously identified student involvement theories. Furthermore, this study is meant to increase literature as it relates to student retention, particularly among African American students who attend HBCUs. The data analyzed in this study was collected using

student responses from the Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) and data reported by the university from their withdrawal survey.

Historical Overview of Educating African Americans

This section will provide an overview of the history of educating blacks and the effect it had on the development of systems of higher education. In order to provide a historical analysis of African American students in higher education, it is imperative to trace the origin and the development of the education system in the African American culture. Wilson (1998) explains "It is difficult to understand the depth of the African American educational experience without a historical and/or cultural context" (p.11). When researching the history of educating blacks, Anderson (1988) pointed out that there was a central theme interwoven in the history of the education of black Americans. This theme can be identified as the continued struggle to create a system of formal education that prefigured black Americans liberation from peasantry. Several factors played a significant role and aided in the development of the educational system for African Americans. Some of those factors include: (a) blacks zeal and commitment to be educated, (b) the development of secondary public schools for blacks, and (c) the conflicting ideologies of Southern planters and Northern philanthropist.

From 1860-1935 there was a significant change in the methods of educating blacks. After the Civil War, the South began to take steps towards educating blacks (Cohen, 1998). There were some significant people who played a major role in the education as well as the non-education of blacks. Some of these influential people include: southern planters, northern philanthropists, George Foster Peabody, Robert C. Ogden, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, and Carter G. Woodson, just to name a few. Weinberg (1991) noted that there were 27

times more white children attending schools than black children after the Civil

War in 1860. Weinberg (1991) also acknowledged that "Slaves, who numbered 4 million that

year, were not permitted to become literate or to instruct their own children. It was not until the

mid-twentieth century that school enrollment ratios of black and white children were similar" (p.

5).

It was evident that blacks had a zeal for learning. Anderson (1988) stated "Blacks

emerged from slavery with a strong belief in the desirability of learning to read and write" (p. 5).

After the Civil War, it was apparent that blacks were fighting the hardest for universal education

in the South. Cohen (1998) expressed the limited availability of higher education for minorities

and stated that "Because the universities could not or would not matriculate everyone who

sought upward mobility through higher education, several other institutional forms developed"

(p. 110). With this in mind, blacks began setting up their own schools. Several schools were

being established, such as Fortress Monroe established in 1864 in Virginia and Pioneer School of

Freedom established in 1860 in New Orleans. Franklin and Moss (1994) added that many of

these schools had dilapidated facilities, a small amount of teachers and inadequate supplies, but

these characteristics of the black schools did not stop the increased enrollment that allowed the

schools to continue to grow. In 1865, John Alvord was appointed inspector of schools and he

commented on the Freedmen's Bureau Schools. He reported that blacks were practicing "self-

teaching" and they were determined to educate themselves (Anderson, 1988). Blacks desire to

learn and commitment to education continued to spread and ignite the establishment of many

other schools for blacks.

In addition to their zeal and commitment to be educated, the formation of secondary

public schools for blacks also aided in the development of education systems for blacks.

Anderson (1988) ascertained in the beginning the main obstacle and most oppressive feature of black secondary education was the government's lack of concern in providing public secondary education for black students as they willingly committed time and time again to maintain these same types of facilities for white children. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1991), mainly only black private institutions offered secondary education for southern blacks before 1920.

One of Alabama's black leaders, Dr. W.R. Pettiford, launched a campaign for a high school for blacks and won the support of the president of the school board, Samuel Ullman (Anderson, 1998). Black leaders found themselves negotiating in order to receive black public secondary institutions, with the small class of moderate southern whites who believed in academic education for black children (Anderson, 1988). Progress was taking place as twenty-two public high schools were established in southern cities by 1915 which included cities such as Birmingham, Little Rock Baltimore, Louisville, and St. Louis.

Anderson (1988) sited that "The significant shift of the black population from the rural to the urban South during the period of 1916 to 1930 forced a new attentiveness to secondary education for black youth" (p. 202). The establishment of secondary public schools for blacks continued to aid in the development of educational systems for blacks. Anderson (1988) noted, "The same coalition that transformed white public secondary education-northern philanthropists and southern school officials-joined to forge a new system of urban black secondary education" (p. 203). The Northern philanthropist had a different vision for the public secondary schools for blacks that varied significantly from the model that was seen in the South between 1880 and 1920. Most of the intentions for educating blacks of both the Northern philanthropist and Southern planters were brought on by selfish motives (Cohen, 1998). Northern philanthropists

set out to develop a public secondary education for blacks; they attempted to create a system that would translate their own conceptions of blacks' economic roles in the urban South into a new model of secondary black education (Anderson, 1988). Although establishing secondary public schools for blacks was very strenuous and tedious, this process contributed significantly to the development of education for African Americans and led to the formation of schools of higher learning for blacks.

The planters and northern philanthropist had their own ideology in regards to the best way to educate blacks. The planters and northern philanthropist often had conflicting views in regards to how and if blacks should be educated. When faced with choosing between moving toward a northern style system of free labor and mass literacy or remaining with their coercive mode of labor allocation and control, planters chose the labor repressive systems (Anderson, 1988). Planters were convinced that if blacks became educated, there would be no one to do the manual labor of the plantations. The southern planters tried to re-establish the plantation system while having labor control among the blacks (Sherrod, 2009). The ex-slaves' most fundamental challenge to the planter's ideology and structure of schooling, however, went beyond the practice of universal schools as a customary right. The planters were opposed to black education and showed little interest in the idea of universal education for the laboring classes (Anderson, 1988). Planters continued to use their influence to place obstacles in front of those who tried to establish an efficient public school program for African Americans.

Spring (2007) explained that after the Civil War the North was different from the South because African Americans who lived in the North were already free therefore they attempted to help the African Americans in the South make the transition from slavery to freedom by aiding them in developing an education system. During 1860-1900, northerners believed that ex-slaves

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needed to be taught values and rules.   In the North, according to Kaestle (1983), "In 1830,

Charles Andrews, head of New York's African Free School, estimated that there were 1,800

school-age black children, not counting, those already in domestic service" (p. 107). Northerners

had a preconceived notion that slaves/ex-slaves were uncivilized victims. Northern

philanthropists of the New South wanted to keep public education open as an avenue of Negro

advancement, but they highly underestimated the force of the white supremacy. Anderson

(1988) suggested, philanthropic northerners sought to cushion the Negro against the shock of

racism and to keep public education open as an avenue of Negro advancement. The Hampton

Tuskegee curriculum of industrial education was central to the philanthropists' educational

ideology, not as a means to reconcile white supremacists to the idea of black public education,

but as a program to reinforce the existing structure of the South's political economy and make it

run more efficiently (Dennis, 1998). This drive and persistence aided in the advancement of

blacks in the higher education realm.

<div align="center">Establishment of Higher Education systems for African Americans</div>

The development of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia

by Samuel Chapman Armstrong contributed significantly to the formation of new schools for

blacks in the South. Anderson (1998) mentioned that "The new curriculum developed by

Armstrong offered the possibility of adapting black education to the particular needs and

interests of the South's dominant-class whites" (p. 31). This model school played a significant

role in jump starting the education for blacks and created a snowball effect for establishing

schools of higher education for blacks.

Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was originally founded as a normal school whose mission was to train common school teachers for the South's black education system, but eventually its focus shifted toward being a more technical and vocational school (Anderson, 1988). Armstrong's ideal student was one who only had the education of elementary school and one who exemplified hard work. Hampton did not offer bachelor's degrees and "Like many other normal schools of the nineteenth century, Hampton offered curricula of two or three years in length" (Anderson, 1988, p. 34). The Hampton Model promoted cheap, hard labor among blacks as the key to the revitalization of the South.

Booker T. Washington, one of Armstrong's pupil's, was heavily influenced by Armstrong's ideology and Washington supported the idea of educating blacks for the purpose of industrialization. In 1881, Booker T. Washington founded the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. The two ideologies of the Hampton Institute and the Tuskegee Institute combined to form the Hampton-Tuskegee Idea (Dennis, 1988).

There were several who criticized the Hampton Model. Many felt that the instruction given was very limited and taught on an elementary level. Students often complained that they were misled to believe they would be taught a skilled trade, but instead there was an absence of technical training and a low level of trade training. Students expressed that there was very little teaching and more manual labor. Blacks were able to take this controversial model for a school and convert, what some thought to be a bad situation into a good one, by building upon it and adding different curricula for educating.

Sissoko and Shiau (2005) articulated that "Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established during the segregation period of U.S. history in response to the

demand for education by blacks who did not have access to white educational institutions"
(p.181). According to Jackson and Nunn (2003), Historically Black Colleges and Universities
(HBCUs) were not initially established to develop the minds of young black students, but they
were created to contain and segregate black people. Although this may be true, the
establishment of HBCUs played a significant role in the higher education realm. Franklin and
Moss (1994) identified that "Predominantly black colleges increased from one in 1854 to more
than 100 by the middle of the next century. They were of three general types: church-related
colleges, privately endowed colleges, and public colleges" (p. 408).

Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1872

The enactment of the Second Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 helped to contribute to the
development of some of the very first HBCUs. The First Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 stated
that a state could not base admission on race and receive the benefits of this act. Jischke (2004)
noted that the original mission of the First Morrill Act was to make higher education available to
those who otherwise would not be able to obtain one. Under this act Virginia, Mississippi, South
Carolina and Kentucky named black schools as land-grant schools. The mission of the Second
Morrill Act focused on providing just and equitable division of funds, creating segregated
schools of higher learning, and establishing schools that focused on agriculture and mechanic
arts. The act provided three options that had to be followed by the states. With these funds the
state could choose to admit blacks to the already established colleges and universities, establish a
black school or allocate funds to private schools. The 1890 Act provided that a state could
establish separate colleges, one white, and one black, and still be in compliance with the act. It
was decided by the courts that a "just and equitable" division of the fund would be made

between one white and one black school. Thus the "just and equitable" framework of the 1890

Morrill Act predated the "separate but equal" framework (Johnston, 2006).

This study focused on one HBCU in particular known as Alabama State University. In

1867, Alabama State University (ASU) was founded by nine free slaves and was originally

named the Lincoln School of Marion in Marion Alabama. At the time the institution was

founded, ASU was a private institution for blacks, by nine former male slaves known as the

Marion Nine. Marion Nine." These men—Alexander H. Curtis, Joey Pinch, Thomas Speed,

Nickolas Dale, James Childs, John Freeman, Nathan Levert, and David Harris—had been

working to provide an education for the black children of Marion, Alabama. The school opened

with 113 students. Through the works of the Second Morrill Act, in 1874 Alabama State

University became the first state supported educational institution for blacks. Currently ASU has

an enrollment of over 5,000 students from 42 states and 7 countries and has a minority

population (non-Black) of 11 percent.

<center>Conceptual Frameworks</center>

This section identifies three well known conceptual frameworks in regards to student

involvement and student retention and persistence. This section also analyzes other frameworks

developed to enhance the knowledge base for student involvement and persistence and retention.

Three theoretical frameworks have been primarily utilized to address student retention,

involvement and persistence.

Reason and Terenzini's Conceptual Framework for Studying College Impacts

The model chosen as the grounding theory for this research, Terenzini and Reason's

(2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences on Student Learning and Persistence framework, is

an extension of research and findings published by Astin (1985, 1993), Tinto (1975, 1993), and

Pascarella (1985), which all build upon sociological and psychological foundations. According

to Terenzini and Reason (2005), "The [Comprehensive Model of Influences on Student Learning

and Persistence] framework also draws on the model for researching the organizational impacts

on student outcomes given by Berger and Milem (1999)" (p.12).
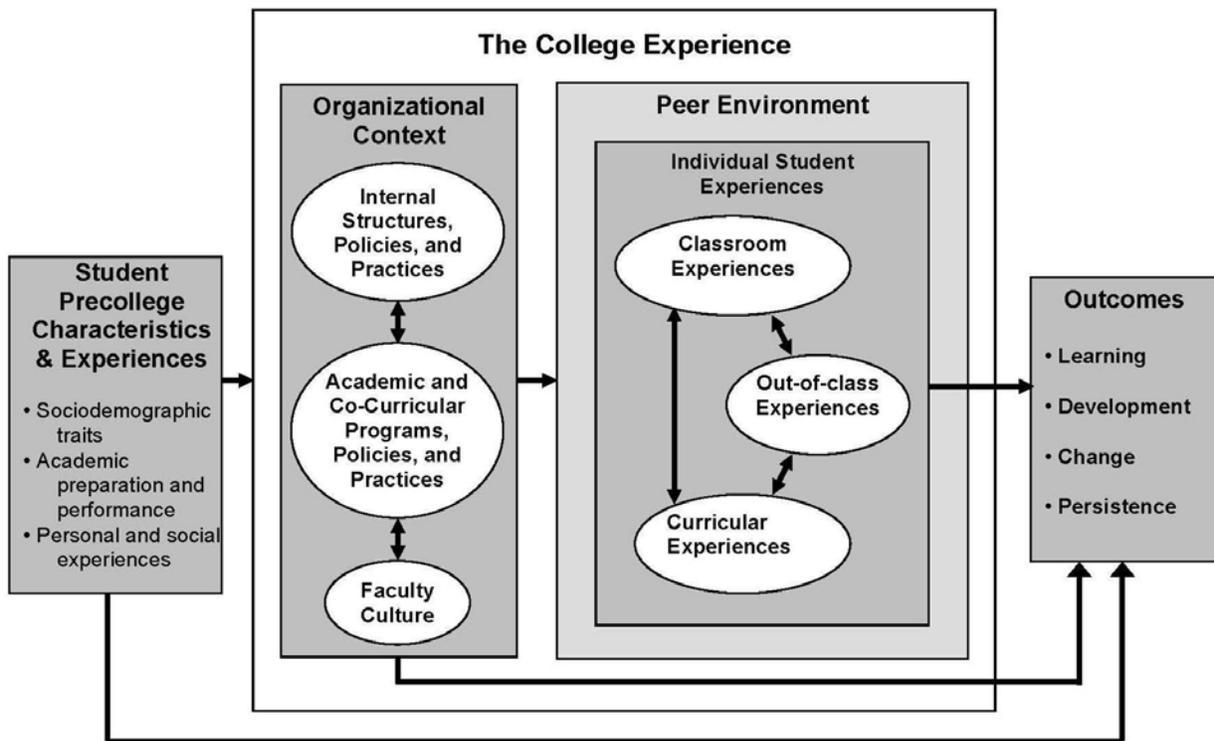
Figure 1. A Comprehensive Model of Influences on Student Learning and Persistence
    (Terenzini & Reason, 2005).

The conceptual framework incorporates four general categories of influences on college

students that affect outcomes: student precollege characteristics, organizational context, peer

environment, and individual student experiences. Figure 1 depicts A Comprehensive Model of

Influences on Student Learning and Persistence framework and includes the four major outcomes

of the college experience including learning, development, change, and persistence. The college

experience includes aspects of the institution's internal organizational context, the peer

environment, and, ultimately, students' individual experiences. Terenzini (2010) noted "Once

students enroll, their college outcomes are shaped primarily by their individual curricular,

classroom, and out-of-class experiences" (p. 5).

This study evaluated the construct validity of the conceptual framework (Figure 1)

suggesting that individual student experiences, specifically student involvement in and out-of

class experiences (extra-curricular), as well as the quality of the organizational context, result in

an outcome of student persistence. In addition to student involvement being characterized as

peer involvement within this model, students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction,

academic advising, and customer service was also part of the organizational context used for this

study.

In addition to Reason's and Terenzini's work, there are two frequently noted conceptual

frameworks that were used in this study and are worth noting when considering persistence and

involvement. Both Tinto (1987) and Astin (1993) emphasized the importance of forging

connections between individuals and groups on campus as keys to student persistence.

Tinto's Interactionalist Theory

The first model widely recognized for studying student persistence and departure was

created by Tinto in 1975 (revised in 1993) and is known as the Interactionalist Model of Student

Departure. Tinto identified reasons why students did not remain in college and the impact that

student involvement had on student persistence. Tinto's emphasis on the need to better

understand the relationship between student involvement in learning and the impact that

involvement has on student persistence has been extensively reviewed by Milem and Berger

(1997). Milem and Berger (1997) noted that "Tinto's (1993) revision of his initial conceptual

model (Tinto, 1975) included a more detailed discussion of the interaction between behavior and

perception by students as they move toward greater integration with their social and academic environments" (p. 661). Tinto (1993) later revised his model to include a more detailed analysis of the interaction between behavior and perception by students as they began to integrate themselves more, socially and academically within the college environment in which they exists. Within his model, Tinto identified the importance of understanding the role that student involvement plays in learning and the impact it has on the students' willingness to remain at the college or university, or persist. Tinto (1993) added that "There appears to be an important link between learning and persistence that arises from the interplay of involvement and the quality of student effort. Involvement with one's peers and with the faculty, both inside and outside the classroom, is itself positively related to the quality of student effort and in turn to both learning and persistence" (p. 71). Tinto (1975) confirmed this when he wrote "Moreover, the greater the student's level of social integration, the greater the level of their subsequent commitment to the focal college or university" (p.110).

Astin's Theory of Student Involvement

The theory of student involvement relating to student development grew out of a study by Astin (1975) on college dropouts. Astin's study investigated factors in college that affected student persistence to remain in college. He found that students who joined social fraternities or sororities were less likely to drop out.

Astin (1975) demonstrated that a student's lack of involvement factors contributed to departure from college. He also noted that several factors linked to a student's persistence had a direct correlation with his or her involvement in student activities. Astin (1984) defined student involvement as "The amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). Student involvement can be viewed as a variable in a

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quantitative study and can be used to study persistence. In his theory of student involvement, Astin (1984) identified five basic postulates that can be used to address student involvement and persistence. Astin's (1984) five basic postulates in his theory imply that: (a) involvement means the investment of physical and psychological energy in different areas; (b) involvement occurs along a continuum, with different students investing different amounts of energy at various times; (c) involvement includes quantitative and qualitative components; (d) the amount of student learning and personal development is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of involvement; and (e) the effectiveness of any educational practice is related to the capacity of that practice to increase involvement.

Astin (1999) suggested that both quantitative and qualitative research methods can be used to measure involvement. Astin (1999) explained this mixed methods approach as "Quantitatively, by determining how many hours are spent studying, attending meetings, etc, and qualitatively, by including the student's role in participating in the activity, or depth of reflection" (p. 598). This study will use the quantitative aspect of Astin's theory for variable design and to analyze African American student involvement and retention at a southeastern HBCU.

Students are likely to lessen their commitment the university or even leave if they have negative experiences such as lack of involvement in campus activities and little to no faculty interactions (Graunke & Woosley, 2005). Students must feel connected to the university in order to want to remain at the institution and be successful (Tinto, 1993). Consequently, those students who fail to identify with the university or college that they attend often do not persist and are not retained (Tinto, 1975, 1987).

According to Bean and Eaton (2000), when students are academically and socially integrated, they form positive attitudes about the institution which influences their intent to persist, and ultimately, their actual persistence. In their research, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) stated that students' participation is student organizations leads to greater involvement overall and has a positive effect on educational persistence and attainment.

<center>Social Identity Student Developmental Theories</center>

When defining development, Sanford (1967) stated that development represents the "organization of increasing complexity" (p. 47). Knowledge of theories such as student identity development theory and methods of human development and their applications in college settings can assist student affairs professionals to accomplish their goal of creating a well rounded while increasing student retention and persistence rates. Student support researchers such as Erikson, Komives, Kohlberg, and Chickering, just to name a few, have aided in the expansion of the three main aspects of student development which include psychosocial, cognitive and social identity development theories. These theories of development, according to Knefelkamp, Widick and Parker (1978) focused on systematic change that takes place over a period of time while a student matriculates through the collegiate experience. Strom, Bernard, and Strom (1987) argued that the "major target of studying human development is to produce, or become a socialized person" (p. 230). One of the most pertinent goals of student affairs professionals is that of educating the whole student.

With the vast number of experiences that students encounter while attending college, it is important for student affairs professionals to familiarize themselves with the student development theories that exist, particularly student identity theory. McEwen (2003) added that "a student affairs professional needs theory because it is difficult for one person to hold

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simultaneously in his or her understanding all the aspects of a particular phenomenon he or she is interested in" (p. 154). By studying and understanding these theories of student development, student affairs professionals will be able to apply these theories as they work with students in the student affairs realm.

Research with Knefelkamp, Widick and Parker (1978), indicated that "Both psychosocial and cognitive developmental theories provide ways to describe where the student is developmentally and explain how developmental changes occur" (p. xi). While a student attends college and goes throughout the several stages of student development, his or her college experiences help to define who they are. Sanford (1967), a student development theorist, found that the collegiate experience should be that which consists of instances that allow the student to encounter both challenges and supports. Student development theories provide a connection between the practitioner and student. This connection allows the practitioner to create a nurturing and productive environment that permits the student to explore and overcome challenges and in return matriculate through the various stages of student development. Sanford (1966) stated that "The institution which would lead an individual toward greater development must, then, present him with strong challenges, appraise accurately his ability to cope with challenges, and offer him support when they become overwhelming" (p. 46). Knowledge of these theories and methods of human development and their applications in college settings can assist student affairs professionals to accomplish their goal of creating a well rounded student who is a lifelong learner. According to Lavelle and O'Ryan (2001), "college student development and social attitudes comprise an intricate and complex interrelationship involving diverse beliefs, motives, and behaviors" (p. 248).

Purpose of Social Identity Development Theories

Identity development involves a series of stages everyone must go through to determine who they are as an individual. McEwen (2003) articulated the definition for identity development as, "The process of becoming more complex in one's personal and social identities" (p. 205). Identity theories involve how students construct a social identity and what they think about their identity. McEwen (2003) added that "Identity development represents a qualitative enhancement of the self in terms of complexity and integration" (p. 205). As a person goes through the stages of identity development, this process defines the individual to themselves and to others. Erikson (1959) and Chickering (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) identified that the main stage of identity development occurs partially during adolescence and early adulthood. Identity formation leads to a number of issues of personal identity and an identity where the individual has some sort of comprehension of him or herself as a discrete, separate entity. Identity development involves a multitude of categories such as race, sex, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender.

Within his research, Chickering (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) provided seven vectors that can also be applied to identity development. Identity development allows the person to form a sense of uniqueness from others, a sense of continuity, and a sense of affiliation. According to Jones and McEwen (2000), "A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity depicts a core sense of self or one's personal identity. Intersecting circles surrounding the core identity represent significant identity dimensions and contextual influences" (p. 22).

Identity development plays a key role for students attending college. During this phase students began to ask who am I and what is my purpose.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) investigated how one forms their identity and espoused that there are seven vectors of identity development that college students experience. One aspect of social identity development is moral development. The concept of identity theory originated from Erikson's psychosocial theory. Marcia (1980) expanded Erickson's psychosocial theory into four categories, called identity status, that are comprised of varying degrees of crisis and commitment: identity achievement, foreclosure, identity diffusion, and moratorium. He also linked identity status to a wide array of personality characteristics, such as patterns of behavior, anxiety, moral reasoning, and self-esteem. Marcia's (1966) work suggested that not all students approach the identity resolution process similarly and that they may need different types of interventions to progress.

Identity theory plays a role in whether or not a student is more likely to become involved on campus. Identity development involves a series of stages everyone must go through to determine who they are as an individual. As a person goes through the stages of identity development this process defines the individual to themselves and to others. Erikson (1959) and Chickering (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) identified that the main stage of identity development occurs partially during adolescence and early adulthood. Identity development involves a multitude of categories such as race, sex, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender. Identity development allows the person to form a sense of uniqueness, continuity and affiliation. This sense of affiliation can be derived as a student takes an active role of being involved academically and socially while attending college (Erickson, 1959).

Increasing emphasis has been placed upon identity development and the need to develop a number of identity development models. Reynolds and Pope (1991) provided a well-known model that addresses multiple identities that focuses on oppressions. Jones and McEwen (2001) noted in their study that within the ten years after the publication of Reynolds and Pope's model, researchers have only minimally addressed multiple identities and have failed to contribute towards testing their models. A new focus of social identity theories models has been linked to social identities of dominant social groups, the primary groups in the United State who collectively have power and privilege society considers normative.

Empirical Studies of Retention

This section discusses studies related to student retention and persistence among African American students in general. Research in higher education has documented a link between the social and academic experiences of African American college students and whether they attend HBCUs or PWI's (Allen, Epps & Haniff, 1991; Nettles, 1987).

Studies conducted by researchers such as Allen (1999), Fleming (1984), Berger and Milem (1999), and Graham (2001) focused on students who leave college before completing their degree. Many of these studies are focused on students who attend predominately White institutions (PWI's). There is limited research related to African American students who attend HBCUs and the effects of student involvement on persistence and retention.

According to Moore (1996), "The literature indicates that a comprehensive and holistic approach is essential to the successful recruitment, retention, and graduation of minority students" (p. 82). Brown (1991) noted that out of the seven components that are critical to addressing minority retention social climate is important. He also argued the importance of the

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social climate for students being welcoming and comfortable (Brown, 1991). The university should provide several opportunities for the student to become involved. Chapman and Logan (1996) recognized that existing retention data stated that students who actively participate in campus functions are more likely to persist. In a study conducted by Chapman and Logan (1996) retention was defined as any student who remained at the university for four or more quarters.

In their study *The role of student involvement and perceptions of integration in a casual model of student persistence,* Berger and Milem (1999) distinguished that African American students are less likely to perceive the institution as being supportive and in return are less likely to persist. Berger and Milem (1999) also concluded that "It is alarming that even after controlling for a number of entry characteristics, being black is the third largest negative predictor of persistence, trailing only the two measures of noninvolvement. They also found that a student's early involvement in the fall was a great predictor of spring involvement and showed that this year round involvement had significant indirect effect on social integration, academic integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence. In addition to supporting the theory that student involvement plays a role in student persistence and retention, Berger and Milem (1999) also revealed that noninvolvement displayed negative effects throughout the model. In their study they also reported that those students who did not get involved early in their first year tend to tend to stay uninvolved throughout the year. They are less likely to become integrated, and as a result, less likely to persist" (Berger & Milem, 1999).

Noble, Lee, Flynn and Hilton (2008) conducted a study that focused on the evidence of first year retention programs. According to Noble et al (2008), "Theoretically, such programs should help in part because they foster integration into campus communities and help align

personal goals with institutional goals". In their study, in an effort to increase retention and achievement of first year students, the University of South Alabama implemented a program for resident first year students called Entering Students at South Engaging in New College Experiences (*ESSENCE*) in the fall of 1998. The purpose of the study was to measure the effects of that program on student success. The results reported from this study revealed that *ESSENCE* improves GPAs and the likelihood of graduating in five years relative to other experiences, even when controlling for other factors.

Schwartz and Washington (2002) conducted a study involving 229 African American freshman which examined the extent to which pre-college, as well as, college experiences impacted retention. They concluded that students' perceptions of their social adjustment on campus were strong predictors of retention, adding that those who felt more socially connected to the institution were more likely to return for the following semester.

The Influence of Customer Service, Academic Advising, Social Activities and Instruction on Student Persistence and Retention and students' perception

Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda (1993) acknowledged important factors influencing college persistence including the institutional commitment to the student (customer service), the student's intention to persist, and college GPA. According to Thomas (1990), there are three major student outcomes that can increase the likelihood of student persistence. These outcomes include student academic integration, student social integration, and student confidence in the quality of the institution. Thomas (1990) also added in order for institutions to improve retention, there needs to be some emphasis on student-faculty classroom experience, quality teaching, and participation with student organizations. While making a connection between instruction and student persistence, Kobrak (1992) asserted that increased teacher-student

relation can create a better environment conducive to learning, promote a healthier climate among African American, and ultimately determine a student's academic success. Bennett and Okinaka's (1990) examination of student-faculty relationships, described those "Students who feel most positive about their college instructors feel most satisfied with the universities' social environment, administration and classes" (p.55).

While researching student retention at a community college in New York, Romano (1995) examined first year attrition and retention and found that academic problems were the main reason for attrition. Academic advising can also play a role in improving retention as Thomas (1990) found that helping student increase academic skills by adding student services is also important.

Summary

There is not a plethora of research that exists on the influence of student involvement on the persistence and retention of African American students attending HBCUs. However, several models exist that look at the impact of participating in social activities as well as additional factors influencing student retention. The literature that does examine the influence of student involvement on retention shows a direct correlation between the two.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Purpose and Design of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of four factors that influence African American students to remain enrolled at a southeastern HBCU: the quality of social life/activities, academic advising, quality of instruction, and customer service. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). This study was designed to identify whether or not student involvement, in addition to the quality of academic advising, instruction and customer service contributed towards student retention and persistence.

In this study, persistence of the student is the dependent variable. As an extension of Mortenson's (2005) definition for persistence, the conscious act by students to maintain their status in education and continue their enrollment in a higher education institution, students in this study were identified as persistent if they did not withdraw and were actively enrolled at the university.

Furthermore, this study is intended to increase literature as it relates to student retention particularly among African American students who attend HBCUs. The data analyzed in the study was collected using student responses from the Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) and withdrawal survey data reported by the university. This chapter identifies the methods used in this research including the purpose and design of the study, four research questions, a

description of the population, the research data collection instrument, demographics of the

sample, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures, analysis, and

summary.

Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of this study the following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation

and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of social life and student activity

programs?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation

and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of academic advising?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation

and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation

and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of customer service?

Reason and Terenzini's (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences on Student Learning

and Persistence served as the conceptual framework for this study. The framework is an

extension of research and findings published by Astin (1984, 1993), Tinto (1975, 1993), and

Pascarella (1985), which all build upon sociological and psychological foundations. This model

was chosen because it identifies two major components of the college experience which include

organizational context and peer environment. These two components lead to several outcomes

with one major outcome being student persistence.

Population and Sample

Two samples were used for this study. The first sample consisted of 108 students who were currently enrolled at the university during the Fall 2011 semester. This sample was drawn from a population of 4,807 students who were enrolled at the institution at this time. A second sample was used in this study which consisted of students who officially withdrew from the university and belonged to cohorts from 2007 through 2011. Students completed the withdrawal survey on a voluntary basis. This second sample was made up of 510 students that officially withdrew from the university and volunteered to take the withdrawal survey. Although this sample does include students who withdrew from the university, this sample is not inclusive and does not include any student who may have withdrawn unofficially or those students who withdrew officially from the university and decided not to take the withdrawal survey.

Instrumentation

This was a quantitative study that utilized the data collected from two research instruments.

Student Life Involvement Survey

The primary research instrument that was used in this study was the researcher adapted Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS), in addition to, the participating university's Official Withdrawal Survey. The research adapted instrument was first used by Jeffrey Hunter Coats in his study to determine the factors that contributed to student involvement in extracurricular activities at a large southern land grant university. The SLIS was altered in order to accommodate the needs of this study by adding specific extracurricular activities offered at a southeastern HBCU as well as additional questions related to reasons why students chose to

remain at the university. Survey results from students who completed the SLIS were compared

to those that completed a withdrawal survey and withdrew from the university from the 2007 to

2011 cohorts. Since this study used a tested survey that had been field tested, no new pilot study

or test for validity or reliability were required.

The SLIS questionnaire was composed of a letter of participation and a total of 13 items that

were broken down into three sections:

a. Items (1-9) focused on demographic and enrollment information.

b. Item (10) addressed the extent of the participant's involvement in several different

   extracurricular activities.

c. Item (11) addressed four reasons that may have influenced the student's decision to

   remain at the university.

d. Items (12-13) proposed two questions regarding the student's perception of student

   involvement and persistence.

The first section of the instrument requested responses regarding the participant's

demographic information. The participant was asked to complete nine questions. The questions

were given in a multiple-choice format and the answer that most described the participant was

marked with an X next to the appropriate answer.

The second section of the survey was designed to examine differences between the

students' levels of participation compared to student persistence. This section was composed of

3-point scale questions (never, occasionally, or often) where participants were asked to respond

to one of the three choices for each extracurricular activity.

The third section of the survey was designed for participants to identify four possible reasons why they may have chosen to remain at the university. This section was composed of 3-point scale questions (major reason, minor reason, and not a reason) where participants were asked to respond to one of the three choices for each reason given.

The fourth section included two questions that related to the student's perception of student involvement and persistence. One of these questions was an open-ended question used to gain the student's perception of student involvement and persistence at the institution. The questionnaire items were reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee members for usefulness to the study, clarity, and redundancy. A copy of the instrument can be found in Appendix A.

University's Official Withdrawal/Exit Survey

The secondary research instrument used in the study was the university's Official Withdrawal/Exit Survey. The University's Office of Records and Registration Student Withdrawal/Exit Survey questionnaire was composed of two sections:

a. Section 1 and item 15 focused on demographic and enrollment information.

b. Section 2 including items 1-13 were reasons given why the student chose to leave the university. Items 14-15 identified whether or not the university can assist the student so that they may remain at the university.

The first section of the instrument requested responses regarding the participant's demographic information. The participant was asked to complete nine questions. This section included demographics such as name, cohort, classification, term, and withdrawal dates.

The second section of the survey was designed for participants to identify thirteen possible reasons why they may have chosen to leave the university. This section was composed of a 3-point scale (major reason, minor reason, and not a reason) and participants were asked to respond to one of the three choices for each reason given. A copy of the instrument can be found in Appendix B.

Reliability and Validity

For this study, a survey design was chosen due to its cost effectiveness, time efficiency, and effectiveness for generalizing findings about a sample's characteristics, experiences, and opinions to the population from which it is drawn (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). This study was conducted using two groups of students at a southeastern HBCU to establish reliability. The SLIS was adapted from a previous study, where reliability and validity were established, and by a researcher who conducted research on the factors that contributed to student involvement in extracurricular activities at a large southern land grant university. The university's withdrawal survey was created and established as valid by the HBCU's Office of Institutional Research.

Variables

The independent variables for this study were the quality of social life/social activities, academic advising, instruction, and customer service. The dependent variable for this study was student persistence as identified as an extension of Mortenson's (2005) definition for persistence, the conscious act by students to maintain their status in education and continue their enrollment in a higher education institution, students in this study were identified as persistent if they did not withdraw and were actively enrolled at the university.

Data-Collection and Procedure

The procedures for data gathering and study validation supported the overall purpose of this study. Several groups of students were randomly chosen for this survey. The Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) was the researcher-adapted instrument used in this study that included questions pertaining to student involvement in extracurricular activities, student's perception of involvement and retention and self reported enrollment data. The SLIS was five pages in length, included 13 items and three sections: (1) background information such as gender, race, age, classification, GPA etc., (2) level of participation in student life, (3) probable reasons why students remained at the university and questions regarding students' perception of persistence and student involvement.

The researcher administered the SLIS via the Internet. Survey Monkey, a Web-based survey tool, was selected due to its user-friendly interface. The Survey Monkey URL link for the survey was uploaded to the university's course management system. Researchers are using the Internet to administer surveys online as they "enable individuals and organizations to quickly create, distribute, and collect information in a survey format" (Abel, Sardone, & Brock, 2005, p. 40). Once available, all students had the opportunity to volunteer to take the survey. The following steps were taken to administer the SLIS online:

1. Approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) was obtained to administer the SLIS to participants via the Internet.

2. A letter of support was obtained from the southeastern HBCU where the study was conducted.

3. An account, including user ID and password for authentication, was established by the researcher using Survey Monkey.

4. The researcher created the SLIS and uploaded the survey to the host server.

5. The link to the survey with the letter of invitation embedded was disseminated via the university's course management system to all students.

6. The embedded letter of invitation gave detailed information regarding privacy and consent, along with information about the three sections of the survey.

7. A computer services technician from the HBCU used the university's course management system to post the link to all student accounts.

The data was collected via Survey Monkey and transferred to Microsoft Excel 2007 for coding and input into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), release 16.0. Descriptive data such as mean scores, maximum and minimum scores and frequency distributions, and ordinal ranking were calculated from the collected data.

In order to validate the non-persistence of those students who did not remain at the university, data received from the university's withdrawal survey was used to identify students who chose to leave the university before receiving their degree from the same institution. The withdrawal survey, in addition to demographic information, consisted of fifteen probable reasons why the student decided to withdraw from the university. The researcher met with the HBCU's Office of Institutional Research statistician to receive data from the 2007 through 2011 withdrawal surveys. The data was transferred to Microsoft Excel 2007 for coding and input into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), release 16.0. Descriptive data such as mean scores, maximum and minimum scores and frequency distributions, and ordinal ranking were calculated from the collected data.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to display data in tables using frequency counts and

percentages (Holcomb, 1998). Data were organized in tables in order to establish priorities for

why students remained in school versus departing school. Inferential analysis was performed

using the chi-square technique. Chi-square was selected as appropriate due to the non-parametric

nature of the data (Greenwood & Nikulin, 1996). Chi-square analyses were performed using

SPSS 16.0 statistical software package. Chi-square results and table data findings are reported in

the next chapter, Chapter Four: Findings.

Consideration of Human Subjects

Student Life Involvement Survey participants read the embedded letter, via the internet,

approved by the researcher's committee chairperson. This letter explained that permission had

been granted from the university to distribute the survey, it explained that the survey had been

approved by the Institutional Review Board at Auburn University, the purpose of the study, and

explained that the participation in the study was voluntary. The letter further explained that no

harm would be caused by participating in the survey. Individuals were given an opportunity to

decide whether or not they wanted to participate in the survey before continuing to the next

section of the SLIS.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methods used to conduct the study as well as the

research questions that were used to guide the study. This study was designed to determine the

relationship between students' social involvement in campus organizations and retention and

persistence. African American students were the population under study due to the disparities in

graduation rates discussed earlier; and this study focused on students attending a southeastern HBCU. Each student participant who was currently enrolled Fall 2011 was administered a three-part SLIS survey: (1) background information such as gender, race, age, classification, GPA etc., (2) level of participation in student life, and (3) probable reasons why students remained at the university and questions regarding students' perception of persistence and student involvement. Data from the university's withdrawal survey was also used from those students who officially withdrew from the university and voluntarily completed the survey. A total of 618 respondents were used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and descriptive statistics. Findings from this study are intended to assist higher education administrators to find effective methods to retain African American students who attend HBCUs through graduation. Chapter IV will present the findings from the study in both tabular and narrative form.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of four factors that influence African American students to remain enrolled at a southeastern HBCU. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). This study was designed to identify whether or not student involvement, in addition to the quality of academic advising, instruction and customer service contributed towards student retention and persistence. Furthermore, this study is intended to increase literature as it relates to student retention particularly among African American students who attend HBCUs.

The data analyzed in the study was collected using student responses from the Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) and withdrawal survey data reported by the university. This chapter presents and discusses the statistical analysis of the data collected by the researcher. The data analyzed in this study was collected from students who withdrew from the university between 2007 to 2011 and students who were currently enrolled during the Fall 2011 semester. Two samples were used for this study. The first sample for this study consisted of 108 of the 4,807 students who were currently enrolled at the university during the Fall 2011 semester. The second sample consisted of students who officially withdrew from the university and belonged to cohorts 2007 through 2011. Students completed the withdrawal survey on a voluntary basis. The second sample was made up of 510 students that officially withdrew from the university and volunteered to take the withdrawal survey.

The following questions guided the research of this study:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of social life and student activity programs?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of academic advising?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of customer service?

Descriptive Statistics

For the purpose of analyzing data for this study, the design used was descriptive survey research. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, (2002) identify survey research as research that uses instruments to gather information from multiple groups of subjects. In order to address the research questions and report the demographic variables for each independent variable identified in this study, descriptive statistics were employed.

Table 4.1 contains the top four reasons that affected students' decision to withdraw by those students who voluntarily completed the withdrawal survey and were a part of the 2007 to 2011 cohort. According to the data, students listed the lack of quality customer service (25%) and lack of quality social activities (16%) as the top two reasons why they chose to withdraw from the university. The lack of quality academic advising and lack of quality instruction were both noted equally (14%) as reasons the students decided to leave the university.

Table 4.1

Top Four Reasons that Affected Students' Decision to Withdraw from the University

	N	%	
Lack of quality customer service	125	25.0	
Lack of quality social activities	81	16.0	
Lack of quality academic advising	71	14.0	
Lack of quality instruction	71	14.0	
Total	348	69.0	

Table 4.2 contains the top four reasons for remaining at the university as identified by those students who were enrolled in the Fall 2011 semester and completed the SLIS. According to the data, students listed quality of social activities (76.9%) and quality of academic advising (76.9%) as the top two reasons why they chose to remain at the university. Quality of instruction (75%) was also a top reason for students persisting at the university, while quality of customer service (54.6%) was at the bottom of the list for reasons the students chose to remain at the university. This data and subsequent data to follow were collected from the primary survey used in this study.

Table 4.2

Top Four Reasons for Remaining at the University as Identified by Currently Enrolled Students

	A reason		Not A reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Quality of social activities	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100
Quality of academic advising	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100
Quality of instruction	81	75.0	27	25.0	108	100
Quality of customer service	59	54.6	49	45.4	108	100

Tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 presents Chi-Square data analysis of the top four reasons for remaining at the university as identified by those students who were enrolled in the Fall 2011 semester and completed the SLIS. The data is arranged by the following demographics: age, gender, classification and GPA. There was no significant statistical difference in the overall reported Chi-Square vales for each demographic identified. The limited difference in importance of most of the factors did not vary significantly due to the small sample size that was surveyed using the SLIS.

Table 4.3

Reasons to Remain at the University by Age as Identified by Currently Enrolled Traditional
Students (n=66) and Non-Traditional Students (n=42)

Reasons to Remain	Traditional Students		Non-Traditional Students			
	N	%	N	%	$X^2(1)$	p
Quality of social activities	54	81.8	29	69.0	2.353	.125
Quality of academic advising	53	80.3	30	71.4	1.136	.286
Quality of instruction	49	74.2	32	76.2	.056	.820
Quality of customer service	39	59.1	20	47.6	1.363	.243

Table 4.4

Reasons to Remain at the University by Gender as Identified by Currently Enrolled Male
Students (n=41) and Female Students (n=67)

Reasons to Remain	Male Students		Female Students			
	N	%	N	%	$X^2(1)$	p
Quality of social activities	34	82.9	49	73.1	1.371	.242
Quality of academic advising	30	73.2	53	79.1	.503	.478
Quality of instruction	28	68.3	53	79.1	1.586	.208
Quality of customer service	20	48.8	39	58.2	.912	.340

Table 4.5

Reasons to Remain at the University by Classification as Identified by Currently Enrolled Lower Level Undergraduates (n=53) and Upper Level Undergraduate (n=55)

Reasons to Remain	Lower Level Students		Upper Level Students			
	N	%	N	%	$X^2(1)$	p
Quality of social activities	40	75.5	43	78.2	.111	.739
Quality of academic advising	41	77.4	42	76.4	.015	.902
Quality of instruction	38	71.7	43	78.2	.605	.437
Quality of customer service	30	56.6	29	52.7	.164	.686

Table 4.6

Reasons to Remain at the University by GPA as Identified by Currently Enrolled Students with GPA of 0.0-2.50(n=29) and Students with GPA of 2.51-4.0 (n=79)

Reasons to Remain	GPA 0-2.50		GPA 2.51-4.0			
	N	%	N	%	$X^2(1)$	p
Quality of social activities	22	75.9	61	77.2	.022	.883
Quality of academic advising	22	75.9	61	77.2	.022	.883
Quality of instruction	21	72.4	60	75.9	.056	.820
Quality of customer service	16	55.2	43	54.4	.005	.945

The first research question was "What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of social life and student activity programs?" Tables 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 indicate a comparison of the quality of social life and student

activity programs as a reason to remain by gender, age, GPA and classification. When comparing males to females 82.9% of males agreed that the quality of social life is a top reason why they chose to remain at the university compared to 73.1% of females who gave this as a top reason. Only 17.1% of males and 26.9% of females felt that the quality of social life was not a reason to remain at the university. In regards to age, 81.8% of students identified as traditional gave quality of social life as a reason to remain as compared to 18.2% who stated this was not a reason to remain. Of the students identified as non-traditional, 69% agreed while 31% stated that the quality of student life was not a reason to remain at the university. Students with a GPA of 2.50 or lower was made up 75.9% of those students who gave quality of student life as a reason to remain at the university, compared to 24.1% who stated this was not a reason. Students with a GPA of 2.51 or higher was represented by 77.2% of students who gave quality of student life as a reason to remain at the university compared to the remaining 22.8% who stated this was not a reason. Seventy-five point five percent of lower level undergraduates (LLUG) gave quality of social life as a reason to remain compared to 24.5% who stated this was not a reason to remain. In comparison, when examining upper level undergraduate and graduate(ULUGG) students 78.2% gave quality of social life as a reason to remain as compared to 21.8% who stated this was not a reason to remain.

Table 4.7

Comparison of Quality of Social Life and Student Activity Programs as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Gender

Gender	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	34	82.9	7	17.1	41	100
Female	49	73.1	18	26.9	67	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

Table 4.8

Comparison of Quality of Social Life and Student Activity Programs as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Age

Age	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Traditional	54	81.8	12	18.2	66	100
Non-Traditional	29	69.0	13	31.0	42	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

*Note Traditional Student Age 21 and younger and Non-Traditional Student Age 22 and up

Table 4.9

Comparison of Quality of Social Life and Student Activity Programs as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by GPA

GPA	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0.0 to 2.50	22	75.9	7	24.1	29	100
2.51 to 4.0	61	77.2	18	22.8	79	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

Table 4.10

Comparison of Quality of Social Life and Student Activity Programs as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Classification

Classification	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
LLUG	40	75.5	13	24.5	53	100
ULUGG	43	78.2	12	21.8	55	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

The second research question was "What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of academic advising?" Tables 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, and 4.14 indicate a comparison of the quality of academic advising as a reason to remain by gender, age, GPA and classification. When comparing males to females 79.1% of females agreed that the quality of academic advising is a top reason why they chose to remain at the university compared to 73.2% of males who gave this as a top reason. Only 20.9% of females and 26.8% of males felt that the quality of academic advising was not a reason to remain

at the university. In regards to age, 80.3% of students identified as traditional in comparison to

71.4% of students identified as non-traditional gave quality of academic advising as a reason to

remain. Only 19.7% of traditional students and 28.6 % of non-traditional students stated lack of

quality academic advising as a reason to remain. The category of a GPA of 2.50 or lower was

made up 75.9% of students who gave quality of academic advising as a reason to remain at the

university, compared to 24.1% who stated this was not a reason. Students with a GPA of 2.51 or

higher was represented by 77.2% of students who gave quality of academic advising as a reason

to remain at the university compared to the remaining 22.8% who stated this was not a reason.

Seventy-four point four percent of lower level undergraduates (LLUG) gave quality of academic

advising as a reason to remain compared to 22.6% who stated this was not a reason to remain. In

comparison, when examining upper level undergraduate and graduate(ULUGG) students 76.4%

gave quality of academic advising as a reason to remain as compared to 23.6% who stated this

was not a reason to remain.

Table 4.11

Comparison of Quality of Academic Advising as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Gender

Gender	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	30	73.2	11	26.8	41	100
Female	53	79.1	14	20.9	67	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

Table 4.12

Comparison of Quality of Academic Advising as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Age

Age	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Traditional	53	80.3	13	19.7	66	100
Non-Traditional	30	71.4	12	28.6	42	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

*Note Traditional Student Age 21 and younger and Non-Traditional Student Age 22 and up

Table 4.13

Comparison of Quality of Academic Advising as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by GPA

GPA	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0.0 to 2.50	22	75.9	7	24.1	29	100
2.50 to 4.0	61	77.2	18	22.8	79	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

Table 4.14

Comparison of Quality of Academic Advising as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Classification

Classification	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
LLUG	41	77.4	12	22.6	53	100
ULUGG	42	76.4	13	23.6	55	100
Total	83	76.9	25	23.1	108	100

The third research question was "What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction?" Tables 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, and 4.18 indicate a comparison of the quality of instruction as a reason to remain by gender, age, GPA and classification. When comparing males to females 79.1% of females agreed that the quality of instruction is a reason why they chose to remain at the university compared to 68.3% of males who gave this as a reason. This is over 10 percentage points difference between females and males. Only 20.9% of females and 31.7% of males felt that the quality of instruction was not a reason to remain at the university. In regards to age, 74.2% of students identified as traditional in comparison to 76.2% of students identified as non-traditional gave quality of instruction as a reason to remain. Only 25.8% of traditional students and 23.8 % of non-traditional students stated lack of quality instruction as a reason to remain. The category of a GPA of 2.50 or lower was made up 72.4% of students who gave quality of instruction as a reason to remain at the university, compared to 27.6% who stated this was not a reason. Students with a GPA of 2.51 or higher was represented by 75.9% of students who gave quality of instruction as a reason to remain at the university compared to the remaining 24.1% who stated this was not a reason. Seventy-one point seven percent of lower level undergraduates (LLUG) gave quality of instruction as a reason to remain compared to 28.3% who stated this was not a reason to remain. In comparison, when examining upper level undergraduate and graduate(ULUGG) students 78.2% gave quality of instruction as a reason to remain as compared to 21.8% who stated this was not a reason to remain.

Table 4.15

Comparison of Quality of Instruction as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Gender

Gender	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	28	68.3	13	31.7	41	100
Female	53	79.1	14	20.9	67	100
Total	81	75.0	27	25.0	108	100

Table 4.16

Comparison of Quality of Instruction as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Age

Age	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Traditional	49	74.2	17	25.8	66	100
Non-Traditional	32	76.2	10	23.8	42	100
Total	81	75.0	27	25.0	108	100

*Note Traditional Student Age 21 and younger and Non-Traditional Student Age 22 and up

Table 4.17

Comparison of Quality of Instruction as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by GPA

GPA	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0.0 to 2.50	21	72.4	8	27.6	29	100
2.50 to 4.0	60	75.9	19	24.1	79	100
Total	81	75.0	27	25.0	108	100

Table 4.18

Comparison of Quality of Instruction as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Classification

Classification	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
LLUG	38	71.7	15	28.3	53	100
ULUGG	43	78.2	12	21.8	55	100
Total	81	75.0	27	25.0	108	100

The fourth research question was "What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of customer service?" Tables 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, and 4.22 indicate a comparison of the quality of customer service as a reason to remain by gender, age, GPA and classification. Quality of customer service was the least popular reason given by students for choosing to remain at the university and statistically had the least variation in percentage points. When comparing males to females 58.2% of females agreed that the quality of customer service is a reason why they chose to remain at the university and only 48.8% of males gave this as a reason leaving 41.8% of females and 51.2% of males who felt this was not a reason for remaining at the university. In regards to age, 59.1% of students identified as traditional in comparison to 47.6% of students identified as non-traditional gave quality of customer service as a reason to remain; while 40.9% of traditional students and 52.4% of non-traditional students stated lack of quality customer service as a reason to remain. The category of a GPA of 2.50 or lower was made up 55.2% of students who gave quality of customer service as a reason to remain at the university, compared to 44.8% who stated this was not a reason. Students with a GPA of 2.51 or higher was represented by 54.4% of students who gave quality of customer service as a reason to remain at the university compared to the

remaining 45.6% who stated this was not a reason. Fifty-six point six percent of lower level

undergraduates (LLUG) gave quality of customer service as a reason to remain compared to

43.4% who stated this was not a reason to remain. In comparison, when examining upper level

undergraduate and graduate(ULUGG) students 52.7% gave quality of customer service as a

reason to remain as compared to 47.3% who stated this was not a reason to remain.

Table 4.19

Comparison of Quality of Customer Service as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Gender

Gender	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	20	48.8	21	51.2	41	100
Female	39	58.2	28	41.8	67	100
Total	59	54.6	49	45.4	108	100

Table 4.20

Comparison of Quality of Customer Service as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Age

Age	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Traditional	39	59.1	27	40.91	66	100
Non-Traditional	20	47.6	22	52.4	42	100
Total	59	54.6	49	45.4	108	100

*Note Traditional Student Age 21 and younger and Non-Traditional Student Age 22 and up

Table 4.21

Comparison of Quality of Customer Service as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by GPA

GPA	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0.0 to 2.50	16	55.2	13	44.8	29	100
2.50 to 4.0	43	54.4	36	45.6	79	100
Total	59	54.6	49	45.4	108	100

Table 4.22

Comparison of Quality of Customer Service as a Reason or Not a Reason to Remain by Classification

Classification	A Reason		Not A Reason		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
LLUG	30	56.6	23	43.4	53	100
ULUGG	29	52.7	26	47.3	55	100
Total	59	54.6	49	45.4	108	100

Summary

While many of the findings noted above were consistent with other studies on the impact of student involvement on retention and persistence, additional finding emerged from the data related specifically to students attending an HBCU. Findings from this study are intended to assist higher education administrators and policy makers at colleges and universities in making changes that will address minority retention and will benefit the institution as a whole. The results of this study as they relate to both the literature and the model upon which this study is based, will be the focus of Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter is divided into six categories. The first includes the purpose and design of the study. The second and third sections present the summary of findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data. The fourth and fifth sections consist of the implications and recommendations followed by the last sections which indicates suggestions for further research

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of four factors that influence African American students to remain enrolled at a southeastern HBCU. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community (Hurd, 2001). This study was designed to identify whether or not student involvement, in addition to the quality of academic advising, instruction and customer service contributed towards student retention and persistence. Furthermore, this study is intended to increase literature as it relates to student retention particularly among African American students who attend HBCUs. The data analyzed in the study was collected using student responses from the Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) and withdrawal survey data reported by the university.

Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of this study the following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of social life and student activity programs?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of academic advising?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between persistence towards graduation and students' satisfaction with the overall quality of customer service?

The data analyzed in the study was collected using student responses from the Student Life Involvement Survey (SLIS) and withdrawal survey data reported by the university. This chapter presents and discusses the statistical analysis of the data collected by the researcher. The data analyzed in this study was collected from students who withdrew from the university between 2007 to 2011 and students who were currently enrolled during the Fall 2011 semester. Two samples were used for this study. The first sample for this study consisted of 108 of the 4,807 students who were currently enrolled at the university during the Fall 2011 semester. The second sample consisted of students who officially withdrew from the university and belonged to cohorts 2007 through 2011. Students completed the withdrawal survey on a voluntary basis. The second sample was made up of 510 students that officially withdrew from the university and volunteered to take the withdrawal survey.

Summary of Findings

As identified in the previously mentioned research and in this study "There are various factors that affect any student's ability to successfully complete a college degree" (Benton, 2001, p.4). A review of the literature indicated that students who participated in student activities and felt a connection to the university, were more likely to persist (Tinto, 1987 &Astin 1993). Table

5.1 identifies the lack of student activities and social programs as one of the top four reasons that affected students' decision to withdraw from the university. According to the data, students listed the lack of lack of quality customer service (26%) and lack of quality social activities (16%) as the top two reasons why they chose to withdraw from the university. Students also identified the lack of quality academic advising and lack of quality instruction were both noted equally (14%) as reasons the students decided to leave the university.

In comparison to reasons why students decided to withdrew, Table 5.1 also includes the top four reasons for remaining at the university as identified by those students who were enrolled at the university. According to the data, students listed quality of social activities (76.9%) as the one of the top reason for remaining at the university. These findings support research conducted by others such as Berger and Milem (1999), Scwartz and Washington (2007), Suarez-Orozco and Paez (2002) who all conducted research that revealed students were more likely to persist when involved in student activities. Quality of academic advising (76.9%) and quality of instruction (75%) were also identified as a reason why students chose to remain at the university. These findings are consistent with research conducted by other researchers. Thomas (1990) identified student academic integration, student social integration, and student confidence in the quality of the institution as three major student outcomes that can increase the likelihood of student persistence. Thomas (1990) also addressed instruction and noted that in order for institutions to improve retention, there needs to be some emphasis on student-faculty classroom experience and quality teaching, and participation with student organizations. Research findings from this study related to instruction and academic advising and their impact on student persistence are also supported by the findings of Kobrak (1992) who argued that increased teacher-student relation can create a better environment conducive to learning, promote a healthier climate among

African American, and ultimately determine a student's academic success. Bennett and

Okinaka's (1990) also identified that "Students who feel most positive about their college

instructors feel most satisfied with the universities' social environment, administration and

classes" (p.55). Romano (1995) examined first year attrition and retention and found that

academic problems were the main reason for attrition. According to his research, academic

advising can also play a role in improving retention as Thomas (1990) found that helping

students increase academic skills by adding student services is also important supporting the

findings revealed in this study by students enrolled at the university who cited the quality of

academic advising as a reason for remaining at the university.

Table 5.1

Top Four Reasons for Remaining at the University as Identified by Currently Enrolled Students compared to Top Four Reasons to withdraw from the University as Identified by Withdrawn Students

	Reason to remain			Reason to withdraw	
	N	%		N	%
Quality of social activities	83	76.9	Lack of quality customer service	125	25.0
Quality of academic advising	83	76.9	Lack of quality social activities	81	16.0
Quality of instruction	81	75.0	Lack of quality academic advising	71	14.0
Quality of customer service	59	54.6	Lack of quality instruction	71	14.0

Remain or Withdraw? Not the same reasons

Higher education professionals should take note that, although poor customer service is a top reason for students to withdraw, it is not a top reason for them to persist. This means that improving the quality of service to students likely reduces frustration and perhaps diverts some of the students who are most at-risk from quitting school. However, for students who intend to persist, customer service was not cited as a top reason. Administrators must weigh the pros and cons of increasing scarce resources by investing in customer service for students. Similarly, good quality academic advising seems to play a role in persistence and retention, but not as much a role for those who dropped out.

It is our suspicion those who left may have been pre-dispositioned to leave according to research conducted by Tinto (1987, 1993), and Berger and Milem (1999). Students' integration into the social as well as academic life of the college has been identified by Tinto (1993) as an important factor in a student's choice to re-enroll. In regards to student departure, Wilson (2005) also expressed "Where there is a lack of fit between the individual and the institution the likelihood of withdrawal is higher" (p. 247). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) mentioned in their work that those students who have negative experiences in areas such as customer service and social integration are more likely to withdraw from the university. As noted in table 5.1, students who withdrew noted a lack of quality customer service, as well as, lack of quality social activities as major reasons why they chose to leave. These students, as identified by Coates (2004), are students who could not adjust to collegiate life and in return depart early from college. Students in this study who withdrew listed lack of quality social activities as one of the top reasons for leaving the university. Tinto (1987, 1993) explained that those students who do not become involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to leave the university as compared to those who choose to participate in social activities. The results of this study

indicated that non-academic reasons, such as lack of quality customer service and lack of quality social activities, must be addressed when developing programs to decrease the number of students who decide to withdraw from a university. Terenzini and Reason (2005) addressed the importance of developing "Programs and policies to include formal efforts to integrate students' academic and nonacademic lives through collaborative efforts that cross any institutional boundaries between academic and student affairs professionals".

Table 5.1 listed quality of social activities and academic advising as top reasons why students chose to remain at the university. This supports Tinto's (1987, 1993) research where he depicted those students who are able to adjust both academically and socially as are more likely to persist. When addressing the quality of academic advising, academic advisors primary role is to help students to achieve their educational goals, most importantly remaining at the university until graduation (Dungy, 2003). In their research, Ryan and Glenn (2002) indicated that advising has been identified as an effective service in facilitating student success as well as contributing to persistence. When examining the quality of social activities, a study conducted by Holland and Huta (1991) showed those students who became involved in social activities such as campus-based service projects at a large research institution perform better academically and were more likely to persist in college and feel a closer tie to the programs and goals of the institution. Derby and Watson (2006) noted that "Students' commitment, affect toward campus, involvement with faculty, administrators, and other students, campus integration, and connection to campus effect their enrollment decisions" (p. 383). These factors can aid higher education administrators in addressing the concerns regarding African-American students' perceptions of campus environment, including the quality of academic advising and social activities while allowing for decreased dropout and increased persistence (Derby& Watson, 2006).

When comparing reasons to remain at the university and reasons why students leave the university, one commonality for higher education administrators to focus on is improving the quality of social activities. McInnis, James, and Hartley (2000) expressed that one critical factor in retention is identifying the commitment of the institution to the student. Student affairs professionals can also take a closer look at students first year experience when identify retention and persistence.   Nelson, Kift, and Clarke (2008) also added that universities need to initiate, support and promote student personal, social and academic engagement in the early weeks of first year to retain students and stop the drift away from university life. Nelson et al. (2008) stated that "The resulting snapshot of first year experiences indicates that there has been a general increase in the number of students whose expectations have been met through the university over this time period" (p. 2). Wilson (2005) affirmed that "Whether students are retained and graduate ultimately rests with the student. However, institutional actions and systems can make a difference" (p. 245). Taking the time to identify reasons why students decide to remain at the university and establishing programs to address retention and persistence can in return decrease the number of students who withdraw from the university for reasons such as lack of quality customer service and lack of quality social activities and increase the number of students who decide to remain at the university.

Conclusions

The results of this study confirmed the findings of Astin (1985, 1993) and Tinto (1975, 1993) that acknowledged that students are more likely to persist when they become involved in student activities. Findings from this study suggest that the quality of social activities, in addition to quality academic advising, and instruction were the leading reasons for students decision to remain at the university. A framework that is specific for African American students

and retention that identifies reasons why students persist at HBCUs would be beneficial for future studies.

<div align="center">Implications for Future Practice and Research</div>

The results of this study have several implications for higher education administrators and policy makers.

1. The results of this study were expected to provide significant data for student affairs and university administrators with information and insight regarding the extent of student involvement and their persistence in attaining academic success.

2. The findings of this study will contribute to the limited body of research knowledge that currently exists on the topic of student involvement and persistence at HBCUs.

3. The findings and conclusions may not be used to make generalized statements about other universities, since this study was limited to only one university and used a small sample population.

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

Studies concerning African American students and student retention are frequently limited to quantitative and qualitative studies which focus on students attending PWI's. The following recommendation for future research and programs are offered to continue this study of student involvement and persistence at HBCUs.

As a result of the findings of this study, the researcher is recommending the following:

1. Research should continue to acknowledge and expose the impact of student involvement, quality academic advising, customer service and instruction on the persistence of students

attending HBCUs.

2. Policy makers should develop and implement policies and programs that allow for better ways to follow students from the beginning of their college career through graduation.

3. Programs should be developed that are geared towards following students throughout their matriculation as entering students through graduation. Implement Learning Communities just as the University of Missouri-Columbia did in 2003. Learning Communities are where groups of students are enrolled together in general-education courses and are assigned to the same housing unit. Peer assistants coordinate activities such as group study meetings and the goal is to give students a greater sense of belonging and to ease their involvement in the academic social systems of the institution.

4. More research should be produced, as well as, more studies conducted that strengthen the understanding of student persistence and the challenges faced by African American students and provide evidence-based solutions to these challenges.

5. It is recommended that more research be conducted using a larger sample size and to include other colleges and universities.

6. It is recommended that the university used in this study, as well as, other HBCUs find ways to enhance the quality of student activities, customer service, academic advising and instruction in order to retain more students from each cohort.

<div align="center">Suggestions for Further Research</div>

Research by Astin (1984, 1993), Fischer (2007) and Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) identified that by addressing retention, administrators can develop programs geared toward student involvement among African Americans students, including those at HBCUs. Although there has been a great deal of research on the correlation between student involvement and retention, there has been very little research geared specifically toward African American

students at HBCUs (Allen, 1999 & Swail, Redd, and Perna 2003). There is a void in the literature as it relates to how student involvement, quality of customer service, academic advising, and instruction plays a role in student persistence at HBCUs.

To further advance the body of knowledge as it pertains to African American students and student persistence it would be beneficial to conduct other studies. A study should be conducted that collects data from multiple HBCUs and compares reasons given for student persistence. An extensive study can be done that follows a cohort of students attending an HBCU and collects data from their entering year, withdrawal year for those that withdraw and graduation year for those who complete their program of study. A study of this nature could help admission and recruitment officers at HBCUs better understand the factors that could lead to more African American completing their degrees.

This study should also be replicated at other HBCUs in other states. By using one particular school in one state, it may be difficult to make generalizations about HBCUs across the United States.

Future research should also examine effective ways to encourage students to remain at the university. As college enrollments continue to increase among minority students, research needs to be conducted on reasons why African American students leave and why those who decide to remain are successful. Additional studies will help improve university graduation rates and retention efforts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Student Life Involvement Survey

Student Life Involvement Survey

Directions: This survey contains three sections: section one, demographic information, section two, student involvement and section three, college experience. Please respond to all questions by marking (X) in the appropriate space. Section three consistent of an open ended question. Please answer in the space provided.

Section I. Demographic Information

* 1. What is your gender?

◻ Female

◻ Male

* 2. What is your age?

◻ 20 years old

◻ 21 years old

◻ 22 years old

◻ 23 years old

◻ 24 years old

◻ 25 years old or older

* 3. With which racial/ethnic group do you identify? (If you are of a multi-racial/multi-ethnic background, please select one group with which you primarily identify.)

◻ African-American

◻ Asian-American

◻ Caucasian

◻ Hispanic

◻ Native-American

Other (please specify) [_____]

* 4. Select the year that you first enrolled at Alabama State University.

◻ 2003

◻ 2004

◻ 2005

◻ 2006

◻ 2007

◻ 2008

◻ 2009

Other (please specify) [_____]

* 5. Which semester have you filed for graduation?

○ Summer 2011

○ Fall 2011

Other (please specify) [   ]

* 6. What is your cumulative Grade Point Average(Current GPA)?

○ 0.00 to 1.99 GPA

○ 2.0 to 2.50 GPA

○ 2.51 to 3.0 GPA

○ 3.1 to 3.5 GPA

○ 3.6 to 4.0 GPA

Section II. Student Involvement

* 7. How often do you participate in the following organizations?

	Never	Occasionally	Often
Academic Fraternity/Sorority	○	○	○
Cheerleading	○	○	○
Community Service	○	○	○
Commuter Students Association	○	○	○

Dance Team	☐	☐	☐
Departmental/Major Clubs (ex. Bio-Med)	☐	☐	☐
Elite Models	☐	☐	☐
Golden Ambassadors	☐	☐	☐
Honorary Society's	☐	☐	☐
Honors Program	☐	☐	☐
Intramural sports	☐		☐
Marching Band	☐	☐	☐
Music Fraternity/Sorority	☐	☐	☐
National Pan-Hellenic Council	☐	☐	☐
Professional Organizations	☐	☐	☐
Religious organization	☐	☐	☐
Residence Hall Councils	☐	☐	☐
Service Learning (ex. Tutoring)	☐	☐	☐
Social Fraternity	☐	☐	☐
Social Sororities	☐	☐	☐
Sporting Team	☐	☐	☐

	Minor Reason	Major Reason	Not a Reason
Student Government (SGA)	☐	☐	☐
Student Orientation Services (SOS)	☐	☐	☐
Theatre Organization	☐	☐	☐
Tribe of Judah	☐	☐	☐
University Choir	☐	☐	☐
Yearbook	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) [_____]

Section III. College Experience

*8. Listed below are some of the reasons you may have decided to remain at this university to complete your degree. Please select Major Reason, Minor Reason, or Not A Reason as to whether or not you remained at this university.

	Minor Reason	Major Reason	Not a Reason
Being satisfied with the Overall Quality of Customer Service	☐	☐	☐
Being satisfied with the Social Life/Student Activity Programs	☐	☐	☐
Being satisfied with Academic Advisement	☐	☐	☐

| **Being satisfied with the Quality of Instruction** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*9. Do you think that you have been more successful and remained at the university due to participating in extracurricular activities?

☐ Yes

☐ Somewhat

☐ No

*10. What role do you think participating in student activities has played in your remaining at this university?

APPENDIX B
ASU Withdrawal Survey

Office of Records & Registration

Student Withdrawal Exit /Survey

Name:

Why are you leaving Alabama State University? Listed below are some of the reasons you may be leaving Alabama State University. Please answer the following questions. Circle in the appropriate answer for each of the reasons listed as a **Major Reason**, a **Minor Reason**, or **Not A Reason** that you

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.

CLASSIFICATION
Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
Graduate Student

TERM
Fall
Spring
Summer

HOME STATE

WITHDRAWAL DATE		
MONTH	DAY	YEAR
		20

	NOT A REASON	MINOR REASON	MAJOR REASON
1. I am transferring to another institution. Name of Institution: _____	○	○	○
2. Conflict between work and / or home or school.	○	○	○
3. Inadequate financial aid.	○	○	○
4. Dissatisfied with overall quality of customer service.	○	○	○
5. Dissatisfied with social life / student activity programs.	○	○	○
6. Dissatisfied with academic advising.	○	○	○
7. Could not get the classes I wanted / needed.	○	○	○
8. Health related problems (personal or family member).	○	○	○
9. Inadequate financial resources.	○	○	○
10. Low grades.	○	○	○
11. Dissatisfied with quality of instructions.	○	○	○
12. Felt alone or isolated.	○	○	○
13. Other: _____	○	○	○

	YES	NO
14. If the university could assist you in one or more of these areas, would you remain at Alabama State University?	○	○
15. Does either of your parents have a four - year college degree?	○	○

Created by the Office of Institutional Research / Alabama State University Comments: oir@alasu.edu

APPENDIX   C

Auburn University Institutional Review Board Protocol Submission and Approval

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM

For Information or help contact THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966   e-mail: hsubjec@auburn.edu   Web Address: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/

Revised 03.26.11 – DO NOT STAPLE, CLIP TOGETHER ONLY.   Saved Copy

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY July 1, 2011 –

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):   FULL BOARD   EXPEDITED   ✓ EXEMPT

2. PROJECT TITLE: An Investigation of the Relationship between Student Involvement and Its Influence on the Persistence of African American Students at a Southeastern Historically Black University

3. TaShara Smith-King   Doctoral Candidate EFLT   334-319-7477   smithty@auburn.edu
   PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR   TITLE   DEPT   PHONE   AU E-MAIL

   7400 Gristmill Circle McCalla, Al 35111   205-454-8768   tking6@montevallo.edu
   MAILING ADDRESS   FAX   ALTERNATE E-MAIL

4. SOURCE OF FUNDING SUPPORT ✓ Not Applicable   Internal ___ External Agency: _____ | Pending ☐ Received

5. LIST ANY CONTRACTORS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, OTHER ENTITIES OR IRBs ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT.

6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Mandatory CITI Training	6B. Research Methodology
Names of key personnel who have completed CITI: TaShara Smith-King David C. DiRamio	Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.
	Data Source(s): ✓ New Data ✓ Existing Data
	Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? ✓ Yes ☐ No
CITI group completed for this study: ✓ Social/Behavioral Biomedical	Data collection will involve the use of:
	___ Educational Tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
PLEASE ATTACH TO HARD COPY **ALL** CITI CERTIFICATES FOR **EACH** KEY PERSONNEL	___ Interview / Observation
	___ Physical / Physiological measures or Specimens (see Section)
	✓ Surveys / Questionnaires
	✓ Internet / Electronic
	___ Audio / Video / Photos
	___ Private records or files

6C. Participant Information	6D. Risks to Participants
Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population.	Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.
✓ Males ✓ Females ___ AU students	___ Breach of Confidentiality* ___ Coercion
Vulnerable Populations	___ Deception ___ Physical
___ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ___ Prisoners	___ Psychological ___ Social
___ Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)	✓ None ___ Other
Persons with:	**RECEIVED**
___ Economic Disadvantages ___ Physical Disabilities	
___ Educational Disadvantages ___ Intellectual Disabilities	MAY 25 2011
Do you plan to compensate your participants? Yes ✓ No	*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

Do you need IBC Approval for this study? ✓ No ☐ Yes – BUA # _____   Expiration date _____

APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board Letter of Support of Research from Alabama State University

ASU

July 27, 2011

Ms. TaShara Smith King, M.Ed.
7400 Gristmill Circle
McCalla, AL 35111

Re: IRB Review and Letter of Support

Dear Ms. King:

The Alabama State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your request to have the opportunity to invite students at ASU to participate in your study titled "An Investigation of the Relationship between Student Involvement and its Influence on the Persistence of African American Students at a Southeastern Historically Black University".

Your request to include ASU in your dissertation has been approved based upon a review of your application, your instructions from the IRB at Auburn University, and the support of Mr. Albert C. Calhoun, Jr., Statistician, Office of Institutional Research at ASU.

Congratulations on moving to the next phase of your doctoral education. If you need further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Best Regards,

Regina Adams, Secretary
ASU IRB