CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Issues of retention have become a "complex and multi-faceted challenge" for university administrators (Beal & Noel, 1980, p. 33). Retention refers to the percentage of first-time, full-time students who return to the same institution for the second term or second year of study (Gaither, 1999). Higher education administrators devote considerable attention to retention because many students leave college before completing their degree.

There are three reasons why retention deserves attention. One reason for concentrating on improving retention rates are the links between retention, student success, and institutional success (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999). Another is that retention serves as a performance indicator of institutional goals and outcomes. Third, academicians point to the potential to increase tuition revenue when retention rates increase (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

When institutions focus on the link between student success and institutional success, retention improves. In other words, when students persist to graduation at high rates, institutions and their students benefit. Institutions that do not place the needs of their students at the forefront of their efforts may deteriorate. Further, institutions that have already made serious commitments to their students by focusing on retention and related issues have proven to be successful (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999).

A second reason for focusing on retention involves stakeholders' demands to improve accountability in higher education. Retention can serve as a means to improve accountability (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999). The skyrocketing costs of higher education have caused stakeholders to demand more accountability in spending, performance, and outcome measures. Consumers have insisted that administrators share what services or goods the public should expect in return for the skyrocketing costs. Performance indicators, such as retention rates, provide measurable outcomes that stakeholders may use to compare programs and institutions.

Another reason to focus on improving retention is the potential impact of retention on revenue. Institutions stand to gain revenue when they retain a greater number of students. Shapiro and Levine (1999) compared the revenue stream before and after implementing special retention efforts at one institution. Findings showed a noticeable revenue increase after implementing retention efforts. In other words, the institution was able to maintain fee and tuition income generated by students' continued attendance.

Many factors may have an impact on retention in higher education including student satisfaction (Stodt & Klepper, 1987), academic readiness (Lang & Ford, 1988), financial support (Tinto, 1993), and institutional efforts to help students feel they are a part of the college community (Gloria, Kurpius, Hamilton, & Wilson, 1999).

Students' satisfaction with their college is highly significant in terms of student retention. Satisfaction has a high correlation to institutional characteristics like involvement with faculty, living on campus, and forming friendships with peers. These characteristics can be manipulated to improve student satisfaction (Stodt & Klepper, 1987).

Academic readiness for college is another factor that impacts student retention. Lang & Ford (1988) point to secondary school systems as the cause of inadequate academic preparation for college especially for minority students. Society seems to accept the fact that students who come from urban, inner city schools are not offered the same academic programs as their peers who attend suburban schools. Too often this means minorities have less access to higher education because they overwhelmingly attend the urban schools that have lower academic expectations and standards.

Limited finances also impact retention; however, the extent of the role that finances play on retention may be overstated. The impact of finances upon departure from college is a complex issue. It appears that finances often contribute indirectly rather than directly to students' decisions to leave college (Tinto, 1993). Students tend to explain leaving college for

financial reasons because people are more likely to accept this reason than other reasons (e.g., academic difficulty).

Students also report the lack of feeling a part of the university community as a reason for leaving college (Gloria, et al., 1999). In order for students to succeed at an institution, it is important that the characteristics of the institution match their expectations. For example, students who wish for a great deal of interaction with and feedback from professors may not be satisfied at a large research institution. The nature and size of this type of institution does not allow for close ties between faculty and students. Demands on faculty time due to large classes and other requirements limit the amount of time any one faculty member can contribute to the development of an individual student.

Institutions have responded to problems with retention through various approaches. Remedies have included assessment and evaluation (Ewell, 1984), academic support services (Stodt & Klepper, 1987), and departments devoted to addressing retention issues (Levitz et al., 1999).

Many institutions when confronted with retention problems begin assessing their organizations. This assessment might include an evaluation of current programs to determine their effectiveness. Other data assess the unmet needs of students on campus (Stodt & Klepper, 1987). Some institutions conduct their own studies while others solicit and receive grants from outside agencies and still others employ consultants to examine their programs and suggest improvements (Levitz et al., 1999).

Academic support services exist to provide assistance to students who are not prepared academically to enter college. These services address emotional as well as academic deficits (Stodt & Klepper, 1987). They include services such as advising (Frost, 1993), counseling, intervention (Beal & Noel, 1980), early warning systems (Hyers & Joslin, 1998) and monitoring systems (Tinto, 1993).

In an effort to assist students who may not have the academic preparation needed to survive in college, many campuses utilize academic advising as a form of teaching (Frost, 1993). Developmental advisors, for example, teach students to systematically plan their futures when selecting courses. These advisors involve students in the decision-making process. Moreover, the developmental advising model considers students "mature individuals who can – and should – plan their own futures better by seeing courses as part of a larger scheme or purpose" (Frost, 1993, p. 24).

Counseling is another service provided to students to assist them with overcoming their academic shortcomings. Group counseling sessions offer students an opportunity to address difficulties they might be having that hinder their academic success. When one institution developed a counseling program to identify potential dropouts, it found the program successfully identified students in danger of leaving college. In addition, the students who accepted an invitation to participate in individual counseling received higher grades, maintained higher enrollment rates, completed more units, and dropped out at lower rates (Beal & Noel, 1980).

Various intervention methods have proven successful in addressing academic deficits among first year students (Beal & Noel, 1980). One such intervention is orientation seminars that focus on study skills, tutoring, and group counseling to address matters of general concern to students (McAdams & Foster, 1998). High-risk students who participate in a semester-long course show increases in intellectual development (McAdams & Foster, 1998).

Early warning (Hyers & Joslin, 1998) and monitoring systems (Tinto, 1993) attempt to identify academic difficulties early in the semester so interventions can be employed to prevent failing. Some institutions have a policy of posting mid-term grade reports. Advisors and academic support personnel review these grades and consult with students receiving failing mid-term grades to recommend and/or impose intervention strategies to address the problem before the final grading period.

One additional factor that relates to retention is transition. Whether students experience successful transitions into post-secondary education may also have an impact on retention (Tinto, 1993). Students who do not experience success in the transition process often do not return. The first year in college marks a transition period when students often need assistance.

While all college students experience transition issues when they matriculate, minority students can face a particularly difficult transition. Nora and Cabrera (1996) researched transition issues of minority students based upon the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1999), an instrument used to measure the adjustment process. The Student Adjustment Model (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999) explains the experiences of minority students in the transition process in two domains: the academic domain and the social domain. The SACQ also includes measures of personal-emotional adjustment and goal commitment/institutional attachment (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

In the academic domain, adjustment involves experiences with faculty, academic staff and academic experiences with other students. The social domain comprises experiences of an informal nature students have with faculty and other students. The personal-emotional domain refers to the degree to which students experience stress during the adjustment process. Attachment refers to the degree of commitment to educational goals and level of satisfaction with the institution. These experiences may have a considerable impact on the overall adjustment process enhancing cognitive and affective development (Baker & Siryk, 1999; Cabrera, et al., 1999).

The enrollment patterns among minority students suggest that retention has been an issue for decades. From 1969 until 1979, minority students enrolled in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in increasing numbers (Dey, Astin, & Korn, 1991). During the period following this increased enrollment, however, a regressive trend developed for non-Asian minorities attending PWIs (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Beginning in the 1980s, the time to

graduation increased, grade point averages decreased, attrition rates increased, and matriculation to graduate school decreased for minorities attending PWIs.

These data suggest that retention is an issue among minority students at PWIs. The pressures minority students attending PWIs experience increase their feelings of distress and "pose additional demands on students' coping resources" (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993, p. 446). Smith (1997) suggests university officials offer ethnic support groups to help improve retention. The need for such support becomes evident when retention rates for individual groups of minorities are examined. Retention rates of minority students differ from the retention rates of White students.

For example, African Americans are 20% less likely to graduate from college in a six year period than White students (Porter, 1990). In a classic study, Fleming (1984) found African Americans attending PWIs have concerns about "interpersonal relationships, identity and black consciousness" (p. 20). In addition, African Americans and other minorities have different socio-cultural and contextual factors affecting their academic adjustment (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985). Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) examined how these factors might impact minority student adjustment. Chronic role strain reduces feelings of well-being for minority students. These feelings exert a negative impact on adjustment.

Retention among Hispanic students parallels that of African Americans. The growing number of Hispanic students enrolling in higher education has masked the fact that there has been a decline in the college-going rate of Hispanic students (Carter & Wilson, 1991). Hispanic students are often viewed as a heterogeneous group without considering how differences in subgroups may impact their adjustment to college. They also suffer from problems of chilly campuses. Problems of discrimination and prejudice take a toll on students' emotional adjustment (Hurtado, 1994). Moreover Hispanic students are concerned that majority students perceive them as recipients of special admissions policies such as affirmative action (Hurtado, et al., 1996). Collectively, these factors contribute to low success rates among Hispanic

students. In fact, Hispanic students' college completion rates are about 32% (Torres, Winston, & Cooper, 2003), the lowest of any ethnic group (O'Brien, 1993).

Native Americans comprise the third most often cited minority group in postsecondary education. Estimates of the departure rate for Native Americans have been as high as 75%; that is three-quarters of Native American students leave college before graduation (Hodgkinson, 1990). Native Americans face overwhelming barriers to attaining higher education. These barriers include lack of preparation, inadequate financial resources, lack of family support, and cultural differences. In addition, emotional problems such as high rates of depression and suicide and the common incidence of alcoholism have also been cited as attributing to lower rates of Native Americans in higher education. One solution to address these problems has been the creation of tribal colleges. Native Americans who attend tribal colleges prior to enrolling in a four year institution are four times more likely to complete the bachelors degree than Native American students who enter mainstream institutions during the first year (HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002).

In summary, retention is an important issue in higher education (Beal & Noel, 1980; Lang & Ford, 1988; Stodt & Klepper, 1987; Tinto, 1993) because of the relationship between retention and institutional success, performance indicators (Levitz et al., 1999) and increased revenues (Shapiro & Levine, 1999). To promote retention, institutions have improved advising (Frost, 1993) counseling, (Beal & Noel, 1980) and intervention methods (Frost, 1993).

One additional factor that influences retention is transition (Tinto, 1993). Transition has received considerable attention in the literature (e.g. Beal & Noel, 1980; Choy, Horn, Nunez, & Chen, 2000; Gaither, 1999; Gloria, et al., 1999; Paul & Brier, 2001; Tinto, 1997). However, that literature offers evidence that transition is not the same for all students (Cabrera & Nora, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Smith, 1997). Minority students do not have the same experiences as White students at PWIs (Cabrera & Nora, 1994; Fleming, 1984).

Cabrera and Nora (1994) have described one model of transition for minority students that focuses on the academic, social, and personal-emotional experiences minority students encounter. Transition is important for all students; however, there are differences between minority students' and White students' transition experiences. The literature has explored transition for students in general (Baker & Siryk, 1999; DeStefano, Mellott, & Petersen, 2001; Tinto, 1993) transition among minority students (Haralson, 1996; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996; Smedley, Meyers, & Harrell, 1993), and differences in transition between White and minority students (Allen, 1992; Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Rodriquez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, & Talbot, 2000). There is no research, however, that compares the differences in transition experiences among different minority groups, or among minorities by sex. Additionally, the connection between transition and retention among minority students has not been explored. The current study addresses these gaps in the existing body of work on minority students' transition to higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the academic, social, and personal-emotional transition process as well as institutional attachment for racial minority students at a large research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Participants completed the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1999) about their academic, social, personal-emotional, and attachment experiences during their first year in college. Responses were analyzed to examine experiences of participants by race (Hispanic, African American, and Native American) and sex.

In addition to examining how minority students rate their transition experiences, retention rates were studied. The researcher identified which participants persisted to the second semester and second year of college. Chi square tests and logistic regression were used to determine if the level of transition was significantly different for students who returned the second semester and the second year of college versus those who did not return.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study was designed to explore the following research questions:

1. How do minority students rate their academic experiences in the transition process?
2. How do minority students rate their social experiences in the transition process?
3. How do minority students rate their personal-emotional experiences in the transition process?
4. How do minority students rate their attachment to their institution?
5. Are there differences in academic transition experiences by race or sex?
6. Are there differences in social transition experiences by race or sex?
7. Are there differences in personal-emotional transition experiences by race or sex?
8. Are there differences in attachment experiences by race or sex?
9. Is the level of transition different for students who return for the second semester and second year of college versus those who do not return?

Significance of the Study

The current study had significance for future practice, research and policy in higher education. In terms of practice, the results of this study might be useful for minority students, their parents, college professors, and various college administrators.

Minority students might benefit from the current research. The study provided them with information about the transition process. Minority students might use this information to better assess their own transition to higher education.

Parents of minority students might also benefit from the current study. The findings provided parents with information about the academic, social, personal-emotional, and attachment transition processes. Parents might use the results to assist their children in assessing their transition experiences and they could also use the information to help their other children make decisions about pursuing higher education.

Professors might also use the results of the study. The current study provided them with information about the transition process for minorities. Professors might use the research findings to assess the impact of courses designed to target the needs of first year students. Faculty serving as advisors might also use the information yielded by the current study to examine programs that might influence the academic, social, personal-emotional, or attachment transition of minority students.

Finally, administrators might find the results of this study useful. For example, the study provided retention officers with information about the transition process for minority students and differences in those experiences by race and sex. Retention officers might use the results of the study to assess the programs and services they offer to minority students. Other administrators might also use the results of the program to make decisions about funding programs within specific colleges that seek to address issues of transition for minority students.

This study also had significance for future research. The present study examined the experiences of first year minority students in the transition process at a large predominantly White research institution. Future studies could examine the relationship between transition and grade point average during the first year, the impact of transition on persistence to graduation, and the transition process for minorities at other types of institutions.

One future study could focus on the relationship between level of transition and grade point average during the first year of college for minority students. The current study examined the transition process for minorities in the first year of college. The findings from the proposed study would expand information about the connection between level of transition and grade point average during the first year in college.

Another future study could examine the impact of transition on graduation rates. In this study, the researcher examined the transition process for minority students and retention between semester one and two and between years one and two. However, the study did not track the long term effects of transition. Such a longitudinal study might provide higher

education administrators with data about the impact of transition experiences on graduation rates.

Future studies could also focus on minorities at other types of institutions. The current study was conducted at a predominantly White research institution. Researching transition experiences of minorities at other types institutions, such as historically Black institutions, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges, or community colleges, might divulge differences in transition experiences of minority students at various types of campuses.

The current study also had significance for policy in higher education. Those responsible for policies with respect to orientation, for example, might be interested in the results of the study. The findings revealed data about the transition experiences of minority students. Policy makers might use the results to examine whether orientation programs should be mandatory for minority students or to assess whether the components of such programs are appropriate for minority students.

This study also had implications for policies on mentoring programs. The current study examined transition experiences for minorities at PWIs. Administrators responsible for making decisions about mentoring experiences might use the findings to determine if policies regarding faculty or peer programs are warranted.

Limitations

Although this research made a contribution to the existing body of knowledge about transition experiences of minority students, it had some limitations. First, the sample could have posed a limitation. The study sampled students from a single predominantly White research institution. Minority students at this institution might differ from minority students at other PWIs. If this occurred, the results could have been influenced.

Next, limitations associated with the data collection method should also be considered. The data collection involved students' self reported responses to the SACQ. Responses to the

survey may be limited by students' understanding of the survey items. If participants interpreted the survey questions in multiple ways, this could limit the results of the study.

Another limitation of the data collection method involved the relevance of the SACQ to the sample. The instrument used in this study was normed primarily on majority students. The current study focused on the experiences of minority students. If items on the instrument are not reflective of the transition experiences of minority students, results may have been impacted.

A final limitation involves the method of data collection. Some data were collected on-line. Those who volunteered to participate in the on-line study may differ from those who preferred to complete a pencil and paper copy of the SACQ. If so, the results of the study could have been skewed.

Despite these limitations, the current study offered important information. There is a gap in the literature with respect to the transition experiences of minority students attending predominantly White institutions and the relationship between transition and retention. This study revealed information about different groups of minority students. In addition, the data were compared by sex.

Organization of the Study

This study is written in five chapters. In the first chapter, the background, purpose, and significance of the study were discussed. Chapter Two addresses the literature related to transition experiences of minority students. In Chapter Three, the methodology is described including the process for data collection and analysis. The results of the research are presented in the fourth chapter. The final chapter discusses those results and their implications for future practice and research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to understand the transition process for minorities attending PWIs, it was necessary to explore the literature in three areas. First, the literature on academic transition is examined. Second, a review of the literature on social transition is provided. Third, the literature on personal-emotional transition is covered. Under each type of transition research on students in general is discussed. Then, each type of transition is investigated as it relates to race and sex.

Academic Transition

Academic transition refers to the ability of students to deal with the variety of educational demands associated with attending college (Baker & Siryk, 1999). To understand academic transition, two factors are explored: formal faculty/student relationships and motivation.

Developing relationships with faculty is important for students during the transition process for several reasons. First, relationships with faculty can help to improve students' satisfaction with an institution (Astin, 1993). Second, faculty can serve as mentors and facilitate students' entry into college and an academic discipline (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Third, faculty who utilize active and collaborative teaching methods create environments where students feel a part of the learning process (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002).

Astin (1993) found that relationships between students and faculty have a moderate positive effect on satisfaction with college. Examining ratings of faculty divulged interesting information about what students feel is important. The strongest positive effect on satisfaction with faculty involves environmental measures such as faculty who are interested in students' personal problems, committed to the institution, sensitive to issues of minorities, and are available for frequent interactions with students. Another measure, faculty's research orientation, was strongly correlated to student dissatisfaction with faculty.

Other findings associated with faculty student relationships reveal that the type of institution may also impact satisfaction levels (Gloria, et al., 1999). Students who desire extensive interaction and feedback from professors may not be satisfied at a large research institution. The nature and size of these institutions do not allow for close ties between faculty and students. Demands on faculty time due to large classes and other requirements (i.e. research and publication expectations) limits the amount of time any one faculty member can contribute to the development of an individual student.

Another manner in which faculty/student relationships produce effective results is through mentoring. Faculty serve as important role models on college campuses when formal mentoring relationships are articulated. At other times, informal mentoring occurs when faculty serve as an early point of contact for students within a discipline. Mentoring establishes a hierarchical relationship between an experienced mentor and a protégé (Haring, 1999). In these relationships, faculty help indoctrinate students regarding the norms and mores for students' future professions. Students are often introduced to language and information about how to successfully integrate themselves as full members of the community.

In addition to providing information about the professional world, faculty also offer important information about the academic environment on campus. Faculty perpetuate stereotypes and the culture of the institution through formal contact with students in the classroom as well as informal contact outside of class (Tinto, 1993).

Collaboration between students and faculty also serves to integrate students into the academic culture of an institution. Proponents of learning communities profess the value of collaborative experiences between students and their professors. Not only do students become more involved in the classroom, their self concept is also enhanced (Tinto, 1997) and they develop stronger relationships with those professors (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002). Learning communities help to enhance academic transition as evidenced by students who participate in

first year learning communities. Such students have higher retention rates as compared to students who do not participate in learning communities (Gablenick, et al., 1990).

Faculty who intentionally create learning environments where students are part of the construction of knowledge empower students to take ownership of the learning process. Students are also more likely to feel supported and take risks in the learning environment. That leads to greater academic success. Faculty often reveal more about themselves and take greater risks in this environment as well. It is believed that this sharing is what leads to deeper relationships between students and professors (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002).

In addition to relationships with faculty, researchers have found that student motivation, effort, performance and satisfaction with the academic environment have an impact on academic transition (Cote & Levine, 2000; Fleming & Morning, 1996; Livengood, 1992). Livengood (1992) examined students with different types of motivation to determine its effect on effort, performance, and academic transition. Different sources of motivation result in differential effort exerted to achieve success. First, students motivated by performance generally believe that intelligence is a fixed entity and cannot be increased through effort; thus, these individuals tend to participate in activities that validate their ability rather than seeking out ways to increase their intelligence (i.e. expend a great deal of effort). On the other hand, students motivated by learning believe they can increase their intellectual skills through effort. As a result, they put forth more effort to succeed in college and tend to make a more successful academic transition.

In another study, Cote and Levine (2000) predicted that students' level of motivation and intelligence would have more of an impact on academic performance than students' experiences or interactions with the academic environment. Findings revealed that students motivated to attend college to attain a better career or for personal development tended to have better academic performance than students with higher IQs who attended college because it was what their parents expected. Moreover, students with higher IQs and negative motivation

for attending college did not rate their college experiences as positive and tended to have less successful transitions. The findings confirm the researchers' hypothesis that motivation factors contribute more to academic transition experiences than intelligence.

Academic Transition Experiences of Minority Students

A review of the literature revealed that differences exist in the transition process for minority students (Haralson, 1996). Evidence of differences in the transition process for minorities is explored by examining relationships with faculty, academic performance, and academic motivation.

One manner of dealing with the demands of academic transition involves relating to faculty on an academic level (Nora, 1993). Because developing relationships with faculty may facilitate minority students' ability to integrate into the university environment, it is essential to review the literature as it relates to relationships between faculty and minority students. Several studies have demonstrated the impact of relationships with faculty on the successful transition of minority students (Fleming & Morning, 1996; Nettles, Theony, & Gossman, 1986; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993).

Minority students report that the quality of time faculty spend with them is more important than the quantity of time. Nettles, Theony, and Gossman (1986) reported a positive correlation between students' perceptions of the quality of faculty treatment and academic performance. Students relate more to faculty they feel have a genuine concern for their well-being. In contrast, students do not relate well to professors who seem to care little about them or who have little time for students because of their research interests and obligations.

Minority student concerns about negative expectations can also impact the success of their academic transition. Minority undergraduates who believe their professors do not have faith in their academic ability often fulfill those expectations. For example, negative expectations of high school teachers and college professors have more predictive ability for success of minority students in the transition process than scores on the SAT (Fleming & Morning, 1996).

Although stressors such as off campus employment and family responsibilities may contribute to lower feelings of well-being for minority students, genuine concern from faculty can help to alleviate the impact of these outside stressors (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Further, concern about negative expectations of faculty has more impact on performance and transition than stressors. Beliefs about negative expectations of faculty contribute more to lower academic performance than factors considered stressors and inhibitors of academic progress.

Academic performance is an important indicator of academic transition because of its potential impact on academic adjustment and retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto 1993). Poor academic performance has been used as an early warning signal for students in danger of withdrawing from higher education. Allen (1992) found that relationships with faculty have an impact on academic performance. This study focused on how Black students' academic success is affected by campus context and students' backgrounds. Results revealed achievement is highest for minority students with positive faculty relationships. Other factors that were found to have an impact on academic performance include campus racial composition, high school grades, career aspirations, and selecting the right college.

Another factor important to academic transition is academic motivation. Allen's (1992) study uncovered information about academic motivation. When considering the impact of differences in students' motivation levels on transition, Black students were found to have similar or higher motivation levels compared to their White counterparts' even though disparities exist in social, economic, and educational backgrounds for these two groups. Students motivated by higher career aspirations tend to have higher educational aspirations. There is a positive correlation between high aspirations and successful academic integration for minority students. Thus, faculty relationships, academic performance, level of motivation all have an impact on academic transition for minority students.

Academic Transition Experiences of Women

Originally, the design of higher education sought to enhance the intellectual, religious and moral development of White male students. Although women were attending universities as early as 1870, the presence of women on campuses was a topic of great debate (Gordon, 1990). As the number of women attending college increased, the opportunities to create true coeducational experiences were not realized. The development of American universities proceeded with separate, yet parallel, lives for women and men students. Maintaining separate systems became too difficult during the 19th and 20th centuries and led to increased coeducational experiences in higher education. An examination of the current literature reveals disparities still exist in higher education for female students (American Association of University Women, 1992; Gmelch, 1998; Gordon, 1990; Touchton & Davis, 1991).

These differences are evident in relationships with faculty, academic performance, and academic motivation. Even though the number of women in college increased, closing the enrollment gap between women and men in college by 1979 (Francis, 1991), some argue that the climate in higher education remains a chilly one for women (Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996). Others argue that the climate for women is changing in higher education and women no longer suffer disadvantages due to gender on college campuses (Cornelius, Gray, & Constantinople, 1990; Fassinger, 1995; Follet, Andberg, & Handel, 1982). While this debate has not been resolved, differences remain in the low number of women who persist in nontraditional majors. Despite higher enrollment rates of women in higher education, negative faculty attitudes and behavior contribute to the chilly climate for women especially in traditionally male dominated majors.

Drew and Work (1998) found that women interact with faculty in different ways than men. Interactions between faculty and female students tend to be more formal and result in fewer research collaborations. Both actions have a negative impact on campus and classroom climate by stunting the growth and professional development of women. Faculty relationships

with female students overall have changed since the time when women were called on in class less frequently than men and were openly ridiculed in nontraditional majors. However, some faculty members continue to discourage female students through subtle behaviors. These include failing to make eye contact with female students, sounding or looking impatient when women speak, and not responding to comments from women. Not only do these subtle behaviors diminish contributions women make in the classroom, they also erode relationships between faculty and female students (Gmelch, 1998).

Despite some discouraging behavior by faculty, relationships between women and faculty have shown some gains. Since female students have become the majority on many college campuses, positive outcomes have developed. Drew and Work (1998) reported women participate more in class, have more positive relationships with faculty, and experience gains equal to or greater than those of men. Although it may seem these findings suggest the climate for women in the college classrooms is welcoming, inequalities still exist. Faculty members have the potential to act as change agents by creating gender-neutral environments in classrooms. Unequal treatment, however, can begin before women even get to college.

Problems in relationships between teachers and female students can be traced back to the elementary level (Gabriel & Smithson, 1988). Elementary teachers give more support to their male students. Teachers in grades four through six, for example, give more time to male students, ask them more challenging questions, and allow them more time to talk compared to female students. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that negative teacher behaviors and expectations in elementary and secondary school are continued at the college level (Gabriel & Smithson, 1988).

Successful academic transition for women has also been measured by examining academic performance in college (Tinto, 1993). As with other areas associated with academic transition, disparity exists in terms of performance between female and male students. Although girls tend to outperform boys in elementary and middle school, in high school something occurs

that leads to women earning fewer degrees in science and technological fields. During high school, the enrollment of girls in math and science courses declines. This leaves few women academically prepared to pursue college majors in math and science that lead to more lucrative careers.

The low number of women in nontraditional fields such as engineering is one of the reasons why college does not seem to provide the same advantages for women and men graduates. In many instances, outcomes for men are more positive than for women (American Association of University Women, 1992).

In some cases, female students enjoy benefits that males do not. One example is grades. Astin (1993) found that only one in three students earn the same grades in college as they did in high school, only one in five obtain higher grades, and almost half receive lower grades. Students' grades generally decline after they enroll in college. However, being female tends to be a positive predictor of grades in college (Astin, 1993).

Women who withdraw from engineering have higher grades than male students who withdraw from engineering (Adelman, 1998). Although fewer women earn degrees in engineering than men, speculation that women do not persist in engineering at the same rate as men due to low academic performance has been proven false. Most women do not leave engineering because of poor grades. In fact, men withdraw from engineering more often than women because of academic problems (Adelman, 1998).

Another measure of academic performance is standardized tests. There is evidence that some standardized tests, like the SAT, contain gender bias. Although female high school students outperform their male counterparts in terms of grades, males outperform females on the SAT and other standardized exams (Touchton & Davis, 1991). This problem is compounded when one considers that colleges and universities make admission and financial aid decisions based upon SAT scores. Women receive 28% less in grants and 16% less in loans than men to fund higher education expenses (American Association of University Women, 1992). Receiving

less financial assistance may cost women their degrees because women often cite lack of financial support as a reason they leave college before earning their degrees.

Motivation, another component of academic transition, also has an impact on women's experiences in college. An ethnographic study of women at two different universities identified three motivations for completing course work: to get by academically, to do well academically, or to learn from experts (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990). Women who are motivated by thoughts of finishing college and reaping the rewards associated with earning a degree are not concerned about academic accolades. They focus instead on rewards such as a higher socioeconomic status and obtaining a fulfilling career after graduation. However, women who want to do well academically are more motivated by academic success. Finally, women who want to learn from experts expect to receive evaluations from professors about their potential for success in prospective career fields.

Because academic transition is critical to persistence in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1993) and students who make successful transitions to college are more likely to remain in college, various aspects of academic transition have been identified and studied. Since the transition process has different implications for various groups, these differences should be noted in order to ensure success for all.

Similar to academic transition, social transition also impacts persistence in college. However, Allen (1992) suggested minorities' social transition plays an even bigger role in college persistence than academic transition. For this reason, it is also important to explore the literature on social transition.

Social Transition

Social transition refers to a student's ability to cope with the interpersonal-societal demands of the college experience. Although universities have formal academic standards in order to persist, there are no requirements for membership in the social systems of institutions.

As a result, students who perform well academically may still depart from college due to an inability to make successful social transitions (Tinto, 1993).

Three factors associated with social transition and integration are discussed here. First, the degree to which a student becomes involved in campus activities is addressed (Astin, 1993). The extent to which students feel comfortable with the campus climate is discussed next. Finally, the ways students relate to others in the campus environment is discussed in the context of social transition.

Students who become involved in campus activities tend to persist to graduation at higher rates than students who are less active on campus (Astin, 1993). Activities with which students get involved may include employment, student clubs and organizations, and athletics.

Student employment has a significant impact on success in college. Outcomes of student employment vary by the number of hours worked and whether students work on or off campus (Furr & Elling, 2000). On one hand, students who work off campus and maintain heavy workloads may be negatively impacted by employment. However, some types of employment have been linked to higher academic achievement (Astin, 1993).

Students who work on-campus jobs earn higher grade averages and experience greater satisfaction in college. While working off campus may have a negative impact on college persistence, working on campus has the opposite effect (Astin, 1993). Students who work on campus remain connected to the institution and often find employment in their major departments. Thus, on-campus employment has the potential to create more opportunities to interact with faculty and to increase the number of learning experiences outside of class.

Another manner through which students become connected on campus is by participating in clubs and organizations. Students with higher levels of involvement in student clubs and organizations report greater overall satisfaction with college (Astin, 1993). Moreover, involvement in student clubs and organizations produces perceived growth in leadership and

interpersonal abilities. These abilities increase the likelihood that students will hold elected position in student clubs and organizations.

Another form of involvement on campus, college athletics, can have profound effects for students. College athletic programs include intramural and intercollegiate competition. Intramural and intercollegiate sports have varying degrees of success when it comes to socially integrating athletes into the campus environment. Intramural sports give students the opportunity to enjoy athletics with fewer demands on players' time. Leadership outcome measures, satisfaction with college, and attainment of the bachelor's degree are all positively associated with participation in intramurals (Astin, 1993).

Competing in intercollegiate sports, on the other hand, does not have such clear cut positive outcomes. Although Astin (1993) found intercollegiate sports had a negative impact on cognitive outcomes for first-year male students, Pascarella and Smart (1991) found that athletes were more socially involved and more satisfied than non-athletes with their college experience.

There is a great deal of pressure for athletes, especially in revenue-generating sports, to perform in the game. However, expectations for academic performance may not take on a prominent role in the athletes' college careers. Coaches who demand athletic superiority may make it difficult for these students to focus on their school work. Add to that the athletes' need to fit in socially with their peers and what results is a balancing act not present for non-athletes. Athletes experience pressures not present for nonathletes. At times, goals of athletic programs do not align with institutional missions. In an effort to foster success for student athletes, athletic programs should develop missions, goals, and purposes consistent with those of the institution as well as policies to support them (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Such policies will serve to make the campus environment more inclusive and supportive of student athletes thus facilitating their social transition. Since minorities are represented in disproportionately high numbers in intercollegiate athletics, such policies are important to ensuring minority student success.

The literature as it relates to social transition is examined here because of its importance to college persistence. To examine this construct, the literature was reviewed as it relates to social transition issues by minority students and by women.

Social Transition Experiences of Minority Students

Because minority students often maintain off campus jobs with heavy work schedules (i.e. 30 or more hours per week) in an effort to earn money for college and other expenses, they are less likely to become involved on campus (Furr & Elling, 2000). Latinas are more likely to experience stress in comparison to majority students from lack of adequate financial resources and uncertainty about financial aid (Rodriguez, et al., 2000). These students as well as other minorities work full or near full-time to support themselves and their families. Seventy-three percent of students with heavy work schedules do not participate in any student clubs or organizations (Furr & Elling, 2000). Moreover, they tend to have fewer interactions with faculty and are less involved on campus than students who work fewer hours (Astin, 1993).This lack of involvement limits social transition and as a result limits college success in general.

Making the campus climate inclusive and supportive for all students can be a significant factor in the adjustment of minority students. African American students must make a greater transition when attending PWIs. In comparison to White peers, African Americans do not know as many people on campus and are confronted with discriminatory experiences more often (Allen, 1992). Merely attending college does not remove differences in background between minority and White students. Minority students are more likely to perceive the effects of a negative campus climate.

The climate on campus has far more impact on adjustment than student background characteristics (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996). "Sociocultural and contextual stresses play a significant role in the adaptation of minority freshmen to a predominantly White college" (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993, p. 446). Minority first year students tend to exhibit considerable psychological sensitivity and vulnerability to the campus climate. The climate for

minorities is impacted by relationships within and between cultures as well as interactions with faculty.

Minority students suffer because of perceived and actual episodes of discrimination from White peers. This causes additional role strain and negatively impacts well-being. Minority students are more likely than their White peers to experience pressure to conform to racial and ethnic stereotypes regarding their behavior. They are also coerced "to minimize overt racial-ethnic group characteristics (e.g., language and dress) in order to be accepted" (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000, p. 183).

At the same time, minority students experience conflict if they do not exhibit an appropriate amount of loyalty to members of their own culture. The stress associated with being a minority student on a predominantly White campus leaves minority students feeling a sense of marginalization or dual existence (Cooper, 1997). Minority students develop a sense that they must live in two diverse cultural groups in order to survive on campus.

Minority students believe their acceptance at selective institutions is due to affirmative action policies. Minority students with SAT scores higher than the national average for minority students question their accomplishments and attribute their presence on campus to affirmative action policies. However, D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993), controlling for the effects of backgrounds, found minority students achieve at the same level as White students even though they enter with statistically different SAT scores.

Faculty play an important role in the transition process. Because students with different cultural backgrounds experience college in different ways, it is critical to provide early validation for minority students (Terenzini, Rendon, Upcraft, Millar, Allison, Gregg & Jalomo, 1994). Faculty can take part in that validation process and provide a more welcoming climate for minority students. Students who believe they have caring faculty who support them socially as well as academically are more likely to succeed.

Faculty have the power to facilitate collaborative learning in the classroom which can have effects that extend beyond the classroom. Participating in collaborative learning groups develops networks of support and bonds to the larger social communities of college (Tinto, 1997). These collaborations initiate processes where minority students begin to connect their personal experiences with classroom experiences. Connecting these experiences enhances learning and involvement on campus.

The role of faculty has many implications for student success. It may begin in the classroom; however, their impact can have a dramatic effect on the social transition to college. For minority students, finding a caring voice and connecting with the larger community is potent (Norman & Norman, 1995).

Minority students often derive support from others in order to make their transition to college easier. They must deal with others effectively during the social transition process. This includes relating to faculty, peers, and family. Each of these groups can serve as a source of support or as a hindrance in the transition process (Chen, 1999).

In fact, Tinto (1993) described relationships with others as an important aspect of the social transition process. It is important for minority students to develop positive relationships with faculty in order to enjoy successful social transition (Norman & Norman, 1995). They can develop social relationships with faculty through informal conversations outside of class, participation in informal meetings, and engaging in research projects with faculty.

Peer support programs such as learning communities, tutoring, and mentoring can be effective in the social transition process. Learning communities produce outcomes that facilitate social integration in the transition process (Johnson & Romanoff, 1999; Shapiro & Levine, 1999; Tinto, 1997). One group of studies relates to the link between learning communities and involvement in campus life and developing a sense of belonging to the campus.

Minority students adapt to the new environment on campus by becoming involved and developing a sense of connectedness with the campus community. Tinto (1993) emphasizes

the importance of separation from the old environment in order to transition and become incorporated into the new environment. Because the college environment differs from the high school and family environment, Tinto asserts that students must reject their old environment in order to learn the norms and behaviors of the new environment. Minorities and other nontraditional students often find support and comfort from parents and friends during the transition process, however (Tierney, 1992). Therefore, rejecting the old environment may pose a problem for minority students and place them at risk in the college environment.

Social Transition Experiences of Women

Social transition can have a great impact on student learning and can also differ by gender (Gabelnick, et al., 1990). Males' departure from college usually results from non-voluntary, academic reasons whereas females usually separate voluntarily (Tinto, 1993). That is, female departure from college is more often influenced by social forces than academic forces.

Campus involvement, campus climate, and relationships with peers are examined in the literature to address the impact of social transition for women in higher education. Little information exists that specifically addresses women's involvement on campus. Extracurricular activities have provided a means for leadership in activities since women began attending institutions of higher education. In an effort to build community on campus and divert women's attention away from family life in the early years, university officials offered campus activities. Speakers who discussed political reform, activism, and feminism encouraged women to participate in campus activities. Women who had little interaction with college life and were not involved in campus activities left campus after class to go home. These women were not prepared to accept their roles in society as social and civic leaders after graduation (Gordon, 1990).

It may be that the women who do not get involved in extra curricular activities do not see themselves as leaders. Research indicates that female campus leaders report higher self

esteem than their peers (Astin & Kent, 1983). Over time, women with higher self esteem also make substantial gains in their academic ability. Because of the potential increase in self esteem and academic ability, it seems that leadership opportunities have more impact for women than men in college.

The tendency for women to withdraw from higher education as a result of their discomfort with the social environment makes it critical for faculty and other university personnel to be sensitive to fostering a climate that is welcoming. A great deal of attention has been dedicated to campus climate for women. The campus climate refers to the total environment of the college or university campus including power dynamics and relationships among students, faculty, and administrators. "Campus climate, in other words, is the metaphorical temperature gauge by which we measure a welcoming and receptive versus a cool and alienating learning environment" (Cress, 2002; p. 390).

The chilly climate has not prevented women from enrolling in higher education nor has it prevented them from obtaining college degrees. However, there have been a number of negative effects for women in college that are associated with the climate. Despite the fact that college has been portrayed as a mechanism to increase social status in this country, this is not fully realized for women. Unfortunately, the system of higher education has failed to help women attain social status equal to White males. For example, there is still a disparity between the earnings of women when compared to White men (AAUW, 1992).

Several factors influence the continuing chilly climate for women in higher education. Women students are concentrated in traditionally female dominated majors. Women in the more male dominated majors often do not persist to graduation and behavior in the classroom does not favor women (Sandler, et al., 1996). A common misconception is that discrimination is no longer a problem for women because of legal as well as institutional policies that address the issue. Several reports have noted that women and men receive differential treatment in college (Fassinger, 1995; Follet, et al., 1982; Sandler & Hall, 1986; Hall, & Sandler, 1982). Merely

addressing some issues has not resulted in an automatic reversal of the climate that marginalizes women.

During the period between 1970 and 1998, the number of women earning bachelor's degrees exceeded the number of degrees earned by men. Women earned 43% of all degrees in 1971, but 56% of all degrees in 1998 (National Center of Educational Statistics, 2001). A closer examination of these numbers reveals that a majority of women continue to earn degrees in traditionally female dominated areas such as education and nursing. Women earned three fourths of the bachelor's degrees awarded in health sciences, education, and psychology. Only 17% of engineering degrees and 27% of computer and information science degrees are awarded to women (National Center of Educational Statistics, 2001).

The notion that some fields are feminine and others are masculine is a concern not only in higher education, but for society as well. This thinking has relegated women to lower paying, lower status jobs. Departmental climate accounts for part of the reason why few women select nontraditional majors and even fewer persist to graduation (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Women in male-dominated majors find themselves in the minority. With few female peers or faculty to serve as mentors, a lonely and isolating environment ensues for female students. Also, professors fail to cite examples which are inclusive or relative to experiences of women (Fassinger, 1995).

Not only do women select the traditionally male dominated majors less often, but those who enter college majoring in these fields often migrate to other programs. Women do not persist to graduation in nontraditional fields at the same rates as men. Adelman (1998) found a 20% gap between completion rates for men and women earning degrees in engineering. Women are significantly more likely to migrate out of engineering than men. Often, women leaving engineering migrate to disciplines that require strong quantitative skills such as computer science, business, and the physical sciences. Recent studies have considered how changing pedagogical styles, classroom structure, and group dynamics might help to increase

the retention of women in science and mathematics (Allan, 2002; Sandler & Hall, 1986; Sandler, et al., 1996).

Further disparity between achievement for men and women exists in hiring and promoting of women (Sandler & Hall, 1986). For example, women faculty receive fewer promotions to dean or department chair, women faculty members and administrators remain concentrated in a few areas, and women in higher education continue to earn less than men. Professional women in academia are not as visible as women undergraduate students (Sandler & Hall, 1986). The number of female faculty members lags far behind the enrollment rates of women undergraduates. Moreover, the number of doctoral degrees earned by women is disproportionately lower than the number of master's degrees women earn. This is discouraging because campuses are now dominated by women undergraduate students. However, these female students need female role models and mentors serving in professional capacities in all disciplines and at various levels of administration and that does not occur in higher education.

Another issue for women in higher education relates to classroom behavior (Sandler, et al., 1996). An influential study, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women* (Hall & Sandler, 1982) explained how classroom structure, curriculum, and processes allow gender bias to impact women's education. As a result of the study, many universities and colleges developed new policies for classroom behavior. Unfortunately, "it has become increasingly clear that merely reducing the ways in which women and men are treated differently neither automatically nor immediately increases women students' active participation in the classroom" (Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996, p. 1).

Although corrections have been attempted to address the mistreatment of women in the classroom, current practices continue to disadvantage women in higher education (Allan, 2002). Sandler, Silverberg, and Hall's (1996) follow up study includes additional information about classroom climate. Behaviors may be overt or subtle and may stem from faculty or students. Overt faculty behaviors include ridiculing or making denigrating remarks about women's issues,

discouraging students from conducting research on women's issues, and making disparaging remarks about scholarship or specific works by women. Students and faculty make sexist remarks about women and use humor in a hostile manner which alienates women.

In addition, men and women behave differently which also impacts the climate of the classroom. For example, men tend to be more hierarchical and competitive, call out answers without waiting to be recognized and feel validated by verbal sparring. In contrast, women prefer to make connections and build relationships, raise their hands and wait to be recognized, and feel validated by gaining a consensus from the group. Faculty should assume responsibility for responding appropriately regardless of differential student behaviors (Sandler, et al., 1996).

Issues of social transition experiences deserve as much attention as academic transition especially when one considers that minority students and women have suffered due to lack of social integration. The result of poorly integrated students may not mean that these individuals withdraw from the institution. However, social transition characteristics such as involvement, campus climate, and personal interactions can impact the quality of the experience (Allen, 1992). How students respond to other issues – academic and social – has an impact on personal-emotional transition.

Personal-Emotional Transition

The third type of transition students experience is personal-emotional. The amount of general psychological distress a student experiences during the transition process comprises the personal-emotional transition. Personal-emotional transition may be determined by students' sense of psychological and physical well-being (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

Personal-emotional adjustment has serious implications for adjustment to college as well as issues of social and academic adjustment. Students who have lower personal-emotional scores on measures of adjustment tend to experience lesser degrees of mental health or psychological well-being (Baker & Siryk, 1999). As a result, they are more likely to make more visits to campus counseling services as well as experience higher degrees of psychological

distress such as anxiety and depression. They are also more dependent emotionally on other individuals including parents. Students with low personal-emotional transition scores usually suffer negative life events and have fewer psychological resources to cope with these negative events.

Personal-emotional transition has been examined as it relates to attachment and separation from parents (Berman & Sperling, 1991; Daniels, 1990; Hoffman, 1984; Lopez, Mauricio, Gormley, Simko, & Berger, 2001; McCurdy & Scherman, 1996), problem coping-styles (Brown & Cross, 1997; Harvey & Byrd, 2000; Lopez, et al., 2001; Morris, Brooks, & May, 2003), and the need for counseling services (Chen, 1999; DeStefano, et al., 2001; Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002). A look at these issues provides insight on this form of adjustment.

First, separation is a normal developmental task that is assumed to have significant consequences for adaptation in young adults. Although separating from parents is a part of the transitioning to college process, it does not require abandoning close familial ties (Daniels, 1990; Hoffman, 1984). Rather, the task requires developing relational autonomy. The attachment style of college students has an impact on successfully negotiating the process of separation. Individuals who have secure attachment styles are comfortable with separation and connectedness.

Examining the literature related to separation-individuation reveals several things. First, family structure has an impact on how individuals separate from parents (Berman & Sperling, 1991). Second, the process impacts commuter and residential students in different ways (Berman & Sperling, 1991). Third, separation-individuation also imposes differential implications in personal-emotional transition (Lopez, et al., 2001). Separation-individuation is a developmental task presumed to have significant consequences for young adults and adolescents. This requires young adults to develop a sense of self while maintaining family connections.

In a study of college students, McCurdy and Scherman (1996) examined how various family structures impact young adults in their separation from parents. Participants who remained in intact families at the time of college have greater attachment to their fathers than those in divorced families. Also, individuals from intact families report greater conflictual independence (i.e. freedom of guilt, anger, and resentment) compared to those whose parents are divorced or remarried. Conflictual independence suggests a secure attachment style which predicts greater success in the transition to college (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002).

Berman and Sperling (1991) examined parental attachment and emotional distress in the transition process. Commuter and residential students were examined in two trials: one early in the semester (September) and another later in the semester (December). Both groups were found to have attachment to parents at the beginning of college transition. However, the second trial revealed that commuters' attachment to parents does not diminish while there is a significant decrease in residential students' parental attachment. In addition to important differences in parental attachment during the transition to college, Berman and Sperling (1991) suggested attachment level be used as a predictor of emotional anxiety in men during the college transition period.

Several studies have examined the association between adult attachment and coping styles (Brown & Cross, 1997; Harvey & Byrd, 2000; Lopez, et al., 2001). Coping style is another facet of personal-emotional transition which should be examined. Students have used family coping strategies and achievement goal orientation to cope with the pressures associated with being successful undergraduates. Successful coping methods help students to achieve better grades (academic adjustment) and feel a more positive sense of well-being (personal-emotional adjustment).

Problem coping styles may cause distress for undergraduates (Lopez, et al., 2001). Reactive coping is marked by the tendency to display strong emotional responses, impulsivity, and to distort reality. Suppressive coping is indicative of denial, confusion, and a tendency to

avoid awareness of problems. Both reactive and suppressive coping styles are significantly predictive of distress in college students. Students with insecure family attachments are likely to utilize one or both coping styles. For example, a significant and positive relationship was found between avoidant attachment patterns and both reactive and suppressive coping. Another maladaptive attachment pattern, anxious, was found to have a significant and positive relationship with the reactive coping style.

It seems that family influence (Harvey & Byrd, 2000) and attachment style (Lopez et. al., 2001) impact coping behavior. Students with secure attachment patterns perceive themselves as having fewer family conflicts and report using active problem solving. In contrast students with certain insecure attachment patterns report more family conflict and use more passive measures in problem solving. It is likely that students with problem coping styles experience significantly more stress resulting from developmental problems in intimate relationships and attempts to manage distance and closeness in relationships (Lopez, et. al., 2001).

Coping style also has a relationship with achievement goal orientation (Morris, et al., 2003). A study that examined the differences in coping styles of traditional and nontraditional undergraduates suggested a relationship between performance goal orientation and maladaptive coping styles in traditional-aged students. Students with performance goal orientations tend to complete assignments and requirements as a means to an end (i.e. to earn a passing grade, to earn course credit, or to fulfill an academic requirement for graduation) in comparison to students who employ learning goal orientations. Nontraditional-aged students are more likely to employ learning goal orientations that endorse learning for the sake of learning. They are more adaptive in a variety of problem situations. Nontraditional students often face multiple roles and must adapt to a variety of situations which results in using a range of coping behaviors rather than relying on a single coping style in problem solving.

Problem coping strategies could provide a framework for university counselors to explore issues college students face during the transition process. As mentioned above, using

maladaptive coping strategies can cause distress. Insecure adult attachment patterns also cause difficulty for college students. Heightened emotional anxiety could be an indication that students might benefit from counseling (Chen, 1999).

Lapsley and Edgerton (2002) suggested that measures of dysfunction in separation-individuation have important implications for university counseling centers. Individual differences in attachment style predict individual differences in adaptational outcomes. Individuals with secure attachment styles tend to exhibit better personal-emotional and social adjustment. Counseling services could assist students who exhibit dysfunctional attachment styles by helping them develop more constructive behaviors.

Other studies of personal-emotional adjustment reveal that students who seek university counseling services are not as well adjusted as students who do not seek university counseling services. A comparison of students who sought counseling at the university counseling center and a control group revealed differences in adjustment between pretest and posttest measures (DeStefano, Mellott, & Petersen, 2001). Those who sought counseling experienced more difficulty coping with various educational, interpersonal, and societal demands associated with the college experience. They experienced general psychological distress and associated somatic problems.

Differences in adjustment during pretest trials were greater than in the posttests. Moreover, the posttest scores for the counseling group were significantly higher than pretest scores for personal-emotional adjustment as well as academic and social adjustment. While the mean scores for the counseling group fell below the normal range during the pretest trial, this group scored within one standard deviation of the mean on the posttest. This suggests that students benefit from counseling services and achieve more successful adjustment when they use such services (DeStefano, et al., 2001).

Personal-emotional adjustment in college students has implications on adult attachment patterns, coping styles, and the utilization of counseling services. However, there are differences in behaviors for minority students and women.

Personal-Emotional Transition Experiences of Minority Students

The literature regarding personal-emotional adjustment for minority students is limited. However, there does seem to be an indication that minorities have different experiences related to personal-emotional transition. Similar to academic and social transition experiences, minority students utilize different coping styles and do not seek university counseling assistance in the same manner as majority students during the transition process (Constantine, Wilton, & Caldwell, 2003).

For example, Black students attending PWIs cope with inhospitable campus climates by disengaging psychologically (Haralson, 1996). These students may adopt different identities in order to gain acceptance by the university community. A problem for African American students is that the same behavior rewarded in majority students, aggressiveness, is perceived as negative for them.

These differential expectations leave minority students feeling marginalized, as if they do not matter to the university (Cooper, 1997). Minorities suffer from feelings of marginality because they must struggle to maintain their own culture when they migrate into higher education (Cooper, 1997; Rodriguez, et al., 2000). Individuals who perceive themselves as marginalized often assume dual personalities to cope with the dominant culture. This duality results in stressors that are not present for majority students (Smedley, et al., 1993).

It seems students of color may be at greater risk in the transition process; thus they could benefit from university services to address these issues. However, minority students are sometimes unaccustomed to the university setting and may not take advantage of the support services provided in that setting (Norman & Norman, 1995). Although several studies have shown that college students have more positive attitudes toward receiving psychological

services, these studies included few minority students (Hargrove & Sedlacek, 1997). There is evidence that minority students may not utilize university counseling and other mental health resources during periods when they perceive moderate psychological distress such as during college adjustment (Constantine, et al., 2003). When these students are satisfied with their support from close interpersonal relationships, they will not likely seek counseling for routine stressors like academic, personal, or vocational concerns.

Students of color tend to utilize familiar resources to address issues of moderate distress. Black, Latino, and Native American students, for example, often seek family support when stressed. Because of moral values, Black students also employ religious activities to help mediate the effects of distress. It is important that counseling center staff be sensitive to cultural backgrounds and try to incorporate support from family and peers because these are socially acceptable forms of addressing problems for African American, Latinos, and Native Americans where formal mental health services are not (Constantine, et al., 2003).

Constantine, Wilton, and Caldwell (2003) examined the relationship between psychological distress and willingness to seek psychological help among Black and Latino students. In certain instances, minority students do seek help from university officials. While Black students express neutral opinions about utilizing services for emotional and social concerns, they are significantly more likely to accept assistance for concerns about educational and vocational plans (Hargrove & Sedlacek, 1997). Minorities are more likely to first turn to faculty mentors and staff in minority centers. Students find comfort with faculty mentors, advisors, and minority-related support staff who can address the less stigmatized concerns that relate to vocational and educational planning.

University officials may want to consider faculty mentors and agents in offices for minority concerns as extensions of the counseling process for minority students (Norman & Norman, 1995). These agents can offer referrals to university counseling centers when more serious problems arise. It should also be noted that Blacks and Latinos experiencing high levels

of stress do seek the services of mental health professionals like those at university counseling centers (Constantine, et al., 2003). University personnel, including mentors and advisors, should not minimize the importance of their roles to the counseling and adjustment process especially for minority and nontraditional students.

Personal-Emotional Transition Experiences of Women

Research on the experiences of women's personal-emotional adjustment reveals differential development for women during college. This differential development in part accounts for differences in perception of well-being. Family attachment styles, coping styles, and implications for counseling for female college students diverge from those in male students.

Initially, attachment to parents is more important for women entering college than for men (Berman & Sperling, 1991). However, men who exhibit strong parental attachment have a greater likelihood of developing emotional anxiety. The correlation between later depressive mood and continued parental attachment is significant for men, but not women. Depressive moods, common in female college students (Sax, 1997), seem unrelated to parental attachment. It seems women might fare better separating from parents because they are able to transfer feelings of attachment to figures in the new environment.

Overall, however, women suffer from depression and stress more than men in college (Sax, 1997). Comparing responses from men and women in college during a 30-year period revealed that women tend to rate themselves as more depressed than men during the college transition. Emotional health and physical health of all students seems to decrease during college years. Women may be more prone to declining emotional health because they rely on developing strong relationships with others for support. However, as indicated earlier, the campus environment usually fails to provide the supportive relationships women seek, at least as far as faculty are concerned.

The depression and stress women suffer may stem from the manner in which women define themselves. Women define themselves in terms of their connectedness and relationships

with others (Blanke, 2002). The differences among women in development and how they view themselves with respect to others calls for different approaches in counseling and mental health treatment. Women are twice as likely to utilize counseling services as men. Some of the concerns addressed by women in counseling include relationships, reproductive issues, the role of violence in their lives, careers, sexual abuse, body image, eating disorders, and self esteem (Blanke, 2002).

In conclusion, the literature on transition experiences of first year students reveals that this is a multifaceted, complex issue which has received a great deal of attention (Baker & Siryk, 1999; Hurtado, et al., 1996; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Tinto, 1993). The review of the literature has uncovered information about transition in three domains: academic, social, and personal-emotional.

It seems that transition varies for different students. The literature includes information about the experiences of majority students (Baker & Siryk, 1999; DeStefano, Mellott et al., 2001; Tinto, 1993), minority students (Haralson, 1996; Nora, et al., 1996; Smedley, et al., 1993), and female students (Alfeld-Liro & Sigelman, 1998; Astin & Kent, 1983; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996). Women and minority students often have different experiences than majority students in the transition process (Astin & Kent, 1983; Haralson, 1996; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996). With respect to academic transition, differences in faculty relationships, academic performance, and motivation impact the process (AAUW, 1992; Gmelch, 1998; Gordon, 1990; Touchton & Davis, 1991). Social transition experiences for minorities and women diverge from those of men and majority students due to involvement on campus, support from peers, and campus climate (Anderson, 1988; Gordon, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Finally, personal-emotional transition varies for women and minority students because of their different perceptions about physical and psychological well-being (Berman & Sperling, 1991; Blanke, 2002; Sax, 1997).

There are, however, gaps in the existing body of knowledge. For example, the research that focuses on minority students does not compare the transition experiences among minority groups. The research on women does not include information about all facets of transition (i.e. academic, social, and personal-emotional). Finally, research is needed on the connection between transition and retention among minority students. The present study was designed to address these gaps in the existing work on transition by examining academic, social, and personal-emotional transition by race and gender, and by investigating the relationship between level of transition and retention.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the academic, social, personal-emotional transition, and attachment process for racial minority students at a large, public research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Participants completed the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1999) about their academic, social, personal-emotional, and attachment experiences during their first semester in college. Responses were analyzed to examine experiences of participants by race (e.g., Hispanic, African American, and Native American) and sex. Additionally, responses were analyzed to explore differences in transition levels between those who returned for a second semester, and those who returned for a second year, with those who did not.

Specifically, the study was designed to explore the following research questions:

1. How do minority students rate their academic experiences in the transition process?
2. How do minority students rate their social experiences in the transition process?
3. How do minority students rate their personal-emotional experiences in the transition process?
4. How do minority students rate their attachment to the institution?
5. Do the academic transition experiences of minority students differ by race or gender?
6. Do the social transition experiences of minority students differ by race or gender?
7. Do the personal-emotional transition experiences of minority students differ by race or gender?
8. Do the attachment experiences of minority students differ by race or gender?
9. Is the level of transition different for students who returned for the second semester and second year of college versus those who did not return?

In this chapter, the overall design of the study is provided. Specifically, this chapter includes details on the sample selection, instrumentation, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Sample Selection

In order to examine the transition experiences of minority students at a large, public, research institution, all underrepresented minority first time college students were invited to participate in the study. The study institution is a PWI located in a rural area of a mid-Atlantic state. The institution enrolls about 18,000 undergraduates and offers more than 70 majors through its seven undergraduate colleges. Historically, minority students comprise about 8% of each incoming class.

Underrepresented students at the institution include people who identify themselves as African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino(a), and Native/American Indian. In fall 2004, there were 1,675 minority students enrolled at the university. Three hundred (300) of those students were classified as first year students (Office of Institutional Research & Planning, 2004).

Before the researcher selected respondents for the study, they had to meet three criteria. First, students had to identify themselves as a member of one of the underrepresented minority groups targeted for the study: African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino(a), or Native/American Indian. This was important because the study focused on the experiences students in these minority groups.

The second and third criteria required participants to be first year and traditional aged (18 – 20) students. The Baker and Siryk (1999) model is based on traditional-aged first year students. Moreover students who were not in their first year of college or not of traditional college age may not have processed the transition experience in the same way as those meeting these criteria.

To select participants for the study, the researcher obtained the names and email addresses of all first year underrepresented minority students enrolled during the fall 2004

semester at the large, public, research institution. The list of potential participants and their email addresses was obtained from an independent consultant who analyzes data on the campus where the study was conducted.

The researcher sent an email (Appendix A) to all students from the list inviting them to participate in the study. Participants who were interested in participating clicked "Consent Form" and were connected to an electronic informed consent form (Appendix B). Those who consented to the conditions outlined in the consent form were then included in the study and connected to the web page which contained the survey instrument.

To maximize the participation rate, there was an incentive for completing the SACQ. Participants were offered an opportunity to win a $25 prize if they completed the instrument and entered their names in a drawing.

Instrumentation

The SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1999) was developed to assess students' adjustment to college. The instrument is based upon the assumption that adjustment to college is a multifaceted process. For that reason, the 67-item questionnaire contains four subscales. The four subscales measure Academic Transition, Social Transition, Personal-Emotional Transition, and Goal Commitment/Institutional Attachment. An additional section was added to the instrument to collect demographic information about the respondents. A copy of the SACQ appears in Appendix D.

The first section of the instrument elicited demographic data such as age, race, and sex. Participants responded to demographic items by selecting the appropriate choice from a menu of options.

The Academic Transition subscale consists of 24 items that relate to educational demands associated with the college experience. Items on the Academic Transition subscale ask participants questions such as whether they stay current on academic work, if they are satisfied with their professors, and about their motivation for studying.

There are 20 items on the Social Transition subscale. The items on this scale are relevant to the social demands of college life. Sample items from this subscale include questions related to fitting in, meeting people and making friends, and getting involved with social activities at college.

The third subscale, Personal-Emotional Transition, contains 15 items that measure how the respondent feels psychologically and physically. Sample items from this subscale ask about feeling tense or nervous, taking responsibility for self, and having physical symptoms of stress such as headaches.

The fourth subscale, Attachment, has 15 items; six of the items are exclusive to this subscale while one item is shared with the Academic Transition subscale and eight items are shared with the Social Transition subscale. The Attachment subscale measures the quality of the relationship or bond that exists between the student and the institution. This is determined by examining the student's degree of commitment to educational goals and the level of attachment to the institution the student is attending. Items under the Attachment subscale inquire about feelings associated with the decision to attend college in general and feelings associated with attending the specific institution.

Finally, two additional items are included which do not contribute to any of the subscales, but add to the TOTAL score. The TOTAL score, an index of overall adjustment, is a sum of scores for all 67 items. Higher scores indicate better adjusted students. The authors caution against using the TOTAL score in isolation because the subscales offer unique information about a student's adjustment to college (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

Each item on the SACQ contains a statement that students respond to using a scale ranging from 9 ("applies very closely to me") to 1 ("doesn't apply to me at all"). Students must indicate the point on the scale that best represents the degree to which the statement is true for them at the time they complete the instrument.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure that the SACQ has consistency in its measurement procedures over time and with different groups of people (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), estimates of reliability have been established. Adjustment to college does not remain stable over time because students are expected to develop and become better adjusted during their college careers. To that end, internal consistency estimates of reliability have been reported rather than the more common test-retest reliability estimates.

Reliability estimates include calculations for internal consistency of the SACQ for studies at 10 universities over a period of seven years (Baker & Siryk, 1999). However, these estimates are summarized in this research for convenience. Only data collected from non-disabled, first year students are reported here since this is the focus of the current study.

The data reveal strong estimates of reliability on all subscales. Specifically, the Academic Transition coefficient alpha values ranged from .90 to .78 (mean.858); the Social Transition coefficient alpha values ranged from .91 to .79 (mean.877); the Personal-Emotional coefficient alpha values ranged from .87 to .73 (mean .813); the Attachment coefficient alpha values ranged from .85 to .91 (mean .879); and the Full Scale coefficient alpha values ranged from .89 to .95 (mean .892).

The mean coefficient alpha values all exceed .8 which indicates that the SACQ has high internal consistency (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Moreover, the correlation scores in this range make it possible to predict group behavior (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). In other words, it is likely that group scores on the SACQ subscales are predictive of transition to college.

Interpretation of the research results hinges on the validity of the SACQ (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996); therefore, it is important to evaluate the instrument's validity. Validity indicates the extent to which the measurement procedures accurately reflect the variable being measured (McCall, 1996). Median intercorrelations for the three subscales are quite comparable. Academic Transition verses Social Transition yielded intercorrelations of .45 and .39. When

evaluating Academic Transition and Personal-Emotional Transition, the results were .60 and .55. The results for Social Transition and Personal-Emotional Transition were .49 and .42. The above scores suggest accuracy in the measurement procedures. That is, the SACQ appears to be a valid measure of transition.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to beginning the data collection process, the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in compliance with the university's policies governing research on human subjects (see Appendix B). The purpose of the review is to ensure the ethical conduct of research and that participant exposure will result in the least possible risk. Data collection began after obtaining approval.

An electronic version of the SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1999) was administered to underrepresented minority students during the fall 2004 semester. All underrepresented minority students were contacted by email explaining the intent of the study (see Appendix A). The email explained the purpose of the study and provided an explanation of the incentive for participating.

Within the email message, a link was provided to a consent form. Students who considered participating were directed to the electronic consent form when they clicked the link "Consent Form." After reading the consent form and deciding to participate in the study, respondents clicked on the link "I Agree" which then connected them to a screen where students had to enter a password which then linked them to the electronic version of the survey. If they elected not to participate, they clicked on a "Do Not Agree" link and received a message thanking them for their time.

Participants completed the online SACQ and submitted their responses by clicking "Submit Form" at the end of the electronic form. When participants submitted the electronic form, a pop up window opened that asked if they would like to participate in a drawing for a cash prize. Participants who clicked "Yes" were directed to the Prize Drawing Entry form. After

completing the information on the Prize Entry form, participants selected "Submit" to return the form to the researcher electronically.

One week after the initial request for participation was emailed to respondents, a reminder message was sent out (Appendix D). A subsequent email reminder was sent again two weeks and then three weeks after the initial invitation. This reminder thanked those who had already completed the instrument and asked those who had not had an opportunity to complete it to do so within the following week. The message also reminded potential respondents about the incentive for participating.

The emails inviting students to participate in the study resulted in 97 responses. In order to increase the response rate, the researcher visited students who did not respond to the online SACQ survey. This led to 167 additional responses; 141 students completed a paper and pencil version and an additional 26 students completed the survey online after a visit from the researcher. Combining the responses collected electronically and the paper and pencil responses, a total of 264 surveys were received. Of that number, three surveys were missing demographic information; two of the surveys were unusable because the respondents did not complete the survey; and 15 were unusable because the students did not meet the criteria for participation. Therefore, the usable sample consisted of 244 first year minority students. This represents a response rate of 81%.

The data collected on the paper and pencil forms were entered into an excel spreadsheet. Data from the electronic surveys were collected and scored using an electronic program. The information was transferred into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 13.0) for data analysis. During the following semesters, spring and fall 2005, follow up information was obtained on participants to determine if they remained enrolled at the study institution.

Data Analysis

The current study included two data sets to address the research questions. Transition, addressed in research questions one through eight, is the focus of the first data set. The second data set concentrates on retention and is examined in the last research question.

The researcher utilized descriptive statistics to address the first four research questions which explored how minority students rated their academic, social, personal-emotional, and attachment experiences during the transition process. First, range of scores, mean scores, and standard deviations for each subscale (Academic, Social, Personal-Emotional, and Attachment) and the TOTAL score were calculated. These descriptive statistics were used to answer the first four research questions posed in the study.

To answer questions five through eight in the study, responses were sorted into appropriate groups by race and sex. Then, mean scores for all subscales and the TOTAL score were calculated for each group. Multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were run to look for any significant differences in mean scores. MANOVA is a statistical procedure which determines whether several groups differ on more than one dependent variable (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). After obtaining the MANOVA *F*, significance was determined using statistical tables. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to follow up. ANOVA indicated which mean scores were statistically significantly different and contributed to the MANOVA *F.*

Finally, the researcher investigated the second data set, to assess retention. First, participants' TOTAL scores were sorted into three groups: high transition scores, medium transition scores, and low transition scores. Next, the researcher contacted the Office of Institutional Research to find out which participants enrolled in school for spring and fall 2005. Frequencies of the number of high, medium, and low scorers who did not return were calculated.

To determine if a significant difference existed in retention based upon level of transition, chi-squared statistics were used. Specifically, the chi-squared analyses were conducted to

determine differences in retention for high transition students who persisted to the second semester or the second year and those who did not. Finally, the researcher calculated contingency coefficients to determine the magnitude of the relationship between variables in the chi-square table (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Additionally, logistic regression was used to estimate the probability that respondents would return based upon their transition levels.

In conclusion, this study examined how minority students at a large, public, research institution rated their transition experiences and whether level of transition is related to retention. The data were analyzed to determine if differences exist in transition experiences of students by race or sex. The methodology described in this chapter enabled the researcher to address the questions that guided the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the study. The chapter begins with a description of the sample. Next, the results from the data analyses are reported. The results are organized around the research questions posed in the study.

Characteristics of the Sample

The target population included 300 first-year, traditional-aged, minority students who matriculated at the research institution in fall 2004. Students were invited to participate in the study via an email invitation and follow up email reminders. After sending several reminders, fewer than one third of the students (97) responded to the emails inviting them to participate in the survey. Therefore, the researcher visited students in their residence halls if they had not responded. These students were asked to go online to complete the survey or to complete a paper and pencil version of the survey. The researcher distributed paper and pencil versions of the survey to students and then returned to pick up the surveys later the same evening.

The surveys that were completed online were automatically entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The responses that were collected by paper and pencil were entered into an electronic database which also converted the results into an Excel spreadsheet. These results were downloaded into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, Version 13.0) to facilitate statistical analyses.

All students were traditional age and classified as first-time, full-time freshmen. Approximately 63% of the respondents identified themselves as African American/Black, 34% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, and 3% identified themselves as Native American. The make up of the sample is similar to the make up of the minority student population at the institution where the study was conducted; 63% of the students in the population are African American/Black, 34% are Hispanic/Latino/Latina, and 3% are Native American (Office of Institutional Research & Planning, 2004).

The sample included 105 (43%) women and 139 (57%) men. The population of first year minority students has similar proportions of men to women. That is, 42% of the population is female and the males comprise 58% of the population (Office of Institutional Research & Planning, 2004). Because differences between the characteristics of sample and the characteristics of the population are limited, the likelihood for sampling error is reduced (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Although the greatest number of participants, (n = 94 or 38%), were undecided in terms of academic major, the remaining respondents were enrolled in varying degree programs in all of the undergraduate colleges. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the students were enrolled in engineering, 15% in liberal arts, 9% in business, 9% in science, 4% in agriculture, 2% in architecture and less than 1% in natural resources. Table 1 includes a summary of the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Results of Data Analyses

The SACQ is a 67-item, self-report instrument designed to measure students' transition to college. The questionnaire yields scores on four subscales and a TOTAL score. The subscales include: Academic Transition, Social Transition, Personal-Emotional Transition, and Attachment to the institution.

The items on the SACQ describe college experiences. Respondents are asked to read each item and decide how well the statement applied to them within the past few days. Participants respond on a continuum ranging from "applies very closely to me" to "doesn't apply to me at all." Each response corresponds to a raw score rating ranging from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating a greater level of transition into college. For 33 of the items, the values were rated from 9 to 1 while the remaining 34 items were reverse scored, ranging from 1 to 9, because they were negatively worded.

The researcher divided the scores into three categories of transition: high, medium, and low. Scores ranging from 9 – 6.5 were categorized as high transition, scores ranging from 6.49 – 3.5 were categorized as medium transition, and scores ranging from 3.49 – 1 were

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=244)

Characteristics	n	%N
Race		
African American/Black	153	63
Hispanic/Latino(a)	84	34
Native American/Alaskan Native	7	3
Sex		
Female	105	43
Male	139	57
College		
Agriculture	10	4
Architecture & Urban Studies	5	2
Business	23	9
Engineering	53	21
Liberal Arts & Human Sciences	36	15
Natural Resources	1	0.4
Sciences	23	9
Undecided	94	38

categorized as low transition. These cut scores for the categories were determined by rank-ordering all total scores and identifying the top, middle and lower third of scores.

Student Ratings of Transition Experiences

The study was guided by nine research questions. The first four questions related to participants' ratings of their academic, social, personal-emotional experiences and their attachment to the institution during the transition process. Tables 2 – 5 summarize the scores on each subscale of the SACQ. Simple descriptive statistics were obtained by calculating the mean, range, and standard deviation for all items on each of the four subscales.

These descriptive statistics offer a more thorough understanding of the data. For example, each mean score indicates the average of all individual scores on a subscale. The range provides a single score, a value which computes the difference between the minimum and maximum scores reported on the subscale. Finally, the standard deviation is important because it is a measure that reflects the extent to which scores in a distribution deviate from the mean (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

The first research question examined Academic Transition (AT): how well participants are responding to academic demands. Table 2 summarizes responses to items on the AT subscale; Mean scores ranged from 3.85 to 8.56. Nine of the items were rated in the high range while the other 15 items were rated in the middle range; there were no items rated in the low range. The mean score on this subscale (m=5.76, SD=1.068) indicates that students achieve medium levels of academic transition. The highest rating related to a question about motivation: "getting a college degree is very important to me" (8.56). The lowest rated issue dealt with academic performance: "I enjoy writing papers for courses" (3.85). Items on this subscale had the greatest standard deviation indicating the ratings on this scale were the most inconsistent.

The second research question referred to how respondents cope with the social demands in college, or Social Transition (ST), for all participants. The ratings for the ST

Table 2

Sample Mean, Range and Standard Deviation on Academic Transition Scale (N=244)

Scale/Item	N	M	Range	SD
Total Scale	244	5.76	6.66	1.068
Getting a college degree is very important to me	244	8.56	8	1.133
I am attending classes regularly	243	7.45	7	1.841
Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a college education	243	7.41	8	2.216
I know why I'm in college and what I want out of it	243	7.19	8	2.078
I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at college	243	7.15	8	1.738
I am satisfied with the quality or the caliber of courses available at college	243	6.94	8	1.576
I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now	244	6.91	8	2.115
My academic goals and purposes are well defined	241	6.78	8	1.776
I have been keeping up to date on my academic work	243	6.70	8	1.676
I am satisfied with my program of courses for this semester/quarter	242	6.46	8	2.091
I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses	244	6.19	8	2.058
Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at college	244	5.70	8	2.466
I am quite satisfied with my academic situation at college	244	5.36	8	2.308
I am enjoying my academic work at college	242	5.19	8	2.138
I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in	242	5.17	8	2.370
I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments	243	4.77	8	2.441
I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately	243	4.77	8	2.337
I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically	242	4.71	8	2.129
I have not been functioning well during examinations	244	4.66	8	2.312
I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work	244	4.19	8	2.257
Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study	242	4.15	8	2.258
I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately	244	4.07	8	2.186
I am finding academic work at college difficult	243	3.99	8	2.042
I enjoy writing paper for courses	244	3.85	8	2.424

Table 3

Sample Mean, Range and Standard Deviation on Social Transition Scale (N=244)

Scale/Item	N	M	Range	SD
Total Scale	244	6.34	6.15	1.241
I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at college	239	7.39	8	2.237
I am pleased now about my decision to attend this college in particular	243	7.32	8	1.969
I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the college setting	243	7.19	8	1.859
I feel that I fin in well as part of the college environment	244	7.07	8	1.659
I have some good friends or acquaintances at college with whom I can talk about any problems I may have	242	6.94	8	2.373
I am adjusting well to college	244	6.83	8	1.724
I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at college	242	6.66	8	2.080
I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at college	242	6.50	8	2.196
I feel I am very different from other students at college in ways that I don't like	243	6.49	8	2.343
I am quite satisfied with my social life at college	244	6.42	8	2.233
I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like in college	243	6.30	8	2.005
I have several close social ties at college	244	6.18	8	2.206
Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now	243	6.17	8	2.471
I enjoy living in a college dormitory	242	6.15	8	2.481
I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately	242	6.12	8	2.626
On balance, I would rather be home than here	244	5.91	8	2.504
I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at college	242	5.85	8	2.220
I have been feeling lonely a lot at college lately	240	5.40	8	2.761
I am very involved with social activities in college	244	5.16	8	2.263
I have had informal, personal contacts with college professors	243	4.79	8	2.475

Table 4

Sample Mean, Range and Standard Deviation on Personal-Emotion Scale (N=244)

Scale/ Item	N	M	Range	SD
Total Scale	244	5.67	5.60	1.064
I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from counseling services	242	7.57	8	2.226
My appetite has been good lately	244	6.90	8	2.095
I have been having a lot of headaches lately	244	6.59	8	2.614
I have been feeling in good health lately	244	6.44	8	2.319
I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately	244	6.39	8	2.402
I've put on (or lost) too much weight lately	242	6.33	8	2.554
I have been getting angry too easily lately	242	6.32	8	2.251
Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy	242	6.05	8	2.342
I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in college	243	5.35	8	2.400
I haven't been sleeping very well	243	5.17	8	2.651
I have been feeling tense or nervous lately	244	4.86	8	2.394
Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily	243	4.56	8	2.320
I worry a lot about my college expenses	244	4.36	8	2.605
Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot	241	4.30	8	2.324
I have felt tired much of the time lately	244	3.91	8	2.184

Table 5

Sample Mean, Range and Standard Deviation on Attachment Scale (N=244)

Scale/Item	N	M	Range	SD
Total Scale	244	6.95	6.533	1.320
Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of college altogether and for good	244	8.21	8	1.737
I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from college and finishing later	243	8.00	8	1.946
I am pleased now about my decision to go to college	244	7.94	8	1.638
I am pleased now about my decision to attend this college in particular	243	7.32	8	1.969
I expect to stay at college for a bachelor's degree	243	7.30	8	2.339
I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at college	243	7.15	8	1.738
I feel that I fit in well as part of the college environment	244	7.07	8	1.659
Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another college	244	6.75	8	2.651
I wish I were at another college or university	244	6.75	8	2.572
I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at college	242	6.50	8	2.196
I feel I am very different from other students at college in ways that I don't like	243	6.49	8	2.343
I am quite satisfied with my social life at college	244	6.42	8	2.233
I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like at college	243	6.30	8	2.005
I enjoy living in a college dormitory	242	6.15	8	2.481
On balance, I would rather be home than here	244	5.91	8	2.504

subscale are reported in Table 3. Participants' overall rating on ST also clustered near the middle (M=6.34; SD=1.241). Mean ratings on eight items fell in the high range while the remaining 12 items were in the medium range. The mean scores ranged from 4.79 on an item about establishing personal, informal contact with professors to 7.39 on an item about getting along well with roommates.

The third research question examined Personal-Emotional (PE) Transition for all participants. The PE subscale focuses on participants' psychological and physical sense of well-being. Table 4 includes information on PE transition and reveals item mean scores that ranged from 3.91 to 7.57. Respondents reported the lowest level of transition among the four scales on this scale (M=5.67). The standard deviation for PE (1.064) is low in comparison to other subscales (AT=1.068, ST=1.241, ATT=1.320) indicating respondents were more similar to one another in their responses to items on this scale than on other scales. The highest scored item related to seeking counseling services (M=7.57); conversely, the lowest scored item, "I have felt tired much of the time", (M=3.91) relates to physical health.

The fourth research question examined the Attachment (ATT) experiences for participants. Table 5 details the mean scores for items on the ATT subscale. The Attachment score reflects the degree to which respondents feel committed to the institution. This subscale yielded the highest mean score of all subscales (M=6.95) though the standard deviation (SD=1.32) indicates a fair degree of disparity in scores on this subscale. The item yielding the highest score (M=8.21) asked about having thoughts of general dissatisfaction with the college experience: "I have been giving thought to dropping out of college altogether." The lowest scored item on the ATT subscale relates to the student's desire to be at home (M = 5.91).

Differences in Transition Experiences

Research questions 5 – 8 examined differences in transition experiences by race and sex on TOTAL scores and each of the four subscales (AT, ST, PE, and ATT). To determine if differences exist by race, sex, or an interaction of race and sex on TOTAL transition,

multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed on TOTAL transition (see Table 6). To evaluate the MANOVA hypotheses, Wilks's lambda was employed for all MANOVA procedures in this study. Wilks's lambda is a measure used to determine if mean scores of variables differ significantly across groups (Cramer, 2003). Represented by *F*, Wilks's lambda is commonly used because the results are more conservative than other tests for significance like the Hotellings trace and Roy's largest root (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). When the p value is greater than .05, significant differences do not exist.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine the effects of race and sex on the TOTAL transition score. Wilks's lambda revealed no significant differences for transition by race, F (8, 470) = 1.090, p = .37; by sex F (4, 235) = .721, p = .58; or interaction of race and sex F (8, 470) = .344, p = .95. The MANOVAs showed no significant differences in TOTAL transition by race, sex, or an integration of race and sex as indicated by p values; all are greater than .05. The multivariate eta squared shows weak association for race (.02), gender (.01) and the interaction of race and gender (.01). This indicates that 2%, 1%, and less than 1% of the variance is associated with race, sex, and the interaction of race and sex, respectively. The fifth research question posed in the study explored differences in Academic Transition by race and sex. ANOVA was conducted to determine if any of the scores showed statistically significant differences. The ANOVA conducted to determine the effects of race and sex on AT revealed no significant differences. The results for race, F (2, 238) = .839, p = .434; sex, F (1, 238) = 2.198, p = .140; and differences based on the interaction of race and sex, F (2, 238) = 1.009, p = .366 are shown in Table 7.

The sixth research question investigated differences in Social Transition by race and sex and interaction of these two main effects. To determine if significant differences exist, I again employed ANOVA tests. Significant differences for sex were not found, F (2, 238) = 1.029, p =.359; nor were they found for race, F (1, 238) = 1.776, p = .184; and differences based on the

Table 6

Results of MANOVAs on Differences in TOTAL *Transition by Race and Sex (N=244)*

Ratings	Wilks's Lambda	F	*df*	p	Partial eta squared
Race	.964	1.090	4	.369	.018
Sex	.988	.721	4	.579	.012
Race x Sex	.988	.344	8	.949	.006

Table 7

Results of ANOVAs on Differences in Academic Transition by Race and Sex (N=244)

Characteristic	N	M	SD	*df*	F	p
Race				2	.839	.434
African American/Black	151	5.712	1.118			
Hispanic/Latino(a)	83	5.888	.971			
Native American/Indian	7	5.488	1.056			
Sex				1	2.198	.140
Female	107	5.820	1.109			
Male	137	5.718	1.037			
Race x Sex				2	1.009	.366
Black Female	67	5.707	1.203			
Black Male	84	5.717	1.052			
Hispanic Female	37	5.997	.928			
Hispanic Male	46	5.800	1.006			
Native American Female	3	6.181	.797			
Native American Male	7	5.190	1.058			

interaction between race and sex were not found, F (2, 238) = .760, p = .469. Results on ST are reported in Table 8.

In research question seven, differences were examined in Personal-Emotional Transition experiences by race, sex, and interaction of race and sex. Table 9 includes the results of ANOVA examining personal-emotional transition for race, sex, and the interaction of race and sex. Again, no significant differences were found. The reported values are race, F (2, 238) = 1.782, p = .171; sex, F (1, 238) = .742, p = .390; and with the interaction of race and sex, F (2, 238) = .384, p = .682.

I examined differences in Attachment to the institution by race and sex in research question eight. There were no significant differences found among the independent variables for this subscale (see Table 10). The values for race are F (2, 238) = 1.577, p = .209; for sex F (1, 238) = 1.458, p = .229; and for the interaction of race and sex are F (2, 238) = .858, p = .425.

Retention and Transition Level

The final research question employed a second data set to explore retention as it relates to level of transition to college. Of those who participated in the study in the fall of 2004, 233 (95.5%) respondents returned for the second semester of college and 11 (4.5%) students did not return. Of the returners, the majority were rated as achieving high levels of transition. There were 180 students who were rated as having a high transition level, 52 who were rated as having a medium transition level, and one rated as having a low transition level. All of the 11 participants who did not return for the second semester, spring 2005, were rated as achieving a high transition level.

The number of students who returned for the second year was also examined. Of the 233 participants who returned for the second semester of college in the spring of 2005, 204 (87.5%) returned for year two of college in fall, 2005. Of those who returned for the fall 2005

Table 8

Results of ANOVAs on Differences in Social Transition by Race and Sex (N=244)

Characteristic		N	M	SD	*df*	F	P
Race					2	1.029	.359
	African American/Black	151	6.296	1.302			
	Hispanic/Latino(a)	83	6.377	1.160			
	Native American/Indian	7	6.750	.937			
Sex					1	1.776	.184
	Female	105	6.445	1.293			
	Male	139	6.262	1.198			
Race x Sex					2	.760	.469
	Black Female	67	6.324	1.462			
	Black Male	84	6.274	1.167			
	Hispanic Female	37	6.596	.943			
	Hispanic Male	46	6.200	1.292			
	Native American Female	3	7.300	.218			
	Native American Male	7	6.514	1.041			

Table 9

Results of ANOVAs on Differences in Personal-Emotional Transition by Race and Sex (N=244)

Characteristic	N	M	SD	*df*	F	P
Race				2	1.782	.171
African American/Black	151	5.592	1.063			
Hispanic/Latino(a)	83	5.778	1.051			
Native American/Indian	7	6.053	1.162			
Sex				1	.742	.390
Female	105	5.702	1.066			
Male	139	5.654	1.067			
Race x Sex				2	.384	.682
Black Female	67	5.584	1.103			
Black Male	84	5.600	1.036			
Hispanic Female	37	5.856	.994			
Hispanic Male	46	5.716	1.101			
Native American Female	3	6.444	.743			
Native American Male	7	5.886	1.316			

Table 10

Results of ANOVAs on Differences in Attachment by Race and Sex (N=244)

Characteristic	N	M	SD	*df*	F	p
Race				2	1.577	.209
African American/Black	151	6.864	1.398			
Hispanic/Latino(a)	83	7.052	1.202			
Native American/Indian	7	7.400	.918			
Sex				1	1.458	.229
Female	107	7.027	1.378			
Male	137	6.890	1.274			
Race x Sex				2	.858	.425
Black Female	67	6.856	1.557			
Black Male	84	6.871	1.267			
Hispanic Female	37	7.259	.960			
Hispanic Male	46	6.886	1.353			
Native American Female	3	7.978	.870			
Native American Male	7	7.152	.880			

semester, more than 77% (158 students) were rated as having a high transition level and 22% (45 students) were rated as having a medium transition level. The one student who was rated as having a low transition level returned for the second year. There were 29 students who returned the second semester, but did not return for the second year. Of those, the majority (22) were rated as having a high level of transition. There were seven students with a medium transition level rating who did not return in fall 2005. Table 11 shows the number of returners versus non-returners by transition level and semester.

Chi square analysis was used to determine if a significant difference existed in retention based upon transition levels. The two variables included enrollment status (returners versus non-returners) and transition levels (high, medium, and low). Enrollment status and transition were not found to be significantly related during the second semester, Pearson X^2 (2, N = 244) = 3.196, p = .202, the contingency coefficient = .114. The chi square test, also known as Pearson X^2, compares the observed frequencies in the categories of one or two variables with those expected by chance (Cohen & Holliday, 1982).

Similarly, the chi square analysis for the second year revealed no significant relationship between enrollment status and transition level, Pearson X^2 (2, N = 233) = .631, p = .729, the contingency coefficient = .051.

In addition, chi square can be used as a descriptive statistic to indicate the strength of the association between two variables (Neuman, 1997). The range for chi squared is 0 – 1 with values closer to 1 indicating a stronger association between the variables. Larger numbers show stronger associations between the numbers. The contingency coefficient is used to report this measure of association. In the present study, the contingency coefficient .114 for spring and .051 for fall indicates a weak association between transition level and enrollment status.

Next, follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted to evaluate the differences among these proportions (Thyer, 2001). Table 12 shows the results of these analyses. There were no

Table 11

Student Returners vs. Non-returners by Transition Level

Transition Level	Returners	Non-returners	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Spring (N=244)			
High	180 (77.25)	11 (100)	191 (78.28)
Medium	52 (22.32)	0 (0)	52 (21.31)
Low	1 (.43)	0 (0)	1 (.41)
Total	233 (100)	11 (100)	244 (100)
Fall (N=233)			
High	158 (77.45)	22 (75.86)	180 (77.25)
Medium	45 (22.06)	7 (24.14)	52 (22.32)
Low	1 (.49)	0 (0)	1 (.43)
Total	204 (100)	29 (100)	233 (100)

significant relationships found. However, the relationship between medium and high transition levels for fall was closest to showing significance ($p = .077$).

Regression is another tool used to describe the relationship between variables. Since the chi square analysis did not estimate the precise relationship between level of transition and enrollment status, an additional analysis was employed.

Logistic regression transforms the distribution of a linear regression model into an *S* shaped distribution. This *S* shaped distribution shows a more precise prediction of the relationship between two variables (Pampel, 2000). Moreover, logistic regression can estimate the probability that a respondent will return when given the respondent's transition level. The dependent variable, which measures school status (enrolled or not enrolled) here, is equal to 1 when students return and 0 when students do not return to school. The logistic regression model is used to estimate the factors (high, medium, low transition) which influence school status.

The analysis showed the relationship between school status and transition level was not significant for either spring or fall enrollment and the coefficient was negative. Finally, the model predicts 95.5% of the responses correctly. The negative coefficient suggests a reverse *S* shape curve when graphing the relationship (see Figure 1). This suggests that a student with a high transition level is less likely to return to school for a second semester or a second year.

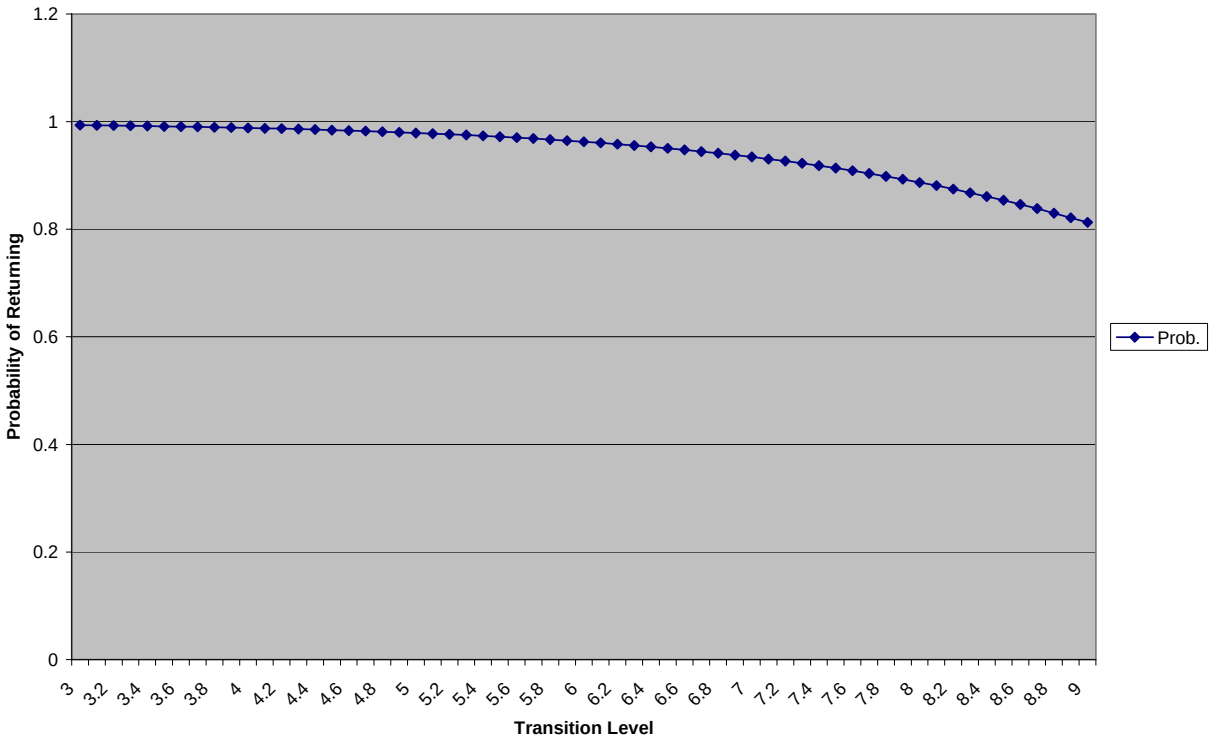
In summary, this study examined the transition levels of minority students at a predominantly White institution. The data analyses revealed no significant differences in transition levels of minority students when compared by race, sex or the interaction between race and sex. Moreover, there was no relationship found between level of transition and the tendency to return to school for the second semester or second year of college. The results of the study, as well as implications of these findings for future practice, policy, and research are discussed in Chapter Five.

Table 12

Results for Pairwise Comparisons

Comparisons	Pearson chi square	p value (alpha)	Contingency Coefficient
Spring			
Low vs. medium			
Low vs. high	.061	.805	.018
Medium vs. high	3.137	.077	.114
Fall			
Low vs. medium	.155	.694	.054
Low vs. high	.209	.648	.033
Medium vs. high	.433	.511	.042

Figure 1. The relationship between school status and transition level



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the college transition experiences of under represented minority students at a large, predominantly White, research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This chapter includes a discussion of the results of the study. The chapter begins with an overview of the findings as they relate to the research questions. Next, the chapter reports how these findings relate to prior research. Then, I discuss implications for future practice, research, and policy. Finally, I describe the limitations of the study and draw some conclusions.

Overview of Findings

This research was guided by nine questions. To investigate these questions, the study examined the responses to the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) among the participants. Responses to each item ranged from 9 to 1 with higher scores indicating a higher level of transition. For this study, I interpreted each score as a high, medium, or low transition level. Scores of 9 – 6.5 were rated as high transition, scores from 6.49 – 3.5 were rated as medium transition, and scores from 3.49 – 1 were rated as low transition. Further, I studied whether a relationship exists between how individuals responded to items on the questionnaire and their retention in college.

The first four research questions examined how students rated their experiences during the transition process. Their experiences were rated using four subscales of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ): academic (AT), social (ST), personal-emotional (PE), and attachment (ATT).

To understand participants' levels of transition, it is important to examine the top ranked items on each subscale. To do this the responses which students rated 6.5 or more, indicating a high transition level, are discussed. This included 10 items on ATT, nine items on AT, eight

items on ST, and three items on PE. In addition, the lowest responses to items on two subscales (AT and PE) that ranked quite low were also considered.

By subscale, participants rated Attachment highest (6.95); next, participants rated Social Transition (6.34); the third ranked subscale was Academic Transition (5.76); finally, participants ranked Personal-Emotional Transition lowest among the four subscales (5.67). Note, only the Attachment subscale reached a high transition level; the other three ranked as medium transition levels.

The findings suggest students have a strong Attachment to higher education in general. Participant responses include high ratings for items that suggest they are not likely to drop out of college or take time off. Moreover, they report pleasure about their decision to attend college and they expect to remain in school until they earn a bachelor's degree. These minority students also report they fit in well at college and they feel at ease with others.

In addition to positive feelings about higher education in general, students report having positive attachments to their institution. Specifically, ratings indicate respondents are pleased they are attending the institution at which the study was conducted, they are not planning to transfer to another institution, and do not wish they were attending another university. These positive responses about higher education and the specific institution they are attending demonstrate quality relationships between students and the institution (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

The positive feelings and strong scores on ATT may be a result of the selective nature of the institution where the instrument was administered. The average SAT scores and grade point average for entering students at this university tend to exceed norms for high school graduates. High grades and test scores might indicate that these students are more serious about pursuing baccalaureate degrees.

Other factors that may influence students' attachment and commitment to the institution (or higher education) include the fact that many of those who are accepted to the university have successfully completed honors courses, have earned advanced placement (AP) credit in

high school, and have earned college credit prior to enrolling for their first semester at the university. These experiences may provide the students with some insight about college life before they matriculate. If so, these students may be able to express preferences for specific characteristics of an institution which leaves them feeling more satisfied about their college selection.

Social transition was the second highest rated subscale. Participants appear to be adjusting well to the social environment, getting along with others, and managing their feelings about being away from home and their significant relationships. The items with the highest ranked means in the category include getting along well with roommates (7.39), experiencing pleasure regarding decision to attend college (7.32), believing they are socially capable of doing well in college (7.19), fitting into the environment (7.07), making good friends (6.94), adjusting to college well (6.83), enjoying satisfaction with extracurricular options (6.66), and feeling at ease with others (6.50). Students attending large public institutions probably do not select these schools expecting close social relationships. These low expectations could make social transition experiences seem smoother; hence students rate their experiences higher.

The sense that these individuals believe they are a part of the social environment leads to improved relationships with roommates, higher participation in extracurricular activities, and establishing friendships with others on campus. Since the participants indicate they have good social skills, this might be a sign that these individuals have personalities that facilitate social success in large environments. Finally, the fact that these students have developed friendships may result in opportunities to talk over frustrations as well as positive experiences further promoting a sense of belonging and positive adjustment.

Academic transition measures the level of motivation, application (or how well that motivation is translated into academic effort), performance, and the academic environment. The mean scores for AT ranked third among the subscales. The items rated highest on this subscale include: regular class attendance, the belief that getting a degree is important, clarity about

goals, appreciating the value of education, and satisfaction with the number and quality of courses offered. The fact that the institution is more selective in admissions may contribute to the medium levels of academic transition reported by participants. These students might also place more value on education due to previous academic achievement. Finally, high grades in high school might also contribute to increased motivation levels.

On the other hand, at the lower end of the ratings for AT were items indicating students do not enjoy writing papers and are experiencing difficulty with college work, time management, and concentrating. Although students at the university where the study was conducted generally performed well in high school, evidence suggests that they were not as prepared for college level work as they should be. Another explanation for some of the lower ratings might be due to the timing of the survey. The survey was distributed after mid-semester of the first year, a time when students at the research institution may experience burn out and the need for a break. In addition, the institution attracts a large number of students to science, technology, engineering, and math programs. Since preparation for these programs emphasizes the importance of analytic rather than literary or writing ability, students may not have developed strong writing skills which might result in lower ratings on the item about writing papers.

The Personal-Emotional transition subscale gauges one's sense of psychological and physical well-being. This subscale ranked lowest in terms of level of transition among the four subscales. Mean scores on only three items fell in the range indicating a high transition level. The highly rated items include thoughts of seeking counseling, good appetite, and not experiencing headaches.

Participants rated most of the items on this subscale low, indicating that they are not transitioning well with respect to personal-emotional issues. Low rated items included feeling tired, feeling blue, worrying about expenses, confused thinking, and experiencing nervousness and tension. Young adults tend to ignore their physical and mental health; however, these individuals may need to be educated about campus resources offered by the health center to

address mental and physical health concerns. Again, the timing of the study might have influenced the results. After 10 weeks, the stress of college may have been catching up with respondents.

In addition to scores on the four subscales, a score for overall transition (TOTAL) was also derived. Of the 244 students who responded to the survey, the majority were rated as having a high TOTAL transition level. It is interesting to note that 78% (n=191) of the participants were rated as achieving a high TOTAL transition level. Twenty-one percent (n=52) were rated medium TOTAL transition levels and less than 1% (n=1) had a low TOTAL transition rating. The one pattern I noticed is that mean scores for ATT and ST were much higher than scores for AT and PE. This might suggest that they feel attached, and like being here, but are not adjusting as well academically and that might be taking a toll personally-emotionally. Perhaps these feelings of attachment were due to the very successful football season at the institution where the study was conducted. Students may generalize their positive feelings about the football team to the entire university. Another reason may be that like many first year students, they are engaging in social activities more than they are engaging in academics.

Research questions five through eight examined whether participants' experiences differed by race, sex, or the interaction between these two variables. There were no significant differences found in the TOTAL transition experiences of students by these factors. Moreover, there were no significant differences in transition experiences by race, sex, or interaction for any of the subscales. Finally, the difference in transition level by school status was examined to determine if students with high levels of transition were more likely to return to school the second semester and the second year than students with medium and low transition levels.

Although one might expect that students would be more likely to return to school if they experienced higher transition levels, the opposite was true. Students with high transition levels were more likely to not return to school. In fact, 100% (n=11) of the students who did not return the second semester and more than 75% (n=22) of the students who did not return the second

year reported high transition levels. More than 24% (n=7) of the students who did not return the second year had medium transition levels; however, the one student with a low transition level returned the second semester as well as the second year. Instead of a high transition level predicting students more likely to return to school for the second semester and the second year, participants in this case with high transition levels were less likely to return than those with medium or low transition scores.

These students may have failed to return for the second semester or the second year because of reasons that do not relate to difficulty with transition. It could be that the individuals who did not return experienced financial difficulties that complicated their return. Perhaps students with financial hardships had to transfer to an institution closer to home where they could commute and save on the cost of room and board. Also, students experiencing financial difficulties may sit out for a semester or longer to work and save money to return to school. Other personal issues also could have influenced the decision to leave the university. Further research would be needed to identify the causes of attrition for participants.

Relationship of Findings to Prior Research

Findings in the present study support as well as contradict previous research on transition experiences for minority students. Prior studies suggest minority students may suffer during the transition process and may have difficulty forming attachments with the college environment (Tinto, 1993). Minorities have different experiences during transition than majority students (Haralson, 1996; Terenzini, et al., 1994). Results from the present study are not consistent with these findings; responses about comfort with the campus environment are high. Respondents say they feel they fit into the campus environment and at ease with others, and do not sense they differ from other students on campus.

Other research suggests developing relationships with others is important in the transition process (Astin, 1996; Tinto, 1993). Moreover, it is important for minorities to engage in university activities to develop a connection to the school (Tinto, 1997). Separating from past

relationships also relates to forming an attachment to the institution. There seems to be conflicting findings related to severing ties with old environments and developing associations with the new academic environment. While students in my study seem satisfied with their decision to attend college and satisfied with their decision to attend the university where the study was conducted, there were hints that they were nostalgic. For example, participants reported moderate scores about feeling lonesome for home (6.17), wanting to be home (5.91), and feeling lonely (5.40).

Although students in the current study seem to be developing positive relationships with other students, they do not seem satisfied with the relationships they are developing with faculty. Student dissatisfaction with professors may also signal problems with attachment. Personal interactions with faculty as well as peers can impact the quality of the students' experiences (Allen, 1992).

Social transition is predicted to play an even greater role than academic transition in the experiences of minority students (Allen, 1992). The degree of involvement in extracurricular activities may have an impact on graduation rates (Astin, 1993). While on campus employment may produce positive effects on transition, working off campus tends to have the opposite effect (Astin, 1993). Minority students are often less involved in campus activities due to obligations from full or nearly fulltime employment (Furr & Elling, 2000). It seems clear that students are not as involved in campus activities as they would like (5.16). The factors which contribute to this, however, are not evident. The findings in my study somewhat support prior research that suggests minority students are often less involved in campus activities.

Minority students benefit from a climate that encourages collaborative learning. In such environments, students benefit from relating to others (Tinto, 1997). Students enjoy support from both their peers as well as their professors when they participate in shared learning tasks (Chen, 1999). Faculty can also help to foster a warmer climate by validating the varied experiences of students from different backgrounds (Terenzini, et al., 1994). Prior research on

social transition is inconsistent with my research. Participants in the current study expressed dissatisfaction with informal faculty relationships (4.79). Despite the lack of informal relationships with faculty, these students' are doing relatively well with respect to social transition.

My findings are inconsistent with previous research in another respect. In this study, students seemed to benefit from peer support; students rated getting along with roommates (7.39) high on the social transition scale. They also reported having good friends or acquaintances with which they could discuss problems. Prior research suggests minority students have fewer opportunities for exploiting peer relationships because when they begin college they usually have fewer personal contacts with current students who might help them to navigate their transition (Allen, 1992). This group does not seem to have fewer opportunities to benefit from peer relationships. Ratings of peer relationships have a positive impact on Social Transition.

Several of the items that students rated highly in the study relate to the social environment and campus climate. Students reported they are glad they chose this particular college (7.32) and they are satisfied with their extracurricular activities (6.66). The ratings on these items signal that students seem to feel comfortable with the campus' climate. Research suggests that students who are satisfied with the climate have better transition experiences. The overall rating for ST implies a positive transition experience, but some items suggest otherwise. For example, students would like to be more involved in social activities (5.16). Another sign that students experience some difficulty with social transition is reflected in fact that participants had not had informal, personal contacts with college professors (4.79). It appears that the ST experiences for the participants in this study were mixed, thus the medium rating on this subscale. This may reflect that social opportunities with which these students are comfortable are not present at this PWI.

Prior research points out that faculty-student relationships (Fleming & Morning, 1996; Smedley, et al., 1993), academic performance (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980), and motivation (Allen, 1992) are important aspects of academic transition. The literature indicates that establishing relationships with faculty helps to improve student satisfaction with an institution (Astin, 1993). In addition, these relationships provide students with mentors who assist them in navigating the system of higher education (Tinto, 1993) as well as provide them entry into their professional field (Haring, 1999). These relationships also increase students' feelings of inclusion (Norman & Norman, 1995). However, the academic experiences of minority students differ from the experiences of majority students. For example, minority students favor high quality rather than high quantity interactions with faculty (Nettles, et al., 1986), prefer faculty who express positive expectations of their performance (Fleming & Morning, 1996), and desire faculty who display genuine concern for students' well-being (Smedley, et al., 1993). Students in the current study expressed ambivalent feelings about their current professors; i.e. "I have had personal contacts with college professors" (4.79). Such findings suggest that academic transition may be more difficult for these respondents and indeed, the mean AT score was low (5.76) when compared to scores on the ATT (m=6.95) and ST (m=6.34) scales.

In addition to relationships with faculty, academic performance is important to academic transition. Motivation, rather than intelligence and positive relationships with faculty (Allen, 1992) are cited as indicators of high academic performance for minority students. In addition, the reason minorities attend college is also a key indicator of academic performance. In the current study, students' academic performance is a concern. The four lowest rated items on academic transition all have to do with performance. These include having trouble concentrating (4.15), being inefficient with study time (4.07); finding difficulty with college academic work (3.99), and enjoying writing papers (3.85). This may suggest that they face challenges in terms of academic transition, hence academic performance.

With respect to the role motivation plays in academic transition, motivation factors contribute more to academic performance than intelligence (Cote & Levine, 2000). Research asserts that minority students' motivation stems from factors such as high career aspirations, similar to those of majority students (Allen, 1992). Four of the highest rated AT items in this study relate to motivation. One item notes the importance of attaining a college degree (8.56). On other items, participants reported attending class regularly (7.45), relating to the value of a college degree (7.41), and knowing what they want from college (7.19). My findings seem to contradict earlier research on Academic Transition. Although the participants report being highly motivated, they have concerns about their performance. These students' motivation levels do not seem to mitigate their negative feelings about their performance.

The literature on minority students' personal-emotional transition reveals that students disengage psychologically from campuses that do not have warm climates (Haralson, 1996). In addition, students who must struggle to maintain a sense of their own cultural identity are less likely to seek counseling services. Minority students are more likely to capitalize upon personal relationships for support during the transition process. This is especially true when students of color are satisfied and comfortable with the support they are receiving from familiar sources such as family and friends (Constantine, et al., 2003). Studies show that minority students feel more comfortable seeking professional assistance with personal matters in settings where they are less vulnerable (Hargrove & Sedlacek, 1997). For example, they are more likely to visit career centers regarding future education and vocational plans.

Findings in the current study support prior research that indicates minority students are less likely to seek professional assistance for moderate stressors like headaches (6.59), inability to control emotions (6.39), and weight gain/loss (6.33). Although participants in the current study report willingness to seek counseling services (7.57), the low mean for PE Transition (5.67) contradicts this.

Implications for Future Practice, Research, and Policy

In addition to adding to the literature base, the findings of this study revealed important information regarding the transition experiences of underrepresented minority students at a PWI. The results may be used to shape future practice, research, and policy that impact the experiences of minority students on predominantly White campuses. The findings suggest that minority students are making successful transitions during their first semester in college. Findings also show minority students have strong attachments to higher education and to the institution they are attending.

However, not all of the findings were positive. The students in the study did not fare as well in terms of personal-emotional transition. Students reported worrying about expenses (4.36), feeling blue (4.30), and feeling tired much of the time (3.91). There is also an indication that, in terms of academic transition, students face difficulties that affect academic performance. For example, participants revealed difficulty with functioning during exams (4.66) and getting started on homework (4.77). Another concern is that my findings suggest that predictions about retention cannot be made based upon an individual's level of transition.

Higher education program managers, administrators, and faculty might use findings from the current study to develop and improve programs that address the needs of first-year minority students. Although many participants in the study showed evidence of achieving high levels of transition, there were some deficiencies noted. For example, students showed lower levels of transition on personal-emotional measures. This suggests a need for programs that will improve the likelihood that minority students will seek assistance with mental or physical health issues when needed.

Constantine, Wilton, and Caldwell (1993) found that minority students are more likely to rely on interpersonal relationships with parents and peers as well as church activities to deal with distress. To achieve greater personal-emotional transition, university mental health counselors could use education programs to improve the likelihood that minority students seek

professional counseling when needed. Because parents, peers, and ministers in nearby churches are often sought during distress, it is critical to educate these allies about warning signs that may suggest a student needs professional attention. These education programs should also target faculty, career services professionals, and academic advisors, as students are more prone to seek help for problems from sources where they feel less vulnerable psychologically (Hargrove & Sedlacek, 1997). Agents with whom students have interpersonal relationships should be encouraged to refer minority students to professional assistance before problems turn into crises.

Students in the study also reported lower scores on items that relate to academic performance. Although the study did not review grades, respondents confessed that academic performance is a concern. For example, they do not feel they work hard enough (4.19) and are not satisfied with their level of performance (4.71). Managers who develop academic support programs should be more proactive in educating minority students about the promise of such programs. Often students see academic support programs as remedial and tend to believe the myth that good students do not need academic assistance. Marketing and advertising for academic assistance programs should emphasize that academically strong students utilize these services more than academically weak students. Faculty could also assist these efforts by encouraging students to utilize support services before students begin struggling. Faculty might refer individuals to programs for assistance when they notice them struggling to demonstrate they care for students' well-being.

Programs that focus on all students, rather than merely focusing on students traditionally at risk are necessary. Trends in higher education focus a great deal of attention on students considered at risk (Hicks, 2005; Seal, 2004; Olszewski-Kubilius & Laubscher, 1996). The majority of students in this study were considered to have made a successful transition to college. Of the students who failed to persist to the second semester or second year, the

majority reported high levels of successful transition. For that reason, programs that address the needs of all students, including students who perform well, should be developed.

Students who interact with faculty on an academic level manage the demands of academic transition better (Nora, 1993). In terms of social transitions, building quality relationships with faculty helps students connect to the larger university community (Norman & Norman, 1995). Programs and opportunities that encourage students to meet with professors in academic as well as informal settings can be useful. For example, programs can be developed that encourage faculty to meet students in the dining halls for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Another program could feature faculty-student collaborations in a lecture series. These kinds of initiatives might increase student-faculty interactions, hence ease transition for minority students at PWIs.

In terms of future research, program administrators and others who work with first-year students might use the results of the current study to conduct projects that identify the needs of successful students. The current research utilized a quantitative methodology to examine transition experiences of first-year minority students. Examining the characteristics of students with higher transition levels may be explored through qualitative techniques. Such research might provide richer data about the needs of minority students who have made successful transitions into college.

More research is needed on student attachment to an institution. An exploratory study of minority students' feelings of attachment and how these might impact academic, social, and personal-emotional transition would be useful. Findings from such a study would help to improve the understanding of minority students' college experiences. Further, this type of study might provide answers about why students of color have developed strong attachments to their institutions.

In the current study, minority students reported discontent with involvement in social activities. Because involvement on campus is important to minorities' developing a positive

connection with the institution, it is important to investigate why students might be dissatisfied with social activities and what impact this had on their overall transition to the university.

Other researchers might study minority students' transition beyond the first year to determine if they are still having positive experiences later in college. The current study examined first-year minority students; however, additional research is needed to determine if they remain attached to higher education and the institution beyond the first year.

The SACQ does not incorporate experiences that are particular to minority students. Issues such as racism and discrimination, for example, are not explored through the instrument. Minority students often feel marginalized and believe that they must maintain a dual existence when they choose to attend PWIs(Cooper, 1997). Therefore, it would be interesting to determine if such feelings or experiences with racism had any impact on their overall transition, especially their attachment experiences.

Another study might include more participants by administering the SACQ to a larger sample, perhaps at multiple institutions. The original design of this study was to include information on differences minorities experience in various majors. The current study only included the responses of 244 minority students of the 300 that entered college in Fall 2004 so such comparisons could not be made. It would be useful to conduct a multi-institution study to determine if the findings in the current are repeated. Do minority students at other institutions report similar transition levels on the four subscales, for example? Also, are minority students at other institutions with high transition levels more likely to leave than students with lower ratings? Such data would prove beneficial to the understanding of transition for minorities.

In the current study, the one participant with a low transition rating persisted to the second semester and the second year of college. Another study might examine more students with lower level transition ratings to determine if they persist despite those low levels. Further investigation of these students' characteristics and backgrounds might help uncover distinctions that led to continued enrollment. Questions could center on whether continuation was due to

institutional or some other form of support. Also, such a study could inform researchers about whether persistence among those with low levels of transition is typical.

In addition to implications for future practice and research, the current study also offers promise for developing future policy. Results in the current study reveal that minority students are making successful transitions during their first year of college. Policies on various levels could have a positive impact on the transition experiences of minority students at PWIs. For example, policies that focus on transition for minorities seem to assume that minority students do not transition well. This study suggests that, in fact, minority students report high levels of transition. Policies might be recast accordingly.

State agents could use information in the current study to examine policies regarding the transition of minority students. Several states fund programs to promote transition for minority students; however, my findings suggest relatively high levels of transition. Policymakers might want to reconsider the assumptions that underlie those policies and revise them to focus on minority students with high transition levels.

At the institutional level, administrators should consider policies that focus on the needs of minority students with high transition levels as well. University-wide policies that focus on improving the retention of these students should be developed. For example, financial aid and housing officials focus their resources on first-year students. Although this is important and may help to improve the transition process, additional funding and resources may need to be allocated to students in the second year and beyond.

Limitations

The current study attempted to contribute to the existing knowledge about minority students' transitions at a PWI; however, there were limitations to the research. First, there were limitations related to the sample. For example, the study relied on the responses of volunteers. Students who volunteered for the study might have differed from those who did not volunteer. If this occurred, it may have led to bias in the findings.

In addition to relying on volunteers, the respondents were all from a single institution. Students at the selected institution might not have experiences similar to students attending other schools. For example, educational background, socio-economic status, or feelings about the institution might be particular to students attending the selected college. Surveying minorities from other institutions might produce different outcomes.

Another limitation related to the sample size. The current study drew respondents from a limited minority population of 300 minority, first-year students. The limited number of participants in the study made it impossible to conduct certain analyses due to the small number of participants in certain subgroups. For example, I was unable to compare the responses of participants by academic major. The constrained sample size may have skewed the findings in the study in some unforeseen manner.

This study examined transition experiences on a single occasion, near the end of the first semester. The timing of the study may have influenced how students responded to the SACQ. For example, students may have had a greater sense of attachment because of the successful football season the institution experienced in the fall of 2004 or they may have been lethargic because it was near the end of the semester. Also, students may have felt more pressure about grades because it was getting close to the exam period. Any of these factors could have influenced students' reactions to the instrument which, in turn, may have altered the findings.

The final limitation related to distribution of the instrument. Initially, students were sent invitations to participate via email. The response rate to the email invitation was limited. Therefore, the researcher solicited participants by visiting them in their residence halls. When visiting the students, many asked additional questions about the research project. This might have caused participants to try to anticipate how to respond to items on the instrument. If so, this could have had an impact on the results.

In sum, I investigated the experiences of first-year minority students during transition to a PWI and how transition affected retention. The findings contributed to the knowledge about African American, Hispanic/Latino/a, and Native American students. The overall picture is positive. These students are making successful transitions into higher education and are optimistic about their experiences. This suggests that minorities are managing the transition into a university environment fairly successfully. This is particularly significant since PWIs in general, and PWIs that are research universities in particular, are usually assumed to be inhospitable to minority students.

While it is encouraging to see that the students have made successful transitions, faculty and staff need to remain vigilant. Minorities and other under-represented students still require additional attention. It was surprising to find that the students with high transition scores were more likely to leave the institution. Perhaps students who are at greater risk receive support while students who are not perceived to be at risk do not. It is important for university officials to provide programs to serve all minority students.

Another concern is that under-represented minority students still have lower retention and graduation rates than majority students. Although students in the study had positive transition experiences, it is possible that these early incidents may not continue throughout students' undergraduate careers. The future of minority students might be dependent upon efforts to boost graduation rates. Administrators, policymakers, and faculty should continue to seek ways to improve experiences for minority students throughout their college years.

Finally, the current study revealed no significant differences in the transition experiences of minorities by race or sex. While it may be tempting to apply simple, monolithic solutions for students of color, this will not serve students or higher education well. Just as retention is a multi-faceted and complex issue, so too are minority students. A single approach to retention and transition cannot address all students within one cultural or racial group much less the variety of needs for students from various backgrounds. Academics must incorporate an array

of academic and non-academic measures to ensure that students from all backgrounds gain similar benefits by participating in higher education.

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Appendix A

E-Mail to Students

November 2004

Dear Student:

My name is Kimberly LaBoone and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech. I am soliciting your help for a research study I am conducting to explore the transition experiences of first year students. I would appreciate your support in completing and returning a survey.

Students who participate in the study may have their names entered in a drawing for a cash prize of $25. Once you submit your survey form, you will receive details on how to enter your name for the drawing. If you would like to participate in this study, you must complete a Consent Form. Select the link for the Consent Form. If the link does not work, please cut and paste the URL (http://www.iddl.vt.edu/~elaboone/survey/survey.html) into your web browser. At the end of the Consent Form, there will be a screen where you will need to enter your PID and the password "virginia" this will connect you to the electronic survey. The process should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the Consent Form as well as the survey.

Consent Form

Any information you provide will be kept confidential and used only for this research study. Responses will be compiled and presented in summary form. Reports of information gathered will not include any individual information or details about individuals' identities.

I hope you will participate in this study. I look forward to receiving your completed information. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kimberly LaBoone,
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Tech

Appendix B:

Informed Consent Form

Title of Research

Minority Students' Transition Experiences at a Predominantly White Institution

Principal Investigator

Kimberly L. LaBoone

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to examine the transition process and institutional attachment for first-year students at a large Research institution. If you agree to participate, you will complete an on-line survey about your transition experiences during your first year in college. In addition to examining how students rate their transition experiences, retention rates will be studied to determine if there is a relationship between the level of transition and retention.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

All data and information obtained will be considered privileged and held in confidence. The information gained in this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not be associated to you personally. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only in the context of research publications and discussion.

Risks and Benefits/Voluntary Participation

Participants in this project will help the researcher better understand the transition process for students at a predominantly white large research institution. There are minimal risks related to this study. Your participation is completely voluntary. Students are free to remove themselves from the study at any time.

By clicking on the "I agree" button below, you voluntarily agree to participate in the study and acknowledge that you have read and understand the above information. If you have questions about this information before completing the survey, you may contact.

Kimberly L. LaBoone
Virginia Tech
110 Femoyer Hall (0276)
(540) 231-5499
klaboone@vt.edu

Joan B. Hirt
Virginia Tech
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David Moore
Virginia Tech
Research Compliance (0442)
(540) 231-4991
moored@vt.edu

Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. Should you wish to withdraw, simply close your browser to discontinue the survey.

I AGREE | I DO NOT AGREE

Appendix C:

IRB Information

Virginia Tech
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

Dr. David M. Moore
IRB (Human Subjects)Chair
Assistant Vice Provost for Research Compliance
CVM Phase II- Duckpond Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24061-0442
Office: 540/231-4991; FAX: 540/231-6033
email: moored@vt.edu

DATE: April 8, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joan B. Hirt Educational Leadership & Policy St. 0302
Kimberly LaBoone

FROM: David Moore

SUBJECT: **IRB Expedited Approval:** "Minority Students' Transition Experiences at a Predominantly White Institution" IRB # 04-181

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CPR 46.110 and 21 CPR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective April 8, 2004.

cc: File
Department Reviewer R. G. Salmon ELPS 0302

Appendix D:

Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Please provide the identifying information below.

Student ID #: **Age :**
Race:

Sex:

Directions: The 67 statements on this form describe college experiences. Read each one and decide how well it applies to you at the present time (within the past few days). For each statement, select the circle at the point in the continuum that best represents how closely the statement applies to you. Select only one circle for each statement.

		Applies very closely to me ⬅								Doesn't apply to me at all ➡
1.	I feel that I fit in well as part of the college environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2.	I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3.	I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4.	I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5.	I know why I'm in college and what I want out of it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6.	I am finding academic work at college difficult.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7.	Lately, I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8.	I am very involved with social activities in college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9.	I am adjusting well to college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10.	I have not been functioning well during examinations.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11.	I have felt tired much of the time lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12.	Begin on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13.	I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14.	I have had informal, personal contacts with college professors.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15.	I am pleased now about my decision about my decision to go to college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

		Applies very closely to me ←								Doesn't apply to me at all →
16.	I am pleased now about my decision to attend this college in particular.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
17.	I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
18.	I have several close social ties at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
19.	My academic goals and purposes are well defined.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
20.	I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
21.	I'm not really smart enough for academic work I am expected to be doing now.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
22.	Lonesomeness for home is a source is of difficulty for me now.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
23.	Getting a college degree is very important for me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
24.	My appetite has been good lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
25.	I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
26.	I enjoy living in a college dormitory. (Please omit if you do not live in a dormitory; any university housing should be regarded as a dormitory.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
27.	I enjoy writing papers for courses.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
28.	I have been having a lot of headaches lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
29.	I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
30.	I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
31.	I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help form the Psychological/Counseling Services Center or from a psychotherapist outside of college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
32.	Lately, I have been having doubts regarding the value of a college education.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
33.	I am getting along very well with my roommates(s) at college. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
34.	I wish I were at another college or university.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
35.	I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
36.	I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
37.	I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the college setting.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
38.	I have been getting angry too easily lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
39.	Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
40.	I haven't been sleeping very well.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
41.	I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
42.	I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

		Applies very closely to me ←								Doesn't apply to me at all →
43.	I am satisfied with the quality or the caliber of courses available at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
44.	I am attending classes regularly.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
45.	Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
46.	I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
47.	I expect to stay at this college for a bachelor's degree.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
48.	I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
49.	I worry a lot about my college expenses.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
50.	I am enjoying my academic work at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
51.	I have been feeling lonely a lot at college lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
52.	I am having a lot trouble getting started on homework assignments.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
53.	I feel I have good control over my life situation at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
54.	I am satisfied with my program of courses for this semester/quarter.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
55.	I have been feeling in good health lately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
56.	I feel I am very different from other students at college in ways that I don't like.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
57.	On balance, I would rather be home than here.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
58.	Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
59.	Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
60.	Lately I have been giving a lot thought to dropping out of college altogether and for good.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
61.	I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from college and finishing later.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
62.	I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
63.	I have some good friends or acquaintances at college with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
64.	I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
65.	I am quite satisfied with my social life at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
66.	I'm quite satisfied with my academic situation at college	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
67.	I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix E:

Follow Up Letter to Participants

November 2004

Dear Student:

Recently, you received an email from me requesting your participation in a research project I am completing. The research will be used to fulfill requirements for me to earn my Ph.D. If you have not already done so, please take time to follow the link below to participate in the study. If you have already completed the form, thank you and please disregard this message.

CONSENT FORM

Once again, thank you for your time. Your participation in this project is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Kimberly LaBoone

Appendix F:

Vita

KIMBERLY LAVETTE LABOONE

1803 GLADE ROAD ❒ BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA 24060 ❒ (540) 961-2858 ❒ klaboone@vt.edu

OBJECTIVE

TO OBTAIN A POSITION WORKING WITH ACADEMIC ADVISING

EDUCATION

- **Doctorate of Philosophy, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies – Higher Education & Student Affairs, Cognate: Curriculum & Instruction, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA (**MAY 2006). Dissertation Topic: Transition Experiences of Minority Students at a Predominantly White Institution

- **Master of Arts, Human Resource Counseling, Cognate: Business Administration, Northeastern University, Boston, MA** (SEPTEMBER 1989).

- **Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, Spelman College, Atlanta, GA** (MAY 1986).

RELATED EXPERIENCE

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, COLLEGE TRANSITION PROGRAMS
CENTER FOR ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & EXCELLENCE, VIRGINIA TECH
AUGUST 2004 – PRESENT
RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Plan and implement programs for transfer & first year students
- Develop programs to support academic success & increase retention
- Direct university-wide peer tutoring, reading assistance, and student development programs
- Conduct academic success seminars
- Supervise and mentor graduate assistants and undergraduate student workers
- Teach courses on academic success (EDCI 1004: College Success Strategies)
- Revise programs and course curriculum to facilitate student needs
- Provide feedback, evaluation, and advising to students
- Represent Center on university committees.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT/INSTRUCTOR, COLLEGE SUCCESS STRATEGIES (CENTER FOR ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & EXCELLENCE), VIRGINIA TECH
JANUARY – AUGUST 2004

- Teach course on academic success
- Modify course outline and course topics to better meet the course's learning objectives
- Coordinate guest speakers for course
- Provide feedback, evaluation, and advising to students
- Evaluate curriculum to enhance learning experiences in future semesters.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES COORDINATOR (CENTER FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF ENGINEERING DIVERSITY) COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, VIRGINIA TECH
JULY 2001 – AUGUST 2003

- Direct learning community for women in engineering
- Facilitate seminar course for learning community participants
- Direct and coordinate mentoring program for first year students in engineering
- Supervise graduate assistant, practicum student, and student mentors
- Direct and coordinate summer camp for high school students interested in engineering and technology
- Develop and execute a preview weekend program for prospective engineering students
- Advise first year students in the College.

INSTRUCTOR, COLLEGE SUCCESS STRATEGIES, VIRGINIA TECH
SUMMER 2001
- Plan and teach first year experience course for participants in a summer bridge program
- Develop, update, and revise course outline
- Select course topics and coordinate guest speakers
- Design course assignments and activities
- Provide feedback and advising to students.

ACTING DIRECTOR, STUDENT TRANSITION PROGRAM (CENTER FOR ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & EXCELLENCE), VIRGINIA TECH
OCTOBER 2000 – JUNE 2001
- Develop proposal for state and institutional funding
- Supervise graduate assistant
- Develop summer program guidelines and activities
- Design and implement topics for participants' monthly meetings
- Recruit and select participants and staff for summer program.

PROGRAM ASSISTANT, WING FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (RESIDENCE EDUCATION), VIRGINIA TECH
MAY 1999 – MAY 2000
- Supervise eight student staff of residential first-year program
- Co-teach first-year course
- Assist with planning functions for first-year course and residential programs
- Coordinate participant selection
- Maintain programming budget.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT, SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (DEAN OF STUDENTS), VIRGINIA TECH
AUGUST 1997 – MAY 1998
- Select, supervise, and train employees for Note Taker and Reader Services
- Monitor and maintain Note Taker and Reader Services
- Conduct in-take for new clients seeking services
- Coordinate outreach awareness programs
- Advise student group, Students with Differing Abilities.

ACADEMIC COUNSELOR, MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE, ATLANTA, GA
AUGUST 1993 – AUGUST 1997
- Advise new students and students on academic probation
- Coordinate and teach new student orientation course
- Organize and assist in curriculum development for course
- Edit course text
- Coordinate and administer institutional exams (placement tests and writing proficiency)
- Develop and implement academic skills workshops.

COUNSELOR, TRIO PROGRAMS, MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE
OCTOBER 1992 – AUGUST 1993
- Assist high school students and college seniors prepare for and gain entry into post-secondary and graduate/professional institutions
- Advise first generation college students regarding post-secondary institutions
- Make recommendations to students regarding academic progress, course selection, and personal problems
- Advise student government group
- Facilitate seminars on academic skill enhancement.

ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR, UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, BOSTON, MA
AUGUST 1987 – AUGUST 1989
- Participate in all phases of admissions including recruitment and selection of applicants
- Travel throughout the east coast
- Represent the University at college fairs

- Discuss programs and admissions criteria with perspective students, their parents, and guidance counselors.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council, Inc.; Board of Directors; 2004 - Present
- American Association for Higher Education; Black Caucus; Graduate Student Forum; 2001- 2003.
- American College Personnel Association; Standing Committee for Women; Graduate Student & New Professionals Sub-committee; 1998 – 2003.
- Women in Engineering Programs & Advocates Network; 2001 – 2003.

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- Presented: *Women in Engineering Learning Community: What We Learned the First Year;* Women in Engineering Programs & Advocates Network (WEPAN) Conference 2002; San Juan, Puerto Rico (June 2002).
- Co-presented: *Involving the Academic Community of Learners*; American College Personnel Association, National Conference; Atlanta, GA (March 1999).
- Coauthored article: Hirt, J. B., Bayless, L., Collins, D., Dobbins, T., Fravel, P., LaBoone, K., LaBoone, E., Lichty, M., Werth, P., & Wood, P. (1999). An assessment of computer skill levels among user groups on campus. College and University Media Review, 5(2), 11-27.
- Edited text: Jellins, M. & LaBoone, K. (1997) *New Student Success Seminar.*
- Edited text: Jellins, M., Ross (LaBoone), K. (1996) *New Student Success Seminar*.
- Presented: *Student Success Seminar: A Model for Implementing a First Year Program*; Nashville, TN (October 1996).