

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC MALE PERCEPTIONS OF
EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGIES, AND THE
IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PERSISTENCE IN A
FOR-PROFIT COMMUTER UNIVERSITY

by

Carole Comarcho

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton, Florida

December 2009

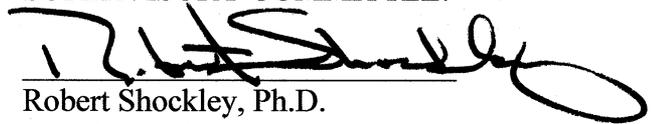
Copyright by Carole Comarcho 2009

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC MALE PERCEPTIONS OF
EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGIES AND THE
IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PERSISTENCE IN A
FOR-PROFIT COMMUTER UNIVERSITY

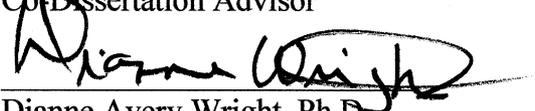
by
Carole Comarcho

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisors, Dr. Robert Shockley and Dr. Dianne Avery Wright, Department of Educational Leadership, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

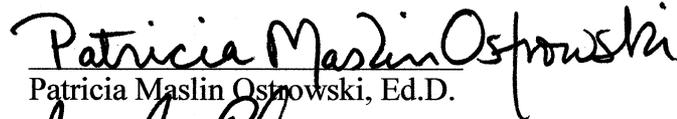
SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:



Robert Shockley, Ph.D.
Co-Dissertation Advisor



Dianne Avery Wright, Ph.D.
Co-Dissertation Advisor



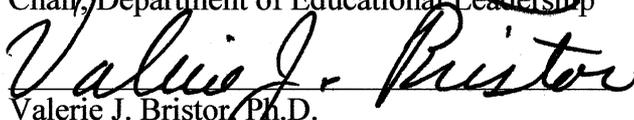
Patricia Maslin Ostrowski, Ed.D.



Angela Rhone, Ed.D.



Robert Shockley, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Educational Leadership



Valerie J. Bristol, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education



Barry T. Rosson, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate College

October 30, 2009
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere thanks and appreciation is extended to Dr. Robert Shockley, chair of my dissertation committee, for his caring, calm, and unwavering leadership, and support during this study. I would also like to offer gratitude to the other members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Patricia Maslin Ostrowski, for leading me through the qualitative process and giving me helpful suggestions and guidance; Dr. Dianne Wright, who offered practical feedback and wonderful support; and Dr. Angela Rhone, who helped me strengthen this study.

To those closest to me, I offer humble thanks for allowing me to take time away from them to complete this study and who have been so supportive and proud of this endeavor: my sons, Hanif, Kyle and Troy, my mother Carmel, sisters Marcia, Patricia and Jacqueline, brother Gary, my closest friends, Ruth, Lisa, Jennifer, and my soul mate Alfred, who have all been along this journey with me, from beginning until the end.

Finally, I thank God for His love and caring for me during some of the hardest parts of this journey. I could not have completed this without His guidance.

ABSTRACT

Author: Carole Comarcho

Title: African American and Hispanic Male Perceptions of Effective and Ineffective Retention Strategies and the Implications for Undergraduate Persistence in a For-Profit Commuter University

Institution: Florida Atlantic University

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Robert Shockley and Dr. Dianne Avery Wright

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Year: 2009

The purpose of this study was to examine the expectations of African American and Hispanic males in a for-profit university (TTU). This study specifically explored student perception of the retention efforts of faculty, staff, policies, procedures and services within the institutional environment. It further examined how these experiences promoted or impeded the African American or Hispanic male's persistence to graduation. The higher education institution is identified as TTU throughout this study. It is a commuter university established in the early 1900s. A qualitative case study approach was used and two campus sites were selected. Data collection included interviews of 19 students, along with 2 faculty (identified by students), as well as document analysis, and various on site observations at each campus. The data were then transcribed, coded, and analyzed to ascertain the overall views and perceptions of the participants.

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC MALE PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE
AND INEFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGIES AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR
UNDERGRADUATE PERSISTENCE IN A FOR-PROFIT COMMUTER
UNIVERSITY

LIST OF TABLES ix

LIST OF FIGURES x

CHAPTER

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Higher Education Institutions	1
	Students and Higher Education.....	3
	Students in For-Profit, Proprietary Institutions.....	4
	African American and Hispanic Students and Higher Education Institutions	5
	African American Students.....	5
	Hispanic Students.....	5
	Student Retention.....	6
	Problem Statement.....	7
	Conceptual Framework.....	7
	Purpose of the Study	8
	Research Questions.....	9
	Significance of the Study	9
	Definition of Terms.....	10
	Limitations	11
	Delimitations.....	12
	Chapter Summary	12
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	13
	Retention and 4-year Institutions.....	13
	Admissions and Financial Aid.....	13
	Commuter Institutions	14
	Commuter Colleges and Universities	15
	Hispanic Students and Retention	17
	African American Students and Retention	19
	Effective and Ineffective Retention Strategies	21
	First-Generation	24

	Cultural Perspective	25
	Chapter Summary	27
3	METHODOLOGY	28
	The Research Design	28
	Pilot Study	29
	Sampling Plan	30
	Site	30
	Participant Selection	30
	Data Collection	33
	Observations	33
	Interviews.....	34
	Data Analysis.....	35
	Documents	35
	Role of the Researcher.....	36
	Chapter Summary	36
4	FINDINGS	38
	Overview of TTU.....	39
	Findings.....	40
	Financial Concerns.....	40
	Academic and Student Friendly Environment.....	45
	Accelerated Learning.....	48
	Hands-on Learning and Application to the Real World	52
	Chapter Summary	58
5	IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	59
	Summary of Study	59
	Discussion and Implication of Findings	61
	Financial Concerns.....	62
	Academic and Student Friendly Environment.....	64
	Accelerated Learning.....	66
	Hands-on Learning and Application to the Real World	68
	Summary of Research Questions and Sub-questions.....	69
	Conclusions.....	69
	Recommendations for Future Research.....	71
 APPENDIX		
A	Consent Form.....	73
B	Interview Guide Student	76
C	Interview Guide Faculty/Staff.....	79
D	Guidelines for Observation.....	82
E	Data Matrix of Research Questions	84

F List of Documents.....	90
REFERENCES	92

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Demographics of Participants	31
Table 2.	Faculty Participants	32

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Tinto's student departure model, 1975	15
Figure 2.	Tinto's theory revised for student departure in residential colleges and universities.....	17

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions

The face of higher educational institutions has changed in America over the past several decades from few to many and from small to large (Seidman, 2005). They may be Ivy League, private, public, liberal art, Research 1-, 2-, or 3-tier universities, online universities, community colleges, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and predominantly White institutions (PWIs), and/or vocational technology institutions. At one time, the mission of higher education institutions was to provide an overall education for young White males (Rudolph, 1990). However, that face of American educational institutions has changed over the last 100 years. Men and women of color, regardless of age, background, and lifestyle, wish to come to college to receive a higher education degree for a variety of reasons (Seidman). One of the most significant changes has been the advent and growth of the for-profit, postsecondary, degree granting, accredited institution (Floyd, 2005). Up until the early 1990s, most higher education institutions were nonprofit or public (Ruch, 2003).

According to Floyd (2005) and Ruch (2003), for-profit institutions or proprietary institutions, as they are sometimes known, are closed institutions. TTU is just such a university. TTU is a large, for-profit, commuter Higher Education Institution located in the Southeastern United States. TTU has been used in this study. TTU was established early in the 20th century and may be identified as a commuter, technology-based, career-

oriented institution. According to Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004), 4-year universities, both private and public, are generally separated into two types—residential or commuter. TTU is a for-profit institution and became a publicly traded corporation on the New York Stock Exchange in the early 1990s. In addition, the institution operates under accreditation standards. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association (NCA).

For-profit educational institutions also are a part of the federal Department of Education's jurisdiction. Floyd (2005) maintained that the federal higher education reauthorization process has provided the for-profit sector an opportunity to seek changes in the federal regulatory/funding framework with the rationale that it will help serve students more effectively. Beyond the federal reauthorization, various federal and state governmental actions will be strongly influenced by the public policy desire to increase the access and success of low income and adult students (Floyd).

TTU has shareholders just like a business organization, and like a business organization, TTU has closed its doors, records, and administration by not allowing research and study or critique and praise. Therefore, records of student curricula, coursework, programs, student records such as graduation rates and retention, among other records have not been available (Ruch, 2003).

Most research in this area has focused on community colleges (Ruch, 2003). Some research has focused on HBCUs or PWIs, but little information has been written about private (Seidman, 2005) for-profit universities mainly because they are proprietary institutions (Ruch). Records on for-profit institutions have either not been available or have only become recently available. More often than not, the data are hidden. According

to Ruch, it has been only recently that any data have been seen, but that is difficult to locate because it has been lumped together with data about students in junior or community colleges. It is only recently that the U.S. Department of Education published its first comprehensive statistical report on students at private for-profit institutions. Again, rather than data focused specifically on for-profit institution's student records, the data only focused on the 1993-1996 academic years and primarily on students attending other than 4-year institutions (Ruch). Unfortunately, very little exists in the literature on for-profit institutions.

Included with the mission statement of TTU is the incentive to foster student learning through high-quality, career-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs in technology, business, and management. TTU identifies itself as the largest minority serving for-profit institution.

Students and Higher Education

As institutions have changed so have the students attending. Participation, access, motivation, expectations, and needs have changed for the students attending the educational institution of their choice (Seidman, 2007). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2003), African American men made up less than one third (31.3%) of students at HBCUs in 2001. This disparity persists in HBCUs almost at the same level as PWIs. Cuyjet (2006) cited a need for qualitative research that addresses insight from the men themselves regarding their issues and challenges and how they address them in contemporary times. In fact, gender disparities exist between males and females at HBCUs as well. Cuyjet concluded that "African American men are facing significant challenges that indicate that a sense of urgency is needed by faculty and

administration at HBCUs to improve the overall experience of African American men attending these institutions” (p. 202).

Minority students are choosing to attend private, for-profit higher education institutions in greater numbers. Farrell (2003) and Ruch (2003) contended that the main reason for this rise in attendance is because of the responsiveness of the for-profits to minority students’ needs. According to Collison (1998), minority males choose these institutions because they want more practical education in a shorter time than that offered by traditional 4-year institutions

Students in For-Profit, Proprietary Institutions

In the 21st century Hispanic and or Latino and African American males have enrolled in proprietary, for-profits in greater numbers (Arbona & Nora, 2004; Harvey, 2003). In recent years, minorities are choosing to attend private, for-profit higher education institutions. Farrell (2003) reported that many of the larger proprietary institutions attract large percentages of minority-male students such as Corinthian College where 21.3% are Black and 15.9% are Hispanic. DeVry has 21.7% Black and 11.9% Hispanic; and ITT Technical Institute has 12% Black and 15% Hispanic; whereas Strayer University has 41% Black and 3.8% Hispanic (Farrell).

Ruch (2003) maintained that the reason these institutions attract minority students is because they provide convenient schedules and an engaging curriculum with emphasis on career launching. The University of Phoenix has worked hard to attract nontraditional students and is enjoying considerable success (Rhodes, 2001).

African American and Hispanic Students and Higher Education Institutions

African American Students

The contemporary journey of the African American student into higher education institutions is coupled with the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s through 1960s. Landmark cases such as *Brown v. the Board of Education* in 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal laws were inherently unequal (Cohen, 1998) and *Florida ex re. Hawkins v. Board of Control* (1956), were cases based on the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that overturned the legalities of segregation and so began the integration of the African American student into main stream higher education institutions. After these landmark cases, few African Americans were among the students who attended higher education institutions and those who did attended mainly HBCU's (Cuyjet, 2006). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, along with several federal student funding initiatives such as the Pell Grant, allowed for the entry of African American students into integrated higher education institutions in larger numbers (Cohen). During this period, immigrants came from Caribbean Islands seeking to become enrolled in many of these integrated higher education institutions.

Hispanic Students

Historians of higher education have virtually ignored the presence of Latino students and faculty (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). The Federal Interagency Committee on Education in 1973 was responsible for the codifying of minority groups. Mexicans, Cubans, South Americans and other groups who spoke Spanish and lived in the U.S. were classified as Hispanic Americans (Cohen, 1998). In discussing the journey of Latino/Hispanics into higher education, Castellanos and Jones defined the "El

Movimiento in Higher Education, 1960-1980,” as the watershed of the entrance of Latinos into higher education.(p. 2) During the 1980s through 1990s as Latino/Hispanic populations grew in higher education institutions, many Hispanic lobbying groups were successful in establishing federally designated Hispanic serving institutions allowing for specific federal funding for Hispanic students (Castellanos & Jones).

Student Retention

Male students of color are leaving educational institutions in record numbers. Researchers (Arbona & Nora, 2004; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton et al., 2004; Cabrera, Castaneda, & Nora, 1992; Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990; Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Coley, 2001; Cuyjet, 2006; Farrell, 2003; Galindo & Escamilla, 1995; Harvey, 2003; Hilliard, 1997; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Kuh & Love, 2000; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Murdock, 1987; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Nora, Rendon, & Romero, 2003; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Ruch, 2003; Seidman, 2007; Spradley 2001; Tierney, 1999; Tinto, 1975, 1993, 2003) cited several reasons for institutions being unable to retain these students. Most of this population is first in their immediate families to enroll in college. Horn and Nunez asserted that because first-generation students cannot benefit from their parents’ experiences in preparing for and applying to college, they may be at a distinct disadvantage in gaining access to postsecondary education. In the U.S. even middle-class Blacks tend to be brought up in basically segregated surroundings (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006). Black families, who urge their children to go to college, are often first-generation college students. Many of these children grew up in households without the systems that support first-rate academic achievement. Many first-generation students are struggling to gain access to quality

education, and many are struggling to enter higher education and complete a college degree (Castellanos & Jones).

Castellanos and Jones (2003) suggested that university-wide efforts should be established if retention of Latino/a students is to be seriously considered. The authors said that tenured faculty should be included in the retention efforts and faculty and staff should be continuously trained on multiculturalism. Castellanos and Jones discussed the need for bilingual parent sessions to discuss financial aid, and the institution should make the curriculum relevant for the student to appreciate the classes and their content.

Problem Statement

An African American or Hispanic male's departure from undergraduate higher education institutions is a long-standing problem. Some literature reports that they are leaving because they are not assimilating. Rationale provided includes programs not being practically based, not being relevant, or not being appropriate to the needs of these students. Additionally, the two targeted groups do not see themselves in the curricula nor in the classroom; they are not integrating socially into the institution.

There is not enough qualitative literature on for-profit higher education institutions nor is there is enough quantitative or qualitative literature on retention of African American and Hispanic males in for-profit higher education. Hence, this study seeks to add to that body of literature.

Conceptual Framework

Tinto (1975, 1993) is considered to be the seminal theorist on retention. Braxton et al.'s (2004) model of student departure was based on Tinto's 1975 retention model.

Braxton et al. have focused research on commuter students because minority students are more likely to attend commuter institutions.

The student's background and experiences within the institutional environment result in varying levels of academic and social integration. These various levels of integration form the core concept of Tinto's model regarding both persistence and departure resulting from the student's integration with the social and academic systems of the institution (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Further, Braxton et al. (2004) offered what they described as a theory of student departure in commuter colleges and universities that references implications for racial or ethnic minority students. Many racial or ethnic minority students who attend commuter institutions are first generation and are of low socioeconomic status backgrounds (Tinto, 1993). Braxton et al. offered four major propositions that are areas of concern for commuter students as a basis for the development of the theory to account for student departure from commuter colleges and universities: (a) economic, the student's cost of attending 4-year, for-profit, commuter college/university; (b) organizational (structure and behavior); (c) psychological (motivation, persistence); and (d) sociological (support for others).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the expectations of African American and Hispanic males in a for-profit university (TTU). This study specifically explored student perception of the retention efforts of faculty and staff services as well as effective or ineffective policies, procedures within the institutional environment. It further examined how these experiences promoted or impeded African American and Hispanic males' persistence to graduation.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is: What are the perceptions of African American and Hispanic male commuter students concerning effective and ineffective retention strategies of the faculty, administration, and staff in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

Four additional subquestions are:

1. What are the economic considerations of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
2. What are the organizational structure and behaviors in place in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
3. What are the motivations and persistence characteristics of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
4. How does the support of others influence African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because there is a low percentage of African American and Hispanic males graduating from college; and higher education institutions have the responsibility for producing productive members of society especially in underrepresented groups. Another significance of the study is if more African American and Hispanic males are retained it will increase representation of African American and Hispanic males in the classroom, increase diversity in the higher education in the curriculum, and in academic and social programs.

Definition of Terms

The term *first generation* in this study and as described by Horn and Nunez (2000) is used to define a college student whose parents have attained no more than a high school education. That is, they are the first generation in their immediate family to enroll in college. Horn and Nunez asserted that because first-generation students cannot benefit from their parents' experiences in preparing for and applying to college, they may be at a distinct disadvantage in gaining access to postsecondary education.

The term *for-profit university* is used to describe private, for-profit, postsecondary educational institutions—businesses that prepare graduates for jobs and career advancement. The for-profit sector ranges from small, owner-operated schools to an increasing number of large higher education systems that are owned and operated by publicly traded for-profit corporations, many with multiple campuses in several states (Foster, 2004).

The phrase *minority-male students* in this study is used alternately between Hispanic, African American/Black males. The term *minority*, for the purpose of this study, describes two groups of males. The first group includes Hispanic/Latino males who, according to the 2000 U.S. Census's American Community Survey, are people who identify with the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" or who are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories: Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban, as well as those who indicate that they are of other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin. *Origin* can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the U.S. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.

African American/Black males are in the second group and who, according to the U.S. Census's definition are Black or African American persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as Black, African American or Negro, or provide written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

The term *Stop Out* is used to describe students who enter colleges or universities, stop attending, and reenter at a later date. Students may stop out for a term or much longer, students do not have to return to the same institution to be considered stopped out (Nora, et al, 1996).

The term *Contract Out*, is used to describe organizations that move departments or services from within the organization to an outside entity. In many cases, these services are move to organizations or companies outside of the United States (Astin & Oseguera, 2004).

Limitations

The limitations of this study are that some of the interviewees were familiar to the researcher because of a previous position held by the researcher within the university so the research may be biased. After conducting the pilot study and before conducting this study, the researcher became employed at another academic institution. The researcher is also from the same racial group as many of the participants; again, there may be implied bias. Finally, the observation centers were selected by the researcher and are assumed to be areas where this particular group of students may assemble.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to one for-profit institution. The original campus of the pilot study is located at the TTU South campus (as was used again in this study); the TTU Central campus that was used in this study is located over 300 miles away, and was not used in the pilot study. The rationale for this delimitation is that although this population has been studied at community colleges and public universities, studies regarding this population are scarce among for-profit universities.

Further research comparing other for-profit institutions simultaneously may help to strengthen the literature in this area.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 explained the advent of the for-profit, publicly traded higher education institution. It described growth of African American and Hispanic males in for-profit commuter higher education institutions. The chapter continued by presenting the need to study the for-profit institution as it relates to African American and Hispanic male students and retention. Existing research was presented on retention of African American and Hispanic males in public higher education institutions. Chapter 2 follows with a literature review on retention of African American and Hispanic male students, and Chapter 3 presents the research methodology that was used. Chapter 4 presents the study's findings, and Chapter 5 is a discussion of the implications of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggested areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the major models of student retention, attrition and persistence are identified for Hispanic and African American males. There is also a discussion of first-generation students and their culture perspective, admissions and financial aid as well as effective and ineffective retention strategies.

Retention and 4-year Institutions

Admissions and Financial Aid

Admissions, along with all other strategic areas within the for-profit educational institution, are market-driven. Sustained employer demand is the number one concern (Ruch, 2003). A typical admission office employs about 30 full-time admission representatives and 7 field representatives for a maximum student population of 3,500, with an expectation that a larger freshman class will be brought in each time (Ruch). Once admitted to the institution, most students seek financial aid to cover the cost of their education. The average cost for a private, for-profit, full-time undergraduate student in 1995-1996 was \$12,600. More than 57% took out student loans averaging over \$4,700, and one half of these students received an aid package (loans, grants and work study) of an average of \$13,300 (NCES, 1996). With the high loan amounts for the for-profit student, Volkwein and Cabrera (1998) examined a number of factors that determine loan default. The following characteristics contributed to loan default: socioeconomic status of the borrower and their achievement within the institution, having parents who attended

college, completing a degree, being married, or not having dependent children. These factors were even more powerful for African Americans.

Commuter Institutions

Braxton et al. (2004) posited that Tinto's (2003) work would not be valid for commuter institutions since the type of institution studied was residential. Four-year universities, both private and public, are generally separated into two types, residential or commuter. Student departure from each institution may be for different causes (Tinto). A number of factors have been identified that may cause departure. Economics, specifically ability to qualify for financial aid, is one factor:

Overall, the authors believe that the primacy of Tinto's work is overstated and that their revisions offer significant advantages for understanding and increasing retention, particularly for students attending commuter institutions and for students of color. Braxton and colleagues believe that students of color are particularly vulnerable to financial constraints and include these constraints as variables in their revised theories. However, the authors make few references to low socioeconomic status or first-generation students, who may also be particularly vulnerable to attrition due to these variables; although [sic] the retention of students of color is a crucial issue, low SES and first-generation students also have high rates of attrition. Moreover, these two groups of students are more likely to attend the less selective commuter institutions that have lower persistence rates. Further developing the implications for these two student groups would strengthen the revised theoretical position (Murdock, 1987. p. 75).

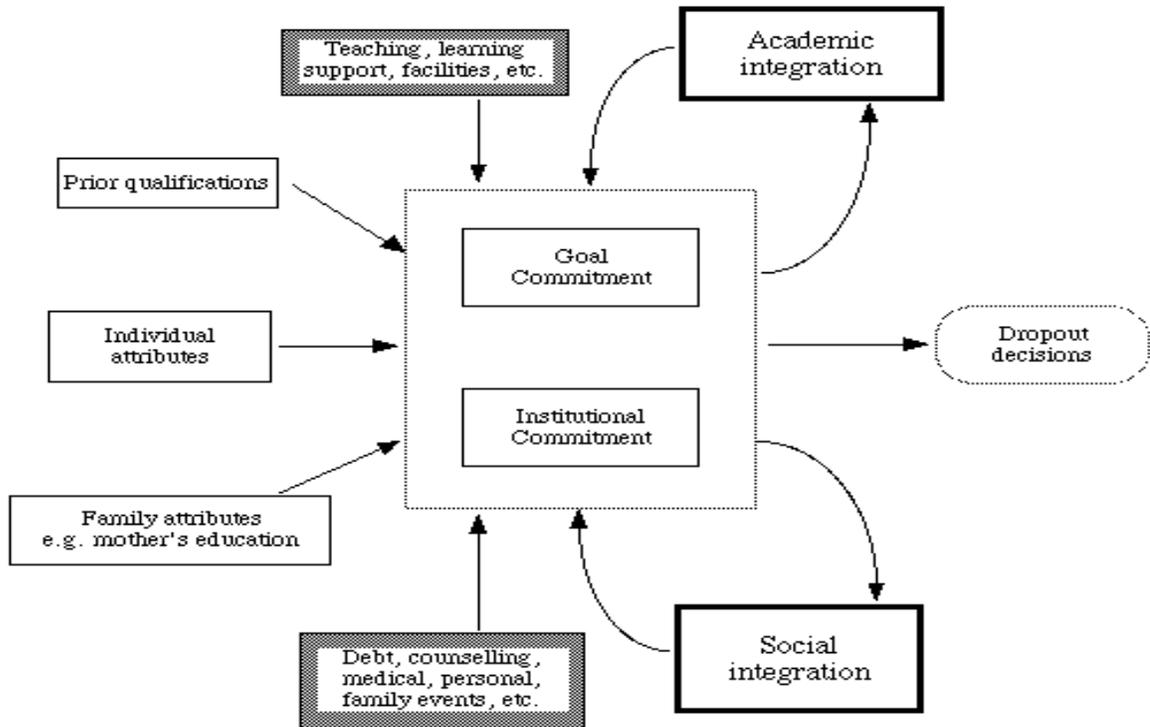


Figure 1. Tinto's student departure model, 1975.

Commuter Colleges and Universities

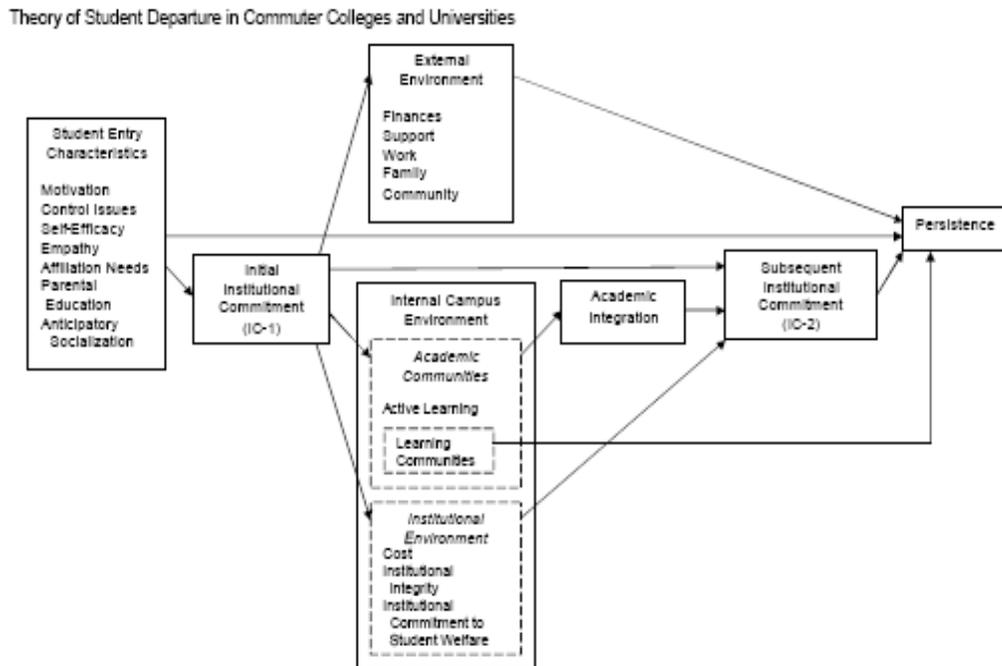
Finally, Braxton et al. (2004) also disputed Tinto's model and offered a theory of student departure in commuter colleges and universities that references implications for racial or ethnic minority students (Braxton et al.). Racial or ethnic minority students who attend commuter institutions are generally of first-generation, and of low-socioeconomic status backgrounds (Tinto, 1993).

Braxton et al. (2004) offered four areas of concern for commuter students that are the basis for the development of a theory to account for student departure from commuter colleges and universities. He discussed four areas that affect student attrition: (a)

economic, (b) organizational, (c) psychological, and (d) sociological. As Braxton et al. explained,

Economic, the lower the cost of college attendance incurred by students, the greater their likelihood of persisting in college; *Organizational*, the more a student perceives that the institution is committed to the welfare of its students, the lower the likelihood of the student's departure. The more a student perceives that the institution exhibits institutional integrity, the lower the likelihood of the student's departure; *Psychological*, motivation to graduate from college exerts a positive influence on student persistence. Motivation to make steady progress toward college completion also positively impacts student retention. The greater a student's need for control and order in his or her daily life, the greater the student's likelihood to depart. The stronger a person's belief that he or she can achieve a desired outcome through his or her own efforts, the less likely the student will depart from college. The greater a student's awareness of the effects of his or her decisions and actions on other people, the greater the student's likelihood of departure from college. The greater a student's need for affiliation, the greater the student's likelihood of departure from college; *Sociological*, as parents' educational level increases, the likelihood of student departure from commuter college or university decreases. Support from significant others for college attendance decreases the likelihood of student departure from a commuter college or university. The probability of student departure from a commuter college or university decreases for students who participate in communities of learning. The probability of student departure from a commuter college or

university increases for students who engage in anticipatory socialization before entering college. (p. 10).



Source: Adapted from Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon, 2004.

Figure 2. Tinto's theory revised for student departure in residential colleges and universities (Braxton et al., 2004).

Hispanic Students and Retention

Arbona and Nora (2004) reported that Hispanics are the fastest growing and youngest population group in the United States. The participation of minorities in higher education has increased substantially during the last 20 years (Harvey, 2003); however, Hispanic youth continue to show lower college participation and graduation rates compared to their African American and White counterparts. In the future, Hispanics will

become the second largest group in the labor force; therefore, their lack of educational achievement is likely to impact the economic productivity of the nation. Arbona and Nora (2004) contended that during the last 20 years the participation of minorities in higher education has increased substantially. The percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with at least a bachelor's degree in 2000 was lower for Hispanics (10%) as compared to African Americans (18%) or Whites (34%); (NCES, 2002).

As Arbona and Nora (2004) examined the data on the commitment of Hispanic students in college, they stated,

Research with Hispanics has shown that college students' commitment to the goal of obtaining the degree (Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1993) as well as their early academic performance (Nora & Cabrera, 1996) influences their decision to remain in college. Nora and Cabrera found that college grade point average was three times more important in college persistence for Hispanic and African American students as compared to their White counterparts. (p.2)

Many researchers have used academic performance in college as a form of academic integration, primarily because Tinto (1993) postulated that college grades are an indicator of a fit between the intellectual orientations of the student and the institution. Social integration to the campus environment has been measured in terms of informal friendships, contact with faculty, and participation in extracurricular activities (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Nora and Cabrera (1996) noted that even though academic performance was more influential in minority students' persistence, social experiences also contributed to these students re-enrollment in college. Nora and

Cabrera further showed that environmental factors outside of the college context also influence students' decisions to remain in college.

Family responsibilities and working off-campus may exert a pull away effect on students' social and academic integration and in their decision to remain enrolled (Nora & Wedham, 1991). Hispanic and African American women who reported taking care of a family member were 83% more likely to leave college than their counterparts without such responsibility (Nora & Cabrera, 1996). On the other hand, studies have consistently shown that encouragement from significant others (parents, teachers, and friends) has a positive effect on Hispanic and African American 2- and 4-year college students' integration to college, academic performance and commitments, and persistence (Nora & Cabrera). Receiving financial aid is also an important factor in college persistence among low SES students (Cabrera et al., 1990; Murdock, 1987; Nora et al., 2003; Nora & Wedham, 1991), even though researchers disagree about the impact grants and work-study awards have on persistence as compared to loans (Cabrera et al.).

African American Students and Retention

As we look further at culture as a determinant of retention, Wynn (as cited in Gallien & Peterson, 2005, p. 103) offered a controversial commentary on teaching African American students within a context of culture. Her views may be considered controversial because, as she stated, "As a White woman, I feel presumptuous writing about effective pedagogy for African American students" Wynn described the methods taught to her on how to teach African American students. According to Wynn she was inspired by readings and teachings from Asa G. Hillard III, a renowned writer of African

American history and studies. Hilliard (1997) stated, “Any wisdom I share came from those educators and those places where, no matter the physical structure, the educational process became a ‘sacred space’” (p. 103).

Wynn (as cited in Gallien & Peterson, 2005) also noted that part of the spiritual experience of African American learning comes from music. Using music, as ritual and as a collective everyday experience, is deeply rooted in the African cultural experience.

I was reminded of that when working in Alexandria, South Africa, one summer. I listened often as Black South African workers, building homes in a Habitat for Humanity project, spontaneously burst [sic] into song when passing blocks to one another or when carrying food from one home to another. (Wynn, as quoted in Gallien & Peterson, p.105)

Though Wynn (as cited in Gallien & Peterson, 2005), had no training or talent in music, she would play taped musical selections in her essay and composition classes. Wynn’s most important assertion is what she considers nature versus nurture. She said, “Hilliard (1999) has argued that in the United States there is a continuing ‘nature vs. nurture’ educational debate about African American learners.” Quoting Hilliard, Wynn (as cited in Gallien & Peterson, 2005, p.48) stated,

Many Eurocentric scholars, represented by the likes of Murray and Herrnstein (1994) of the infamous Bell Curve, purport that the nature of the student defines his or her potential to learn and achieve. Because of these and similar educational theorists, the nature or capacity of African American learners to academically excel is more often than not questioned throughout our society, not just in our schools.

HBCUs also have challenges retaining Black male students (Cuyjet, 2006). There are gender disparities between males and females at HBCUs. African American women outnumber their male counterparts by a ratio of 2 to 1 (Cuyjet). According to NCES data (2003), African American men made up less than one-third (31.3%) of students at HBCUs in 2001. This disparity persists in PWIs almost at the same level as the HBCUs. Cuyjet cited a need for qualitative research that addresses insight from the men themselves regarding their issues and challenges and how they address them in contemporary times. To explore issues concerning African American males in higher education, focus groups from various HBCUs were assembled (Patton, 2002) comprising of males representing a broad spectrum of backgrounds. In summary, major themes emerged regarding their collective experiences. The groups focused on their collective experiences using inductive analysis. Two areas of note were predisposition to college and involvement in leadership development. In the area of predisposition to college the men acknowledged their sparse representation on their respective campuses and not enough professional college-educated role models provided to be impediment to their prematriculation. The men cited a need for role models or mentors. (Patton). Cuyjet (2006) concluded that African American men are facing significant challenges that indicate that a sense of urgency is needed by faculty and administration to improve the overall experience and retention of African American men.

Effective and Ineffective Retention Strategies

In an effort to explain the African American male retention dilemma, Spradley (2001) noted that administrators, scholars, faculty, and students should continue to actively discuss the socioeconomic and educational plight of African American males

and their declining enrollment and retention in and graduation from higher education. Evidence suggests that the decision of traditional-age African American males to drop out of college may be caused by several factors, including lack of financial aid, socio-cultural challenges, and institutional incompatibility (Wilson, 1996).

Spradley's (2001) initial recommendation was to address the plight of traditional-age African American male college students through increased attention to mentoring, as mentors have the potential of assisting African American males in negotiating the enormous intricacies of the higher education pipeline (Wilson, 1996).

Spradley (2001, p.2) stated, "One promising trend is the returning of adult males. The number of Black males 25 years old and over enrolled in college has increased from 143,000 in 1990 to 267,000 in 1995 to 335,000 in 2000" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The adult Black male's increased participation in higher education over the last decade has challenged postsecondary institutions to adapt to changing clientele and design their programs to address the special needs of the adult learner (NCES, 1996; Perna, 1997). For instance, it has become necessary to provide accessible options for academic pursuits that respond to the adult males' expectations, needs, and interests. Spradley (2001, p. 2) referenced Bean and Metzner's (1985) very specific measures that will help support African American male students in college. She contended that, "There are three main strategies that help to support this population: (a) peer support in classes as an incentive for their learning; (b) faculty-student relationships; and (c) extracurricular activities."

Spradley (2001) noted that there are no quick solutions to the dilemma of the declining academic achievement of Black males. She also noted, however, that there is hope for etching consciousness into the minds of academy members for effectively

educating adult learners, among them African American males. For example, several interventions can help increase adult African American male success:

(a) peer interactions provide needed social integration into the academic experience; (b) facilitative learning environments with faculty who nurture accumulated learning, contribute to knowledge acquisition, and encourage the application of learning to improve social surroundings are also critical to success; (c) being aware of the distinctive extra-curricular experiences that enrich learning and provide application opportunities is important for faculty; and lastly, (d) providing insightful information to educators on best practices in adult learning, including the obstacles adults encounter on numerous levels (i.e., interpersonal, personal, organizational) is a key step toward inclusive educational transformation (Spradley, 2001, p.2).

Hispanic male students often require similar methods of retention. Castellanos and Jones (2003) suggested that a university-wide effort should be established if retention of Latino/a student is to be seriously considered. The authors stated that tenured faculty should be included in the retention efforts and faculty and staff should be continuously trained in the area of multiculturalism. Castellanos and Jones discussed the need for bilingual parent sessions to discuss financial aid, and that the institution should make the curriculum relevant for the student to appreciate the classes and their content.

Bean and Metzner (1985) advised universities not try to use ineffective strategies such as Tinto's (1975) original student departure model framework as a "one-size-fits-all" for minority students. Bean and Metzner (1985, p. 62) described other factors that

may contribute to student departure from universities such as “perceived stress” and “financial difficulty.”

First-Generation

Tinto (1993) observed that many racial and ethnic minorities who attend commuter institutions are first-generation and are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Although as educators we appear to know much about first-generation college students with respect to their academic preparation, transition to postsecondary education, and progress toward degree attainment, surprisingly little is known about their college experiences or the cognitive and psychosocial development during college. Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini (2004) uncovered information that addressed first-generation concerns and cited a myriad of areas affecting first-generation students. A study by Pascarella, et al. (1996) is perhaps the only investigation that addresses these outcomes directly. Pascarella, et al., found that compared to their peers, first-generation students: completed fewer credit hours, took fewer humanities and fine arts courses, studied fewer hours and worked more hours per week, were less likely to participate in an honors program, and made smaller first-year gains in reading comprehension. Pascarella, et al., 1996, p. 420)

As stated earlier, McCarron and Inkelas (2006) discussed reasons for concerns in first-generation Black families and how many are struggling to enter higher education and complete a college degree. Many grew up in households without the systems that support first-rate academic achievement. And many first-generation Black students are struggling to gain access to quality education. Castellanos and Jones (2003, p.1) when discussing first-generation Hispanic students said; “Many of these first-generation

students are attempting to gain access to a quality education and many are struggling to enter higher education and complete a college degree” (p. 1).

Cultural Perspective

Pascarella, (2006), McCarron and Inkelas, (2006), and Castellanos and Jones (2003) have provided research on first-generation students, other researchers such as Kuh and Love (2000) took into account a cultural perspective. Kuh and Love stated that over time all groups and organizations, including colleges and universities, develop cultures, more or less coherent, widely accepted ways of doing things, which shape how people think and behave. Kuh and Whitt (1988) stated that in higher education, culture can be thought of as ...

the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups, and provide a frame of reference with which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus. (pp. 12-13)

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) stated that one of culture’s most important functions is to protect its relative position with other groups and the larger culture in which it is ensconced. Building on Bourdieu and Passeron’s work, Giroux (1983) stated that when culture is seen in the form of capital, it is impossible to acknowledge the role it plays in enabling those in subordinate positions to resist domination. Using a cultural lens, Kuh and Love (2000) defined the issue of student departure primarily as a socio-cultural phenomenon, rather than an individual, psychological experience. That is, whereas decisions to voluntarily leave institutions are made by individuals, cultural forces also

shape such decisions. Kuh and Love (2000) provided eight cultural prepositions related to premature student departure:

1. The college experience, including a decision to leave college, is mediated through a student's cultural meaning-making system.
2. One's cultures of origin mediate the importance attached to attending college and earning a college degree.
3. Knowledge of a student's cultures or origin and the cultures of immersion is needed to understand a student's ability to successfully negotiate the institution's cultural milieu.
4. The probability of persistence is inversely related to the cultural distance between a student's culture(s) or origin and the cultures of immersion.
5. Students who traverse a long cultural distance must become acclimated to dominant cultures of immersion or join one or more enclaves.
6. The amount of time a student spends in one's culture of origin after matriculating is positively related to cultural stress and reduces the chance they will persist.
7. The likelihood a student will persist is related to the extensity and intensity of one's socio-cultural connections to the academic program and to affinity groups.
8. A student who belong to one or more enclaves in the cultures of immersion is more likely to persist, especially if group members value achievement and persistence (Kuh & Love, p.196).

Kuh and Love (2000) concluded that the undergraduate experience has traditionally been thought of as a developmentally powerful period of change and

transformation. However, the question arises as to how much as educators we should expect students to change their values, attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs. The issues of cultural diversification and student change present a dilemma: to what degree can or should a college remake or diversify its culture without jeopardizing what is to be learned; maintain a curriculum with integrity; and encourage student development and personal transformation? Virtually all colleges and universities espouse a commitment to diversifying their student bodies, faculty and curricula. Yet, an underlying assumption persists that those from cultural backgrounds different from that of the institution's dominant culture need to adapt to the institution. To enhance the quality of undergraduate experience and increase persistence rates, most institutions must challenge this assumption and the institutional policies and practices that flow from it. This means that not all students should or would adapt to an institution's preferred way of conducting business.

How then should universities contend with the growing population of first-generation students who need to complete an education? As educators we look at the mosaic of the American population today we realize that there is probably no category or race that is more culturally diverse than that of Hispanic students.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on African American and Hispanic males, for-profit higher education and retention. Chapter 3 follows with the methodology and Chapter 4 discusses the findings. Chapter 5 presents discuss the implications of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Research Design

This qualitative case study examined the expectations of African American and Hispanic males in a for-profit university (TTU). The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of African American and Hispanic males in a for-profit university (TTU). It further examined how their experiences promoted or impeded the African American and Hispanic male's persistence to graduation. This study was used to answer the following research question:

What are the perceptions of African American and Hispanic male commuter students, effective and ineffective retention strategies of the faculty, administration and staff in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

Four additional sub-questions were:

1. What are the economic considerations of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
2. What are the organizational structure and behaviors in place in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
3. What are the motivations and persistence characteristics of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

The research design that was used to answer these research questions is a case study which incorporated interviews of 19 students at varying stages of progress towards

the attainment of their degree, as well as students who have left the university prior to graduation and students who have graduated. Thick rich data was gathered by repeated observations and re-interviewing students who were interviewed during the pilot study to add longitudinal data (see Appendix A). Further, if faculty or staff were mentioned by students, either because of their perceived ability to help or hinder student retention, the faculty and/or staff identified were interviewed (see Appendix C). Documents were examined to analyze materials marketed to the student on the Internet and on the campus.

Pilot Study

In preparation for this study the researcher conducted a pilot study in the spring of 2006. This study was conducted at the South campus of TTU. This pilot study was conducted to do the following: to test the feasibility of this research study at TTU, to determine whether the researcher would be able to conduct the study without interference or hindrances from institution, and to gather findings on whether the researcher could garner candid, open, and thick rich data from the participants. The pilot study was used to determine student perceptions of the retention efforts of faculty, administrators and staff, policies, procedures, and services. It was also used to examine the perceived efforts that promoted or impeded minority male persistence to graduation. The pilot study was also used to influence the selection of the conceptual framework. Additionally the pilot study was used to change the interview guide to accommodate the selected conceptual framework. The campus where the pilot study was conducted was used in this research study and an additional campus was added.

Sampling Plan

Site

TTU was selected for the purposes of this study because of its classification as a major for-profit technology university that attracts male students, first-generation and minority male students in particular. They were also chosen because, as a for-profit higher education institution, they are the least studied of all of the higher education institutions.

The TTU sites selected for this study were two campuses of TTU in the Southeastern United States. The first campus is the South campus and the second campus is the Central campus. TTU has campuses all over the U.S., but these two campuses contain the largest population of Hispanic male students. Each campus had about the same number of students and both campuses were established within one year of each other, 2001 and 2002. Each campus reports that approximately 60% of the student population was male.

Participant Selection

African American males were chosen because of their population in the Southeastern United States and data show that this population is leaving college at an alarming rate (*A large black-white scoring gap*, 2006). In his recent book, Cuyjet (2006) stated that the popularity of a number of recent books that focus on the plight of African American men in postsecondary education illustrates the concern felt by the members of the higher education community about the topic of African American men's matriculation. Most of these works, however, address topics peripheral to the issues that impact undergraduate African American male matriculation (Cuyjet). Hispanic males

were chosen because of their population in the southeastern United States. Although there is a myriad of studies on Hispanic/Latino/Latina male and female student retention (Castellanos & Jones, 2003), there are very few references made in the data to retention of Hispanic male students in for-profit higher education.

The study used purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998) because the researcher is purposely seeking African American and Hispanic male students. The total purposeful sample size was 21 students.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Participant (N=21)	Race	Funding Source	Standing	Major	Campus
*Broomes	Black	Family - Loans	Graduated	Business Administration concentration Sales and Marketing Small Business Associates Degree	South Campus
Combs	Black/ African American	Financial aid/ Employer paid	Sophomore Stopped out	Small Business Associates Degree	Central Campus
Casas	Hispanic	Financial aid, Loans	Senior	EET	South Campus
*Morales	Hispanic	Employer paid	Junior Stopped out	Technical Management	South Campus
Negron	Hispanic	Employer paid	Senior Stopped out	Bachelor in Science Network Comm.	South Campus
Myers	Black	Parental loans until drop-out for financial reasons	Dropped-out	Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship	Central Campus
Carlton	African American /Black American	Loans, Family, Grants	Senior	Bachelor in Science Gaming Simulation	Central Campus
Canceco	Hispanic	Financial aid/Loans	Freshman Stopped out transferred	Bachelor in Science CET	South Campus
Gonzalez	Cuban/Columbian /Hispanic	Loans, grant (Pell), scholarship	Junior	Bachelor in Science Gaming Simulation Program	Central Campus
Levy	Black	Private student	Senior	Bachelor in Science	Central

loans (didn't qualify for aid) Stopped out Project Mgmt. Campus

Table Cont'd

Participant (N =21)	Race	Funding Source	Standing	Major	Campus
Soames	Black	Financial aid, scholarship	Senior	Bachelor in Science CET	Central Campus
Bartlet	African American	Full scholarship	Senior	Bachelor in Science Computer Information Systems	Central Campus
Campbell	African American	Family, financial aid	Stopped out Graduated	Bachelor in Science Small Business Administration	South Campus
Archer	Black	Scholarship, loans	Junior	Bachelor in Science Gaming Simulation	Central Campus
Ogden	Black	Employer & tuition waiver	Senior Stopped out	Bachelor in Science Management Information	South Campus
Perez	Hispanic	Parent works at college	Junior	Bachelor in Science Business Administration in Hospitality	South Campus
Watson	Bahamian	Parents (international student = no loans)	Sophomore Stopped out	Bachelor in Science CIS	Central Campus
Porter	African American	VA education benefits, loans, scholarship	Graduated Stopped out	Technical Management - Business Information Systems	South Campus
Masters	African American	Loans	senior	Computer Information Systems	Central Campus

*participants from pilot study

Table 2

Faculty Participants

Participant	Race	Degree	Job	Campus
Professor Broomes	African American	Masters (Ph.D. in process)	Dean of Business and Computer Information Systems	South Campus
Instructor Jones	Anglo	Undergrad – English (Masters in progress)	Coordinator, Development Education	South Campus

From the dean of students at each site, the researcher requested the cooperation to interview 24, (12 from each campus) minority-male students, 2 freshmen, 2 sophomores, 2 juniors, 2 seniors, 2 graduates, and 2 students who have already left TTU. The researcher was able to interview 19 students, 6 self-identified as Hispanics, 12 self-identified as Black/African American, and 1 self-identified as Bahamian. There were 11 students total from Central Campus and 8 students total from South Campus. The student's ages ranged between 18 and 30. While the researcher sought to maintain a balance of Hispanic and African American students at both the South Campus and the Central Campus site, there were more African American students than Hispanic. The researcher was able to interview two faculty, both from South Campus. The selection of these students and faculty provided a method of triangulation (Yin, 2003). Two students who were interviewed during the pilot study were re-interviewed based on the modified questions and length of the interviews for this study. One of the two pilot study students stopped out and then returned to TTU and the other has graduated from TTU. Of the current students interviewed, one student had dropped out, one had left TTU and graduated from a culinary arts college, and eight students came from various colleges, universities and trade schools and continued their education at TTU.

Data Collection

Observations

At both campuses, the researcher conducted observations in the admissions office, the cafeteria, the student tutoring centers, and the financial aid reception areas. The purpose of these observations was to determine the academic environment on each campus. Merriam (1998) discussed six tactics to check validity: (a) triangulation, (b)

member checks, (c) long-term observation, (d) peer examination, (e) participatory or collaborative modes of research, and (f) researcher's biases. The researcher used interviews, document analysis, observations, and member checks to thoroughly triangulate the data. According to Merriam, "reliability in a research design is based on the assumption that there is a single reality and that studying it repeatedly will yield the same results" (p. 205). An observation guide was used to document observed behavior of students, faculty, and staff (see Appendix C). A matrix was designed to describe the correlation among all data analyzed, as well as field notes that were taken during the observation period.

Interviews

Over 19 hours of one-on-one, face-to-face interviews of 12 African American male students, 1 Bahamian male student, and 6 Hispanic male students were conducted using an interview guide prepared and based on Braxton et al.'s model (2004) (see Appendix B). During the pilot study, the researcher used Tinto's Student Departure Model as a conceptual framework for the study. The Tinto model was based on a residential student population and the Braxton et al. model is based on a commuter-student population. The researcher found that Braxton et al.'s model resembled the institution being studied more because it took into account commuter students and both TTU campuses used in this study were composed of largely commuter-student populations.

The researcher asked each student to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix A). The interview lasted for approximately 1 hour per student. Questions were asked related to the students' perceptions of their experiences upon entering the institution, their

experiences with professors, and their experience with the financial aid process and student support services. The researcher explained the interview process to the student and assured the student that his responses were confidential. The students' names would not be divulged and pseudonyms would replace them. The researcher asked each student if he had questions before the interview started. The researcher kept field notes and each interview was tape recorded with the student's approval. The tapes were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were entered into an ATLAS.ti qualitative software application.

Data Analysis

Documents

Documents related to enrollment such as freshman applications, programs of study, career choices, and graduation applications were analyzed to determine if there were connections written or digital information found in TTU documents and data gathered from interviews and observations. A list of all documents analyzed was provided (see Appendix D).

All data gathered (observation memos, interviews) were coded using ATLAS.ti software. The researcher used triangulation by comparing interviews, documents, and observations to evaluate data to support the research question. Triangulation ensured the validity of the study as well as giving the researcher the opportunity to analyze and experience different data collection methods. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and students read the transcripts for accuracy so that member checking could occur (Merriam, 1998).

Maxwell (2005) noted that researchers must be careful of inserting their own bias and influence on the research. Reactivity as Maxwell described is “the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied” (p.108). The researcher was able to avoid this possible threat by avoiding leading questions in interviews and keeping contact with the student to a minimum during observations. Asking non-leading, open-ended questions allowed the interviewee to talk about themselves and their experiences. Once the data were coded and themes emerged, the researcher sought to analyze the data.

Role of the Researcher

A major focus of a researcher should be the constant question, “Am I biasing this research in any way?” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21) The researcher must be aware of any personal potential biases and how they may influence the investigation. The researcher is of African descent and was employed for 4 years in the for-profit, 4-year higher education institution used in the study, but is now employed in a public, 2-year higher education institution. She was also employed previously in a public, 4-year institution, another public 2-year institution, and a nonprofit, 4-year institution with cumulative employment in higher education of over 25 years. The researcher’s interest in studying this particular population was a result of her observation of minority-male students during her various experiences in higher education settings. She witnessed first-hand the dilemma of Hispanic and African American male students stop outs and drop outs at what appeared to be a high rate.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 presented the methodology that was utilized in this case study. Because this study sought to gain an understanding of African American and Hispanic males’

perception of effective and ineffective retention strategies of a for-profit, commuter, university, a case study (Merriam, 1998) design was utilized. Chapter 4 discusses findings and Chapter 5 presents implications of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the expectations of African American and Hispanic males in a for-profit university (TTU). This study specifically explored student perception of the retention efforts of faculty, staff, policies, procedures and services within the institutional environment. It further examined how these experiences promoted or impeded the African American and Hispanic male's persistence to graduation. This study sought to answer the following research question:

What are the perceptions of African American and Hispanic male commuter students concerning effective and ineffective retention strategies of the faculty, administration and staff in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

Four sub-questions were:

1. What are the economic considerations of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
2. What are the organizational structure and behaviors in place in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
3. What are the motivations and persistence characteristics of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
4. How does the support of others influence an African American and Hispanic male student in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

The study used a case study approach (Merriam, 1998) in order to examine the undergraduate matriculation of Hispanic and African American males at a major for-profit university and what motivates them to leave before graduation. Nineteen students and two faculty members were interviewed using an interview guide and open-ended questions

Observations were conducted at the South campus and Central campus in areas including the cafeteria, the tutoring centers, admissions offices, and financial aid offices. Documents from each institution's office of admissions, office of financial aid, academic departments, student service offices, career service offices were analyzed. The information was triangulated by synthesizing the data from these various data sources and themes emerged. Seven themes were collapsed into four major findings:

1. Financial Concerns
2. Academic and Student Friendly Environment
3. Accelerated Learning
4. "Hands on" Learning and Application to "Real World."

This chapter provides a brief overview of TTU and then discusses the four major findings in detail.

Overview of TTU

Two major campuses of TTU located in the Southeastern United States were used in this study. Both are located in suburban areas and were built in early 2000. The buildings look alike from the outside in color and structure. The researcher observed a clean, almost pristine interior with potted plants in the stairwell of each floor and benches in the hallways on each campus. Bright colors such as orange and turquoise were painted

on the walls and some had floor to ceiling screened images of students on them. The cafeteria at each campus contained clusters of brightly colored sofa seating and flat screen TVs tuned to CNN. The South Campus cafeteria provided hot food service and the Central Campus provided microwave ovens but no food service except vending machines. Students congregated in the cafeterias at both campuses, many carrying or using laptops in small diverse groups (mostly male). Student who were not in the cafeteria, classrooms or labs were in the tutoring areas. There were a few students in hallways, sitting outside on tables with umbrellas or in any of the admissions, financial aid or career service areas at the times of each observation.

Findings

Financial Concerns

Students expressed perceptions of ineffective efforts and concerns on the part of financial aid staff and services. Students also voiced concerns about mounting personal debt. Students (seven in all) expressed dissatisfaction with the financial aid staff and services as a result of their negative experiences with financial aid personnel. Only one student reported a positive experience and one reported he had negative and positive experiences. The other 10 did not report positive or negative experiences with Financial Aid Services and personnel. Students (eight in all) reported that they had concerns about personal debt accumulation and payments after graduation from college.

TTU financial aid documents state that the average cost for an undergraduate degree is \$48,000. Financial Aid documents indicate that the average scholarship award is \$1,000 per term, and the range for Pell grant awards (for low income students) is \$400 to \$4,000 per year. Loans were specified in financial aid documents and payment plans

were offered. Observations conducted by the researcher of financial aid offices at both campuses showed one student entering the financial aid office at the Central Campus during the one hour observation period and three students in the office during this period at the South Campus. One student expressed “irritation” with a financial aid staff member where he was directed to a financial aid service operated by a “contracted out” company in another country.

Students consistently expressed displeasure with the financial aid services at TTU and reported poor financial advising that resulted in a less than satisfying educational experience. For example, Levy, a project management major, said he came to TTU out of desperation after being out of college for a few years. He noted that he took personal responsibility for his own experience rather than relying on TTU staff. . .

I was also informed by a friend I had made in the financial aid department that going to school part-time was more expensive. I was disappointed that those facts were not included in the decision to start as a part-time student. Eventually I worked out a process for myself of gathering information on line.

Casas, a senior, began TTU at age 17. He also elaborated on how his problems were tied to the failure of services, particularly financial aid. Casas reported that he had problems with career services and financial aid. He described his interaction with financial aid as “very unpleasant.” He elaborated:

They have bad customer service, misleading information. For example, they told me I was only eligible for private loans; they said I had no other option. But I found out that I could get Stafford loans. I have no idea why they wouldn’t tell me

about Stafford loans. I had to go all the way to the director of financial aid and finally I got it solved [sic].

Only one student interviewed expressed satisfaction with financial aid services.

Broomes, who was interviewed in the pilot study and now had graduated, stated,

As any typical university they offer a variety of services. At TTU they offer services from housing, on and off campus activities, insurance, job services, academic assistance and financial advice, just to name a few. TTU promotes customer service to the best of their abilities, treating their customers as if it were them in the same situation. TTU has executed all of these services very professionally and has continued it during my time there from beginning to end.

Most of the students in the study discussed how their access to financial aid was limited by their family's income or background (e.g., international students). In some cases, students complained about the unfairness of this and the burden it placed on them and their families. For example, Levy lamented that he did not qualify for some grants, so attending TTU was a big financial sacrifice for him.

My education is totally funded by private student loans. I was never able to qualify for grants or aid because of the income of my mother who is a registered nurse. I did not even qualify for campus jobs when I tried a few times because there were so many other candidates that expressed a greater need than I did.

Over the years there have been several times when I had to go into my own bank account when the loans were not enough and we still had a few months before we could apply for more loans. My education was totally funded by my own money and loans since I will be paying back the loans for a long time to come.

Levy cited financial strain, caused by a lost soccer scholarship, as a major factor in his decision to drop out of a school that he attended prior to going to TTU; he said he felt a “desperation” to continue in college so he applied at TTU. He discussed how he felt guilty due to the strain his schooling was placing on his family:

I had to stop going to school because I was attending a small liberal arts Christian school that had promised me a soccer scholarship which they never delivered on. As a result my mother had to bear the burden of the tuition which she could not afford. My Mom was willing to struggle through it, with my Dad doing his best to support her from Jamaica where he was living at the time, but I decided it was not worth it and decided to stop school for a while and work to be able to support myself.

Myers (recommended to the researcher by Archer) is a student who graduated high school early and attended TTU because he said he did not want to take unnecessary prerequisites. After starting TTU he dropped out, among other reasons, because of concerns surrounding finances.

I had money issues—I got a scholarship out of high school but I paid housing and had two jobs. I left the part-time one for a full-time overnight job. 6-6. And I didn’t have a computer. I didn’t expect math to be on the computer. I bought a math book but I didn’t use it for at least half the class—I felt swindled.

His parents also tried to help with the financial burden of school. Eventually, the financial strain led him to drop out of school so as to not burden himself or his family with further debt.

I am fairly good at managing my money. I don't like to buy things on credit. I don't like debt. I will never borrow money. My parents took out a loan for housing. I figured I could pay my way. \$48,000 is a lot of money so I dropped. Every semester they upped the tuition. It adds to the stress especially on a college student. I didn't sleep.

Other students provided examples of concerns about the expense of TTU and lack of access to financial aid. Watson dropped out of a college in the Bahamas. He the only student who described himself as Bahamian instead of African American or Hispanic, said, "Finance—foreign students don't get money. My parents are paying for me."

Morales, now a senior (who stopped out twice, once from a state university and once from TTU, and was interviewed during the pilot study then he dropped out at that time) said, "If I wasn't working at TTU I probably would have returned to a state university. The tuition would be much less than in the private university." Archer said, "TTU is a very expensive school." Gonzalez reported, "I rack up mountains of debt."

Speaking from the perspective of a faculty member at TTU, Dr. Jones stated that many young men in high school believe that college is an unattainable goal, perhaps due to their inability to finance higher education...

Higher education was not a primary thought of theirs during high school years. Many of them saw it as unreachable. I believe they are here because of the outreaching of this university in terms of admissions. Many are passive in their own search for schools. I think they see issues such as financial aid as a difficulty. Overall students reported dissatisfaction with Financial Aid services. They

seemed to believe that they were not given clear information and they were concerned about mounting debts. Some even discussed leaving because of Financial Aid services. These ineffective services proved to be an impediment to their retention.

Academic and Student Friendly Environment

This second finding demonstrates students' need for a friendly environment, care and concern of faculty. Students (18) reported that they made friends inside or outside of the classroom and 4 students specifically referenced their positive interactions with faculty. One student reported that he did not make any friends at TTU.

Faculty profiles including credentials are included for each faculty member on the TTU website documents. Each individual faculty profile contains a section that describes the faculty's observations of and interactions with students. A directory of faculty members that includes name, department, and telephone numbers is easily found on the campus website of each campus included in this study. A wall at the South Campus contains pictures of each faculty, each wearing a TTU shirt.

The researcher was able to look into classrooms and observed small classes (approximately 15 students per classroom) and many different types of labs with very few students inside. Each student was on a piece of equipment in the labs and there appeared to be a lab assistant in each lab. The researcher did not observe any faculty in the cafeteria but did see two in the hallway at the Central Campus. There was one faculty member in the tutoring lab in Central Campus and none in the South Campus tutoring lab.

Among the 19 students, 18 seemed to look favorably at their ability to make friends with and/or to be friendly with students at TTU. Archer, who said that his mother

is the main reason for attending college, and Soames, whose decision to attend TTU was based on his technology major, both spoke about their ability to make friends. “I am very friendly—I have no difficulties. I interact with everybody.” Archer went on to say, “I make friends very easily. I have been friends with two guys here for the last 2 years of my life.” Canceco, who dropped out of TTU and then went on to graduate from a culinary arts college said, “I made a lot of friends. I made them in the different activities at TTU. They had pool tables and domino tournaments, spade tournaments ...” Watson stated, “I am very friendly, I have no difficulties. I interact with everybody. I have no difficulties with the student body here at TTU.” Levy made friends through team assignments in the classroom. He said,

Developing friends was mostly functional. I mostly developed friends as a result of having to work in teams in the classroom. To stay organized we had to exchange numbers and emails, and meetings often occurred in conjunction with lunch or dinner and so social conversations would ensue and friendships blossomed. Those that had similar interests as me, or similar backgrounds, naturally kept in touch and those of us that were not that similar naturally did not.

Porter, a military reservist and full-time student, also talked about gaining friends through group assignments: “I made new friends or relationships, since becoming enrolled at this campus in one instance, by participating in groups, asking good questions and earning the respect of my peers.” In reference to class projects, Ogden, an older student who works in the IT department at TTU, said, “I become friends with my classmates in a number of ways, either by doing class projects together or working on assignments.” Casas, who chose TTU specifically because it was a technology college,

agreed, "It is very easy for me to make friends. I went to class and asked about homework and books and I made friends very easily."

Perez, who attends full-time and holds down a full-time job, and Myers are not as positive about making friends at TTU. Myers said, "I'm a friendly kind of guy although friends thought I was standoffish." Perez reported, "I made a few acquaintances while in the school. No one I really ever hung out with. But usually when I did make new friends I would find some common ground (movies, homework, or videogames, etc.) to find something to talk about." Campbell said that although he did make acquaintances, "in class, in the cafeteria, I did not make a lot of friends while I was at TTU. There were not a lot of students when I went. I made some friends in the class but not outside of class."

Some students indicated that making friends with faculty was important. Levy and Broomes not only referenced classmates as friends but went further to include faculty.

Levy said,

I also noticed that friendships were developed with teachers and financial counselors simply because we had to communicate pretty often. Well, those were more associations than friendships but, I noticed I was able to connect or bond with people in the school environment that I would converse with often.

Broomes said,

From the friends I have made not only my school mates but I am also friends with faculty and staff... Since I attended TTU my personality has truly matured and grown to one I thought I would have never seen. I have become more outgoing; I have enhanced my public speaking and I believe this was brought about by the family at the University. They believed in seeing the best of our potential. I have

made friends and many relationships for a lifetime this has made my experience and very momentous one.

Morales, who works on campus said, “I have made some acquaintances but not in class. It has been more work related.” On the other hand, Negron who also works on campus, said,

As a student, relationships are made by working together with other students on student projects, homework assignments, exam preparations, etc. In doing so, I build upon these relationships enabling myself to have the support and network mechanism in place for future opportunities.

Combs, who works in facilities at TTU, stated,

It is very easy for me to make friends. People always come by and ask me things and I may not know the answer but in about a couple of days, they become my friend. I have a lot of professors that are friends. They all like me. When new ones come in I set them up in their office. I hang pictures, help them with their desks.

Overall students reported an ability to easily make friends with students and that they had positive experiences with faculty. Some even reported that TTU promoted a “family” atmosphere. The building of friendships with faculty and students reported in this study seemed to promote retention at TTU.

Accelerated Learning

This third finding reports that accelerated learning was a main reason for attendance at TTU. Seven students reported that accelerated learning was important to them because they wanted to complete college quickly. Condensed learning provided students with an opportunity to attend college, while also attending to other life

responsibilities. Three students reported that they did not like the accelerated learning format.

TTU's general advertising documents, as well as programs of study, admissions and financial aid documents all contain the term "accelerated learning or accelerated flexibility." In general, students emphasized the importance of accelerated learning in their decision to attend TTU and their reasons for having a positive experience at TTU. Furthermore, given some of the males' uncertainty about attending and low expectations about college success, the allure of a shortened degree path was appealing.

Ogden said, "the accelerated sessions are useful for a professional who has little time to go to class." However, he also acknowledged that one needed to be dedicated to be successful at this pace: "If you are motivated then you can get to your goal of completing your degree much faster." Archer said, "Yes [I would choose to attend again] because they let you get out of here faster." Masters and Bartlet, who worked in the technology field and came to TTU because it came highly recommended by several of their coworkers, echoed each other's words in referring to friends who had recommended TTU specifically because of "the pace at which you are able to finish." Casas reiterated the advertised "3 years to degree completion," that is described in admissions documentation and in most TTU advertisements. Casas reported, "[TTU] advertised that I could take 3 years." Bartlet agreed, "If students keep up with the program, they can finish in a fraction of the time compared to other universities. I did a 4-year degree in exactly 2 years, which would be been difficult at best in a state school." Porter provided a specific example of how the accelerated pace combined with the availability of courses helped him achieve his goals:

I believe that I would choose to attend this university again mainly due to the 8-week accelerated courses. I have attended another university that was on a sort of circular schedule, and I didn't like it. I failed Accounting 1 due to personal issues and my cohorts moved on to Accounting 2. I wasn't able to take Accounting 1 until it came around again almost 6 months later! With TTU I can take at least four classes during the semester and concentrate on two at a time (two per each session A & B); instead of trying to study for four midterm exams all during the same week.

However, in contrast, another student (Campbell) who had dropped out of TTU, complained that there were too few classes from which to choose. Carlton, a student whose initial decision to attend TTU was because he wanted to be far away from home, complained that the classes felt too rushed: "Sometimes the classes are rushed too much and some are completely useless. Like Composition 100 and there is no testing out." Myers felt that the classes ended up being "too cut and dried," and he felt that he matured more after leaving college, presumably because the controlled university environment stifled his independence. Another student (Casas) referred to the quick turnaround in admissions: "I took the test and started immediately. That made me happy."

Despite the importance that students attached to the accelerated learning feature at TTU, one of the faculty (Professor Broomes) thought that the overall higher educational climate was transitioning away from one in which students dedicated full-time attention to their university years to an academic climate in which students attended part-time and, consequently, had lower expectations about the speed at which they could finish:

Less and less mentioned—they like the fact that they can finish school earlier than a traditional college, I hear about it less and less because more and more of them are getting comfortable in going to school part-time so they've shied away from that nine terms I'm done.

He elaborated,

Actually, I'm beginning to think they are getting comfortable with the school setting. When I was at school at TTU I never got comfortable because I just wanted to finish but I was an older person—I started at 28. They are not so eager to get out like I was—they are comfortable at home or comfortable with the job they're doing right now but it's amazing that more of them are shying away from saying that I can graduate before my 4 years.

A couple of students mentioned dissatisfaction with the accelerated learning, as they were not able to finish in the anticipated timeframe and felt this was a failure of the academic advisors at TTU. Casas said he only finished after 3 years because he “pushed and pushed.” He reported, “I was supposed to graduate last October but there was a bunch of misunderstanding with classes and everything. I didn't have a good experience at all.” Levy explained that he felt the staff let him down in their advising:

I was advised to take my time when I started the university and get adjusted to the workload. Later I was told because I started part-time and was not able to complete my degree in three to four years, I was viewed by the administration as one who did not achieve sufficient academic progress.

Other students, Morales and Soames, also mentioned dissatisfaction with the shorter duration of the courses:

Morales said, “I don’t like that all classes are 8 weeks long. You cannot learn all the materials for a class in 8 weeks.”

Soames said, “In a way, but some classes go by too fast. I started when they offered classes in 15 weeks but now they offer classes in 8 weeks only. I prefer 15 weeks... The courses are too fast—but we have to get out in 3 years.”

Carlton described the classes as “rushed too much,” and Bartlet attributed the push for online classes to the emphasis on accelerated learning. He disliked online classes because he missed the personal engagement in the classroom environment: “The major issue that I have had was being forced to take online classes to complete my degree in the least amount of time. I prefer learning and the interaction with professors.”

Overall students reported both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with accelerated learning. Many seemed to believe that they got what was described in the literature and others seemed to feel that they felt “rushed” or they didn’t get what they expected. One student reported he stopped out because of accelerated learning. The accelerated learning method may prove to, in most cases, promote retention and in some cases impede retention of this student population.

Hands-on Learning and Application to the Real World

This fourth finding demonstrates that students wanted hands-on learning and application to the real world. Ten students used the term “Hands-on Learning” and “Real World” and reported that they were able to apply hands-on learning to real world applications and three students were able to provide more specific language in their explanations.

TTU documents, such as career services information, admissions and programs of study, all used the phrase hands-on and real world often. The researcher observed many students carrying around and using laptop computers in the cafeteria, hallways, and sitting together in groups using their laptops. Students used the specific TTU language hands-on and real world and were able to relate it to their receptiveness to hands-on learning that many of them experienced in their classes. Students discussed how their learning experiences translated into practice in their everyday lives and in some cases were able to relate concrete examples of hands-on and real world applications. However, in many cases, even when probed, students were only able to provide vague examples, and they did not necessarily conceptualize this as a problem.

Porter stated,

I learned parsing, and all kinds of cool things that I learned in a class that taught me how to use the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. I learned about the various types of managing styles and I am able to recognize them in my current managers. This helps my stress level. I learned a better understanding of business and what drives it. I am able to focus on the company's mission and my personal mission to help others... I find myself still using what I've learned in class on a daily basis.

Myers said, "I didn't have much application. I felt like it was busy work to do it just to do it." On real world application, Morales said, "Dealing with the stress of the classes has helped me deal with stress at work." Ogden expressed similar sentiment,

I used what I learned from a couple of classes in my professional life.

Organization and Behavior taught me how to recognize the different styles and personalities that are a part of an organization; it also taught you how to be an

effective leader. Also in my compensation class, it taught me how to recognize value and worth of a job, it not only focused on financial benefits, but also on the other non-monetary benefits that are available to employees.

Another real world application example comes from Broomes, who said;

One of the major things that I have learned in school that I have utilized both in my personal and professional life was, public speaking. Being an international student with an accent my public speaking was not the best, I was always told to enunciate and articulate my words when I was communicating. I have enhanced my speaking to the point where I am able to speak to anyone and any size crowd, and as we know public speaking is nerve wrecking. When we do ‘marketing’ for the university I use my skills that I have learned in any type setting pertaining to marketing or anything that was work related.

Gonzalez, who chose to attend TTU on Central Campus, even though he was born and raised in South Campus, and Negrón, who dropped out of a community college and continued his education at TTU, both provided specific examples of hands-on and real world applications. Gonzalez explained that he used classroom experience on job interviews: “I used my experience in the classroom on job interviews. I can talk about programs like C++, C sharp and Java. I used 3D modeling or I can even in my own writing. I’ve incorporated what they’ve taught me.” Negrón, provided a concrete example of real world and hands-on application:

In taking my management courses, I have learned of protocols and procedures that have allowed me to improve in my professional life. I just did an online discussion where I spoke about the S.W.A.T. analysis. This procedure is used to

see how you can improve on a system within the organization as well as, the organization as a whole. It is looking at the strengths, weaknesses, assets, and threats. This can be used in your personal life as well as in your future endeavors (job research, interviews).

Levy and Bartlet talked about the real world application of their program of study, Project Management. Levy said,

I especially enjoyed project management because it allowed me to do a lot of the things I enjoyed doing. So it's not surprising that the lessons I learned in project management were immediately applied to my life outside of school. As one of the leaders of the drama ministry at my church I am responsible for setting the schedule and organizing events that will result in a successful production. In my project management class I learned how to organize events based on time, resource and scope or perspective. I was able to apply that immediately to my next drama production. Schedules were organized based on the best allocation of resources, and creating a critical path with more defined timelines than we were accustomed to working with in the past. We were able to broaden the scope of production by dividing functions more appropriately to cover more ground in less time. It was very fulfilling to be able to use the project management professor as a resource and use my drama production as a project towards a grade in class... I also remember how fascinated I was, with applying critical thinking to my job. I worked on the phones and each call offered an opportunity to make quick decisions, usually for people who are in uncomfortable situations. The challenge is to use our expertise to come to the least costly resolution for the problem. I

remember applying the concepts I learned about identifying the real problem rather than the most urgent, to make sounder less costly decisions.

Bartlet said,

I have found that many of the skills learned in my Project Management Class have translated over into my job as a street team coordinator. I am given the opportunity to coordinate and executive plans related to various projects. I recently worked on any event called her world which highlighted professional women in business.

Professor Jones described a real world application in his interaction with a student: About a week ago a student came to me to help write a business letter concerning his financial aid—it was not a topic that we had discussed—I had him for developmental English and we hadn't covered business writing. He wanted to know about formatting and structure of the letter.

Professor Broomes is a developmental education instructor at TTU. He stated that Students tell me all the time about using everything from English to apply to any one of the technology courses that are offered. The hands-on nature of the subject matter helps them to be able to demonstrate what they know almost immediately upon finished a class.

Perez said, “I used the skills I learned in the English classes to help out friends and family with their assignments.”

Although Combs was not able to relate the things he learned to his current career, he said, “But it is helping me in my everyday life. I actually started a business when I was in Central Campus, a construction business, handyman business. There was no work.”

Campbell said that he “learned a lot of short cuts in computer literacy using the applications.” Similarly Carlton said, “When I interview I can use the jargon for different programming language.” Relating to online classes and real world application, Perez stated, “One of my online classes was one about cinema and because of it I am a bit more analytical about movies that I watch to make sure their stories are coherent enough to recommend it to friends.” Casas said that his resume writing class taught him how to present himself. Broomes described his journey based on his TTU experiences.

When attending or going into any new thing we do expect something of interest to us, however we learn so much more than we actually expect... I learned so much more. From leadership, friendship, professionalism and so much more, these simple things have made me who I am which has truly been a beneficial in my growth into adulthood...

Canceco, who transferred in his freshman year from TTU to a culinary arts Institution, stated,

I only learned the basics so I can't really go into detail but math and English helped me in culinary school and computer literacy taught me how to use Microsoft and Power Point presentations. I use the PowerPoint presentation on some of my projects that I did in culinary arts.

Soames and Watson spoke in general terms. Soames said, “I can speak what I know and I don't feel lost. I have no interviews yet. I graduate in February.” Watson stated, “I just use basic skills and it helps me to think more. Critical thinking helped me develop a conscience framework.”

Overall students reported satisfaction with hands-on learning and application to the real world. They believe that they were able to apply what they learned to the real world. Most of the examples reported by students were general although there were a few students who were able to provide specificity in their examples. The students in the study described effective retention strategies in this area.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the study and Chapter 5 presents a discussion of implication of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter includes a discussion of the implication of the findings, and conclusions and some recommendations for further research.

Summary of Study

This study examined the expectations of African American and Hispanic males in a for-profit university (TTU). This study specifically explored student perception of the retention efforts of faculty, staff, policies, procedures, and services within the institutional environment. It further examined how these experiences promoted or impeded the African American and Hispanic male's persistence to graduation.

Minority students are choosing to attend private, for-profit higher education institutions in greater numbers. Farrell (2003) and Ruch (2003) contended that the main reason for this rise in attendance is the responsiveness of the for-profits to minority students' needs. According to Collison (1998), minority males choose these institutions because they want more practical education in a shorter time than that offered by traditional 4-year institutions. Ruch maintained that the reason these institutions attract minority students is because they provide convenient schedules and an engaging curriculum with an emphasis on career launching. Braxton et al. (2004) offered propositions for four areas of concern for commuter students as a basis for the development of the theory to account for student departure from commuter colleges and universities: (a) economic, the student's cost of attending a 4-year, for-profit, commuter

college/university; (b) organizational structure and behavior; (c) psychological, motivation, persistence; and (d) sociological support for others.

According to Floyd (2005) and Ruch (2003), for-profit institutions or proprietary institutions, as they are sometimes known, are closed institutions. TTU is just such a university. Perceptions of African American and Hispanic male students from a major for-profit commuter university will provide important insights into what helps and hinders their retention. Cuyjet (2006) cited a need for qualitative research that addresses insight from the men themselves regarding their issues and challenges and how they address them in contemporary times. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effective and ineffective retention strategies of undergraduate programs from the perspective of African American and Hispanic males in one for-profit commuter institution in the Southeastern United States. This study was used to answer the following research question:

What are the perceptions of African American and Hispanic male commuter students, effective and ineffective retention strategies of the faculty, administration and staff in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

Four additional sub-questions were:

1. What are the economic considerations of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
2. What are the organizational structure and behaviors in place in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?
3. What are the motivations and persistence characteristics of African American and Hispanic male students in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

4. How does the support of others influence an African American and Hispanic male student in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?

The goal of this research was to gain an understanding of how African American and Hispanic male students perceive effective and ineffective retention efforts at a major for-profit commuter university. A qualitative case study design was used. A purposeful sample of 19 students from TTU who were currently enrolled, had stopped attending, dropped out, or graduated and 2 faculty members was selected for this study. Students were recruited from the South and Central campuses and faculty were recruited from the South campus of TTU.

Multiple data were collected through in-depth one-on-one interviews, observations, and document analysis. The researcher interviewed each participant for approximately 1 hour, using a standardized interview guide. The researcher observed several locations where students congregated such as the cafeteria, tutoring lab, financial aid office and admissions office. The data were coded using ATLAS.ti software application. The researcher reviewed the coded data from students and faculty, observation field notes, and documentation from TTU. Triangulation (Yin, 2003) was used to validate data and themes emerged from the coded data. As themes emerged and categories became apparent, the researcher was able to determine the findings of the study.

Discussion and Implication of Findings

Four findings that provided answers to the research questions and sub-questions emerged from the research: (a) students expressed financial concerns and concerns about mounting personal debt, (b) students expressed a need for academic and student friendly

environment (c) students reported one of the main reasons for attendance at TTU was to receive accelerated learning, and (d) students reported they wanted hands-on learning and application to the real world.

Financial Concerns

Students expressed concerns about ineffective financial aid services and overall personal debt accumulation. This finding coincides with Braxton et al.'s (2004) economic proposition as it relates to student finance. As Braxton et al. explained, the lower the cost of college attendance incurred by students, the greater their likelihood of persisting in college. Braxton et al. believed that students of color are particularly vulnerable to financial constraints. Many students voiced concerns about their ability to pay loans after graduating from TTU. Their major concern was the amount of money for which they had to apply and that scholarships and grants were not readily available to them for various reasons. Students said, "I rack up mountain of debt," and "My education is totally funded by private student loans; I was never able to qualify for aid." This finding also coincides with Cabrera et al.'s (1992) research. Receiving financial aid is also an important factor in college persistence among low SES students (Cabrera et al., 1990; Murdock, 1987; Nora et al., 2003; Nora & Wedham, 1991), even though researchers disagree about the impact grants and work-study awards have on persistence as compared to loans (Cabrera et al., 1992). Statements from students in this study suggest that the fear of increasing loans could cause a lack of persistence. More effective retention strategies need to be employed in this area.

Unclear information about loans and other financial aid was another concern voiced by students. When asked about knowledge and usage of services at TTU, most students reported that they used financial aid services although many reported that they were dissatisfied with this particular service. Students described negative interactions, bad customer service, and misleading information from the financial aid office staff.

This misleading information may be attributed to the “contracting out” of financial aid services. During the observation of the financial aid office at the Central Campus TTU location, a student complained about being given unclear information during a customer-service telephone call. The student complained that she could not understand the individual on the phone call and did not understand the information that was given to her by the customer-service person. The financial aid receptionist explained that it was because the services were being routed to a call center situated in another country. The contracting out to another country may account for misunderstanding of information from customer service personnel to students.

Students’ concern about incurring large amount of debt to finance their education may be attributed to their unrealistic expectations of the cost of education. A specific example was given by Instructor Jones who suggested that higher education may not have been in their thoughts during their high school years. This suggests that there should be opportunities in educating minorities early on about the true cost of education. This might be a more effective retention strategy for minority male students.

In summary, concerns about cost of education, financial aid services and concerns about overall debt accumulation, were all major concerns for most of the

students in the study. Braxton et al. (2004), Wilson (1996), Cabrera et al. (1990) and Tinto (1975) all cited economic/financial reasons for student departure. Although TTU's financial aid documents clearly describe the costs associated with each program of study, both Hispanic and African American students alike reported finances as a major concern and some determined that it was a reason to leave TTU. Students in this study perceived that financial aid services and personal debt accumulation proves to be a hindrance to their retention.

Academic and Student Friendly Environment

This finding emphasized the need for social interaction. Eighteen of the 19 students described interaction with other students in or outside of classes as friendly. This evidence supports the second part of Braxton et al.'s (2004) sociological proposition on retention:

As parents' educational level increases, the likelihood of student departure from commuter college or university decreases. Support from significant others for college attendance decreases the likelihood of student departure from a commuter college or university. The probability of student departure from a commuter college or university decreases for students who participate in communities of learning. The probability of student departure from a commuter college or university increases for students who engage in anticipatory socialization before entering college. (p. 10).

Students reported that they enjoyed working in groups and cited specific group experiences, that they became friendly with class mates both in and outside of the classroom. When asked about membership in campus clubs and organizations, almost all

of the students in the study reported that although they knew of clubs and organizations on campus for the most part, they did not participate. Integration to the campus environment has been measured in terms of informal friendships, contact with faculty, and participation in extracurricular activities (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Nora and Cabrera (1996) noted that even though academic performance was more influential in minority students' persistence, social experiences also contributed to these students re-enrollment in college. Over 50% of the students interviewed in the study were students who had dropped out of TTU or other institutions and had re-enrolled at TTU or other institutions.

Students reported that their interaction with faculty was positive. When students discussed relationships with faculty, both in and outside of the classroom, they used terms such as "friends," "friendships," and "family."

In summary, the need for a friendly environment and care and concern of faculty was reported as a positive experience by almost all students—African American and Hispanic alike. Braxton et al. (2004), Spradley (2001), Hurtado and Carter (1997), and Nora and Cabrera (1996) all emphasized the need for family support, social integration, and participation in extra curricula activities for minority and commuter students. Observations at both campuses found students sitting together in groups of combined African American and Hispanic students. Many were discussing class work; some were sitting together surrounding a laptop, watching Anime (Japanese animation cartoons). Almost all students in the study reported that they did not participate in extracurricular activities such as clubs and organizations, but they did report family social support, friendships with students in and outside of the classroom, group activities and positive association with faculty. In this area, the perception of students in this study

demonstrated a need for a friendly environment and care and concern of faculty describe effective retention strategies.

Accelerated Learning

This finding emphasizes the student's desire to be taught in an accelerated learning format. According to Collison (1998), minority males choose these (for-profit) institutions because they want more practical education in a shorter time than that offered by traditional 4-year institutions. Farrell (2003) and Ruch (2003) contended that the main reason for this rise in attendance is because of the responsiveness of the for-profits to minority students' needs.

In general, some students reported the importance of accelerated learning and expressed that it was a major reason for attendance at TTU although some reported that they did not like it. When discussing the organizational proposition, Braxton et al. (2004) stated that the more a student perceives that the institution is committed to the welfare of its students, the lower the likelihood of the student's departure. The more a student perceives that the institution exhibits institutional integrity, the lower the likelihood of the student's departure. Braxton et al.'s psychological proposition stated, motivation to graduate from college exerts a positive influence on student persistence. Motivation to make steady progress toward college completion also positively impacts student retention. Students on both campuses reported that they were able to receive accelerated learning although a few thought the pace did not allow them time to digest the course material. Students said that it "motivated" them toward their goal quicker because it "let them get out faster." One student reported that the "3 year degree completion in TTU advertisements" was the reason for enrolling at TTU. Another student reported that he

could “finish in a fraction of the time as it takes in other universities.” A few students stated the classes felt “rushed,” that the accelerated pace did not allow them to absorb the material. Students seem to be enticed to begin at an accelerated pace. On the subject of accelerated learning, Professor Broomes said that because students continue to take part-time course loads, they are not finishing at a faster pace.

Ruch (2003) noted that one reason why minority students choose for-profit institutions is based on faster rates completion. The responses of the students suggest that TTU allows the opportunity for accelerated learning, thereby allowing them to complete their education at a faster pace. Most of the students in this study view accelerated learning as a positive experience. This suggests that accelerated learning is a positive retention strategy in this for-profit, commuter institution.

In summary, a major reason for attendance at TTU was an ability to receive accelerated learning. Student reports were mixed between wanting accelerated learning and disliking it in this finding. One faculty member reported that he believed students were not finishing any faster because the majority of students were part-time students. Farrell (2003), Ruch (2003), and Collison (1998) all contended that the reason for the rise in attendance of minorities in for-profit institutions is because of the responsiveness to the needs of this population. Braxton et al.’s (2004) organizational proposition stated that the more a student perceives that the institution is committed to the welfare of its students, the lower the likelihood of the student’s departure. In this area, the perceptions of students in the study pertaining to the institution’s ability to provide accelerated learning were mixed and therefore may or may not be an effective retention strategy.

Hands-on Learning and Application to the Real World

This finding (as with the previous finding) demonstrates that students directly relate to descriptions and information published in TTU's documents and advertisement.

The terms hands-on and real world are littered throughout admission and career documents. Farrell (2003), Ruch (2003), and Collison (1998) contended that the main reason for this rise in attendance (in for-profit institutions) is because of the responsiveness of the for-profits to minority students' needs. Ruch further maintained that the reason these institutions attract minority students is that they provide convenient schedules and an engaging curriculum with an emphasis on career launching. This finding also coincides with Braxton et al.'s (2004) organizational proposition. Students were able to describe in broad terms how they were able to translate hands-on and real world learning from the classroom to their personal or professional lives. Students reported they were able to apply computer concepts learned in the classroom to their personal and professional life; they reported they were able to apply business concepts taught to their professional life, and they reported an ability to manage stress because of concepts taught in various courses. However, very few were able to describe specific examples of hands on, real world applications. One student provided a specific example. He stated, "I used my experience in the classroom on job interviews. I can talk about programs like C++, C sharp and Java."

In summary, students reported they wanted hands on learning and application to the real world. Almost all students, both Hispanic and African American students alike, perceived that they received hands-on applications to the real world. Although most of the students in the study were not able to offer specific examples of hands-on application

to the real world, they were able to describe hands on application in general. In regard to this area, the student's perception is that the institution is able to deliver hands-on application to the real world and that it is an effective retention strategy.

Summary of Research Question and Sub-questions

The research question and four sub-questions were answered in the four research findings. The first research sub-question was answered in Finding 1. Major economic concerns expressed by students were about cost of education, financial aid services and overall debt accumulation. The second research sub-question was answered in Finding 3. Students reported that a major reason for attendance at TTU was an ability to receive accelerated learning, and Finding 4, students reported they wanted hands-on learning and application to the real world. The third research sub-question was answered in Finding 2. Students expressed a need for a friendly environment, care and concern of faculty. And finally research sub-question 4 was answered by Finding 2. Students expressed a need for a friendly environment and care and concern of faculty. Each finding in this study is related to important implications not just for for-profit higher education institutions but for all higher education institutions to explore effective and ineffective retention strategies.

Conclusions

Several general conclusions can be drawn from the finding in this study. It is extremely important for financial aid staff and administration to be proactive and responsive to this population in for-profit institution and higher education institutions in general. Specifically, addressing this student population's concerns about amassing large amounts of debt can be an effective retention strategy. One student in the study reported that this

was the reason for leaving college. Second, almost all of the students reported that they want interaction/friendships with students in and outside of the classroom and with faculty. On the other hand, they reported that they do not want to be a part of a club or organization. Understanding their need for a friendly classroom and college environment and further understanding that they do not want to be involved with clubs and organizations will provide an excellent retention strategy. Third, almost all of this student population expressed the need for accelerated learning. TTU's admissions, financial aid, and career documents are filled with the term accelerated learning. Farrell (2003), Ruch (2003), and Collison (1998) all contended that the main reason for this rise in attendance (in for-profit institutions) is responsiveness that for-profits give to minority students' needs. The alignment of the institution's course delivery method and the needs of the students can lead to better retention. Fourth, this student population verbalized that they want hands-on applications to the real world. Almost all students were not able to describe specific examples of hands-on application to the real world. Although they were not able to offer specific examples, they perceived that TTU was offering them hands-on application to the real world. This for-profit university seems to be responding to the needs of this student population. Thus, the organizations alignment with student needs helps to retain students.

Fifth, an area that was not as apparent initially in the study was that out of the 19 total in this student population, there were more African American students who stopped/dropped out than there was Hispanic. There were 6 African Americans, and 1 Bahamian student who stopped/dropped out of TTU and only 3 Hispanics students who stopped out of TTU. The difference between African American and Hispanic student

stop/drop outs is the one area in the study that showed a difference between African American and Hispanic students. Regarding African American male student stop outs, there seems to be positive trends in this area as they seem to eventually return to higher education institutions. Spradley (2001.) reported:

Understanding that many African American male students drop out, and that they eventually do come back to the institution will provide better overall retention strategies. There are several interventions that can help to increase adult African American male success: (a) peer interactions provide needed social integration into the academic experience; (b) facilitative learning environments with faculty who nurture accumulated learning, contribute to knowledge acquisition, and encourage the application of learning to improve social surroundings are also critical to success; (c) being aware of the distinctive extracurricular experiences that enrich learning and provide application opportunities is important for faculty; and lastly, (d) providing insightful information to educators on best practices in adult learning, including the obstacles adults encounter on numerous levels (i.e., interpersonal, personal, organizational) is a key step toward inclusive educational transformation (Spradley, 2001, p.3).

Recommendations for Future Research

Overall the majority of the students interviewed in this study demonstrated positive perceptions of why Hispanic and African American males stay in undergraduate programs at TTU, a major for-profit commuter university and what motivates them to leave before graduation. There was no real difference in responses between Hispanic and African American male students from both campuses, South and Central. There was only

one area, financial aid, where students demonstrated negative perceptions. Braxton et al.'s (2004) economic, sociological, organizational, and psychological concerns were addressed in the responses in this study. Farrell (2003), Ruch (2003) and Collison (1998) all contended that the main reason for this rise in attendance (in for-profit institutions) is that these institutions are responsive to minority students' needs. Although attendance is on the rise at these institutions, do these institutions understand that retention will rise if they respond to the economic, sociological, organizational and psychological needs of this student population? Specifically, this study shows that these students perceive that TTU responds, to some degree, to their sociological, organizational and psychological needs, but did not show that students perceive that TTU was responsive to their economic needs. Further research is needed in the area of economic/financial aid areas in for-profit, commuter higher education institutions. In addition, more in-depth research is needed to examine career-oriented curriculum and the student's ability to demonstrate application to "real world."

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Consent Form

Title of Research Study: How does a proprietary university retain minority male students: From the minority male student perspective?

Investigators: Carole Comarcho (Doctoral Student)
Florida Atlantic University
Department of Higher Education Leadership

Dr. Robert Shockley (Faculty)
Florida Atlantic University
Department of Higher Education Leadership

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate how this university meets the needs of minority male students. The goal is to identify how to help minority male students stay in college. This research should provide insight for educators so that they can develop or continue the educational environment that will keep minority male students engaged in college so that they will complete their education.

Procedures: Your participation in this study will involve an interview of approximately 15 minutes. If you agree to participate you must read and sign the written consent form. The written consent form authorizes the interview and tape recording of the interview and you have the right to decline either or both. If you agree to either or both, check the appropriate box and sign the consent form. You will be asked questions about factors that can help minority males stay in school. The interview audio-tapes will be coded so not one will know the name of the person interviewed. After the interview is completed, the research will offer the student a free tee-shirt for participation. The researcher will transcribe the tape and you have the right to read the transcriptions and you may revise or delete items within the transcriptions if desired. The tapes and the transcriptions will be kept in a locked file cabinet for one year after the study and then destroyed. You may request a copy of the completed study.

Risks: The risks involved in study are minimal and participation is totally voluntary.

Benefits: The benefits of this study will apply to the participants involved and to society, especially the higher education community. You as the interviewee will have the opportunity to contribute your perceptions that will help to add to the knowledge that only you can share. The research will benefit the researcher by ascertaining from the study how to meet the needs of minority male students. Society can also benefit from this study through the identification of needs to help minority males stay in college and complete their education.

Participant Initials _____

Data Collection of Storage: All records from this study will be kept confidential and only the people working on the study will see your information unless required by law. The audio tapes and transcriptions will be kept in a locked cabinet and destroyed one year after the study is complete.

Contact Information: For related problems or questions regarding your rights as a subject, the Office of Sponsored Research at Florida Atlantic University can be contacted at (561) 297-2310. For other questions about the study, you should call the principal investigator, Dr. Robert Shockley at (561) 297-3550.

Consent Statement: I have read the information regarding this study. All of the questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years or age or over and I am freely consenting to participate in the study and I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form. I am aware that I can request and receive a copy of the final results of this study.

Check one or box:

I agree to be interviewed

I agree to be tape recorded

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

IRB
Approval Date: 5/15/08
Initials: RS
Expiration Date: 5/14/09

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide Students

Interview Guide Students

Name of interviewer: Carole Comarcho

Name of interviewee: _____

Place: University, South Campus

Date: _____

Starting Time: _____

Ending Time: _____

Years in College: _____

Introduction: Hello. Thank you for agreeing to serve as a participant in this study. As I mentioned when we set up the interview, I am a student in the College of Education conducting this study as a part of a class project. The research question I am trying to answer is, "What is the student perspective of the retention efforts of this University?" Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and I will be using pseudonyms in my final report. With your permission, I would like to tape this interview. Is that okay? This interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

Interview Questions:

1. Thinking back to when you first made the decision to apply to this University, What prompted you to want to enroll?
2. Thinking back to the same time: What were your expectations when you started here? **Probe:** What do you/did you think the University will/would do for you?
3. What campus activities have you attended? Do you belong to a club or organization on campus?
4. Tell me about new friends or relationships that have since becoming enrolled at this campus?
5. How do you feel the University did or did not fulfill your expectations? **Probe:** What are your perceptions of the University now?
6. Tell me a story of a time you utilized something you learned in class in your personal and/or professional life. **Possible Probes:** Give me another example. Can you be more specific?
7. What do you know about the services available to you as a student at this University? **Possible Probes:** How have you used these services? What was your experience like with these services?

8. What is/was your relationship like with the professors? **Possible Probes:** Can you tell me a specific story about how a professor helped you or stopped you from doing well in your University goals? How about your relationship with your dean or advisor?
9. How important do you think it is to have a University Degree today?
10. Looking back would you choose to attend this University if given the choice again?
11. You identified yourself as _____ do you think it is difficult for _____ to keep on attending this university? Why or why not?
12. What advice would you give to young men who want to attend or are attending this university?
13. Looking back to when you first thought about going to college, how were you going to fund your education?
14. How do you fund your education now?

Closing: Thank you for your time today. Again, all of your responses will be kept confidential. Would you mind if I contact you should I need to ask any follow up questions?

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide Faculty/Staff

Interview Guide Faculty/Staff

Name of interviewer: Carole Comarcho

Name of interviewee: _____

Place: University, South Campus

Date: _____

Starting Time: _____

Ending Time: _____

Years in College: _____

Introduction: Hello. Thank you for agreeing to serve as a participant in this study. As I mentioned when we set up the interview, I am a student in the College of Education conducting this study as a part of a class project. The research question I am trying to answer is, "What is your perspective of the retention efforts of this University toward African American and Hispanic male students?" Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and I will be using pseudonyms in my final report. With your permission, I would like to tape this interview. Is that okay? This interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

Interview Questions:

1. In your experience, when this student population first makes the decision to apply to this University, what prompted them to want to enroll?
2. What campus activities do this student population attend? Do they belong to a club or organization on campus?
3. Tell me about your observations of how this student population makes new friends or relationships since becoming enrolled at this campus?
4. How do you feel the University did or did not fulfill their expectations?
5. Tell me a story of a time you observed student/students from this population utilize something they learned in class or in their personal and/or professional life.
Possible Probes: Give me another example. Can you be more specific?
6. What do they seem to know about the services available to them? Possible Probes: How have they used these services?
7. What is/was your relationship like with this student population?

8. How important do you think it is for this student population to have a University Degree today?
9. Do you believe that they would you choose to attend this University if given the choice again? Why or why not?
10. What advice would you give to young minority men who want to attend or are attending this university?
11. In your experience, how do these student fund their education?

Closing: Thank you for your time today. Again, all of your responses will be kept confidential. Would you mind if I contact you should I need to ask any follow up questions?

APPENDIX D

Guidelines for Observation

Guidelines for Observation

The researcher will conduct the observation as an observer spending thirty minutes in the designated student area. Should the opportunity present itself to be a participant observer, the researcher may partake in this interaction. Furthermore, should clarification be necessary if questions arise, the researcher may approach subjects in the student center taking care not to disturb the integrity of the observation.

The researcher will keep detailed notes of all of the goings on from the environment to the individual students to the interaction among students. Keeping in mind the research question, the researcher will want to attempt to draw a connection between the center and its contribution to the achievement of the student's academic goals. While taking field notes, the researcher will not be limited to, but will attempt to consider all of the following:

1. Description of the layout and details of the area.
 - a. Are students coming and going?
 - b. What is the environment?
 - i. Sounds, noise, lights, fixtures
 - ii. Art, signage, accessibility
 - iii. School spirit
2. Who is in the area?
 - a. Demographics of the students?
 - b. How long do they stay?
 - c. What are they doing?
 - d. Are faculty & staff at the center?
 - e. Do they interact with the students?
3. What are the students discussing?
 - a. What are their priorities?
 - b. Academics
 - c. Social
 - d. Networking
 - i. How are the students grouped together?
 - ii. Separated by demographic, degree program, or other?
 - e. Professors
 - f. Are discussions positive or negative in content and tone?
4. What items are the students carrying?
 - a. Do the books assist the observer in determining the degree program of the subject?

APPENDIX E

Data Matrix of Research Questions

Data Matrix of Research Questions

Research Question	Observation	Documents
1. What are the economic considerations of an African American and Hispanic male student in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?	Financial Aid reception (both campuses)	Undergraduate application, admissions material, Financial Aid application documents/instructions.
2. What are the organizational structure and behaviors in place in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?	Admissions area, Financial Aid Office reception area, Student Cafeteria, and Student game room (both campuses)	Undergraduate application, admissions material, Financial Aid application documents/instructions, student life flyers and material. Clubs and organization material
3. What are the motivations and persistence characteristics of an African American and Hispanic male student in a 4-year for-profit commuter undergraduate institution?	Hallways outside of classrooms. Admissions area, tutoring center (both campuses)	Human Resource material, employer materials, classroom observations, faculty manuals, syllabi. University website.

Research Question	Observation	Documents
4. Thinking back to when you first made the decision to apply to this University, What prompted you to want to enroll?	Admission office (both campuses)	Undergraduate application, admissions material, Financial Aid application documents
5. Thinking back to the same time: What were your expectations when you started here? Probe: What do you/did you think the University will/would do for you?	Admissions office (both campuses)	Undergraduate application, admissions material, Financial Aid application
6. What campus activities have you attended? Do you belong to a club or organization on campus?	Game room, Cafeteria	Student life flyers and material. Clubs and organization material
7. Tell me about new friends or relationships that have since becoming enrolled at this campus?	Cafeteria, game room,	Admissions materials, student life flyers. Clubs and organization material

Research Question	Observation	Documents
<p>8. How do you feel the University did or did not fulfill your expectations? Probe: What are your perceptions of the University now?</p>		Admissions, Financial Aid, program of study
<p>9. Tell me a story of a time you utilized something you learned in class in your personal and/or professional life. Possible Probes: Give me another example. Can you be more specific?</p>	Classroom observations (both campuses)	Program of study, syllabi

(table continues)

87

Interview Question	Observation	Documents
<p>10. What do you know about the services available to you as a student at this University? Possible Probes: How have you used these services? What was your experience like with these services?</p>	Hallways, Financial Aid office	Student Services material, Financial aid
<p>11. What is/was your relationship like with the professors? Possible Probes: Can you tell me a specific story about how a professor helped you or stopped you from doing well in your University goals? How about your relationship with your dean or advisor?</p>	Classroom observations, cafeteria	Program of study, syllabi

Interview Question	Observation	Documents
12. How important do you think it is to have a University Degree today?		Admissions material
13. Looking back would you choose to attend this University if given the choice again?		
14. You identified yourself as _____ do you think it is difficult for _____ to keep on attending this university? Why or why not?	Game room, cafeteria	Admissions material/Website
15. What advice would you give to young men who want to attend or are attending this university?	Cafeteria, Game room	Admission material/Website

APPENDIX F

List of Documents

List of Documents

1. TTU Admissions Application – Hard copy
2. TTU Admissions documents – Web documents
3. TTU Financial Aid Application – Web documents
4. TTU Financial Aid and Scholarship documents – Hardcopy
5. TTU Catalog 2009
6. TTU Catalog 2008
7. TTU Career Services Application – Web documents
8. TTU Programs of Study – Web documents
9. Tutoring Center Flyer – Hard copy
10. Student Affairs Web documents
11. Student Activities/Clubs and Organizations – Hard copy
12. TTU Mission Statement

REFERENCES

- A large black-white scoring gap persists on the SAT. (2006). *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.jbhe.com/features/53_SAT.html
- Astin, W. & Oseguera, L.(2004). *The Declining "Equity" of American Higher Education: The Review of Higher Education - Volume 27, Number 3, Spring 2004*, pp. 321-341
- Arbona, C., & Nora, A. (2004). Predicting college attainment of Hispanic students: Individual, institutional, and environmental factors. *Review of Higher Education*, 30, 247-270.
- Bean, J.P., & Metzner, B.S. (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research*, 55, 435-540.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction: In education, society and culture*. London: Sage.
- Braxton, J.M., Hirschy, A.S., & McClendon, S. A. (2004). Understanding and reducing college student departure. *The Review of Higher Education*, 12, 349-374
- Cabrera, A.F., Castaneda, M.B., & Nora, A. (1992). The role of finances in the persistence process: A structural model. *Research in Higher Education*, 33, 571-593.
- Cabrera, A.F., Stampen, J.O., & Hansen, L. (1990). Exploring the effects of ability to pay on persistence in college. *The Review of Higher Education*, 13, 303-336.

- Castellanos, J., & Jones, L. (Eds.). (2003). *The majority in the minority: Expanding the representation of Latina/o faculty, administrators and students in higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Cohen, A., M. (1998). *The shaping of american higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Coley, R. (2001). *Differences in the gender gap: Comparisons across racial/ethnic groups in education and work*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center.
- Collison, M. (1998). Proprietary preference—For-profit colleges. *Black Issues in Higher Education*. Retrieved June 17, 2008, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_n10_v15/ai_21117465
- Cuyjet, M. (2006). *African American men in college*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley
- Gallien, L.B., Jr., & Peterson, M.S. (Eds.) (2005). *Instructing and mentoring the African American college student: Strategies for success in higher education*. Boston: Pearson.
- Farrell, E. (2003) Minority enrollment at four year colleges, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 49(38), p. A35.
- Floyd, C.E. (2005). For profit degree-granting colleges: Who are these guys and what do they mean for students, traditional institutions, and public policy? In J.C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 539-89). Dordrecht, Germany: Kluwer.

- Foster, L.K. (2004) *For-profit postsecondary education institutions: Overview of accreditation and state and federal oversight*. Los Angeles: California Research Bureau, California State Library.
- Galindo, R., & Escamilla, K. (1995). A biographical perspective on Chicano educational success. *Urban Review*, 27(3), 1-29.
- Giroux, H. (1983) *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Bergin & Garvey, South Hadley, MA.
- Harvey, W.B. (2003). *Minorities in higher education: Twentieth annual status report 2002-2003*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Hilliard, A.G. (1997). *SBA: The reawakening of the African mind*. Gainesville, FL: Makare.
- Horn, L., & Nunez, A. (2000). *Mapping the road to college: First generation students' math track, planning strategies and context of support*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- Hurtado, S., & Carter, D.F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino college students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education*, 70, 324-345.
- Kuh, G., & Whitt, E. (1988). *The invisible tapestry*. College Station, TX: Association for the Study of Higher Education.
- Kuh, G.D., & Love, P. G., (2000) *Reworking the student departure puzzle*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- McCarron, G.P., & Inkelas, K.K. (2006). The gap between educational aspirations and attainment for first-generation college students and the role of parental involvement. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(5), 534-549.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Murdock, T.A. (1987). It isn't just about money: The effects of financial aid on student persistence. *Review of Higher Education*, 11(1), 75-101.
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (1996). Table 172-Total fall enrollment in institutions of higher education, by level, sex, age, and attendance status of students 1993. *Digest of Education Statistics 1996*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/d96/D96T172.html>
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2002). *The condition of education 2002*. (NCES 2002-025). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2003). *Status and trends in education of Blacks* (NCES 2003-034). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Nora, A., & Cabrera, A. F. (1996). The role of perceptions of prejudice and discrimination on the adjustment of minority students to college. *Journal of Higher Education*, 67(1), 119-148.
- Nora, A., Rendon, L. I., & Romero, E. J. (2003, July). *Theoretical consideration in the study of minority student retention in higher education*. Paper presented at a Noel Levitz Conference on Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education, Houston.

- Nora, A., & Wedham, E. (1991, April). *Off-campus experiences: The pull factors affecting freshman-year attrition on a commuter campus*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
- Nunez, A., & Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998). *First generation students: Undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Pascarella, E.T. (2006). How college affects students: Ten directions for future research. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(5), 508-520.
- Pascarella E.T., Pierson, C. T., Wolniak, G. C., & Terenzini, P. T. (1996). Experiences and outcomes of first generation students in Community Colleges. *Journal of College Student Development* , 44 p. 420.
- Pascarella E.T., Pierson, C. T., Wolniak, G. C., & Terenzini, P. T. (2004). First-generation college students: Additional evidence on college experiences and outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education*, 75, .508-520.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perna, L. (1997). *African American education databook. Volume I: Higher and adult education*. Fairfax, VA: Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute of the United Negro College Fund/UNCF.
- Rhodes, F.T. (2001). *The role of the American University*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Ruch, R.S. (2003). *Higher education: The rise of the for-profit university*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press Netherlands: Springer.

- Rudolph, F. (1990). *American college and university: A history*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Seidman, A. (2005). Ed., *College student retention, formula for student success*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Seidman, A. (Ed.). (2007). *Minority student retention. The best of the Journal of College Student Retention: Research, theory & practice*. New York: Baywood.
- Spradley, P. (2001). *Strategies for educating the adult black male in college*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464524)
- Tierney, W.G. (1999) Models of minority college-going and retention: Cultural integrity versus cultural suicide. *Journal of Negro Education*, 68(1), 1-7.
- Tinto, V. (1975) Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45(1), 89-125.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (2003) Learning better together. *Higher Education Monograph Series, No 2*. Syracuse, NY: Higher Education Program, Syracuse University.
- U. S. Census Bureau. (2000). Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/acs/population/projections>.
- Volkwein, J.F., & Cabrera, A. F. (1998). Who defaults on student loans? In R. Fossey & M. Bateman (Eds.), *Conditioning student to debt* (pp.105-125). New York: Teachers College Press.

Wilson, W.J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Knopf.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.