Comparison of Factors Contributing to the Retention of Minority Students at Two Different Types of Institutions: A Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

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Doctor of Education

By

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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

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The final copy of this dissertation has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above-mentioned discipline.
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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to compare factors that contributed to the retention of minority students at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Colleges and universities throughout the United States are faced with the task of making sure students successfully matriculate and graduate; when specifically looking at minority students this is even more of a challenge. In this study, the retention rate of the freshman to sophomore population of students at a PWI in the state of Georgia and an HSI in California was examined, specifically focused on minority students. The study included a review of current research and an analysis of data. Data collected from an online student survey and focus groups was used to determine what works, what does not work, and how these factors compare across the different types of institutions.

In the quantitative phase of this study, data were collected through online surveys. The survey was sent to ethnic minority students who were freshman in 2013 and returned to the institution in 2014. The questions were divided into three groups. The groups were individual/student level factors, institutional level factors, and social/external level factor. The topics that emerged from the surveys given at both institutions were similar. They were academic preparedness, self-motivation, professors, family, and friends.

In the qualitative phase of this study, students from the online survey were selected to participate in focus groups based on their survey responses. The discussions in the focus groups were developed from the topics that emerged from the survey results. From these topics, more specific themes were developed. Based on those themes, recommendations were made to assist universities with retaining minority students. Some recommendations dealt with ways to determine the motivation of students and their level of academic preparedness. Other
recommendations dealt with how professors, family, and friends play a role in student retention and success.

Keywords: Predominantly White Institution (PWI), Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Historically Black College or University (HBCU), Minority Serving Institution (MSI), institutional retention factors, individual/student retention factors, social and external retention factors, minority, retention rate, and emergent themes.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The population of the United States is becoming more ethnically diverse at an increasingly fast rate. In 2015, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population consisted of an estimated 321,414,820 people. This is 12,071,957 more than estimated in 2010 or a 1.04% change. Displayed in Table 1 are the estimated population percentages between the years 2000 and 2015. When comparing 2000 to 2015, Hispanics or Latinos represented the largest growth with an increase of 5.1%. When comparing the estimated populations of the other ethnic groups from 2000 to 2015, the population of Whites was estimated to be 77.1% which is an increase of 2.0% from 2000, but a 0.8% decrease from 2012; the population of Blacks was estimated to be 13.3% which is an increase of 1.0%; the population of American Indian and Alaskan Natives was estimated to be 1.2% which is an increase of 0.3%; the population of Asians was estimated to be 5.5% which is an increase of 1.9%; the population of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders was estimated to be 0.2% which is an increase of 0.1%; and the population of Hispanic or Latinos was 17.6% which is an increase of 5.1% (United States Census Bureau 2016).

As the population of the United States increases, the number of people pursuing a college education is increasing also. College enrollment is not only increasing, it is becoming more ethnically diverse. According to the United States Department of Education (2011), enrollment between 1987 and 1997 in degree granting institutions increased by 14%; and between 1997 to 2007 enrollment increased at a faster rate (26%), from 14.5 million to 18.2 million. In 2013-2014, the number of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions was 27,834,721. This is based on 7,146 institutions (National Center for Education Statistics 2016).
Table 1

*United States Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Estimated Percentage of Population by Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

United States Census Bureau 2016

With this increase, the percentage of U.S. college students who are considered minorities has been increasing. In 1976, 15.4% were minorities, compared to 32% in 2007. From 1996 to 2012, college enrollment among Hispanics ages 18 to 24 more than tripled (240% increase), outpacing increases among Blacks (72%) and Whites (12%) (Krogstad and Fry, 2014).

**Statement of Problem**

Although minority students are entering college at a higher rate than in previous years, they continue to leave at a higher rate than non-minority students. Data from the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange and Analysis at the University of Oklahoma (2011) for first-year retention rates of freshman cohorts from fall 2000 through fall 2009 shows that for all types of institutions, Whites were retained from the first to second year at a rate of 81.0%; African
Americans at a rate of 75.3%, Hispanics at a rate of 78.4%, and American Indians at a rate of 70.2%. Asians were retained at a rate of 87.2%, the highest rate of any ethnic group. The completion rates of students of color, especially African American and Hispanic students are less than that of White and Asian students (Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003).

Retention is an excellent indicator that an institution is meeting its goal of student satisfaction and success. “It is a measure of how much student growth and learning takes place, how valued and respected students feel on campus, and how effectively the campus delivers what students expect, need, and want” (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999, pp. 31-32). Levitz et al. (1999) coined the phrase “student centeredness” to explain the concept of how campuses are meeting the needs of students.

Swail, Redd, & Perna (2003) listed five factors in the retention of minority students and students in general. These factors are financial aid, recruitment and admissions, academic services, student services, and curriculum and instruction. Tinto (2004) suggests that academic preparedness, campus climate, commitment to educational goals and the institution, social and academic integration, and financial aid are key components of any retention model.

The purpose of this mixed method study was to investigate and compare the factors that contribute to the retention of minority students in higher education at two different types of institutions: a Predominately White Institution (PWI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What individual/student level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?
2. What institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

3. What social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

These questions were investigated and provided insight as to existing programs of the universities and recommended what, if any, additional programs and services needed to ensure the success of minority students.

**Definition of Terms**

1. Predominantly White Institution (PWI) – McDonald and Vrana (2007) define a PWI as an institution with a White enrollment rate that range from 56% to 80%.

2. Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) – The United States Department of Education (2013) defines a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) as an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution and has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application.

3. Historically Black College or University (HBCU) – The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) defines a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) as an institution established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and must satisfy Section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA); be legally authorized by the State in which it is located to be a junior or community college or provide an educational program for which it awards bachelor’s degrees; and be accredited or pre-accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.
4. Minority Serving Institution (MSI) – Hubbard and Stage (2009) classifies a Minority Serving Institution as any institution that is defined as a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh, and Leegwater (2005) include Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) in this classification.

5. Individual/student level factors – Jensen (2011) defines individual level factors as factors that relate to academic performance, attitudes and satisfaction.

6. Institutional level factors - Jensen (2011) defines institutional level factors as factors related to academic engagement, such as research activities, club opportunities, and university size.

7. Social and External level factors - Jensen (2011) defines social and external level factors as factors related to social and family support.

8. Minority – This includes students who are black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, or American Indian or Alaskan Native, as defined in the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) regulations, 34 CCFR 280.4(b) (U.S. Department of Education)

9. Retention Rate – The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) defines the retention rate as a measure of the rate at which students persist in the educational programs at an institution. This is expressed as a percentage and for four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree seeking undergraduates that enroll from one fall semester to the following fall semester.

10. Emergent Themes – Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) define emergent themes as those that evolve qualitative data analysis from information gathered or collected from an investigator during a study.
Significance of the Study

The retention of students is a performance indicator for colleges and universities. This means that student retention is one of the primary gauges used when measuring the success of the school. Retention as a goal of an institution is one of the best indicators that the institution is achieving student satisfaction and success (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999).

Institutions depend on the success of all students attempting to get a higher education degree completing the process. It is important for schools to know their customers and provide the necessary services so the customers can be successful. They also have a financial and ethical obligation to retain students. Low retention rates drive up the cost of education through inflated tuition, increased fees, and the increased use of public money (Bean, 1986, Swail et al., 2003). Researching factors that contribute to the retention of minority students will assist colleges and universities in establishing programs that support retention and eliminating or adapting/improving programs that do not support student retention.

Outline of the Remainder of the Study

In chapter two, the literature related to this topic is discussed. In chapter three, the research questions and the methods used to conduct this mixed method study are explained. To answer the research questions, a mixed method research design was used. An online student survey was used for the research quantitative phase; while focus groups at different institutions spearheaded the quantitative phase. Additionally, chapter three includes the research design and how data was collected. Chapter four contains an analysis of data and answers to the research questions. In chapter five, conclusions and further recommendations for research are discussed.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The 2011 College Board Data Set cited freshmen retention rates in higher education as ranging from 40% to 99% (Pfitzner, Brat, & Land, 2011). Retention rates, as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (2008), are the measure at which students persist in the educational programs at an institution. This is expressed as a percentage, for four-year institutions, of first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree seeking undergraduates that enroll from one fall semester to the following fall semester.

History of Student Retention Models

In the past 40 years, there has been an increase in the efforts to study the concept of student retention. Berger, Ramirez, and Lyons (2012) outline the development of retention efforts into nine eras. They are as follows:

1. Retention Pre-History (1600s – Mid 1800s)
2. Evolving Toward Retention (Mid 1800s – 1900)
3. Early Developments (1900 – 1950)
4. Dealing with Expansion (1950s)
5. Preventing Dropouts (1960s)
6. Building Theory (1970s)
7. Managing Enrollments (1980s)
8. Broadening Horizons (1990s)
The Retention Pre-History (1600s – 1900) era is explained as a time when retention was not considered important. Very few people were attending college and institutions were more concerned with attracting students as opposed to supporting persistence towards a degree. Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, enrollment in colleges increased by nearly 80 percent during each decade. Part of this increase can be attributed to a rise in denominational colleges. This era is characterized as Evolving Towards Retention (Mid 1800s – 1900). This was also a time when college students began to experience a more comprehensive collegiate experience. This means they began to engage in experiences in and out of the classroom. Even during this period, there was more of a push for institutional survival instead of student persistence and retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012).

Berger, Ramirez, and Lyons (2012) define the 1900s -1950 as the Early Development era, or an era where there was growth and stability in institutions. This was also a time when colleges became more selective in their enrollment and students from elite families were given preferential treatment. They also highlight that this was a time when barriers were created so institutions would not serve “undesirables” like Jewish, Catholic, and African American students. Also, during this time there was the establishment of less selective colleges, including a number of private and public junior colleges, and when the National Youth Administration, GI Bill, launching of Sputnik, National Defense Education Act of 1958, and Higher Education Act of 1965 all encouraged college attendance and promoted education as a necessity for the stability of the United States.

Beginning in the 1960s, there was a rapid growth in student enrollment, particularly with respect to diverse populations of students. Campuses were unprepared, unable, and some cases unwilling to deal with an increasingly diverse student body. As a result, the retention of minority
students was quite low. This started early research that focused on individual and student characteristics. One of the first was Summerskill, who in 1962 looked at personality attributes of students as a main reason they stay at or leave an institution (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012).

Table 2 is a summary of the models of student retention that date back to the 1970s. The models are complex and contain a large number of variables. Retention models of the 1970s were categorized as sociological, involving commonalities of behaviors of students that stay in college as opposed to those who leave. In the 1980s, models began to take a psychological and socio-psychological approach, concerned with how students access themselves in the educational context. In the 1990s, there was an increased interest in documenting how economic and cultural factors contributed to student retention (Montgomery, Jeffs, Schlegel, & Jones, 2009).

William Spady (1971) made an analogy between committing suicide and dropping out of school. In both instances, Spady suggested that a person leaves a social system. Spady and Emile Durkheim found that some people committed suicide because they lacked the values of the social system in which they participated and because they were not supported by a group of friends. Building on Durkheim’s suicide model, Spady proposed a sociological model of the dropout process. As a result, he proposed five variables: academic potential, normative congruence, grade performance, intellectual development, and friendship support. All of these, he stated, contributed directly to social integration (McClanahan, 2004). Spady’s retention model emphasized the interaction between individual student characteristics and key aspects of the campus environment (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012).
Table 2  
*History of Student Retention Models*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher/Year</th>
<th>Retention Model</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| William Spady – 1971 | • Developed an analogy between committing suicide and dropping out of school or a person leaving a social system  
• Spady and Emile Durkheim found that some people committed suicide because they lacked the values of the social system in which they participated and because they were not supported by a group of friends  
• Emphasized the interaction between individual student characteristics and key aspects of the campus environment |  |
| David Kamens – 1971, 1974 |  |  |
| Vincent Tinto – 1975 | • Borrowed this idea to identify the concepts of academic and social integration  
• Linked the model of Durkheim to his multivariate model of academic integration and social integration  
• Incorporated elements of both elements of psychological and organizational models |  |
| Alexander Astin – 1984 and further developed in 1993 | • Proposed the developmental theory of student involvement as a model for student retention  
• Proposed that the amount of energy a student puts into his college experience had a direct effect on the decisions of the student to depart from the institution |  |
| Ernest T. Pascarella – 1985 | • Developed the causal model  
• Three main sources of influence, initial or pre-enrollment student characteristics, structural or organizational attributes of colleges and universities, and student performances in those institutions |  |
| Vincent Tinto – 1987 | • Revised his earlier theory to incorporate Van Gennep’s 1960 rites of passage which included the concepts of separation, transition, and incorporation |  |
| Vincent Tinto - 1993 | • Developed his longitudinal exploratory model of departure  
• Added the concepts of adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, isolation, finances, learning, and external obligations or commitments |  |
John Bean & Shevawn Eaton – 2001-2002

- Explained retention as a process that begins with a set of characteristics students bring to the university or college environment
- Examined how the characteristics of the organization and the reward structures of the institution affect student satisfaction and retention

Vincent Tinto – 2004

- Lists academic preparedness, campus climate, commitment to educational goals and the institution, social and academic integration, and financial aid as important factors of student retention that should be key components of any retention model

Vincent Tinto borrowed from Spady’s idea to identify the concepts of academic and social integration (Habley & McClanahan, 2004). Tinto’s interactionalist theory incorporated elements of both psychological and organizational models. His model contends that a student’s entry characteristics along with a commitment to the institution and to graduation influence the decision to stay or leave school. The theory also suggests that “early and institutional continued commitment will impact academic and social integration within the university” (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012, p. 23).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1979) noted that both Spady and Tinto have emphasized the process of social and academic integration as critical influences on student persistence, and as a result developed operational measures of the core constructs. They became the bases for greater understanding and future systematic approaches to understanding student retention.

Vincent Tinto’s model established a sociological perspective along with the work of David Kamens. This is outlined by Berger, Ramirez, and Lyons (2012). They stated that Kamens 1971 and 1974 models suggest that institutions of greater size, complexity, and possessing the ability to place graduates in higher social and occupational roles have lower rates of attrition than other types of institutions.
Later, Tinto’s student integration model of 1975 linked the model of Durkheim to his multivariate model of academic integration and social integration. The idea is that the degree to which students are successful in their educational pursuits determines the degree to which they are committed to their career and educational goals as well as to the institutions themselves (Habley and McClanahan, 2004).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1979) noted that both Spady and Tinto have emphasized the process of social and academic integration as critical influences on student persistence, and as a result developed operational measures of the core constructs. They became the bases for greater understanding and future systematic approaches to understanding student retention. John Bean built on this idea in 1980 and 1983 and introduced a model that examined how the characteristics of the organization and the reward structures of the institution affect student satisfaction and retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012).

Ernest T. Pascarella developed the causal model in 1985. The model incorporated multiple measures of the three main sources of influence, initial or pre-enrollment student characteristics, structural or organizational attributes of colleges and universities, and student performances in those institutions (Pascarella, Smart, Ethington, & Nettles, 1987). With this model, Pascarella also suggested that the kind of undergraduate institution attended is a function of a student’s background or precollege characteristics, like family socioeconomic status and high school academic achievements. These two variables are seen to influence the nature of the student’s academic college performance and college satisfaction. In turn, these college experiences would lead to students completing their undergraduate degree (Ethington, Smart, & Pascarella, 2001).
Habley and McClanahan (2004) also later suggested that in 1987 Tinto revised this theory to incorporate Van Gennep’s 1960 rites of passage which included the concepts of separation, transition, and incorporation. Separation is where the individual is separated from past associations. Transition is where the individual begins to interact in new ways with members of the new group in which membership is sought. Incorporation is where the individual takes on new patterns of interaction with members of the new group and establishes competent membership (Tierney, 1999).

In 1993, Tinto developed his longitudinal exploratory model of departure. The model added the concepts of adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, isolation, finances, learning, and external obligations or commitments (Habley & McClanahan, 2004). Nordquist (1993) stated that Tinto’s model argued that an individual’s departure arises from a longitudinal process of interaction between a student’s attributes, skills, dispositions, and other members of the academic and social systems at the college. Habley and McClanahan (2004) also stated that Tinto went on to later recognize that different groups of students had different circumstances requiring group specific retention policies. Some of these groups include at-risk students, adult learners, honor students, and transfer students. They also added that different types of post-secondary institutions also require different types of retention policies and programs.

Tinto’s model demonstrates that most of the burden of responsibility to retain students falls on the institutions (Habley and McClanahan, 2004), but Alexander Astin (1999) proposed that the amount of energy a student puts into his or her college experience has a direct effect on the decision of the student to depart from the institution. Also in 1984 and further developed in 1993, Alexander Astin proposed the developmental theory of student involvement as a model for student retention. The involvement theory has five basic postulates:
1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for a chemistry examination).

2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same students manifest different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times.

3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student’s involvement in academic work, for instance, can be measured quantitatively (how many hours the student spends studying) and qualitatively (whether the student reviews and comprehends reading assignments or simply stares at the textbook and daydreams).

4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in the program.

5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (Astin, 1999, p. 519).

Rodgers and Summers (2008) explained a more recent model created by Bean and Shevawn Eaton, the psychological model. Created in 2001-2002, this model is a retention process that begins with a set of characteristics students bring to the university or college environment. The idea is that in addition to academic skills, students bring attributes to college such as efficacy expectation, motivation, and coping skills. They classify these attributes as entry characteristics. These characteristics affect the environmental interactions students have. They are interactions on and off campus that affect the students’ psychological processes, with each process being associated with a particular outcome. Tinto (2004) suggested that academic
preparedness, campus climate, commitment to educational goals and the institution, social and academic integration, and financial aid are key components of any retention model.

The study of retention evolved from the implementation of isolated programs designed to improve retention to an examination of how organizations or institutions as a whole can affect retention (McClanahan, 2004). Along these lines, Joseph Berger (2001) reviewed organizational studies of student persistence. He developed the following recommendations:

1. Provide students with information and clear lines of communication about campus goals, values, policies, and procedures.
2. Provide opportunities for students to participate in organizational decision-making.
3. Provide a campus environment characterized by fairness towards students.
4. Provide balance between structure and responsiveness.
5. Actively engage students in political activity on campus.
6. Provide students with advocates.
7. Build shared meaning through authentic symbols that are used with integrity.
8. Pay attention to structural and symbolic connections with the external environments.
9. Understand the nature of the organizational environment on campus.

George Kuh (2001) proposed the following organizational practices for cultivating student success:

1. Clarify institutional values and expectations early and often to prospective and matriculating students.
2. Conduct a comprehensive examination of the student experience inside and outside the classroom.

3. Consistently use good practices in teaching, learning, and retention programs.

4. Intentionally tie the curriculum to students’ lives outside the classroom to bring students into ongoing contact with one another and with campus resources, especially after the first year of study.

5. Remove obstacles to student success associated with disciplinary cultures.

6. Determine the effects of proximal peer groups on persistence decisions (Kuh, 2001, pp. 32-36).

Factors that Contribute to Student Retention

Students, who are likely to graduate from college prepared in high school, enter college immediately after high school, come from high income families, have parents who attended college, and attend college full-time with no interruptions. Community college and 4-year institutions are increasingly servicing students that possess characteristics that are not associated with educational attainment or the characteristics listed above. These students come with other characteristics that include caring for children at home, being single parents, struggling financially, being first generation, waiting to attend college instead of attending immediately after high school, and working full-time or part-time while attending college (Burns, 2010).

Upcraft and Garner (1989) outlined variables that impact student success in college: (a) personal characteristics (motivation, previous achievement, and intellectual ability), (b) demographic characteristics (age, gender, and race), (c) cultural characteristics (ethnic background and socioeconomic status), (d) institutional characteristics (campus site, regional
location, selectivity, control, curriculum, and enrollment), and (e) institutional climate (student-faculty interaction, student activities, commuter or residential campus).

Jensen (2011) summarized these same factors as Upcraft and Garner, categorizing them into three levels, the individual level, institutional level, and social and external level. The individual level includes academic performance which takes into account the high school and college grade point average, the course load, credits earned, and the academic discipline of the student. This level also includes attitudes and satisfaction or whether the student has a positive perspective of academics, a commitment to college, and a sense of belonging and social connectedness. The institutional level involves the student’s academic engagement. This level includes factors such as the student being engaged in undergraduate research activities and involvement in on campus clubs and organizations. Also at this level the size of the university is a factor. At the social and external level, factors such as the support of faculty, staff, and family are important. An additional factor is whether the university has an authentic cultural environment and whether or not the students feel a part of the university community and have a sense of importance within that community.

Thomas and May (n.d.) listed pre-entry information and preparation, induction and transition support, curriculum development, social engagement, student support, and data monitoring as factors that support student retention and success. As part of curriculum development, they included additional strategies that are important, like active learning and teaching strategies, formative assessment, relevant courses, integrated personal tutoring and study support, and flexible learning. Along with these areas, Zamani (2000) added that prior academic achievement and intellectual ability are also considered primary factors. Bean (1986) referenced a correlation between high attrition rates and low faculty morale.
At a speech presented in Washington, D.C. at the 2005 National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing, and Retention, Vincent Tinto suggested that both curricular and pedagogical changes and the willingness of faculty and staff to collaborate in ways that provide students a clear path of activities and support lead to student success. He suggested that three changes need to take place:

1. Programs must coherently link developmental education and study skills courses to content courses. Such linkages make possible the immediate application of skills learned in a developmental education course to what is being learned in the course to which it is linked.

2. Programs must employ collaborative and/or cooperative pedagogies that require that students learn together in a coherent interdependent manner. Students who learn together become more academically and socially engaged, that is they spend more time together and on task, learn more, and in turn persist more frequently.

3. Programs must connect classroom activities to support services on campus, for instance, when counselors and/or advisors participate in learning communities. Developmental education learning communities are most effective when they serve as conduits to other support services that low-income students might not otherwise access (Tinto, 2005, p. 9).

**Minority Student Retention**

Jeria and Roth (n.d.) stated that no one set of recommendations will apply to all universities when trying to increase the recruitment and retention rate of minority students. Factors to consider are the size of programs, populations being served, the regional economy, institutional goals and the commitment of the faculty and staff. These factors can alter the degree
of success of minority students. Jeria and Roth also suggested that successful institutions start at the local level and move outward.

Harvey-Smith (2002) created a model to increase minority student retention. The model includes elements such as having a high level of faculty/student interaction, integration of academic and social events, institutional commitment, cultural and social support and interaction. It also includes providing opportunities for involvement, mentoring, and leadership experience, along with giving the students the use of campus resources and student services such as advising, counseling, financial/fiscal counseling, library services, and tutoring services. Seidman (2005) reported that commonalities among minority students that contribute to attrition are financial constraints, academic preparation, and being first generation and that programs that promote student development and involvement in the institution are more likely to produce satisfied students. He added that recruiting certain types of students to fit certain environments will likely increase retention.

Tierney (1999), in contrast, explained that academic and social integration models are too specific and make the assumption that students need economic capital to be able to succeed in college, that they need to be individually oriented, and they need the skills to assimilate into the academic culture of the institution. This means that the students’ cultural backgrounds are irrelevant to their success in college and that their cultural backgrounds need to be discarded in favor of the dominant culture of the institution or the student will fail, not at the fault of the institution, but that of the student. He concluded that rather than demand that students of color attending predominantly white mainstream universities experience cultural suicide, that these students should be able to affirm, rather than reject, who they are.
African American Students. One model that focuses on the retention of African American students and their validation at predominantly white institutions was developed by Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, and Mugenda (2012). Their model looks at two stages. Stage one is recruitment consideration. This stage involves creating a non-threatening community where parent, guardians, and/or significant others can ask questions about the university and not feel intimidated. Stage two is the first-year experience. This stage is divided into validation through orientation, in-class validation, and out-of-class validation. The orientation plays a major role in the student’s transition from high school to college. In-class validation is where the faculty should provide a reinforcing classroom environment. This includes the methods of instruction, course content, evaluation and feedback, student-faculty interaction, and reward structure. The out-of-class validation includes areas like campus climate, residence halls, work experience, peer interaction, and role models. The model recognizes the importance of the institution (e.g. people, programs, services, and policies) to the academic success of African American students and students in general. Also, there should be some involvement of outside agents like parents and mentors.

The work of Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, and Mugenda was based on the previous research of Laura Rendon (1994). She identified two categories of validating agents, out-of-class agents and in-class agents. The out-of-class agents include social group peers, faculty, other members of the academic community, and the parents or partners. The in-class agents are faculty, classmates, and teaching or lab assistants. She went on to state that faculty are represented in both because research indicates that faculty have a great impact on student involvement and persistence in and outside of the classroom. Rendon (1994) also concludes that a validation model should possess the following tenets:
1. Validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in-and out-of-class agents that foster academic and interpersonal development.

2. When validation is present, students feel capable of learning; they experience a feeling of self-worth and feel that they, and everything that they bring to the college experience, are accepted and recognized as valuable.

3. Like involvement, validation is a prerequisite to student development.

4. Validation can occur both in and out of class.

5. Validation suggests a development process. It is not an end in itself. The more validation students receive, the richer the academic and interpersonal experience.

6. Validation is most effective when offered early on in the student’s college experience, such as during the first year of college and during the first week of class (Rendon, 1994, p. 45).

Of all minority groups, African American males have the lowest retention rates (Hagedorn, Maxwell, & Hampton, 2012). In a recent study, Hagedorn, Maxwell, and Hampton (2012) looked at 202 African American males at a middle class predominantly blue-collar suburban community college. They monitored their retention through the first, second, and third semesters of enrollment, and they identified factors that best predict retention of African American males. They concluded that the success of African American males in college is dependent on several factors. These factors are high school grades, age, number of courses, a positive view of personal skills, clear high goals, and the early identification of a college major. The research of Glenn (2012) demonstrated that the best strategies for retaining African-American males should consist of measures to identify at-risk students at enrollment and monitoring of their academic progress. Along with this, he stated faculty should be helpful and
understanding; counseling services should be advertised and utilized; and the student body should be friendly and inclusive.

In relation to African-American females, Schwartz and Washington (2012) found that social adjustment is the best predictor of persistence. They studied 213 African-American females at a historically black, liberal arts college. During the first week on campus, the women were surveyed about their readiness for college, and after the first year, the responses were compared against their actual academic performance and retention. Attachment to the college and personal emotional adjustments were listed as high predictors. Other predictors were academic adjustment and the availability of support staff.

**Hispanic Students.** From 1990 to 2000, the Latino population grew by a rate of 58% making Latinos the largest minority group (Zurita, 2012). This growth has added to the importance for colleges and universities to understand the issues related to Hispanic students’ persistence and success (Hernandez and Lopez, 2012). The Hispanic community is a very diverse population within itself. Cubans and other Latinos (Central and South American) attend college at higher rates and are retained at higher rates than Mexican Americans or Puerto Ricans (Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). As a result, Hernandez and Lopez (2012) suggest that educators should not look at “cookie-cutter” approaches to increase access or retention of Hispanic or Latino students. They recommend educators take into account the regional, generational, ethnic, and gender dimensions these different populations bring to the institutions. Also, the retention of these students should begin before they enter college, and it should continue throughout their enrollment.

Hernandez and Lopez (2012) also examined personal factors, environmental factors, involvement factors, and socio-cultural factors related to retention. The personal factors
consisted of the student’s high school grade point average and test scores, academic self-concept, the family, and their finances. Environmental factors consisted of racial climate, presence of an ethnic community, and whether or not the student is working and living on campus. The involvement factors consisted of faculty-student interaction, mentorship, and participation in student organizations. The socio-cultural factors included immigrant status, ethnic identity development, gender roles, community orientation and the role of religion.

**Asian Pacific Islander Students.** Asian Pacific Americans have one of the highest retention rates of any ethnic minority group. They are retained at 86.9% (Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange and Analysis at the University of Oklahoma, 2002). Yeh (2012) contends that a detailed look at this retention rate does show the true complexity of the situation. She argues that the data related to the retention and college success of Asian Pacific Americans should be disaggregated by criteria like ethnicity, English proficiency, and generation in the United States. In her study, she specifically looked at Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders, an underrepresented group in higher education. She divided their challenges into two categories, individual/contextual factors and institutional/environmental factors. The individual/contextual factors were academic underpreparedness, first-generation college students, language/ESL issues, low-income background, family demands, and cultural adjustment. The institutional/environmental factors were marginalization on campus, racism/discrimination on campus, cultural barriers, model minority stereotype, and citizenship status which affects the ability to receive financial aid.

**Native American Students.** Native Americans have a national retention rate of 67.2%. Based on this, they have the lowest retention rate of any other ethnic minority group (Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange and Analysis at the University of Oklahoma, 2002).
Belgarde and LoRe (2012) studied the retention and intervention of Native American students at the University of New Mexico. They concluded that Native American students come from strong cultural communities and participate in other ongoing culturally-related activities. These students also have to learn to acclimate in the university culture. Many of the students place family and community culture and values above their own personal needs. As a result, college completion becomes less of a priority.

In their study of Native American students, Belgarde and LoRe (2012) looked at preparedness for college, high school rating, study skills, and career goals. They found the majority of the students felt they were not prepared for the college environment and not prepared for college level courses. They suggest that colleges and universities should have resources readily available for Native American students. They also recommend the availability of academic and support programs.

**Development of Minority Serving Institutions**

Harvard University was founded in 1636 and is the oldest institution of higher education in the United States (Archibald, 2002). The first Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) were Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs), which date back to the mid-nineteenth century. The United States Department of Education (2013) defines a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) as an institution established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and must satisfy Section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA); be legally authorized by the state in which it is located to be a junior or community college or provide an educational program for which it awards bachelor’s degrees; and be accredited or pre-accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.
HBCUs can be divided into two categories, private and public. Most private HBCUs were established during the post-Civil War era, primarily by Christian missionaries who undertook efforts to provide a basic education to freed slaves. The establishment of public institutions of higher education in general began in 1862 when Congress passed the first Morrill Act. This Act provided states with a land grant for the creation of liberal and practical education for the industrial class. African Americans could not take advantage of this because this Act did not require states to create institutions for African Americans, and African Americans were not permitted to attend white public institutions. The obligation to create institutions for African Americans occurred with the passing of the second Morrill Act in 1890 (Moore, 2000).

The Second Morrill Act stipulated that those states practicing segregation in their public colleges and universities would forfeit funding unless they established agricultural and mechanical institutions for African Americans. This meant the states were either required to provide separate educational facilities for African American students or admit them into existing white institutions (Gasman, 2007; Moore, 2000).

Another form of MSIs is Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). HSIs are fairly new to the landscape of higher education and were developed through demographic enrollment changes, especially in the southern and southwestern states (Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh, & Leegwater, 2005). The United States Department of Education (2013b) defines a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) as an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution and has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application. Institutions must complete an application process and be designated as eligible for the U.S. Department of
Education’s Title V, Part A and Title III, Part F programs. Laden (2001) adds to the definition by stating that 50% of the student population should be first generation college students.

Along with retaining students, MSIs face many challenges with inadequate resources being the greatest of them. Since a large part of the population of students who attend these colleges are low socio-economic, the institutions make every effort to maintain low tuition and fees. Also, there is a trend in the United States among institutions of higher education to raise tuition and fees, and to depend less on state support. This becomes a funding challenge for MSIs, especially when these institutions try to keep tuition and fees low to meet the needs of its mainly low socio-economic student body. In turn, this adds up to lower financial resources. With fewer financial resources coming from the state, and with reduced student fees, schools are challenged in the areas of recruiting and maintaining the best faculty, upgrading and maintaining facilities, improving technology infrastructure, and establishing large endowments (Cambridge, Kuh, & Leegwater, 2005).

In 2005, some of the presidents and chancellors of HSIs identified five challenges their institutions will face in the future. Eighty percent of them listed lack of funding as the number one challenge. The second was poor academic preparedness of students and the third was student retention and success. The fourth and fifth challenges they listed were faculty recruitment and affordability (Santos and Cuamea, 2010). Even with these challenges, all of the MSIs play an integral role in the higher education landscape (Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh, & Leegwater, 2005).

Lack of academic preparation, lack of a group of students with similar ethnic characteristics, and financial need all seem to be commonalities of African American, Hispanic, Native American, and other ethnic minority groups when it comes to being successfully
integrated into the college life. College and universities need to identify the problems and focus on solutions for targeted populations (Seidman, 2005).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Demographic Information

For the purpose of this mixed method research study, ethnic minorities of the 2013 freshman classes who returned in the fall of 2014 from two different types of schools, a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) were surveyed. To select the right institutions as research samples, colleagues at different universities were consulted to assist with the creation of a list of possible institutions. After the information was gathered and reviewed, the possible samples were narrowed to four HSIs and three PWIs. They are as follows:

Four Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)

- California State University – Channel Island (Channel Island, CA)
- California State University – Monterey Bay (Monterey Bay, CA)
- California State University – Stanislaus (Stanislaus, CA)
- Western New Mexico University

Three Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)

- Armstrong Atlantic State University (Savannah, GA)
- Augusta State University (Augusta, GA)
- Georgia Gwinnett College (Lawrenceville, GA)

Table 3 includes a summary of how the institutions were compared. When looking at these institutions, criteria from a previous completed retention study I completed (Brundage, 2012). In the previous study, factors that contributed to the retention of minority students at a state university in southwest Florida were examined. Some of these factors were size of
institution, geographical location, student to faculty ratio, academic programs, clubs and organizations, admissions criteria, and ethnic makeup of the institution. After comparing these schools for similarities in these selected areas California State University – Monterey Bay, and Georgia Gwinnett College were selected to participate in the study. Georgia Gwinnett College later declined the offer to participate and Armstrong State University was select as a replacement.

These schools range in size from 4,500 to 7,438 students and each of them has comparable programs, admissions criteria, and services to students. California State University – Monterey Bay is a HSI and is located in Seaside, CA. The fall 2013 student enrollment was 5,194 and the ethnic breakdown is 40% White, 35% Hispanic, 4.5% Black, and 4.2% Asian. The institution awards bachelors and masters degrees and has a 24:1 faculty to student ratio.

Armstrong State University is a PWI and is located in Savannah, GA. The fall 2013 student enrollment was 7,438 and the ethnic breakdown is 63.0% White; 5.32% Hispanic, 23.4% Black, and 2.7% Asian. The institution awards associates, bachelor, masters, and doctorate degrees and has a 19:1 faculty to student ratio.

Both institutions have outreach programs, athletics, clubs/organizations and on-campus student housing. Also, they all have ACT and/or SAT requirements for admissions. At both California State University – Monterey Bay and Armstrong State University, admissions is based on an eligibility or freshman index.

For California State University – Monterey Bay, the formula for computing the eligibility index using the total of the verbal and mathematics scores on the SAT is (800 x GPA) + SAT. The formula for computing the eligibility index using the composite score of the ACT is (200 x GPA) + (10 x ACT). This calculation is done with students that have a cumulative GPA below a
3.0 but above a 1.99. With a sliding scale, a student with 2.00 GPA must have higher ACT and SAT scores than a student with a 2.99. The Academic Senate of The California State University (2005) system defines the eligibility index as a weighted combination of high school grade point average during the final three years of high school and a score on either the SAT or ACT.

For Armstrong State University, the SAT Freshman Index is the combined SAT I scores + (High School Grade Point Average x 500). The ACT Freshman Index is the (High School Grade Point Average x 500) + (ACT Composite x 42) + 88. The State of Georgia Board of Regents (2006) defines the Freshman Index as a combination of high school GPA and SAT or ACT scores. The requirements vary based on the sector or type of institution. The sectors are research universities, regional universities, state universities, and state colleges with baccalaureate programs.

The other five institutions were eliminated because of their inability to match similar criteria. California State University - Channel Island was not included because the institution does not have athletic programs and California State University - Stanislaus was not included because it is much larger than the other institutions in the potential comparison groups. Western New Mexico University offers associates degrees and is open enrollment, where the admissions criteria are a high school diploma or the equivalency of a high school diploma. Augusta State University merged with Georgia Health Sciences University and the combined two institutions is called Georgia Regents University. As a result of this merger, Georgia Regents University now has over 10,000 students and a medical college, and has been reclassified to a comprehensive research institution. This does not match any of my other comparison institutions. Georgia Gwinnett College was selected but they declined the offer to participate. Armstrong State University was selected because it has a high percentage of minority students (32.0% total ethnic
minorities), but is still predominantly White when compared to the other ethnic groups, and does not have enough Hispanics to be classified as an HSI as determined by the United States Department of Education.

Table 3

*Comparison of Possible Sample Institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Ethnic Profile</th>
<th>Admissions Criteria</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Student Housing</th>
<th>Student/Faculty Ratio</th>
<th>Academic Programs</th>
<th>Outreach Programs</th>
<th>Athletics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California State Univ.– Channel Island</td>
<td>Camarillo, CA (small town)</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>30% White; 25% Hispanic; 4% Asian, 1.5% Black</td>
<td><em>ACT and/or <strong>SAT and GPA</strong></em> (based on eligibility index)</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Average class size 24</td>
<td>Bachelors; Masters; Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Univ.– Monterey Bay</td>
<td>Seaside, CA</td>
<td>5,194</td>
<td>37.3% White; 38% Hispanic; 2.9% Black; 4.5% Asian</td>
<td><em>ACT and/or <strong>SAT and GPA</strong></em> (based on eligibility index)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24:1</td>
<td>Bachelors; Masters; Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Univ.– Stanislaus</td>
<td>Turlock, CA</td>
<td>9,246</td>
<td>22% White; 44% Hispanic; 1.7% Black; 4% Asian</td>
<td>High School Diploma or GED (COMPASS test for placement)</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Associates; Masters; Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western New Mexico Univ.</td>
<td>Silver City, NM</td>
<td>3,693</td>
<td>63% White; 23.4% Black; 5.32% Hispanic; 2.7% Asian</td>
<td>*ACT – 19 E, 18 M; **SAT – 460 CR, 430 M; GPA (calculated in index)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13:1</td>
<td>Associates; Masters; Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong State Univ.</td>
<td>Savannah, GA (mid-sized town)</td>
<td>7,438</td>
<td>58% White; 24% Black; 4% Hispanic; 2.3% Asian</td>
<td>*ACT – 17 M, 17 E; **SAT – 430 CR, 400 M; GPA (not listed)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19:1</td>
<td>Associates; Masters; Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta State Univ.</td>
<td>Augusta, GA (mid-sized town)</td>
<td>6,528</td>
<td>58.5% White; 30.5% Black; 10.5% Hispanic; 8.1% Asian</td>
<td>*ACT – 21 E, 19 M; **SAT – 480 CR, 460 M; 2.00 GPA</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20:1</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Gwinnett College</td>
<td>Lawrenceville, GA (mid-sized town – near ATL)</td>
<td>7,742</td>
<td>58% White; 24% Black; 4% Hispanic; 2.3% Asian</td>
<td>*ACT – 21 E, 19 M; **SAT – 480 CR, 460 M; 2.00 GPA</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20:1</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ACT – American College Testing (E – English score; M – Math score)
**SAT- Scholastic Aptitude Test (CR – Critical Reading score; M – Math score)
***CSU Statewide Eligibility Index is a weighted combination of high school grade point average during the final three years of high school and a score on either the SAT or ACT.
****Ethnic Profiles do not equal 100% because Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders, students with two or more races, resident aliens, and students that did not report their races were significantly low and were not reported.
A Definition and Rationale for Mixed Method Research

This study consisted of a mixed method research design, which involved the collection and analysis of data from an online survey and focus groups. Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003) define a mixed method study as one where both quantitative and qualitative data is collected and analyzed. The data is collected at the same time or sequentially and is prioritized and integrated at one or more stages of the study. To accomplish this design, ethnic minority students of the 2014 sophomore class who were freshmen in 2013 at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in the United States were surveyed. An online student survey and focus groups were used to determine what factors contribute to their retention as students, and the differences between types of institutions were compared.

The use of mixed method research was done in a sequential manner, with the collection and analysis of the quantitative data first, followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data. According to Creswell (2007) the premise of mixed methods research is that a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research methods provides a better understanding of the research problem. Mixed methods research provides strength and offsets the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative research, if done individually. Also, mixed methods research provides comprehensive evidence; answers questions that cannot be answered by quantitative or qualitative research alone; encourages the use of multiple worldviews or paradigms; and allows the researcher to use all methods possible to address a research problem (Creswell 2007).

More specifically, this study is a sequential explanatory mixed method design. This design is where the quantitative data is collected and analyzed and then qualitative data is collected and analyzed. The sequential explanatory mixed method design is utilized when the qualitative results are used to explain and interpret the quantitative results (Creswell et al., 2003).
Creswell (2005) adds that the collection and analysis of data during the quantitative phase is the priority for addressing the study’s questions.

The survey for this study was developed from a survey done previously by the researchers (Brundage, 2012). The original survey can be found in Appendix A. All the survey questions on the previous study were open questions. The most common responses from that survey were used as the multiple choice options when developing the survey for this study. The participants were also given a final option to write in a response, if needed. Also, the topics from the original survey were the categories used in Table 3 to select the sample institutions. Once the survey for this study was developed and used, the common topics from the survey guided the focus group discussions. From the focus discussions, themes emerged.

**Research Questions**

This study answered the following questions:

1. What institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?
2. What individual/student level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?
3. What social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

**Quantitative Design and Definition**

**Survey Instrument Design**

The quantitative phase of this study was completed using an online survey tool called Checkbox® Survey. Fink (2009) defines surveys as a method to collect information used to
describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior. She also lists three reasons for conducting a survey, which are:

1. To set a policy or to plan a program.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness to change people’s knowledge, attitudes, health, and welfare.
3. To get information about how to guide studies and programs.

This survey was used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services at the higher education institutions. It was also used to gather information to assist with the development of future programs. Since the population was predetermined, the researcher used a cross-sectional survey. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) define a cross-sectional survey as a method of collecting information from a predetermined population sample.

Survey research is a method where information is self-reported through questionnaires, interviews, or both. This is with the goal of predicting the attitudes and behaviors of the general population. Closed-ended questionnaires are quantitative (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Most of the questions as part of this survey were closed-ended questions and at the end allowed the participants to give an open-ended response if their response is different from the items listed. These responses were used to determine the topics for the focus groups.

In addition to the consent form, there were 39 questions on the online survey. The survey questions were based on the survey instrument developed by the researcher and used in a previous study (Brundage, 2012). Students were surveyed using open-ended questions. The most frequent responses were used to develop the survey instrument. There is also an additional response option for items not listed. Based on the research related to minority students, additionally, there was a question added to the survey instrument related to the diversity of the
institutions and one related to cultural traditions of the institution (Seidman, 2005). The questions were divided into three sections based on factors related to each research question.

**Qualitative Design and Definition**

**Focus Group Design**

The qualitative phase of the study consisted of focus groups. Rea and Parker (1997) state that one of the most prominent uses of focus groups is to interpret and enrich previously obtained sample survey results. They also explain the four components of the research process for focus groups as: planning the focus groups, recruiting the participants, implementing the discussion sessions, and analyzing the results. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) state that focus groups are useful for exploring ideas; for allowing the study of how participants react to each other; and for allowing probing. Flores and Alonso (1995) describe focus groups as a way of finding out what interviewees think about themes, their attitudes, feelings, reactions, and doubts.

As part of the development of focus groups, Flores and Alonso (1995) discuss defining the problem, constitution of the groups, development of the meetings, and data analysis. Defining the problem started with the online survey. The topics were selected based on the highest frequency of responses. When forming the groups, the participants were informed of the various topics. This allowed them to know about the focus group topics prior to attending. This also brought homogeneity to each group. Flores and Alonso (1995) stated homogeneity is important in focus groups because it allows participants to speak freely about the topic or theme. It also allows for a more thought provoking discussion.

When discussing the development of the meeting location, Flores and Alonso (1995) mention the importance of the room setup and location. The focus groups took place on the university campuses in a secure classroom that allowed for the privacy of participants. The
researcher arrived early to make sure the room was setup appropriately for a discussion. Also, to make sure any equipment needed was ordered and in place. Each focus group session was audio recorded to ensure accuracy. This also allowed me to focus on the participants and their responses. Each focus group session lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. After the discussion, it was explained to the students how they will be contacted through email and asked to review the transcripts in a process called member checking. At the beginning of the focus group session, in the middle, and at the end, the participants were reminded of their ability to opt out or leave the focus group at any time.

The format and questions for the focus group were conducted in the model outlined by Flores and Alonso (1995). First, participants were thanked for participating and each of them did self-introductions. After the introductions, the objectives of the focus group were explained and the common themes were discussed, specifically the theme related to their group. Also, the anticipated length of time was explained and the format for the discussion. Each participant was given the opportunity of speaking in turn on the theme. After each participant had the opportunity to speak, then the participants discussed the theme in greater detail. As needed and to keep the conversation engaging, open questions were used. The open questions were only used if needed to facilitate the discussion. The development of questions was from the results of a previous study conducted (Brundage 2012). These protocol, script, and open questions can be found in Appendix G. The participants communicated and held a discussion about the topics with each other. The role of the moderator was to keep the discussion flowing. The open questions were used as need to keep the discussion moving and keep the participants on the topics.
Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Surveys were sent through email to ethnic minority sophomore students who were freshmen during the 2013-2014 academic years at the different institutions. There was no minimum response rate established, however, procedures were in place to achieve the maximum number of respondents. Fink (2009) defines the response rate as the number of participants that respond divided by the number of eligible respondents. She also states that no single rate is considered the standard, but researchers should hope for a high response rate. The surveys were conducted for two weeks. To increase the response rate, selected students were followed at the HSI at the end of each week. At the PWI, the emails were sent from the institution’s Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.

The students asked to complete the survey were ethnic minority students who were members of the 2013 freshman class of two different state universities. They were contacted through email and invited to participate in the survey. Email addresses of the participants were used. The email addresses were only used to later contact the students who volunteered to participate in the focus groups. In the email, the students received a link to the survey. Once they accessed the link they received information about the study, including the benefits of participating and the level of confidentiality. They were asked to agree to a consent form. If the students agreed with the terms, conditions, and information on the consent form, they were allowed to continue completing the survey. If they did not agree, then they selected “I do not agree” and they exited the survey and no additional information was collected. Completion of the survey averaged about 45 minutes to one hour. Data collected from the online surveys were organized and analyzed into similar topics.
Since this is a sequential explanatory mixed method design, the information from the surveys was organized into tables that showed the frequency and number of each response. This was reviewed to find the topics with the highest frequency of responses. This was done for each factor level. The topics with the highest frequency at each factor level were the selected topics for the focus groups.

At each institution, three focus groups were conducted with six to 10 students in each focus group. According to Flores and Alonso (1995), the number of focus groups in a study should be a minimum of three or four with a maximum of 10 or 12. They also state that focus groups should have between six and 10 members.

The students were ethnic minority students who were members of the 2013 freshman class who matriculated to the fall of 2014. As part of the online survey, students were asked to provide their email address if they wanted to participate in focus groups. The students who provided their email addresses were contacted and asked to participate in focus groups. Flores and Alonso (1995) contend that when participants are in groups with like-minded participants they are more likely to be comfortable and openly discuss the theme of the group. After reviewing the responses to the online survey and determining the focus group topics, students were invited through email to participate in focus groups. In the email, the students were informed about the study; they received the consent form, and they were informed about the $20 gift card compensation for participating in the focus group.

Each focus group participant signed a consent form. Students were given the option to opt out of the study, if wanted. In this case, they would have been replaced with another ethnic minority student from this same university and that meet the cohort criteria. None of the participants requested to opt out. Data collected from the focus groups was transcribed and
analyzed. The information obtained was compared to the research findings related to the retention of students.

The predicted categories selected were based on responses to the online survey and were developed based on the results of a previous study conducted by the researcher (Brundage, 2012). Of the themes that emerged from the previous study conducted, and that were most favorable to the participants as factors that contributed to minority students’ retention were: being academically prepared; the schools preparation towards goals; and the support of their family. Table 4 shows the percentages of students who selected a response in each area. After the surveys were analyzed, the themes that emerged varied slightly from the themes of the researcher’s original study.

To analyze the survey data, descriptive statistics were used. Pyrczak (2010) defines descriptive statistics as a way to summarize data. One example of a descriptor that was used is frequency. This was used to describe the number of survey and focus group participants at each school. Percentages were also be used to determine what percent of students participated and responded to the survey questions. Frequency distribution was used to show how many students responded in a certain manner or gave a specific response to a survey question. The mean was used to determine the average number of responses to a specific survey question.

Creswell (2007) describes six steps to analyzing qualitative data. They are data managing, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing or visualizing. These methods were applied to data generated from the focus groups. I read through data and organized data based on themes by questions and placed items into categories accordingly. To assist with the interpreting of data, I used tables for representation or visualization. The categories were used to determine if they were common or different and to
determine if there were any internal or external factors. Creswell (2007) defines the analysis of themes as where the researcher aggregates information into large clusters of ideas and provides details to support the theme. Flores and Alonso (1995) state that data analysis is an opportunity to collect relevant information that is associated with the themes of each focus group. Finally, the analyses are presented in Chapter IV using narratives and tables. The same format to analyze data gathered from the focus groups was followed. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) also describe a list of analogous and analytical processes used in quantitative and qualitative research. Of this list of processes, the following were used in both the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data:

- Generation of themes
- Comparing analysis from one part of a sample with analysis from another part of the sample
- Comparison of actual results with expected results
- Contrasting components of research design or elements to find difference (p. 282).

Table 4

*Themes Generated from Brundage 2012 Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well prepared academically for college</td>
<td>Very well prepared - 49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat prepared – 38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School preparing to reach goals</td>
<td>Highly satisfied - 44.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat satisfied – 48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>Very supportive - 80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat supportive – 17.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Validity Approaches

Lincoln and Guba (1982) list seven criteria for establishing credibility when conducting qualitative research. They are prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member-checking. Creswell (2007) also adds clarifying researcher bias.

To address credibility and trustworthiness for this study, peer debriefing and member checking were used. For peer debriefing, the assistance and expertise of an advising professor were used. The advising professor was a part of a dissertation committee. To assist with selecting the sample institution and to review comparison criteria, student affairs and enrollment management colleagues were used. I also enrolled and completed a research writing course to assist with the development of literature review and methodology.

As for member checking, participants were emailed the transcript for review. In the email, they instructed to respond only if they had issues or concerns. None of the participants responded. Also, each sample institution received raw data for review. This was an audit of data.

Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) describe the validity of mixed methods findings as complex. Their reasoning is because with mixed method research you are combining strengths and weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Along these same lines, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) have introduced the integrative framework for inference quality. They focus on the areas of design quality, interpretive rigor, and aspects quality. For this study, in the area of design quality, the focus was on design suitability or appropriateness. In doing this, my research methods were appropriate for answering my research questions. In the area of interpretive rigor, I focused on theoretical consistency, which means that the inferences were consistent with theory and state of knowledge in the field. In the area of aspects quality, the
focus was on interpretive correspondence, which means that my inferences corresponded to the stated purposes and questions of the study.

**Potential Ethical Issues**

**Researcher Bias**

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) stated that it is important for the researcher to reflect on how his or her own bias can shape inferences. They also state how it is important for the researcher to inform the reader of how this bias can possibly have an impact on those inferences. As an ethnic minority college administrator at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), the researcher understands the importance of this study and the need to make sure it is free of prejudice. Being a minority male and working at an HSI is very closely related to my study, a reflection of my role as a university administrator at a Hispanic Serving Institution follows next.

As an African American male, I lived through these experiences. While in the K-12 system, I attended predominately white schools. My high school experiences and courses prepared me for college. After high school, I attended two Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs) and for graduate school I attended a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Early in my college I learned what resources needed I needed in school for me to be successful. While in college, I realized the importance of my family. As a result, I transferred from one college to another closer to my family. I also needed and took advantage of several resources like financial aid, tutoring, and writing labs. I used my professors as resources and mentors to help guide me to my chosen profession.

**Researcher’s Administrative Role**

As a Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, I oversee several of the departments utilized by students as resources to assist them with becoming successful. The
areas used by students and that report to me are Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Center for Student Success (testing, tutoring, career services), Student Housing, Outreach Programs (dual enrollment), Student Health Services (mental health, physical health, disability services), Student Life (multicultural programming, campus recreation), and Campus Safety. I have a professional understanding of how these offices should operate and what services they should be providing to students.

As an administrator at a Hispanic Serving Institution, I understand the dynamics of what these students bring to the institution. I work with and have created programs geared towards ethnic minority students. I have lead departments that served minority students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and first generation college students. Having an understanding of these populations helps to make sure programs and opportunities are available to serve their needs.

**Confidentiality**

Ensuring the confidentiality of the participants is very important. The names of the participants or their university identification numbers were not used in the study. Only their email addresses were used. The participants in the online survey and focus groups completed a consent form as part of the survey. The consent form states that the participants agree to terms and conditions and they understand the information will be used for data analysis only.

Also, the researcher was available to answer any questions the participants might have. Once the data analysis was complete, data is saved for four years and then destroyed. All student information will remain anonymous and confidential.
CHAPTER IV

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to compare factors that contribute to the retention of minority students at a predominantly White institution (PWI) and a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). The investigation considered institutional level factors, individual/student level factors, and social and external level factors.

The objective of this mixed method study was to answer the following questions:

1. What individual/student level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

2. What institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

3. What social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

A mixed method study was conducted using Checkbox Survey and focus groups. Survey questions were developed using three different factor levels mentioned previously. Students who received the survey were ethnic minorities who were freshman in fall 2013 and returned in fall 2014. Based on their response on the survey, students were selected to participate in focus groups. The sections that follow present the quantitative and qualitative findings from the survey questions and focus groups. The results are presented based on the factor levels.

Research Question 1: What individual/student level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

Quantitative Analysis of Research Question 1

The first factors are those associated with the individual or student. The research question is “what institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different
types of universities?” Displayed in Table 5 are questions associated with the individual/student level factors.

Table 5

*Individual/Student Level Factors*

What individual/student level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the university?

- Q1 – In what state is your college/university located?
- Q2 – Consent Form
- Q3 - Email address
- Q4 - Please select your race/ethnicity
- Q5 - Please select your gender
- Q6 - Please select your age range
- Q7 - Please list your major. If undecided, please specify.
- Q8 - Please specify your current working status
- Q9 - How well prepared academically were you for college?
- Q10 - In relation to your academic preparedness for college, for what were you **most** prepared?
- Q11 - In relation to your academic preparedness for college, for what were you **least** prepared?
- Q12 – To what extent do you consider yourself to be self-motivated?
- Q13 - In relation to college, what motivates you **most**?
- Q14 - In relation to college, what motivates you **least**?
- Q15 - How does your ethnicity or cultural background contribute to your educational success?

During the fall of 2013, the HSI had a freshmen population of 1,304 students. Of this population, 664 students met the criteria for this study. The survey was sent to 375 of these students. Of this group, 70 students responded to the survey. This is a 19% response rate. Of this group, 64 (91.43%) responded yes to the consent form and continued with the survey.

Throughout the survey, each question was answered by an average of 50 students. At the PWI, there were 958 freshmen during the fall of 2013 of which 379 met the criteria of being ethnic
minorities. Of this population, the survey was sent to 258 students. Of the 258 students, 20 students responded to the survey. This is a 7% response rate. Of this group, 18 (90%) students agreed with the consent form and continued with the survey.

The first question of the survey asked the students to select the state of their institution (Q1). Based on the response to this question, the students were guided to the correct consent from. The response to the consent form was the second question and if the student agreed with the consent form, they moved on with the survey. If they did not agree with the consent form, they were thanked and exited the survey (Q2).

Questions three through eight were demographic questions. The responses are displayed in Tables 6 through 9. The questions relate to race/ethnicity, gender, age range, and work status. Students were also asked to give their major and email address. Students gave their email address only if they wanted to be contacted to participate in a focus group. As a result, the email addresses were only used for that purpose.

After the demographics questions, students were asked about their levels of academic preparedness prior to them coming to college (Q9). They were asked if they were academically prepared; in what area were they most academically prepared (Q10); and also what area were they least academically prepared (Q11). Displayed in Table 10 is the comparison of the academic preparedness of the students. At the HSI, 94% stated they were prepared for college. More specifically, 38% stated they were very well prepared for college and 56% stated they were somewhat prepared for college. Only 6% stated they were not prepared for college. At the PWI, 85% of the student stated they were prepared for college, with 53.85% stating they were very well prepared and 30.77% stating they were somewhat prepared. Only two stated they were either somewhat not prepared or not prepared at all.
Table 6

*Frequency and Percentage of Race/Ethnicity of Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th></th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Native</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.92%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.73%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.73%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49.02%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.84%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Frequency and Percentage of Gender of Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th></th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Displayed in Tables 11 and 12 is with what the participants were most and least academically prepared (Q10, Q11). The students selected from the areas of academic or prerequisites courses, study skills, test taking skills, or time management. They were also able to list an additional area. Of the respondents at the HSI, 62% stated they were more prepared for
academic or prerequisite courses. This was the highest selected factor. The least selected factor for most academic preparedness was test taking skills. The highest selected factor for what they were least academically prepared was study skills (22%). At the PWI, the highest number of respondents stated they were more prepared for academic or prerequisite courses (46.15%). The lowest selected factors were both study skills and test taking skills. For what they were least academically prepared, the highest selected factor was study skills (38.46%). The lowest selected in this area was academic or prerequisite courses.

Table 8

*Frequency and Percentage of Age Range of Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-older</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

*Frequency and Percentage of Work Status of Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work full-time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work part-time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have a job</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Related to their Academic Preparation for College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very well prepared</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat not prepared</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not prepared at all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to being MOST Academically Prepared*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic or prerequisite courses</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study skills</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test taking skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to being LEAST Academically Prepared*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic or prerequisite courses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study skills</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test taking skills</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about self-motivation (Q12), 50 students at the HSI responded and 13 at the PWI. Of the students who responded at the HSI, the greatest number of respondents stated they were very self-motivated (56%). When compared to the PWI, 61.54% stated they were very self-motivated. At the PWI, this was also the highest factor selected. The least selected factor at both institutions was not being motivated at all. These data are shown in Table 13.

When asked what motivates them most and least (Q13, Q14), 50 students responded at the HSI and 13 at the PWI. The students selected between degree attainment, family, friends/peers, and goals/career aspirations. They also had the option of selecting other. For what motivates them most, 60% of the students at the HSI selected goals/career aspirations. When compared to the respondents at the PWI, 69.23% selected goals/career aspirations. This was the highest selected factor at both institutions. The least selected response at both the HSI and PWI was friends/peers. These data are shown in Table 14.
Table 13

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to being Self-motivated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very self-motivated</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat self-motivated</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unmotivated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not motivated at all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 shows the responses to what motivates the students least. At the HSI, 54% stated friends/peers. This was the highest selected response at the HSI. In response to the same question, friends/peers was the most selected answer (38.46%). The least selected at the HSI were both family and goals/aspirations. These were the same at the PWI.

Table 14

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to what Motivates them MOST*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Attainment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Peers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/Career aspirations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students were asked if their ethnicity or cultural background contributed to their educational success (Q15). These results are shown in Table 16. At the HSI, 46% stated it somewhat contributes. This factor received the highest number of responses. At the PWI, this was also the highest (61.54%). At the HSI, the factor with the lowest number of responses was highly contributes. This was the same at the PWI along with somewhat does not contribute.

Table 15

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to what Motivates them LEAST*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Attainment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Peers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/Career aspirations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative Analysis of Research Question 1**

Based on the information obtained from the surveys, focus groups were set up at both institutions. The focus group topics were based on the response rate in each factor level from questions in the survey. The factor that had the highest percentage at each level was selected for focus group discussions.

For the individual/student level factors, at the PWI, 92.31% of the respondents stated they were self-motivated. This was the highest percentage for that level. Of this percentage, 61.54% stated they were very self-motivated and 30.77% stated they were somewhat self-motivated.
When asked what motivated them the most, 15.38% stated degree attainment, 7.69% stated family, 7.69% stated friends and peers, and 69.23% stated goals and career aspirations.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions of Ethnicity or Cultural Background to retention</th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly contributes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat contributes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat does not contribute</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not contribute at all</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When discussing self-motivations during the focus groups, students at the PWI stated the following:

- I was motivated in high school.
- I want to be successful in life and I want my two younger brothers to look up to me.
- I am the oldest and everyone is looking up to me see how college works.
- My motivation is to try to better myself. I want to give back to my parents.
- My motivation is because I got excited from hearing about this school and orientation. I did not like high school as much. I like that there are less restrictions in college and that motivates me.
- My high school prepared me for college and that motivated me.
- I am motivated because I want to be successful in school.
- I am motivated because I want to be a physical therapist.
I did research on colleges while I was in high school and that motived me.

At the HSI, academic preparedness showed the highest percentage for individual or student level factors. For this level factor, 94% of the respondents stated they were academically prepared for college. Of this percentage, 38% stated they were very well prepared and 56% stated they were somewhat prepared. When asked of what were they most academically prepared, 62% stated academics or prerequisite courses, 20% stated study skills, 4% stated test taking skills, and 14% stated time management.

When discussing academic preparedness in the focus groups, the students at the HSI responded as follows:

- AVID (Achievement via Individual Determination) high school program helped.
- I went to an arts school and I had to make things with my hands. I know I learn by doing things. I like to express myself.
- I bought a planner and that saved my life. Everything I do I write it down. I learned that on my own.
- I got A’s in high school. Now I put in the work in college and I push myself.
- Lessons in high school were overlapped. That helped me to learn subject manner.
- At my high school they pushed us to go to college. For my graduating class 100% of us got accepted to college.
- My high school teachers did SAT prep and had us write college essays.
- If it wasn’t for AVID I would not have made it. They made sure my college application was set and I knew what classes I needed. AVID prepared me for college.
- I was in AVID.
Research Question 1 (RQ1): Summary of the Themes

Research question number one relates to individual/student level factors. For the quantitative part of the study, being academically prepared was most important to the students at the HSI. When these data were discussed during the focus groups, the common theme with the students was their high school and teachers prepared them for college. They also discussed specific programs, like AVID (Achievement via Individual Determination). During the quantitative phase at the PWI, the students stated being self-motivated was most important. When these data were discussed at the focus groups, the themes that emerged were they were self-motivated because they wanted to be successful and they wanted to make their family proud.

Research Question 2: What institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

Quantitative Analysis of Research Question 2

The second set of factors deal with individual level factors. The research question that addresses institutional level factors is “what institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of institutions?” Table 17 shows the questions related to those factors.

Displayed in Table 18 are the responses to the question related to students being satisfied with whether or not their college/university is preparing them to reach their educational goals (Q16). Forty-nine students at the HSI responded and 13 at the PWI. Of the respondents at the HSI, 48.96% stated they are somewhat satisfied with how their institution is preparing them to reach their education goals. At the PWI, 46.15% stated the same. This was the highest at both institutions. At both institutions, the lowest response was they were not satisfied at all.
Table 17

Institutional Level Factors

What institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the university?

Q16 – How satisfied are you with how this college/university is preparing you to meet your educational goals?
Q17 – In relation to your college/university preparing you for your educational goals, with what are you most satisfied?
Q18 - In relation to your college/university preparing you for your educational goals, with what are you least satisfied?
Q19 – Why did you attend this college/university?
Q20 – With what clubs and/or activities are you involved?
Q21 – If you are not involved in clubs and/or activities, why not?
Q22 – What on campus services do you use which contribute to your success as a student?
Q23 – How does your financial aid package meet your educational needs?
Q24 – With what about financial aid are you most satisfied?
Q25 - With what about financial aid are you least satisfied?
Q26 – How helpful are your professors?
Q27 – What about your professors makes them most helpful?
Q28 – What about your professors makes them least helpful?
Q29 – How do the traditions of your college/university contribute to your educational success?
Q30 – How does the diversity of your college/university contribute to your educational success?

Students were then asked what they were most and least satisfied with as it relates to their university preparing them to reach their goals (Q17, Q18). They were asked to select between academic programs/courses, advising/advisors, professors, and support programs or resources. Of the respondents at the HSI, 32% selected professors as their most satisfied factor. This was the highest selected factor. At the PWI, 30.77% selected advising/advisors and 30.77% selected professors. These were both the highest selected factors. The lowest selected factor at both institutions was support programs/resources. These data are shown in Table 19.
Table 20 shows what the students are least satisfied with as it relates to their college/university preparing them for their educational goals. The students selected from the same choices as above. At the HSI, 32% selected advising/advisors. This was the highest select factor. At the PWI, 38.46% selected academic programs/courses and 38.46% selected advising/advisors. At the PWI, these were the highest selected factors. The lowest selected factor at the HSI was professors. The lowest selected factor at the PWI was support programs/resources.

Table 18

Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to Satisfaction with College/University Preparing for Educational Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th></th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly satisfied</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.65%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48.96%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unsatisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied at all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked why they attended their college/university (Q19), at the HSI, 40% selected cost or finances/scholarships. This factor was the highest for the HSI. At the PWI and based on the same choices, the highest factor selected, at 38.46%, was institutional size. The lowest selected factor at both institutions was race/ethnic demographics. These data are shown in Table 21.

Table 22 shows the clubs or activities in which the students participated (Q20). Of the HSI respondents, 34.85% selected they are not involved at all and 33.34% stated they are
involved in academic related support organizations. For the HSI, these two factors were the highest. When compared to the PWI, 40% selected academic related or support organizations. This was the highest response. Of the respondents not involved at the HSI (Q21), 16.33% stated because they do not live on campus; 26.53% stated because they have a job or work conflict; 32.65% stated lack of time, 18.37% stated because there was nothing of interest, and 6.12% stated other reasons. At the PWI, 50% stated lack of time and the other 50% stated there was nothing of interest.

Table 19

Frequency and Percentage of Respondents regarding to what are they MOST Satisfied with related to their College/University Preparing them for Educational Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic programs/Courses</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising/Advisors</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support programs/Resources</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were provided with a list of campus services and they had to select the one that contributed to their success as a student (Q22). Students selected from academic support services, advisors/advising, library, or any other support department. The responses are in Table 23. At the HSI, 38.98% selected library. This factor received the highest number of responses. The factors with the lowest response rate were academic support services (16.95%) and support
departments (16.1%). When compared to the PWI, 29.17% selected academic support services and the lowest area was advisor/advising (20.83%).

Table 20

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents regarding what they are LEAST Satisfied with related to their College/University Preparing for Educational Goals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic programs/Courses</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising/Advisors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support programs/Resources</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When students were asked about financial aid meeting their educational needs (Q23), at the HSI 66% of the respondents stated financial aid either highly meets their needs or somewhat meets their needs (see Table 24). More specifically, 32% of respondents stated financial aid highly meets their educational needs and 34% stated financial aid somewhat meets their educational needs. These were the highest selected responses. The lowest select response was does not meet the needs at all. At the PWI, the highest selected response was somewhat meets the needs (53.85%). At the same institutions, the lowest selected responses were does not meet the needs at all and do not receive financial aid.

Tables 25 and 26 show what the students were most and least satisfied with as it relates to financial aid meeting their educational needs (Q24, Q25). Students selected from the areas of help with educational expenses, customer service, type of aid offered, and the process to apply
for aid. At the HSI, 41.67% of the respondents selected they were most satisfied with help with educational expenses. This factor was the highest selected. At the PWI, the highest was type of aid offered (46.15%). The lowest factors selected at the HSI were customer service and process to apply for aid. The lowest factor selected at the PWI was customer service.

Table 21

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to their Reason for Attending College/University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost or finances/Scholarships</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnic demographics</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution size</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of programs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about with what they were least satisfied as it relates to financial aid, the students replied from the choices of not enough aid, customer service, type of aid offered, and the process to apply for aid. At the HSI, the highest selected factor as it relates to being least satisfied with was customer service (26.53%). The highest selected factor at the PWI was not enough aid (46.15%). The lowest selected factor at both institutions, as it relates to being least satisfied with financial aid, was type of aid offered.

Data presented in Table 27 represents how students feel about how helpful were their professors (Q26). Of the respondents at the HSI, 60% stated they were very helpful and at the
PWI 46.15% stated they were somewhat helpful. These were the highest selected responses at both institutions. The least select response at the HSI was not helpful at all. Along with somewhat not helpful, at the PWI this was also the least selected response.

Table 22

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Participating in Clubs and/or Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic related or support organizations</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Life/Fraternities or Sororities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service related organizations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.61%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student government</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.55%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.61%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not involved</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34.85%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a follow up to the question about professors being helpful, the students were asked how the professors were most and least helpful (Q27, Q28). At the HSI, 36% of the respondents stated the professors were most helpful because of their availability and willingness to help. At the PWI, most of the respondents responded similarly. This response was the highest selected at both institutions. The lowest factor selected at the HSI was teaching style and the lowest at the PWI was motivate/encourage. These data are shown in Table 28.
Table 23

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to Campus Services Contributing to Student Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Services</th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic support services</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.95%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor/Advising</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.58%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38.98%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Department</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to their Financial Aid Meeting their Educational Needs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Aid Status</th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly meets the needs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat meets the needs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat does not meet the needs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not meet the needs at all</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not receive financial aid</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to what they are MOST satisfied about Financial Aid*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help with educational expenses</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of aid offered</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process to apply for aid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to what they are LEAST satisfied about Financial Aid*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough aid</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of aid offered</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process to apply for aid</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.37%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked what was least helpful about professors, 40% stated teaching style, and this was the highest selected factor. At the PWI, 46.15% stated motivate and encourage, and most respondents selected this factor. The lowest selected factor at the HSI was motivate/encourage.
and the lowest selected factor at the PWI was availability/willingness to assist. These data are shown in Table 29.

Table 27

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to How Helpful are Professors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th></th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat not helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful at all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 30 are from when students were asked about the traditions of their institution and whether or not those traditions contributed to their success as a student (Q29). Most respondents at the HSI stated somewhat contributes (40.82%) and most respondents at the PWI selected the same (30.77%) and does not contribute at all (30.77%). Highly contributes was the least selected factor at both institutions.

The final question in the section related to institutional level factors asked the students whether or not the diversity of the institution contributed to their success as a student. Of the respondents at the HSI, 36% stated somewhat contributes and this was the highest response selected. At 38.46%, this was also the highest response selected at the PWI. The lowest selected at the HSI was somewhat does not contribute. The lowest selected responses at the PWI were highly contributes and somewhat does not contribute. These data are shown in Table 31.
Table 28

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to how their Professors are MOST helpful*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability/Willingness</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject knowledge</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching style</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to how their Professors are LEAST helpful*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability/Willingness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching style</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to the Contributions of Traditions of the College/University Contributing to Student Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly contributes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat contributes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40.82%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat does not</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.49%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contribute</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to the Diversity of the College/University to contributing to Student Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly contributes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat contributes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat does not</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contribute</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative Analysis of Research Question 2**

For the institutional level factors at the PWI, the factor with the highest favorable response was with professors being helpful and contributing to the retention of students. For this factor, 84.61% of the respondents stated their professors were helpful and this contributed to their retention as a student. Of this percentage, 38.46% stated their professors were very helpful
and 46.15% stated their professors were somewhat helpful. When asked what was most helpful about their professors 53.85% stated their availability and willingness to help and 7.69% stated their motivation and encouragement.

When asked to discuss their professors during the focus groups, the students responded as follows:

- The professors at my school motivate me.
- The professors are very excited about the subject. They also offer internships and research opportunities.
- They are there for emotional and professional support. They give you that extra hand when needed.
- The professors are there when you need them. They are available. They make sure you understand.
- Some of the professors are very hands-on.
- They are available and making an appointment is not a problem.
- The professors give you their cell phone number on the syllabus.
- I get to do research with my professors.
- They have a lot of information and insight and they are passionate about the subject.
- They have practical experience.
- My professor wrote the textbook.

Like at the PWI, the respondents at the HSI favored helpful professors (92%) when asked about institutional level factors. Of this percentage, 60% stated they were very helpful and 32% stated they were somewhat helpful. When asked how they were most helpful, 36% stated their
availability and willingness to help, 18% stated motivate or encourage, 26% stated subject knowledge, 14% stated teaching style, and 6% stated other.

When asked about their professors during the focus group discussions, the participants at the HSI responded as follows:

- I think the professors here are pretty cool.
- The professors are culturally competent. On the other hand, they are uncomfortable talking about real life situations.
- They care about you. I am surrounded by science professors. They want you to succeed and go on in life and do better things.
- They are not getting paid enough to teach here. Aside from that, they are really awesome.
- Once in my major, the professors are very passionate.
- They understand we do not have a lot of money, so they find books that are not as expensive.
- Since they do not have a lot of students, they can go one on one with the students.
- Since classes are larger, but we have small labs and we can one on one attention at that time.
- The professor knew my name. They care and you don’t have to ask.
- They understand their demographics. They understand we have other classes and jobs.
- The professors understand that college is the most important thing in my life right now.
- The good professors outweigh the bad.
- They are happy to be there and happy to teach. They actually like what they do. They are very passionate about what they are teaching.
- There is not a lot of money here, so they have to like it.
Research Question 2: Summary of the Themes

The second research question related to institutional level factors. During the quantitative phase of the study, students at the HSI responded that professors contribute to their success. When this was discussed during the focus groups, the themes that emerged were: their professors care, they are passionate, and make time for students. During the quantitative phase at the PWI, the students also favored their professors contributing to their retention. The themes that emerged were the professors are knowledgeable and they support the students.

Research Question 3: What social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities?

Quantitative Analysis of Research Question 3

Social and external are the third level of factors. The research question is what social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the different types of universities? Presented in Table 3 is a list of the questions associated with the social and external level factors.

The first set of questions related to social and external factors dealt with the support of family. The students were asked how supportive were their family as it related to their education (Q31). The results are shown in Table 33. Of the respondents at the HSI, 74% selected very supportive. This response was the highest selected. This was also the highest selected at the PWI (76.92%). The lowest response selected at the HSI was not supportive at all. The lowest responses selected at the PWI were somewhat not supportive and not supportive at all.
Table 32

*Social and External Level Factors*

What social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the university?

Q31 - How supportive is your family related to your education?
Q32 - How does your family support you most?
Q33 - How does your family support you least?
Q34 - How supportive are your friends related to your education?
Q35 - How do your friends support you most?
Q36 - How do your friends support you least?
Q37 - If you have a mentor, who is s/he?
Q38 - How does your mentor most contribute to your academic or educational success?
Q39 - How does your mentor least contribute to your academic or educational success?

Continuing with family support, the students were asked how does their family support them most and how does their family support them least (Q32, Q33). The students were given the options of: checks on your progress, financially, motivate/encourage, or other. The results are shown in Tables 34 and 35. When asked how are they most supportive, the highest factor level selected by the respondents at both the HSI and the PWI was motivate/encourage, 56% and 53.85% respectively. The lowest factor level selected at both institutions was checks on your progress. When asked how family is least supportive, the highest factor level selected was financially (44%). This was also the same at the PWI (38.46%). At both institutions, motivate/encourage was the lowest selected factor.

When asked how family is least supportive, the highest factor level selected was financially (44%). This was also the same at the PWI (38.46%). At both institutions, motivate/encourage was the lowest selected factor. These data are shown in Table 37.
Table 33

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to Family Support Contributing to Retention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th></th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat supportive</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat not</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not supportive at all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 34

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to areas of the MOST Support from Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th></th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks on your progress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to family, the students were asked whether or not their friends support their education (Q34). At both institutions, the majority of the respondents thought friends were either very supportive or somewhat supportive. At the HSI, 50% stated very supportive. This was 76.92% at the PWI. This was the highest selected factor at both institutions. Somewhat not
supportive was the lowest for the HSI and somewhat supportive was the lowest factor for the PWI. These data are shown in Table 36.

Table 35

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to areas of the LEAST Support from Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checks on your progress</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 37 and 38 show how the respondents’ friends were most or least supportive (Q35, Q36). As for being most supportive, at the HSI, 42.86% of respondents selected their friends motivate/encourage. This was the highest factor selected. At the PWI, 53.85% selected motivate/encourage and this was the highest factor selected. When asked about how friends are least supportive, at the HSI 50% selected study together and 46.15% of the students at the PWI selected understanding goals. The lowest factor select at the HSI and PWI was motivate/encourage.

The final few questions asked the students if they had a mentor (Q37) and if they replied yes, then they were asked how their mentor contributed to their academic or educational success (Q38, Q49). When asked whether or not they have a mentor, 64% of the respondents at the HSI stated they do not have a mentor and 53.85% of the respondents at the PWI stated the same.
These results are shown in Table 39. In Tables 40 and 41 is how the mentors contribute most and least towards the students’ educational success.

Table 36

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to Friends Support Contributing to Retention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat supportive</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat not supportive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not supportive at all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 37

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related areas of MOST Support from Friends*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI #</th>
<th>HSI %</th>
<th>PWI #</th>
<th>PWI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study together</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.41%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of goals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.73%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 38

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to areas of LEAST Support from Friends*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>PWI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study together</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of goals</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 39

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to Mentor Contributing to Retention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>PWI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University staff member</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have a mentor</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 40

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to what Mentors MOST Contribute to Educational Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>PWI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to set goals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings/Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 41

*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents related to what Mentors LEAST Contribute to Educational Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSI</th>
<th>PWI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to set goals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate/Encourage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings/Communication</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative Analysis of Research Question 3**

For the social and external level factors at the PWI, family support related to education resulted in the highest percentage. For this factor, 100% of the respondents selected either very supportive (76.92%) or somewhat supportive (23.08%). When asked how their family support
them the most, 7.69% stated their family checks on their progress; 30.77% stated their family supports them financially; and 53.85% stated their family motivates or encourages them.

When asked about their family during the focus groups, the respondents stated the following:

- My parents hold me to a very high standard. I do not want to disappoint my mother.
- None of my other family members finished college. I am my mother’s last hope. I do not want to disappoint my family.
- It is not only my immediate family, it is my extended family. There is a pressure for me to do well.
- My parents have been there. They always provide encouraging words.
- I am the youngest and my parents and my siblings keep me grounded.
- I feel like my friends are my family here.
- Most of my motivation comes from family and friends. My parents believe in me more than I believe in myself.

For the HSI, at the social and external level factors, friends received the highest response rate (98%) as contributing to their success as a student. Of this percentage, 50% stated their friends were very supportive and 48% stated their friends were somewhat supportive. When asked how their friends support them most, 14% stated they motivate and encourage, 20.41% stated study together, and 36.73% stated they understand their goals. The percentage for family was very close (96%) to that of friends. As a result, some of the responses include both friends and family.

During the focus groups, when the participants at the HSI were asked how their friends and/or family supported their success as a student. They replied as follows:
• They could not support me financially, but they supported me mentally. They encourage me to finish.
• My friends helped me with my writing. I had a friend who reviewed my papers for me.
• Family and friends encourage me and they celebrate my achievements with me.
• My family constantly reminds me of the importance of education.
• My friends listen to me when I am stressed about school.
• My family is there for me emotionally if and when I reach out.
• My friends support me by forming study groups. We do a lot together to support each other. They have become like family to me.
• My friends and family are moral support.
• My friends and family also are moral support for me. They listen to me when I am stressed.
• My parents are separated and they support me differently. My dad supports me financially. My mom supports me emotionally. My brother and sister see me as a role model.

Research Question 3: Summary of the Themes

The third research question related to social and external level factors. For the quantitative part of the study, the students at the HSI favored their friends and how their friends assisted with their retention. When these data were discussed in the focus groups, themes that emerged were their friends provide emotional and moral support. The students often interchanged friends and family. At the PWI, during the quantitative phase, family emerged as the common factor. When family was discussed during the focus groups, the common themes were emotional support and the students not wanting to disappoint their family.
Summary of Findings

When reviewing data related to individual and student level factors, the topics most selected by respondents at the HSI pointed to them being prepared academically. A large majority of respondents (94%) stated they were either very well prepared or somewhat prepared academically. They further stated they were most prepared for prerequisite courses and least academically prepared for time management. When compared to the PWI, 84.62% of the respondents stated they were academically prepared. The highest level individual or student level factor from respondents at the PWI related to being self-motivated (92.31%). The respondents stated they were either very self-motivated or somewhat self-motivated. They added they were most motivated by their goals and aspirations and least motivated by friends and peers. At both institutions, ethnicity or cultural background was the least favorable topic selected by respondents.

At the HSI, when the topic of academic preparedness was discussed during the focus groups the emergent themes were their high school teacher prepared them for college. They also discussed specific programs that prepare high school students for college. One program discussed was AVID (Achievement via Individual Determination). When the participants at the PWI discussed self-motivation during the focus groups, the emergent themes were they wanted to be successful and they wanted to make their family proud.

Under institutional level factors, the highest rated topic related to professors. The respondents at both the HSI (92%) and PWI (84.61%) stated their professors contributed to their success. Also, at both institutions the respondents reported what is most helpful about professors is their availability and willingness to assist. At the HSI, the respondents stated what is least helpful about their professors is their teaching style. At the PWI, the respondents stated they are
least helpful when it comes to being motivating and encouraging. When the topic of professors was discussed at both institutions, the emergent themes were their professors care, are compassionate, make time for students, support students, and they are knowledgeable.

Also, under institutional level factors, when the students were asked about what they were most satisfied with about their college/university preparing them for their education goals, at both institutions the majority of the respondents once again selected professors. On the contrary, when asked about what they were least satisfied with as it relates to their institution preparing them for their educational goals, students at both institutions selected advising.

When asked why they attended the college, the majority of the respondents at the HSI stated cost, finances, or scholarships. The majority of the respondents at the PWI stated institutional size. The lowest for both institutions was race/ethnic demographics. Of the respondents that stated they were involved in clubs or organizations, at both institutions the majority of them stated they are involved in an academic or support related organization. At both institutions, traditions of the college/university were the least favorable topics as it relates to student success.

As for social and external level factors, the highest rated topic at the HSI was friends (98%) and the highest rated topic at the PWI was family (100%). At the HSI, the respondents stated their friends motivate or encourage them. The respondents at the PWI stated the same for family. The majority of the students at both the HSI and the PWI stated they do not have a mentor.

During the focus groups at both institutions, when the participants were asked about family and friends, they used them interchangeably. The emergent themes from the topics related
to family and friends were they provide emotional and moral support and they did not want to disappoint their family.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section is a summary of the research problem and the study design. The second section is a review of the findings for each research question. The third section is a discussion of the implications of the findings and recommendations made based on those findings. The fourth section is the limitations of the study. After a review of the literature and the findings, I present recommendations for a further study. In the final section, conclusions based on the research are provided.

Summary of Research Problem and Study Design

The purpose of this mixed method study was to investigate and compare factors that contribute to the retention of minority students in higher education at two different types of institutions: a Predominately White Institution (PWI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The retention of students is an institutional performance indicator. This means that student retention is one of the primary gauges used when measuring the success of an institution. Retention as a goal of an institution is one of the best indicators that the institution is achieving student satisfaction and success (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999).

This study consists of a mixed method research design, which involved the collection and analysis of data from an online survey and focus groups. To accomplish this design, I surveyed ethnic minority students of the 2014 sophomore class who were freshmen in 2013 at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in the United States. An online student survey and focus groups were used to determine what factors
contribute to their retention as students, and the differences between types of institutions were compared.

The use of mixed method research was done in a sequential manner, with the collection and analysis of the quantitative data first, followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data. According to Creswell (2007) the premise of mixed methods research is that a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches provides a better understanding of the research problem. Mixed methods research provides strength and offsets the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative research, if done individually. Also, mixed methods research provides comprehensive evidence; answers questions that cannot be answered by quantitative or qualitative research alone; encourages the use of multiple worldviews or paradigms; and allows the researcher to use all methods possible to address a research problem (Creswell 2007).

More specifically, this is a sequential explanatory mixed method design. This design is where the quantitative data, then qualitative data are collected and analyzed. The sequential explanatory mixed method design is utilized when the qualitative results are used to explain and interpret the quantitative results (Creswell et al., 2003). Creswell (2004) adds that the collection and analysis of data during the quantitative phase is the priority for addressing the study’s questions.

**Summary of Findings**

**Research Question 1 – Individual/Student Level Factors**

When participants were asked about their academic preparedness prior to coming to college and how they felt their preparation contributed to their success as a student, at both the HSI and PWI, the students stated they were well prepared. When specifically asked for what they
were academically prepared most and least, the students at both institutions stated they were most prepared for academic courses and prerequisites. Again, at both institutions, they also stated they were least prepared for study skills. When asked about how their self-motivation contributed to their retention and success as a student, the majority of the participants responded by stating they are very self-motivated. As for what motivates them most, the majority of the participants at both institutions stated that goals and career aspirations were the most motivating. Conversely, when asked what motivates them least, the majority of participants at both institutions stated their friends and/or peers. The themes that emerged and were discussed during the focus groups were academic preparedness at the HSI and self-motivation at the PWI. As for the academic preparedness, the students stated their teachers prepared them for college, which helped them with their success as college students. They also mentioned being involved in programs that helped prepare them for college. One specific program mentioned in each focus group was AVID (Achievement via Individual Determination). The theme discussed at the PWI was self-motivation. More specifically, the students stated they were motivated because they wanted to be successful and they wanted to make their families proud.

Research Question 2 – Institutional Level Factors

Participants were asked to respond about the helpfulness of their professors. The majority of the respondents at the HSI and PWI responded their professors were helpful. At both the HSI and the PWI, the majority of the respondents stated their professors helped them most by being available and by the willingness of their professors to assist them. At the HSI, they least liked the teaching style. At the PWI, they least liked the how the faculty motivate or encourage.
The theme that emerged from the online survey from the participants at both institutions was professors contributing to their success as a student. This theme was discussed during the focus groups and more specific themes emerged like their professors are caring, passionate, and knowledgeable. They also stated their professors support the students and make time for students.

**Research Question 3 – Social and External Level Factors**

The third research question dealt the social and external level factors. At this level, participants were asked questions about family, friends, and mentors. When asked about family, at both institutions the majority of the participants felt their family was very supportive. At both institutions, most participants stated their family motivates and encourages them. Also, at both institutions the participants stated their family supported them least financially.

Like family, the participants at both institutions gave similar results for friends. The majority of the respondents stated their friends were very supportive. For how they support most, the majority of the respondents at both institutions stated motivate and encourage. When asked how they support least, the majority of the respondents at the HSI stated studying together, and the majority at the PWI stated understanding goals.

The themes that emerged from the online survey were family and friends. When discussed in the focus groups, the students used these terms interchangeably. More specific, themes that emerged were their family and friends provided more emotional support. The participants also stated they did not want to disappoint their family.

**Implication of Findings**

The themes that emerged related to self-motivation, academic preparedness, the role of professors, and the role or family and friends. All of these factors are supported by the literature.
Seidman (2005) reported that commonalities among minority students that contribute to attrition are financial constraints, academic preparation, and being first generation. Academic preparedness was one of the topics that emerged from the online survey and developed as a theme during the focus groups. In addition, Seidman (2005) discussed programs that promote student development and how involvement in the institution is more likely to produce satisfied students. He added that recruiting certain types of students to fit certain environments will likely increase retention.

One model that focuses on the retention of African American students and their validation at predominantly white institutions was developed by Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, and Mugenda (2012). Their model looks at two stages. Stage one is recruitment consideration. This stage involves creating a non-threatening community where parents, guardians, and/or significant others can ask questions about the university and not feel intimidated. At both institutions, during the online survey family emerged as a topic. When discussed in the focus groups, the students mentioned not wanting to disappoint their parents and also wanting to make their parents proud. Stage two is the first-year experience. This stage is divided into validation through orientation, in-class validation, and out-of-class validation. The orientation plays a major role in the student’s transition from high school to college. In-class validation is where the faculty should provide a reinforcing classroom environment, which includes the methods of instruction, course content, evaluation and feedback, student-faculty interaction, and reward structure. Faculty was the topic that emerged at both institutions when discussing institutional level factors. When discussed during the focus groups, the students discussed the importance of having caring and available faculty. The out-of-class validation includes areas like campus climate, residence halls, work experience, peer interaction, and role models. The model recognizes the importance of the
institution (e.g. people, programs, services, and policies) to the academic success of African American students and students in general. Also, there should be some involvement of outside agents like parents and mentors.

Hernandez and Lopez (2012) examined personal factors, environmental factors, involvement factors, and socio-cultural factors related to retention. The personal factors consisted of the student’s high school grade point average and test scores, academic self-concept, the family, and their finances. Of these factors, academic self-concept and family were both topics from the online survey and developed as theme during the focus groups. This occurred at both institutions. Hernandez and Lopez (2012) also discuss environmental factors which consisted of racial climate, presence of an ethnic community, and whether or not the student is working and living on campus. The involvement factors consisted of faculty-student interaction, mentorship, and participation in student organizations. The socio-cultural factors included immigrant status, ethnic identity development, gender roles, community orientation and the role of religion.

Recommendations

The results from this mixed method study show the factors that contribute to the retention of students at a HSI and PWI are similar. The factors at the individual or student level are self-motivation and academic preparedness. The factor at the institutional level is the professors. The factors at the social and external level are family and friends.

One recommendation for institutions of higher education is to look for students who are self-motivated. This can be done by having students submit an essay where they write about themselves as a student. The prompt for the essay could specifically ask students to write about why they are self-motivated and ask them to give examples of how they are motivated.
Reference letters from teachers, counselors, principals, and community members could also address a student’s level of self-motivation. Smaller institutions could consider personal interviews where students are asked questions about their level of self-motivation. Institutions can also request electronic portfolios or videos from students.

Higher education institutions can look at academic preparedness in different ways. One way is to examine the rigor of high school course load in addition to the grade point average. Institutions can also examine if students have taken higher level math and science courses. They can also determine whether or not students have taken writing intensive courses in English or other disciplines.

Another way institutions could evaluate students for their level of academic preparedness is by looking at a student’s involvement in extracurricular academic or support programs. Many of these programs prepare students for college. These types of programs teach study skills and they also encourage students to take classes needed for success in institutions of higher education. These programs help students with the admissions application process, facilitate the completion of financial aid applications, and assist with college essays. Some support programs take students on college visits to assist them with knowing what to expect prior to entering college.

Standardized tests, like the ACT and SAT, can also be used to determine a student’s level of academic preparedness. Not all higher education institutions require the ACT or SAT for admissions. Some schools use a placement examination once a student is admitted. These tests usually determine a student’s level for placement in math and/or English classes.

Another recommendation relates to the role of professors. To assist with this retention factor, institutions should look for ways students can interact with professors early in the
admissions process and during their first semester in college. Once a student completes an
application for admission to an institution and they list a potential major, a professor from that
academic discipline could make contact with the student and welcome them to the university,
along with their acceptance letter. When students visit campuses for tours, they should get to
visit the academic area of their interest and, if possible, have a conversation with a professor
from that area.

In the classroom, professors should understand the significance of their role as it relates
to the retention of students. They should have regularly scheduled office hours and provide ways
for students to set appointments or make contact with them outside of those scheduled times.
Aside from being experts in their subject content, they should have an understanding of teaching
pedagogy and learning styles of diverse groups of students. This is not limited to ethnic minority
students, but also includes students with disabilities.

Families and friends were important to the students that participated in this study. Higher
education institutions should understand the importance of family and friends to student retention
and develop programs to assist both parents and students with the student’s transition to their
institution. This transition should start with the recruitment process. During this time, institutions
should communicate with both the parent and student about resources for the student, deadlines,
and general costs associated with tuition, fees, and other expenses. During new student
orientation, institutions should have a parent program that is sensitive to needs of parents from
diverse populations, with efforts on educating and supporting parents/guardians of first-
generation students. Institutions should consider having a professional staff member dedicated to
assisting and getting needed information to parents. Institutions should also understand that the
traditional family structure is changing. This means the word family can mean extended family members and sometimes even friends.

**Limitations of Study**

The limitations of a study are often related to inadequate measures or variables, loss or lack of participants, small sample sizes, errors in measurement, and other factors typically related to data collection and analysis (Creswell 2005). For this study, one limitation was the criteria used in the selection and comparison of the institutions. Not all institutions are totally alike and there were slight differences. Another limitation was the academic preparedness of the students. One factor that could have been considered is the percentage of students needing remediation. This could have been done by looking at scores on entrance or placement examinations. Another factor that could serve as a challenge was the geographic location of the schools. Are the schools located in rural areas or major cities? Do students have access to outside resources such as family members and mentors? Does the school provide substantial numbers of scholarships to support students? Since these questions were not used to determine the sample institutions, they were considered as a limitation to the study. These questions, however, were addressed in the survey.

The response rate at the PWI was low. The method of the data collection and a low response rate can also serve as a challenge. Students receive a lot of emails and might not view this study as an important correspondence and they may not take the time to complete the survey. At the PWI, the school would not allow me to send the emails. The emails only came from the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs and the number of emails sent was limited. This was a challenge and resulted in a low response rate. A low response rate could eliminate the findings being used to generalize to a larger population. A final limitation is that the research is
only focusing on retention and not reasons students drop out. Key reasons students drop out were not included in data obtained.

**Conclusions**

Jensen (2011) summarized factors into three levels, the individual level, institutional level, and social and external level. The individual level includes academic performance which takes into account the high school and college grade point average, the course load, credits earned, and the academic discipline of the student. This level also includes attitudes and satisfaction or whether the student has a positive perspective of academics, a commitment to college, and a sense of belonging and social connectedness. The institutional level involves the student’s academic engagement. This level includes factors such as the student being engaged in undergraduate research activities and involvement in campus clubs and organizations. Also at the institutional level the size of the university is a factor. At the social and external level, factors such as the support of faculty, staff, and family are important.

When these factors were examined at both a Hispanic Serving Institution and a Predominantly White Institution as it related to the retention of minority students, the results were similar and in many cases identical. The success of students at both institutions at the student level was attributed to their level of academic preparedness and self-motivation. At the institutional level, at both types of institutions the success and retention of ethnic minority students was linked to their interaction and association with their professors. At the social and external level, the success and retention of students was connected to their relationship and support offered by their family and friends. All of these factors should be considered by colleges and universities with they are looking for strategies and factors to contribute to the retention of minority students.
Recommendations for Further Study

I recommend the following ways to further this study:

1. Since this study only looked at two type of institutions, a Predominantly White Institution and a Hispanic Serving Institution, this study could be expanded by including a Historically Black College or University as part of the comparison.

2. This study could be expanded by focusing more on retention factors related to males and female genders within ethnic minority groups.

3. This study could be expanded by finding out what academic courses a student completed prior to entering college. This expansion could also include looking at extracurricular academic programs.
References


Brundage, I. (2012). Factors that contribute to the retention of minority students at a state


Hubbard, S. & Stage, F. (2009). Attitudes, perception, and preferences of faculty at Hispanic


Appendix A – Online Survey – Brundage (2012) Study

*Online Survey Questions*

What individual/student level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?

Q1 – How well prepared academically were you for college?

Q2 – In relation to your academic preparedness for college, for what were you **most** prepared?

Q3 – In relation to your academic preparedness for college, for what were you **least** prepared?

Q4 – What are your educational goals?

Q5 – Are you satisfied with how this university is preparing you to meet your educational goals?

Q6 – In relation to the university preparing you for your educational goals, with what are you **most** satisfied?

Q7 - In relation to the university preparing you for your educational goals, with what are you **least** satisfied?

Q8 – To what extent do you consider yourself to be self-motivated?

Q9 – In relation to college, what motivates you the **most**?

Q10 – In relation to college, what motivates you the **least**?

(Upcraft & Gardner, 1989; Zamani, 2000; Tinto, 2003; Jensen, 2011)

What institutional level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?

Q11 – Why did you attend this university?

Q12 – Were you recruited to attend this university?

Q13 – If you were recruited to attend this university, how were you recruited?

Q14 – At this university, are you involved in clubs and activities?
Q15 – If you are involved in clubs and activities, with what clubs and activities are you involved?
Q16 – If you are not involved in clubs and organizations, why not?
Q17 – How does being involved in these clubs and activities support/benefit you most?
Q18 - How does being involved in these clubs and activities support/benefit you least?
Q19 – What on campus services do you use which contribute to your success as a student?
Q20 – How does your financial aid package meet your educational needs?
Q21 – With what about financial aid are you most satisfied?
Q22 - With what about financial aid are you least satisfied?
Q23 – Does the curriculum of the university meet your educational needs?
Q24 – What about the curriculum meets your needs the most?
Q25 - What about the curriculum meets your needs the least?
Q26 – How helpful are your professors?
Q27 – What about your professors makes them most helpful?
Q28 – What about your professors makes them least helpful?

(Upcraft & Gardner, 1989; Swail & Holmes, 2000; Jensen, 2011)

What social and external level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?

Q29 – How supportive is your family related to your education?
Q30 – How does your family support you most?
Q31 – How does your family support you least?
Q32 – How supportive are your friends related to your education?
Q33 – How do your friends support you most?
Q34 – How do your friends support your least?

Q35 – Do you have a mentor?

Q36 – If you have a mentor, how does your mentor contribute to your academic success?

Q37 – How does your mentor most contribute to your academic success?

Q38 – How does your mentor least contribute to your academic success?

Q39 – Are there any factors, not discussed previously, that contribute to your success as a student?

Q40 – Are there any factors, not discussed previously, that hinder your success as a student?

(Upcraft & Gardner, 1989, Jensen, 2011)
Appendix B – Online Survey – Current Study

Online Survey Questions

What individual/student level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the university?

1. In what state is your college/university located?
2. Consent form
   a. Yes, I agree with the consent form and I would like to continue with this survey.
   b. No, I do not agree with the consent form and I would like to exit this survey.
3. What is your email address? (This email address will only be used to compare data and if you elect to participate in a focus group.)
4. Please select your race/ethnicity
   a. American Indian or Alaska Native
   b. Asian
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic or Latino
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   f. White
   g. Other (please specify)
5. Please select your gender
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other
   d. Prefer not to disclose
6. Please select your age range
   a. 18 - 24
   b. 25 - 30
   c. 30 - 35
   d. 35 – older
7. Please list your major. If undecided, please specify.
8. Please specify your current working status
   a. Full-time
   b. Part-time
   c. I do not have a job
9. How well prepared academically were you for college?
   a. Very well prepared
   b. Somewhat prepared
   c. Somewhat unprepared
   d. Not prepared at all
10. In relation to your academic preparedness for college, for what were you most prepared?
    a. Academic or prerequisites courses
b. Study Skills
c. Test taking skills
d. Time management
e. Other (please specify)

11. In relation to your academic preparedness for college, for what were you least prepared?
   a. Academic or prerequisites courses
   b. Study Skills
   c. Test taking skills
   d. Time management
   e. Other (please specify)

12. To what extent do you consider yourself to be self-motivated?
   a. Very self-motivated
   b. Somewhat self-motivated
   c. Somewhat unmotivated
   d. Not motivated at all

13. In relation to college, what motivates you most?
   a. Degree Attainment
   b. Family
   c. Friends/Peers
   d. Goals/Career aspirations
   e. Other (please specify)

14. In relation to college, what motivates you least?
   a. Degree Attainment
   b. Family
   c. Friends/Peers
   d. Goals/Career aspirations
   e. Other (please specify)

15. How does your ethnicity or cultural background contribute to your educational success?
   a. Highly contributes
   b. Somewhat contributes
   c. Somewhat does not contribute
   d. Does not contribute at all

   (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989; Zamani, 2000; Tinto, 2003; Jensen, 2011)

What institutional level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the university?

16. How satisfied are you with how this college/university is preparing you to meet your educational goals?
   a. Highly satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Somewhat unsatisfied
   d. Not satisfied at all
17. In relation to your college/university preparing you for your educational goals, with what are you most satisfied?
   a. Academic programs/Courses
   b. Advising/Advisors
   c. Professors
   d. Support programs/Resources
   e. Other (please specify)

18. In relation to your college/university preparing you for your educational goals, with what are you least satisfied?
   a. Academic programs/Courses
   b. Advising/Advisors
   c. Professors
   d. Support programs/Resources
   e. Other (please specify)

19. Why did you attend this college/university?
   a. Cost or finances/Scholarships
   b. Demographic make-up of the college/university (race/ethnicity of students)
   c. Geographical location
   d. Size of the college/university
   e. Types of Programs
   f. Other (please specify)

20. With what clubs and/or activities are you involved?
   a. Academic related or support organizations
   b. Greek life/Fraternities or Sororities
   c. Service related organizations
   d. Student government
   e. Other (please specify)
   f. Not involved

21. If you are not involved in clubs and/or activities, why not?
   a. Do not live on campus
   b. Job or work conflict
   c. Lack of time
   d. Nothing of interest
   e. Other (please specify)

22. What on campus services do you use which contribute to your success as a student?
   a. Academic support services (Writing Lab, Tutoring Lab, Math Lab, Computer Lab, etc.)
   b. Advisors/Advising
   c. Library
   d. Support department (Career Services, Health Services, Student Support Services, etc.)
   e. Other (please specify)

23. How does your financial aid package meet your educational needs?
   a. Highly meets the needs
   b. Somewhat meets the needs
   c. Somewhat does not meet the needs
d. Does not meet the needs at all
e. I do not receive financial aid

24. With what about financial aid are you most satisfied?
   a. Help with educational expenses
   b. Customer service
   c. Type of aid offered (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
   d. Process to apply for aid
   e. Other (please specify)

25. With what about financial aid are you least satisfied?
   a. Not enough aid to cover educational expenses
   b. Customer service
   c. Type of aid offered (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
   d. Process to apply for aid
   e. Other (please specify)

26. How helpful are your professors?
   a. Very helpful
   b. Somewhat helpful
   c. Somewhat not helpful
   d. Not helpful at all

27. What about your professors makes them most helpful?
   a. Availability/Willingness to respond to emails and questions
   b. Motivate/Encourage
   c. Subject knowledge
   d. Teaching style
   e. Other (please specify)

28. What about your professors makes them least helpful?
   a. Availability/Willingness to respond to emails and questions
   b. Motivate/Encourage
   c. Subject knowledge
   d. Teaching style
   e. Other (please specify)

29. How do the traditions of your college/university contribute to your educational success?
   a. Highly contributes
   b. Somewhat contributes
   c. Somewhat does not contribute
   d. Does not contribute at all

30. How does the diversity of your college/university contribute to your educational success?
   a. Highly contributes
   b. Somewhat contributes
   c. Somewhat does not contribute
   d. Does not contribute at all

(Upcraft & Gardner, 1989; Swail & Holmes, 2000; Jensen, 2011)
What social and external level factors contribute to the retention of minority students at the university?

31. How supportive is your family related to your education?
   a. Very supportive
   b. Somewhat supportive
   c. Somewhat not supportive
   d. Not supportive at all

32. How does your family support you most?
   a. Checks on your progress
   b. Financially
   c. Motivate/Encourage
   d. Other (please specify)

33. How does your family support you least?
   a. Checks on your progress
   b. Financially
   c. Motivate/Encourage
   d. Other (please specify)

34. How supportive are your friends related to your education?
   a. Very supportive
   b. Somewhat supportive
   c. Somewhat not supportive
   d. Not supportive at all

35. How do your friends support you most?
   a. Motivate/Encourage
   b. Study together
   c. Understanding of goals
   d. Other (please specify)

36. How do your friends support you least?
   a. Motivate/Encourage
   b. Study together
   c. Understanding of goals
   d. Other (please specify)

37. If you have a mentor, who is s/he?
   a. Community member
   b. Family member
   c. Friend
   d. Professor
   e. University staff member
   f. I do not have a mentor

38. How does your mentor most contribute to your academic or educational success?
   a. Helps to set goals
   b. Motivate/Encourage
   c. Regular meetings/Communication
   d. Other (please specify)
39. How does your mentor least contribute to your academic or educational success?
   a. Helps to set goals
   b. Motivate/Encourage
   c. Regular meetings/Communication
   d. Other (please specify)

40. Would you like to participate in a focus group on your campus related to this survey?
   (Participants will be selected based on responses to survey questions; will only be contacted through the email address previously provided; and will receive a $20 gift card.)
   a. Yes
   b. No

(Upcraft & Gardner, 1989, Jensen, 2011)
Dear Student:

My name is Isaac Brundage. I am a student in the Doctor of Education program at Florida Gulf Coast University. As part of my degree requirement, I am conducting a study on the retention rate of minority students, specifically; I am comparing factors that contribute to the retention of minority students. The cohort of students I am surveying were freshman in the 2013-2014 academic year and returned the following academic year. You have been contacted because you are part of this cohort and you are classified as an ethnic minority student. As a result, I am inviting you to participate in this voluntary study.

Being in this study might benefit you as a student by you helping the university gain knowledge about opportunities and programs that aid in the retention of minority students. Also the information provided, might help others by giving them the opportunity to participate in programs that assist with the retention of minority students. Other benefits to this study are as follows:

- Researching factors that contribute to the retention of minority students will assist colleges and universities in establishing programs that support retention and eliminating or adapting/improving programs that do not support student retention.
- Institutions depend on the success of all students attempting to get a higher education degree completing the process.
- It is important for institutions to know their customers and provide the necessary services so the customers can be successful. Institutions have a financial and ethical obligation to retain students.
- Low retention rates drive up the cost of education through inflated tuition, increased fees, and the increased use of public money.

Thank you for your considerations. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at 239-634-8932.

Click on the link to begin the survey:

https://survey.fgcu.edu/Survey.aspx?s=a70a8f29ebc94b05b34ed92a2a8dd303

Sincerely,
Isaac Brundage
Appendix D – Focus Group Email

Focus Group Email

Dear Student:

My name is Isaac Brundage. I am a student in the Doctor of Education program at Florida Gulf Coast University. As part of my degree requirement, I am conducting a study on the retention rate of minority students, specifically; I am comparing factors that contribute to the retention of minority students. The cohort of students I am surveying were freshman in the 2013-2014 academic year and returned the following academic year. You have been contacted because you are part of this cohort and when you completed the online survey you stated you would like to participate in a focus group. As a result, I am inviting you to participate in this voluntary focus group. Participants in the focus groups will receive a $20 gift card.

If you would like to participate in this focus group, please plan to attend on _________ at ______ in _____ Hall, room ____. At that time, I will explain the research project, benefits of the project, and give you a consent form.

Being in this study might benefit you as a student by you helping the university gain knowledge about opportunities and programs that aid in the retention of minority students. Also the information provided, might help others by giving them the opportunity to participate in programs that assist with the retention of minority students. Other benefits to this study are as follows:

- Researching factors that contribute to the retention of minority students will assist colleges and universities in establishing programs that support retention and eliminating or adapting/improving programs that do not support student retention.
- Institutions depend on the success of all students attempting to get a higher education degree completing the process.
- It is important for institutions to know their customers and provide the necessary services so the customers can be successful. Institutions have a financial and ethical obligation to retain students.
- Low retention rates drive up the cost of education through inflated tuition, increased fees, and the increased use of public money.

Thank you for your considerations. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at 239-634-8932.

Sincerely,
Isaac Brundage
Appendix E – Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form (focus groups)

Study Title:
Comparison of Factors Contributing to the Retention of Minority Students

Principal Researcher: Isaac Brundage

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Thomas Valesky

Through Florida Gulf Coast University and California State University – Monterey Bay, you are being invited to participate in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. In order for you to participate in this study, the University requires that I obtain your signed consent in order for you to participate in this project. The study is a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Florida Gulf Coast University.

The researcher will explain to you the purpose of the project in detail, the procedures that will be used, the expected time the study will take and any benefits or risks to you.

A short description of the study follows. Please read it and ask the researcher any questions you have to help you understand the study. If you choose to join the study, please sign the last page of this form in front of the person who told you about the study. You will get a copy of this form to keep. If you choose to join the study, you can leave it at any time with no penalty.

Refusal to join the study will not affect any future services you may be eligible to receive from the Florida Gulf Coast University or your home institution. Anyone who chooses to participate in this study is free to withdraw at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits they are entitled to.

The purpose of this research study is to answer these questions.

- What institutional level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?
- What individual/student level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?
- What social and external level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?

I am asking you to take part in the study because you were a 2013 ethnic minority freshman student and you successfully matriculated to your second year. Also, you responded in a certain manner during the online survey and based on this response you have been asked to join a certain focus group. If you join this study, you participate in a focus group will last about 90 minutes and will take place on campus. Also, the focus group will be audio recorded. The format of the focus group will start with introductions, I will explain the objectives, the benefits of the study, and discuss the common themes. Each participant will be given the opportunity to speak on the theme and they will also have the opportunity to discuss in greater detail.
There are no known or anticipated risks to you if you join the study. We hope the information from this study will help other students as they matriculate and assist the University with the development of needed programs and activities.

Being in this study might benefit you by you gaining the opportunity to participate in programs that aid in the retention of minority students. Also the information you provide and for similar reasons, we hope will help others by giving them the opportunity to participate in programs or university procedures that assist with the retention of minority students.

If you join the study, we will take the following steps to keep your information confidential and secure. We will not release information about you unless you authorize us to do so or unless we are required to do so by law. The collected data will be in a locked secured office in a locked file cabinet. The data will be analyzed using the participants’ email addresses. The email addresses will only be used as a link to those agreeing to participate in a focus group. The informed consent forms and data collected will be stored electronically on a password protected computer. Consent forms and data collected from the focus will be stored in a locked file cabinet. A copy of the research data and consent forms will be stored and maintained securely in Dr. Valesky's office. All student information will remain confidential. Focus group participants will be paid a $20 gift card to take part in this study. You do not have to complete the focus group to receive the gift card.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Dr. Thomas C. Valesky at 239-590-7793.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through Sandra Terranova, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at 239-590-7522.

I have read this form and I understand it. The researcher answered my questions about the project. My signature indicates that I volunteer to participate in the project. I understand that if I become uncomfortable with the project I am free to stop my participation. I also understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure and I believe that reasonable steps have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

_________________________             August 23, 2016     __________
Signature of Study Participant Date

_________________________             Date
Signature of Witness Date

The dated approval stamp on this consent form indicates that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Florida Gulf Coast University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research.
Appendix F – Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form (focus groups)

Study Title:
Comparison of Factors Contributing to the Retention of Minority Students

Principal Researcher: Isaac Brundage

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Thomas Valesky

Through Florida Gulf Coast University and Armstrong State University, you are being invited to participate in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. In order for you to participate in this study, the University requires that I obtain your signed consent in order for you to participate in this project. The study is a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Florida Gulf Coast University.

The researcher will explain to you the purpose of the project in detail, the procedures that will be used, the expected time the study will take and any benefits or risks to you.

A short description of the study follows. Please read it and ask the researcher any questions you have to help you understand the study. If you choose to join the study, please sign the last page of this form in front of the person who told you about the study. You will get a copy of this form to keep. If you choose to join the study, you can leave it at any time with no penalty.

Refusal to join the study will not affect any future services you may be eligible to receive from the Florida Gulf Coast University or your home institution. Anyone who chooses to participate in this study is free to withdraw at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits they are entitled to.

The purpose of this research study is to answer these questions.

- What institutional level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?
- What individual/student level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?
- What social and external level factors contribute to the perseverance of minority students at the university?

I am asking you to take part in the study because you were a 2013 ethnic minority freshman student and you successfully matriculated to your second year. Also, you responded in a certain manner during the online survey and based on this response you have been asked to join a certain focus group. If you join this study, you participate in a focus group will last about 90 minutes and will take place on campus. Also, the focus group will be audio recorded. The format of the focus group will start with introductions, I will explain the objectives, the benefits of the study, and discuss the common themes. Each participant will be given the opportunity to speak on the theme and they will also have the opportunity to discuss in greater detail.
There are no known or anticipated risks to you if you join the study. We hope the information from this study will help other students as they matriculate and assist the University with the development of needed programs and activities.

Being in this study might benefit you by you gaining the opportunity to participate in programs that aid in the retention of minority students. Also the information you provide and for similar reasons, we hope will help others by giving them the opportunity to participate in programs or university procedures that assist with the retention of minority students.

If you join the study, we will take the following steps to keep your information confidential and secure. We will not release information about you unless you authorize us to do so or unless we are required to do so by law. The collected data will be in a locked secured office in a locked file cabinet. The data will be analyzed using the participants’ email addresses. The email addresses will only be used as a link to those agreeing to participate in a focus group. The informed consent forms and data collected will be stored electronically on a password protected computer. Consent forms and data collected from the focus will be stored in a locked file cabinet. A copy of the research data and consent forms will be stored and maintained securely in Dr. Valesky's office. All student information will remain confidential. Focus group participants will be paid a $20 gift card to take part in this study. You do not have to complete the focus group to receive the gift card.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Dr. Thomas C. Valesky at 239-590-7793.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through Sandra Terranova, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at 239-590-7522.

I have read this form and I understand it. The researcher answered my questions about the project. My signature indicates that I volunteer to participate in the project. I understand that if I become uncomfortable with the project I am free to stop my participation. I also understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure and I believe that reasonable steps have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Study Participant

Signature of Witness

The dated approval stamp on this consent form indicates that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Florida Gulf Coast University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research.
Appendix G – Focus Group Protocol

Moderator:

Thank you all for coming and participating in this study. My name is Isaac Brundage. I am a doctoral student at Florida Gulf Coast University. For my research, I am looking at factors that contribute to the retention of minority students at two different types of institutions, a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). You all participated in an online survey and answered yes to wanting to participate in the focus group.

This focus group will be audio recorded. This recording will be transcribed and I will email you a copy. If you do not agree with the transcript, then reply with your concerns.

You have all signed consent forms. At any time, you may exit the focus group. At the end of the focus group, you will receive a $25 gift card.

Next, I will allow each of you to introduce yourself. Then, we will start discussing each of the topics.

Focus Group Participants:

(Introductions)

Moderator:

The following topic emerged from the online survey. Please discuss as a group. If needed, I will ask additional questions keep the conversation moving.

Focus Group Open Questions and Topics

Minority students that feel they were well prepared academically for college

- How did your high school prepare you for college?
- How did your previous courses prepare you for college and assist with retaining you as a student?
- What other experiences prior to entering college prepared you for college?
- How do your study skills or time management skills assist with your retention as a student?
• How do your goals or career aspirations motive you and assist with retaining you as a student?

Minority students that feel their self-motivation contributes to their success in college

• Why does your degree attainment motivate you?
• When did you know you were self-motivated?
• What helps with your motivation for college success?

Minority students feel their professors contributed to their success as a student

• How do your professors contribute to your success?
• How does the teaching style of your professors contribute to your success?
• How does the subject knowledge of your professors contribute to your success?
• How do you professors motivate?
• How are your professors willing to assist you?

Minority students that feel their family/friends is supportive of them in reaching their educational goals

• How do your family/friends checking on your educational progress contribute to retaining you as a student?
• How does your family’s financial support contribute to retaining you as a student?
• How do your family’s/friends’ motivation and encouragement contribute to retaining you as a student?
Moderator:

Again, thank you for participating in this focus group. Again, I will email you a copy of the transcript. Only respond if you disagree with the information. I will now give you the $25 gift card. Do you have any questions?