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A STUDY INVESTIGATING THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS OF SELECTED
FRESHMEN MINORITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT ROWAN
UNIVERSITY

by
Philip K. Oware

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts in Higher
Education Administration
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
February 2005

Approved by
Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Date approved 2/15/05

ABSTRACT

Philip K. Oware

A STUDY INVESTIGATING THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS OF SELECTED FRESHMEN MINORITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

2005

Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of the study was to investigate the college choice process of selected freshmen minority undergraduate students at Rowan University. Convenience sampling was used to select 66 minority freshmen undergraduate students. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of 29 items. Descriptive analysis employed included frequency distribution and calculation of mean and the corresponding dispersion (standard deviation) where applicable. The relationship between each item/statement and the attitude dimension variable according to the responses of all the students was established using Spearman Correlation. Eighty-four percent of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that the financial aid they received was opportunity structure during the college choice process. Thirty-four percent of the students said they would recommend prospective minority high school students to seek help from those who had once gone through the college choice process. The study concluded that providing appropriate information during the college choice process and increasing financial aid to minority students would most likely increase the number of minority students who enroll in college.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Just as research work is a difficult and complex undertaking that requires hard work, good ideas, interest, dedication and commitment from many people, so did undertaking this study.

I first want to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of Dr. Burton R. Sisco who spent countless hours guiding and suggesting what needed to be done. I personally appreciate his openness and candor in sharing his thoughts, challenges, successes and failures with each one of us. I was constantly in awe of his dedication and passion as well as his ability in pointing out ambiguity and finding clarity. I am highly honored to have him as my mentor and professor. Indeed, to attend a prestigious institution is one thing and to have distinguished professors mentor or teach you is another.

May I also take this opportunity to thank my course mates, who in diverse ways helped bring this study to a successful end.

Finally, I reserve my final thanks to Lily, Frank, Dorcas and Ofori and especially Vida Oware my dear wife. Without their patience, love, understanding, encouragement and thoughtfulness this work would not have been completed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the introduction of their study of affirmative action and college admissions, Bowen and Bok (1998), cite Mark Twain's image of the mighty river featured in *Life on the Mississippi*. According to the authors, the river serves as a useful metaphor for the process of higher education that is meant to bring the flow of talents ultimately to the sea of opportunities, employment, and success.

In order to successfully navigate life, people must understand the twists and turns, the deep and shallow aspects along the way, and the challenges present with every opportunity. The metaphor clearly defines undergraduate freshmen minority students and the process many go through as they seek admission into America's colleges and universities.

Indeed, many challenges and barriers stand in the way that can make the college admission process frustrating. The college choice process has been said to be one of the most important and difficult of life's many decisions. According to Miller (1990), each year the college choice process involves more than two million American students, along with their families and school personnel who spend substantial amounts of time, effort, and money to get to college.

The decision that students make about where to attend college has a lasting impact on their lives. For instance, increased education leads to higher salaries, longer

working lives, more career mobility, and higher quality of life (Bowen & Bok, 1998). Also, college graduates are less likely to be unemployed for long periods of time and they are reported being happier and satisfied with life (Bowen & Bok, 1998). Given the importance of the college choice process, it is surprising that students and parents spend relatively little time in making their choices. Understanding the college choice process can be useful to high school guidance counselors, whose role is to provide assistance to students and families during the college choice process. In addition, research on the college choice process can lead to new policy initiative that might enable state and federal governments to provide college education opportunities in a more cost-effective manner

Significance of the Study

Potential students find out about colleges and universities through a variety of sources including the encouragement of family, friends, high school advisors, teachers, peers, freeway signs, radio and television commercials and many other sources. Approximately 62% of high school seniors in the United States enroll in colleges annually (Snyder & Hoffman, 1995). This figure suggests an opportunity structure that is fair and open. However, society's structures do not work equally well for all.

The college enrollment rate hides many discrepancies in the access and retention between whites and students of color or minorities as well as economically advantaged and disadvantaged students (McDonough, 1997). According to Hanselman (1996), students who go through the college choice process in deliberate and strategic ways make better decisions about colleges and are more likely to achieve a sense of self-sufficiency that is taken to college. Conversely, students who are not given the opportunity to go

through the college admissions process deliberately and strategically may not make the best educational decisions and are less likely to achieve the same sense of self-sufficiency that will help them succeed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the college choice process of selected freshmen minority undergraduate students at Rowan University. The study examined the influences of college planning, the assistance provided by parents, family, friends, peers, the high school attended and Rowan University during the college choice process, and how each factor helped the undergraduate students pursue postsecondary education. The study also sought to understand the barriers that students faced during the college choice process.

Assumptions and Limitations

Research on the college choice process and decision-making of students can lead to new public policy initiatives at both state and federal levels to provide college education opportunities in a more cost-effective manner and also to increase the nation's educated work force. In addition, policy makers have long supported education as means for economic development and a necessary condition for a strong democracy. These assumptions explain the interest among public policy makers in increasing the educational achievements of citizens.

Also, a college education is considered the best way to help many disadvantaged and less privileged groups in America succeed. In addition, it is assumed that in order to redress all past social injustices, minority students need to have a well defined college choice process designed to help them make informed college choice decisions.

Finally, a well defined college choice process for minority students helps them to rely on families, friends, peers, and the community to supplement school information during the college choice process. This may help first-generation college bound high school seniors who operate mainly in uncharted waters and who face high degrees of uncertainty to make good college choice decisions.

There are several limitations associated with this study. Namely, the study was done at time the students were preparing to take the spring 2004 final examinations which could influence the way the questionnaires were answered. Another limitation was that factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, and the high school grade point average were not controlled in the study.

Also, the study looked for patterns and meaning in a very complex phenomena. For instance, both social environments and personality vary widely and the interaction of the two could affect the college choice process. Moreover, the college choice process involves many factors that could be difficult to simplify or control. Statistical representations are frequently used to describe social reality. In the end, a majority may be behaving in a certain way while there is always a minority behaving differently. A modal behavior does not necessarily provide a complete picture of reality.

In addition, what may be observed depends on both the specific questions asked and the research methods used. This study relied on asking students why certain decisions were made during the college choice process. Students might have been critical of the questions and this could have influenced their responses.

Moreover, the world of college recruiting and admissions has changed substantially during recent years and continues to evolve. Factors such as demographics, economics

and institutional competition have influenced both the concerns and activities of college admissions. Although the study provides some generalized insights into the college choice process, it fails to give a complete picture of the students engaged in the process that is fraught with hopes and fears, joys and disappointments, conflicting pressures, progress and ambiguities.

The most difficult and challenging aspect of the study was obtaining a good response rate to the survey. This was in part due to the fact that students were busily preparing for final examinations and the only place they could be contacted was in the examination halls or in their dormitory rooms. A final limitation consisted of the potential for investigator bias since the researcher interned in a college admissions office and is a member of a minority group; these factors could have influenced the way subjects responded to the survey questions in the study.

Operational Definition of Important Terms

Black and African American: Term used interchangeably to describe all persons of African American descent and persons of African, Haitian and other Caribbean, and Cape Verde descent.

College: Term used in the study to refer to a publicly funded postsecondary education institution in New Jersey known as Rowan University.

A Student-Centered Model: Term used to describe the college choice process in which a student is the focus and the central agent and the admission process is evaluated in terms of outcomes for the student as seen from the student's point of view.

Opportunity Structure: Term used to define the pathways to success in American culture. More specifically, in this study, the "organizational arrangements and processes

within institutions and linkages between organizations that define and mediate individual's achievements" (McDonough, 1997, p.2).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What information and support do selected minority undergraduate students report needing at the high school level to help make informed decisions during the college choice process?
2. What opportunity structures do selected minority undergraduate students report as important during the college choice process?
3. What do selected minority undergraduate students think about having a student-centered college choice model?
4. What barriers do selected minority undergraduate freshmen report encountering as they went through the college choice process?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the attitudinal variables of information and support, opportunity structures, student – centered process, and barriers encountered with selected survey items?
6. What recommendations would selected minority undergraduate students give to prospective high school students?

Organization of the Study

The major research areas included the following: the college choice process, influence of family, friends, peers, teachers and counselors, delivery of college information, college counseling and minority access to higher education, first generation college students and college decision making. Chapter two reviews relevant literature on the college choice

process recruitment, and college attendance of minority students. Chapter three addresses the methods and design of the study. Chapter four contains the findings of the study and chapter five provides a summary, discussion, conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The central purpose of the college choice process is to help increase self-actualization of a student. A student who knows more about himself or herself and has good information about colleges, has a better chance of making an informed decision (Fay-Williams & Williams, 1995).

The literature on the college choice process is robust, suggesting that students must make a number of sub-decisions rather than seeing the process as a single decision. This is because the point at which the student starts down the path of college appears to be one of the more variable aspects of the college choice process. Research suggests that in some families children are considered to be “college-student-in-training” from nursery school while other students become aware of the possibility of attending college only in the senior year of high school (Berger, 1990).

The search for related literature involved consulting various sources of information on the admissions of the minority students. The major research areas included the following: the college choice process, influence of family, friends, peers, teachers and counselors, delivery of college information, college counseling and minority access to higher education, first-generation college students and college decision-making.

The College Choice Process

According to Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989) the college choice process can be a lengthy one extending back to when a student becomes aware of postsecondary

educational opportunities.

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) offered a model of how students behave as they go through the college choice process. The model identified three main stages:

(1) Predisposition; (2) Search; and (3) Choice. According to the researchers, in the predisposition phase, a student decides whether to attend college. The search phase takes place when the student searches for general information about colleges, forms a set of choices, and begins to consider several specific colleges. In the final choice phase, the student eliminates certain choices and settles on a single college to attend.

In the student's choice phase, a number of factors have been found to be influential including parents, the size of the college, location, academic programs, reputation of the college, selectivity, peers, friends, guidance counselors and availability of financial aid (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989)

However, most college choice research focuses on students' background and institutional characteristics. Two main factors that affect the college choice process are the kind and amount of financial aid that a student receives and the total cost of tuition expenses. According to St. John (1990), student aid has been found to result in increased consumption of higher education and redistribution of students to private, four-year, and smaller institutions. Also, students educational expectations play a major role in college placement (Hearn, 1984) and often, it is the single strongest predictor of four-year-college attendance (Thomas, 1980). In addition, long-standing college goals can be resources. For instance, intending to go to college increases the likelihood of attending by 21%, when that intention develops prior to 10th grade, compared to waiting until the senior year to begin the college choice process (Alexander & Cook, 1979). Hearn (1984)

also contends that the perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about college attendance of parents may take on distinctive shapes for different social classes and races as early as the 10th grade and thus may produce differences in a family's college planning. McDonough (1994) points out that student plans are unstable predictors of behavior and differ based on socio-economic status (McDonough, 1994).

Information Delivery

Ray (1992) studied the role of information in the college choice process and found that accurate information provided by a counselor can help students make better selection decisions and more appropriate choices. Thus, the information provided increases the individual's confidence level which influences successful transition to college. However, very little attention has been given to information delivery because it does not seem to conform to the accepted sociological or econometric theories (Ray, 1992).

Other researchers have found that students who have access to information about colleges are more likely to attain their educational objectives of being accepted to college. For example, Orfield and Paul (1994) found that timely, correct and accurate information is critical in helping a student make the college choice decision. However, there seems to be a missing-link between the kind of information students need to succeed and what career counselors and admissions professionals provide to prospective students (Ray, 1992).

Hamrick and Hossler (1996) examined techniques that high school students and their parents used to gather information about postsecondary education institutions. They identified students as "highly diversified" or "less diversified" searchers. The researchers found that high diversification was positively related to students' perceptions of having

adequate information to choose a college, certainty of identifying an appropriate pool of colleges for application, certainty about proposed academic major, and first-year satisfaction with the chosen college.

College Counseling

Berger (1990) suggested the need for a systematic and collaborative approach for college prospects that can help them learn that college planning is part of lifelong experience of career development. Hanselman (1996) maintains that the college choice process should be more than just furnishing students and families with background information; admissions officers and counselors need to listen and let prospective students and parents know that their ideas are heard and valued. According to McDonough (1994), even though providing support is important, “the seniors want to have a safe space to be able to talk through their fears and anxieties about making important decisions” (p. 433).

Minority Access to Higher Education

While research on minority access to higher education has been helpful in finding common influences on the under-represented poor (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996), additional research on specific factors that influence African American students’ motivation and aspiration to go on to postsecondary education is lacking (Freeman, 1997). According to Bateman and Hossler (1996), the enrollment of African-American students in college is one of the most distressing issues facing admissions officers. For instance, McDonough (1997) found the perception that affirmative action has led to African-American students having an easier time getting into college is erroneous. Contrary to this belief, the researchers found that African-American students have more difficulties being accepted

into college than other applicants. Freeman (1997), on the other hand, found that African-American high school students have different perceptions of the barriers to participation in higher education. She found two broad themes and grouped them under economic and psychological barriers. Under the economic barriers she cited the fear of not having enough money to attend college and the fear of not getting a job with an appropriate salary. Referring to psychological barriers she found loss of hope, an intimidation factor, and college never being a viable option.

In another study, Levine and Nidiffer (1996) interviewed poor students including some African-American students who attended college. The common themes in the interviews revealed the importance of an individual who touched or changed the students' lives and as a result, enabled them to attend college. Most of the participants reported that some family members, teachers, counselors or even their peers helped them during the college choice process.

First-Generation College Students

Research on first-generation students has shown that they are less likely to get help during the college choice process (Fallon, 1997), are more likely to drop out of college during the first semester, and have lower first semester grades than students with one or more college-educated parents (Riehl, 1994).

At the same time, first-generation students are increasingly a significant force in higher education even though these students face many challenges over their academic career. Some of these challenges include conflicting obligations, false expectations, financial burdens, peer pressure, and even neighborhood influence as well as an unstable family environment (Hsiao, 1992).

College Decision Making

Galotti and Kotzberg (1996) studied the college decision-making process by using the college choice process as a way to better understand adolescent decision-making. They also examined different aspects of the way high school students make college decisions. The researchers found that all students make decisions in a similar way. They concluded that over time, students felt more certain of their decisions, more comfortable with approach to the decision, more confident of their ability to make a decision, and generally more satisfied. The researchers suggested that the findings of the research could be used to develop a model of college decision-making for prospective students.

On the other hand, Galotti and Kotzberg (1996) found that the students perceptions of the college choice process as being difficult, stressful and pressured, changed very little throughout the decision-making process. In addition, the students also reported that they were overwhelmed during the process. Many of the students felt stressed by the amount of information that is relevant to the decision and the short time they had to process it. Even though differences in emotional experiences were observed, Galotti and Kotzberg (1996) attributed these to differences in gender, but on the whole the students painted a similar picture of the process: one of stress and difficulty.

The Influence of Family, Friends, Peers, Teachers, and Counselors

Previous research on the effect of student background characteristics indicates that parental encouragement is the best predictor of postsecondary educational aspirations (Hearn, 1994). Using statistical techniques, Hearn (1994) found that parents, other family members and to a lesser extent, peers had the largest effect on students' college aspirations. Shepard, Schmidt, and Pugh (1992) also noted that the single most important

predictor of postsecondary educational planning is the encouragement and support parents give their children. Parental encouragement was defined by the frequency of discussions between parents and students about the parents' expectation, hopes, and dreams for their children. Parental support also included saving for postsecondary education, taking a prospective student on campus visits, and attending financial aid workshops (Shepard, Schmidt, & Pugh, 1992).

Apart from influences inside the home, high-school teachers and counselors have tremendous influence on the choice students make during the college choice process. For instance, 47.5% of African-American 12th grade males in her study reported that "assignment to excellent teachers helped keep them in school" (Barnes, 1992, p.96). In another study, Shepard, Schmidt, and Pugh (1992) suggested that it was an opportunity for minority students and their parents to engage in programs such as current institutional information, interaction with faculty, and questions and answer sessions provided by school counselors.

Summary of Literature Review

Research on the college choice process has provided information for understanding the critical factors that motivate many minority students to make certain choices during the college decision- making process. New research has been helpful in finding common influences on the college choice process among under-represented groups (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). However, additional research on some specific factors that influence African-American students to make decisions during the college choice process is needed (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989).

The search for related literature involved consulting various sources of information on

the admissions of the minority students. The major research areas included the following: the college choice process, influence of family, friends, peers, teachers and counselors, delivery of college information, college counseling and minority access to higher education, first-generation college students and college decision-making. A student who knows more about himself or herself and has good information about colleges, has a better chance of making an informed decision (Fay-Williams & Williams, 1995).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

The study was conducted on the campus of Rowan University, a state supported post-secondary institution located in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University, originally called Glassboro Teachers' College, has grown from a Normal School for the training of teachers to a comprehensive liberal arts university.

Rowan University is located in the city of Glassboro about 15 minutes drive to Philadelphia, PA. In 1992, the college changed its name to Rowan College in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rowan who donated 100 million dollars, one of the largest gifts ever given to a public institution. In 1997, the Rowan College of New Jersey achieved university status and changed its name to Rowan University (Rowan University Undergraduate Catalog, 2004).

The university has six colleges made up of the College of Business, College of Communication, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The total enrollment for academic year 2003/ 2004 was 9,667 (Rowan University undergraduate catalog, 2004).

Population and Sample

The subjects in the study consisted of 66 freshmen minority undergraduate students at Rowan University in 2004. The subjects were recruited with the permission of an English professor, through a convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling technique was used because the students happened to be in a particular place at a particular time. The subjects were selected from three separate English composition classes. All the subjects were African-American freshmen students consisting of 32 males and 32 females.

Instrumentation

The data were gathered using a self-designed 29 item survey (Appendix D). The survey was divided into three sections: background information with respect to age, gender, type of high school attended, current college enrolled, educational level and marital status of the subjects' parents; attitudes and opinions of the college choice process; and, an open ended question on recommendations subjects would give to prospective minority high school students on the college choice process. The section of the instrument dealing with the attitudes and opinions of the college choice process followed a Likert format based on a 5 point scale with 1,2,3,4 and 5 given to responses strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (A) respectively (see Appendix D). The statements on the attitudes and opinions of the college choice process was further grouped into four attitudinal variables based on the work of McDonough (1997). The four dimensions and attitudinal variables were: information and support, opportunity structures, student centered process, and barriers

encountered. To ensure that the instrument was valid, reliable, and free of bias, the investigator had several consultations with Dr. Burton R. Sisco, who provided a critique of the overall design, assisted in establishing content validity, and made recommendations for improvement (Dr. Burton R. Sisco- personal communication). A pilot study was also conducted with a sub-sample of subjects who met the same characteristics as the study sample. Based upon the consultation and pilot study, the survey was improved by adding clearer directions of the three sections and a more defined objective. A reliability analysis was performed by dividing the attitudinal variable items into split-halves. The reliability test showed consistency among scores with a coefficient of 0.89 or better.

To protect the rights of the subjects, an informed consent form was issued along with a cover letter explaining the enclosed survey and the purpose of the instrument (Appendix A). The application was approved by the Chair of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board, Dr. Tricia J. Yurak, on April 28, 2004 at 1:35 p.m. Subjects were asked to read and sign the consent form prior to completing the survey.

Procedure of Gathering Data

On April 29, 2004, an envelope was distributed to 66 black freshmen undergraduate students in three separate English composition classes. Each envelope contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey (Appendix B), student informed consent form (Appendix C), the survey (Appendix D), and a self- addressed envelope for the return of the instrument and related materials. The data collection was closed on May 5, 2004 and data analysis followed soon after. The cooperation of the students was sought by asking them to read and sign the informed consent forms which

remain confidential. All subjects were provided with a New Jersey lottery ticket once the survey and consent form was returned. Forty-four students returned the questionnaire for a response rate of 66.7%.

Data Analysis

Data were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, students version 11.0). Descriptive analysis of the data included frequency distribution and calculation of means and corresponding dispersion (standard deviation) where applicable. Research question five was analyzed using Spearman Correlation to determine if there was any significant relationship between each of the selected survey items and the four attitudinal variables (information and support, opportunity structures, student centered process, and barriers encountered). Research question six was analyzed looking for common themes. Codes were developed based on the themes as described in McDonough (1997). The corresponding frequencies and percents of the codes were then calculated.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Profile of the Sample

Of the total 122 black freshmen undergraduate students enrolled at Rowan University in the 2003 – 2004 academic year, 66 were surveyed and 44 students (66.67%) returned the survey. Out of this number, 21(47.7%) of the students were females while 22(50.0%) were males; one student (2.3%) did not declare his or her gender.

Sixteen of the participants attended urban high schools, one attended a rural high school, 26 attended suburban high school and one did not state the high school attended. The majors of subjects were categorized as: College of Business-6; College of Communication-3; College of Education-3; College of Engineering- none; College of Fine & Performing Arts-none; College of Liberal Arts & Sciences-11; Other-21.

Tables 4.1 through 4.3 represent age distribution of subjects, educational level and marital status of the subjects' parents.

Table 4.1 provides information on the ages of all the subjects of the study. Two point three percent of the subjects were 17 years old, 29.5% were 18 years old, 61.4% were 19years old, 4.5% were 20 years old and 2.3% did not state his or her age.

Table 4.1

Age Distribution of Subjects

n = 44, M = 8.8, SD = 11		
Age (Years)	Frequency	Percent
17	1	2.3
18	13	29.5
19	27	61.4
20	2	4.5
Other	1	2.3
Total	44	100

Table 4.2 describes the educational level of subjects' parents. Mother's educational levels were: 1(2.3%) elementary school, some high school 5(11.4%), graduated from high school 5(11.4%), had some college education 13(29.5%), college graduates 13(29.5%), had graduate or professional degrees 7(15.9%). Father's educational levels were: 1(2.3%) elementary school, 8(18.6%) some high school, 10(23.3%) high school graduates, 5(11.6%) some college education, 10(23.3%), graduate or professional school 9(20.9%) and 1(2.3%) did not state father's education level.

Table 4.2

Parents' Education Level

Education Level	Mother n = 44, M = 7.3, SD = 4.8		Father n = 43, M = 7.1, SD = 3.5	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Elementary Sch	1	2.3	1	2.3
Some High Sch	5	11.4	8	18.6
High Sch	5	11.4	10	23.3
Graduate				
Some College	13	29.5	5	11.6
College Graduate	13	29.5	10	23.3
Graduate Prof.				
Sch	<u>7</u>	<u>15.9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>20.9</u>
Total	44	100	43	100

Table 4.3 provides information on the marital status of parents of subjects. Seventeen (38.6%) parents were alive and lived together as a couples, 21(47.7%) parents were alive but divorced, 6(13.6%) had one of the parents deceased.

Table 4.3

Marital Status of Parents

Marital Status	n = 44, M = 8.8, SD = 9.7	
	Frequency	Percent
Both alive & live together	17	38.6
Both alive & Divorced	21	47.7
One Deceased	6	13.6
Both Deceased	0	0
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	44	100

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What information and support do selected minority undergraduate students report needing at the high school level to help make informed decisions during the college choice process?

Table 4.4 shows the percentages of student responses for the statements pertaining to the information and support attitudinal variable. Eighty percent of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that their school teachers encouragement helped them during the college choice process, 60% strongly agreed or agreed that guidance counselors were very supportive, 79% strongly agreed or agreed that early college awareness must involve students and parents, 59% strongly agreed or agreed that their siblings encouraged them during college choice process, and 43% strongly agreed or agreed that friends encouragement helped them during the college choice process.

Table 4.4

Information and Support Attitudinal Variable Responses

Level of Agreement	School Teachers Encouragement n = 44, SD = .15, M = 1.77		Counselors' Support n = 43, SD = .23, M = 2.33		Involve Parents and Students in College Awareness n = 44, SD = .13, M = 1.86	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	23	52.3	21	48	17	38.6
Agree	12	27.3	5	11.6	18	40.9
Neutral	5	11.4	3	7	7	15.9
Disagree	4	9.1	10	23.3	2	4.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4	9.3	0	0
Total	44	100	43	100	44	100

Table 4.4 continued

Level of Agreement	Siblings Encouraged to be Best n = 44, SD = .18, M = 2.32		Friends Encouragement n = 44, SD = .19, M = 2.73	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	14	31.8	9	20.5
Agree	12	27.3	10	22.7
Neutral	10	22.7	14	31.8
Disagree	6	13.6	6	13.6
Strongly Disagree	<u>2</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11.4</u>
Total	44	100	44	100

Research Question 2: What opportunity structures do selected minority undergraduate students report as important during the college choice process?

Tables 4.5 shows the percentages of scores on the five statements making up the opportunity structures attitudinal dimension. Sixty-four percent of the students surveyed, strongly agreed or agreed that the high school attended served as opportunity structure during the college choice process, 57% strongly agreed or agreed that the tutorial program served as an opportunity structure, 36% strongly agreed or agreed that the residence hall was conducive for learning, 46% strongly agreed or agreed that the mentoring component of the program was opportunity. Finally, 84% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that the financial aid they received was essential during the college choice process.

Table 4.5

Opportunity Structures Attitudinal Variable Responses

Level of Agreement	High School Attended Stressed Importance of Attending College n = 44, SD = .16, M = 2.18		Help from Tutorial Program n = 44, SD = .15, M = 2.34		Conduciveness of Residence Halls n = 44, SD = .18, M = 3.09	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	14	31.8	10	22.7	4	9.1
Agree	14	31.8	15	34.1	12	27.3
Neutral	11	25	14	31.8	9	20.5
Disagree	4	9.1	4	9.1	14	31.8
Strongly Disagree	1	2.3	1	2.3	5	11.4
Total	44	100	44	100	44	100

Table 4.5 Continued

Level of Agreement	Confidence in Mentoring Program n = 43, SD = .20, M = 2.63		Financial Aid Help n = 44, SD = .20, M = 1.70	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	11	25.6	31	70.5
Agree	9	20.9	6	13.6
Neutral	12	27.9	1	2.3
Disagree	7	16.3	1	2.3
Strongly Disagree	4	9.3	5	11.4
Total	43	100	44	100

Research Question 3: What do selected minority undergraduate students think about having a student-centered college choice model?

Table 4.6 shows the percentage of subjects' responses on the student-centered attitudinal variable. Fifty-nine percent of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that parents' help had impact during the college choice process, 66% strongly agreed or agreed that they were optimistic about college attendance and that it was important to have a student-centered college choice process model. On college choice, 72% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that they would never forget the college choice experience. Further, 80% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that they would tell any high school senior to assume responsibility for the college choice process. Finally, on benefits from friends' experience in selecting college, 50% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that friends' experience helped them.

Table 4.6

Student Centered Process Attitudinal Variable Responses

Level of Agreement	Parents' Help n = 44, SD = .17, M = 2.23		Optimism About College Attendance n = 44, SD = .18, M = 2.23		Never Forget College Choice Experience n = 43, SD = .15, M = 2.02	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	15	34.1	14	31.8	15	34.9
Agree	11	25.0	15	34.1	16	37.2
Neutral	11	25.0	9	20.5	9	20.9
Disagree	7	15.9	3	6.8	2	4.7
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	3	6.8	1	2.3
Total	44	100	44	100	43	100

Table 4.6 Continued

Level of Agreement	Responsibility for College Choice Process n = 44, SD = .14, M = 1.73		Benefits from Friends Experience n = 44, SD = .17, M = 2.61	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	23	52.3	7	15.9
Agree	12	27.3	15	34.1
Neutral	7	15.9	14	31.8
Disagree	2	4.5	4	9.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	4	9.1
Total	44	100	44	100

Research Question 4: What barriers do selected minority undergraduate freshmen report encountering as they went through the college choice process?

Tables 4.7 shows the percentage of scores of subjects on the seven statements making up the barriers encountered attitudinal variable. Fifty-seven percent of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that the college choice process was stressful, 61% strongly agreed or agreed that college application process was difficult, 48% strongly agreed or agreed that choosing a college to attend was very confusing, 48% strongly agreed or agreed that the financial aid process was too complex, 80% strongly agreed or agreed that fear of not getting into a college was a barrier. Conversely, less than 30% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that their parents knew how college the choice process worked, and 34% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that high school counselors were very helpful to them.

Table 4.7

Barriers Encountered Attitudinal Variable Responses

Level of Agreement	College Choice Process is Stressful n = 44, SD = .15, M = 2.30		Parents Knew College Choice Process n = 44, SD = .19, M = 3.34		College Application Process Difficult n = 44, SD = .17, M = 2.32		Help from High School Counselors n = 44 SD = .22 M = 3.25	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	11	25	3	6.8	12	27.3	8	18.2
Agree	14	31.8	10	22.7	15	34.1	7	15.9
Neutral	14	31.8	10	22.7	10	22.7	7	15.9
Disagree	5	11.4	11	25.0	5	11.4	10	22.7
Strongly Disagree	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>22.7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>27.3</u>
Total	44	100	44	100	44	100	44	100

Table 4.7 Continued

Level of Agreement	College Choice Confusing n = 44, SD = .15, M = 2.64		Complex Financial Aid Process n = 44, SD = .16, M = 2.66		Fear of Attending College n = 44, SD = .17, M = 1.98	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	5	11.4	6	13.6	18	40.9
Agree	16	36.4	15	34.1	17	38.6
Neutral	14	31.8	13	29.5	4	9.1
Disagree	8	18.2	8	18.2	2	4.5
Strongly Disagree	<u>1</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6.8</u>
Total	44	100	44	100	44	100

Research Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between the attitudinal variables of information and support, opportunity structures, student – centered process, and barriers encountered with selected survey items?

Table 4.8 shows the relationship between each item or statement and its attitude dimension variable according to the responses of all students. The table shows that only the statement “Receiving financial aid helped me attend Rowan University” correlated positively with opportunity structures selected minority undergraduate students report as important during the college choice process at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4.8

Correlation Coefficients Between Attitudinal Variables and their Individual Component Items for Students (n = 44)

Information and support	Opportunity structures	Student-centered process	Barriers encountered
9; ^a 0.07 ^b	12; 0.16	7; 0.29	14; 0.14
10; 0.01	15; 0.02	8; 0.22	19; -0.11
18; 0.27	16; -0.21	11; 0.17	24; 0.05
20; 0.04	17; 0.26	13; 0.02	25; -0.07
12; 0.03	23 0.38*	22; 0.23	26; 0.14
			27; 0.002
			28; 0.29

^aitem or statement number * significant at 0.05 level of significance

^bcorrelation coefficient

Research Question 6: What recommendations would selected minority undergraduate students give to prospective high school students?

Table 4.9 shows the frequency and percent distribution of responses that the study subjects said they would give as recommendations to prospective minority students. Most (34.1%) of the students said they would recommend prospective minority students to seek help from people who had once gone through the college choice process.

Table 4.9

Distribution of Recommendations Students Would Give to Minority Prospective Students on College Choice Process (n = 44)

Recommendations	Frequency	Percentage
Get help from people who had once gone through the college choice process.	15	34.1
Do not get frustrated because the college choice process is long and difficult.	10	22.7
Listen to teachers and counselors	10	22.7
Communicate with financial aid providers	9	20.5

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The expansion of higher education has increased choice and brought new student groups into high education. At the same time, institutions are operating in a more competitive recruitment market. The college choice process is designed to provide relevant information and support structures that can help prospective students increase access to higher education institutions.

In this study, 80% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that their high school teachers' encouragement helped them during the college choice process; 84% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that the financial aid they received was opportunity structure during the college choice process. Further, 80% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that they would tell any high school senior to assume responsibility for the college choice process. Finally, 80% of the study subjects strongly agreed or agreed that fear of being denied admission into a college served as a barrier encountered as they went through the college choice process.

Purpose of the Study

The college choice process involves certain problems and barriers that prospective students may encounter during the selection process. However, because of competition among collegiate institutions who concentrate on marketing strategies, the problems and issues that are of interest to prospective students are often overlooked and may be detrimental to students.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the college choice process of selected freshmen minority undergraduate students at Rowan University. The study examined the influences of college planning, the assistance provided by parents, family, friends, peers, the high school attended and Rowan University during the college choice process and how each helped the undergraduate students pursue postsecondary education. The study also sought to understand the barriers that students faced during the college choice process.

Methodology

The subjects in the study consisted of 66 conveniently selected black freshmen undergraduate students from Rowan University. Of the 66 students, 44 completed a survey, resulting in a response rate of 66.7%. In order to protect the rights of the participating subjects, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application (Appendix A) was completed on April 28, 2004 and submitted to the Rowan University IRB for approval. The subjects were asked to read and sign a consent form (Appendix C) prior to completing the survey.

Data were gathered using 29 items divided into three sections. The first section

obtained background information on the subjects. The second section consisted of a series of statements designed to obtain the attitudes and opinions of the subjects on college choice process. A five-point Likert scale was utilized to address the level of subjects' agreement to the statements. The third section of the instrument asked subjects for recommendations they would give to prospective high school students on the college choice process.

On April 29, 2004, 66 survey packets were distributed to the selected study subjects. The packets included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, student consent form, and a self addressed envelope for the return of the survey questionnaire. The survey collection period was closed on May 5, 2004 and data analysis followed soon after.

Data Analysis

The Likert scale data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program. Descriptive analysis employed included frequency distribution, percents, and calculation of mean and their corresponding standard deviation where applicable. This information was used to answer research questions one, two, three, and four. Research question five was analyzed using Spearman Correlation to determine if there was any significant relationship between each of the selected survey items and the four attitudinal variables (information and support, opportunity structures, student centered process, and barriers encountered). Research question six was analyzed using content analysis by first pre-coding the responses of the students and then calculating the corresponding frequencies and percents.

Findings and Discussions

Demographic Information

Analysis of the demographic data showed that 18 (40.9%) of both fathers and mothers of the subjects had some college education, while another 23(52.2%) were college graduates or had higher professional qualifications. In spite of the educational attainment of both parents, 80% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that they were afraid they might not get into college. This situation could be due to the fact that parents of the subjects' did not know how the college choice process works, or there was a lack of information about how to access information on the college choice process. For example, less than 30% of the subjects positively agreed that their parents knew how the college choice process worked.

The demographic data also showed that 21(47.7%) of the 44 families of subjects reported that their parents were divorced and this could put more pressure on both the students and the single parents as the college choice process unfolded.

Research Question 1: What information and support do selected minority undergraduate students report needing at the high school level to help make informed decisions during the college choice process?

The results of the study show that 80% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that high school teachers encouraged them to go to college. This observation supports the finding by McDonough (1994) that providing support is important because “seniors want to have a safe space to be able to talk their fears and anxieties about making important decisions”(McDonough, 1994, pp. 427-446).

The majority (80%) of the subjects also reported that early college awareness must involve students and parents. This observation could be due to the fact that both the subjects and their parents did not know how the college choice process worked. More than 50% of the subjects said that their guidance counselors were very supportive. This observation is encouraging since information provided by counselors could help students make better decisions and appropriate choices. This could also increase the individual student's confidence level and ensure successful transition to college (Ray, 1992). In addition, Orfield and Paul (1994) found that timely, correct, and accurate information is critical in helping students fulfill their educational career goals.

Research Question 2: What opportunity structures do selected minority undergraduate students report as important during the college choice process?

The data showed that most students (84.1%) saw "Receiving financial aid helped me attend Rowan University," as the single most important opportunity structure available for minority students during the college choice process. This observation supports the findings by St. John (1990) that students' aid increased the aspirations of students' enrollment into a four – year higher education.

According to McDonough (1997), opportunity structures in higher education favored certain groups over others and that there were some inequalities in the college choice process. McDonough acknowledges the importance of background variance and suggests the need for practical changes to available opportunity structures.

Research Question 3: What do selected minority undergraduate students think about having a student-centered college choice process?

Over all, 72% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that they would never forget their experiences during the college choice process while 80% strongly agreed or agreed that they would tell any high school seniors to assume responsibility for the college choice process. This observation could be due to the difficulties that students go through in the college selection process. For example, less than 60% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that parents help impacted them during the college choice selection. Litten (1982) noted that if student behavior is to be changed, it should result in a more effective college selection process, the enhancement of personal development or social benefits.

Research Question 4: What barriers do selected minority undergraduate freshmen report encountering as they went through the college choice process?

A majority (80%) of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that the fear of not getting into a college was the greatest barrier. This observation could be due to the fact that college choice process was confusing and difficult. For instance, 61% of the subjects reported that the college application process was difficult and therefore a barrier for them to enter into college.

Hamrick and Hosler (1996) found that students' perceptions, certainty of identifying an appropriate pool for application was a major problem. According to McDonough (1997) people generally believe that affirmative action has led African- American students to have easier time getting into college. But McDonough's research concluded that such a belief was erroneous because African-Americans had greater difficulties being accepted into college than the average applicants.

Freeman (1997), on the other hand, found out that African-American students had a different perception of the barriers to participation in higher education. Issues such as financial aid, psychological barriers, the fear of not having enough money to attend college, the loss of hope and intimidation, and the fear of not getting a good job after college were reported as some of the barriers minority students encountered during college selection process (Freeman, 1997).

Research Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between the attitudinal variables of information and support, opportunity structures, student – centered process, and barriers encountered with selected survey items?

The results of the study showed that only one item of the “opportunity structures” was positively and significantly correlated to its respective attitudinal variables at 0.05 level of significance. The item that correlated significantly with opportunity structures was “Receiving financial aid helped me attend Rowan University.” This findings further supports the earlier report by St. John (1990) that students’ financial aid increased the aspirations of students’ enrollment into a four – year higher education.

Research Question 6: What recommendation would selected minority undergraduate students give to prospective high school students?

The results of the study showed that 34% of the subjects would recommend that prospective minority students seek help from people who had once gone through the college choice process. This observation could be due to the fact that the students and their parents do not know how the college process works. For instance, a majority (80%) of the students reported that early college awareness must involve students and parents.

This finding agrees with Fay-Williams and Williams (1995) that a student who knows more about himself and has good information about colleges has a better chance of making an informed decision during the college choice process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although majority (80%) of the subjects agreed that their school teachers' encouragement helped them during the college choice process, a high percentage (79%) of the subjects agreed that early college awareness must involve students and parents.

Less than 30% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that their parents knew how the college choice process worked and recommended that minority prospective high school students should get help from people who had once gone through the college choice process.

Although most subjects (80%) strongly agreed or agreed that fear of not being admitted into a college served as a barrier encountered as they went through the college choice process, over 80% of the subjects saw "Receiving financial aid helped me attend Rowan University," as the single most important opportunity structure available for minority students during the college choice process.

Providing proper information during college choice process and increasing financial aid to minority students would most likely increase the number of minority students who enroll in college.

Implications

The purpose of the study was to investigate the college choice process of selected black freshmen minority undergraduate students at Rowan University and the following implications are made for further research:

1. Early college awareness programs must involve parents because students need individualized objectives as well as accurate information so that they can make informed judgments and increase their chances of admission. Also, all parents need to know early that college education is an option for their children and therefore it pays for all to get involved and discuss school related matters with their children as early as possible to help create a climate of support and expectation in the family.
2. High schools need to provide the resources that help create a good school climate that supports college attendance for minority students. Minority students need extra attention from adults to help them raise confidence in themselves that they can succeed in college.
3. Students need guidance and support in the college choice process. This support must come from high school counselors, admission counselors at colleges of choice, parents and must be readily available.
4. There is the need for teachers and counselors to work hand- in- hand during college choice process. This is because the study found that subjects reported having greater confidence in their high school teachers than their school counselors.

5. The study showed that financial aid plays an important role for minority undergraduate students during the college choice process. A remaining area that needs further investigation is the uncertainty associated with the perception that a college education does not guarantee a job. Such investigation would help assure minority groups to take bolder steps and risks by attending college and opening further employment options.

Recommendations for Further Research

A more in-depth study should be conducted to help develop a model on student-centered college choice process based solely on the experiences of minority undergraduate students, especially African-American students, that can make the college choice process smooth, less stressful and more adaptable to their specific needs and cultural practices.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Disposition Form

OK

2004-97
RECEIVED MAR 25 2004

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
DISPOSITION FORM

Appendix C

PHILIP K. OWARE
Principal Investigator

Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable)

143- 4 KIRKBRIDE ROAD
Address of Principal Investigator

Address of Co-Principal Investigator

VOORHEES, NJ 08043-1828
City, State, and Zip Code

City, State, and Zip Code

856-651-0042 PKOWARE@AOL.COM
Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

TITLE OF
RESEARCH : A STUDY INVESTIGATING THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS OF SELECTED
FRESHMEN MINORITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISPOSITION - DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Your claim for exemption for the research study identified above has been reviewed. The action taken is indicated below:

_____ **APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION AS CLAIMED: CATEGORY #** _____
Note: Anything that materially changes the exempt status of this study must be presented to the IRB for approval before the changes are implemented. Such modifications should be sent to the IRB Office at the address above.

_____ **APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION - BUT NOT AS CLAIMED.** Your claim for exemption does not fit the criteria for exemption designated in your proposal. However, the study does meet the criteria for exemption under CATEGORY # _____.

_____ A determination regarding the exempt status of this study cannot be made at this time. Additional information is required.

_____ Your proposal does not meet the criteria for exemption, and a full review will be provided by the IRB.

EXPEDITED REVIEW: _____ Approved _____ Denied

FULL REVIEW : _____ Approved _____ Approved with modifications _____ Denied

DENIED: _____

See attached Committee Action Letter for additional comments.

J. Gurak
Chair, IRB
4/28/04

[Signature]
Co-Chair, IRB
04/21/04

APPENDIX B

Letter of Introduction

Philip K. Oware
pkoware@aol.com
143-4 Kirkbride Road
Voorhees, NJ 08043
Phone # : 856-651-0042

March 15, 2004

Fellow Students,

I am currently a Graduate intern in the admissions office at Rowan University. I am asking for your help in collecting data for my study, on the College Choice Process of Selected Freshmen Minority Undergraduate Students at Rowan University.

I am asking for you to complete the attached survey and return it to me. Your response is critical to the results of my study. The survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete and your responses will remain confidential.

Please, return the survey in the enclosed envelop as soon as possible. It is my hope that the information collected here would provide valuable insights in the experiences of minority students at Rowan University and in the long run help attract more freshmen minority undergraduate students to attend Rowan University.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Burton Sisco, my research advisor at (856) 256-4500 ext. 3717 or Philip Oware at (856)-651-0042.

Once again, I am asking for your help in better understanding the college choice process of selected freshmen minority undergraduate students at Rowan University. This information may assist future students such as yourself, attend Rowan University. Your contribution is vital for the completion of this study.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Philip Oware
(Graduate Intern, Admissions Office)

APPENDIX C
Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in a study entitled 'A Study Investigating College Choice Process of Selected Freshmen Minority Undergraduate Students at Rowan university', which is being conducted by Mr. Philip K. Oware of the Educational Leadership Department at Rowan University. The data collected in the research study will be included as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Masters of Arts Degree of the Graduate school at Rowan University.

I understand that by participating in this study, that my responses will be anonymous and all the data gathered will be confidential.

I agree that the information obtained from this study may be used in any way, provided that I am in no way identified, or the institution that I represent is identified.

I understand that there are no psychological or physical risks involved in this study, and I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty.

I understand that my participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any project facilitator.

If you have questions or problems concerning your participation in this study, you may contact Mr. Philip Oware at (856) 651-0042 or Dr. Burton Sisco at (856) 256-4500 ext 3717.
Thank you for your participation in this study.

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

P. Oware
(Signature of Investigator)

2-15-04
(Date)

APPENDIX D

**The College Choice Process of Selected Freshmen Minority Undergraduate Students
Survey**

The College Choice for Selected Freshmen Undergraduate Students at Rowan University

Name (optional): _____

SECTION I: Demographic Information : For each item please check all that apply:

1. Age: 17__ 18__ 19__ 20__ Other (please indicate) ____

2. Gender: ____ Male ____ Female

3. Type of high school attended: Urban__ Rural__ Suburban__

4. Current College where you are enrolled:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| A. College of Business ____ | D. College of Engineering ____ |
| B. College of Communication ____ | E. College of Fine & Performing Arts ____ |
| C. College of Education ____ | F. College of Liberal Arts & Science ____ |
| G. Other ____ | |

5. My parents are:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| A. Both alive and living with each other ____ | D. Both are deceased ____ |
| B. Both alive, divorced or separated ____ | E. I don't know ____ |
| C. One deceased ____ | |

6. Please indicate the highest level of education of your father or mother:

- | Mother | Father |
|---|---|
| A. elementary school ____ | A. elementary school ____ |
| B. some high school ____ | B. some high school ____ |
| C. high school graduate ____ | C. high school graduate ____ |
| D. some college ____ | D. some college ____ |
| E. college graduate/ professional school ____ | E. college graduate/ professional school ____ |
| F. graduate/ professional school ____ | F. graduate/ professional school ____ |

SECTION II: Experiences and perceptions of the college choice process:

Listed below are statements which reflect the experiences you went through during the College Choice Process. For each statement indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 7. My parents helped me to get into Rowan University. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 8. I was very optimistic about going to college. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 9. My high school teachers encouraged me to go to college. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 10. My guidance counselors were very supportive. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 11. I will never forget the college choice experience. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 12. The high school I attended stressed the importance of attending college. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 13. I would tell any high school senior to assume personal responsibility for the college choice process. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 14. I would tell any high school senior that the college choice process is difficult and stressful. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

SECTION III: Support Services at Rowan University:

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 15. The tutorial programs helped me to be a better student. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 16. The residence halls were conducive for learning. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 17. The mentoring program gave me confidence to succeed. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

SECTION IV: Family influences during the college choice process:

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 18. Early college awareness must involve students and parents. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 19. My parents did not know how the college choice process worked. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 20. My siblings encouraged me to be the best. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

SECTION V: Peer influences:

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 21. My friends encouraged me to attend Rowan University. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 22. My friends' experiences in selecting college were helpful to me. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 23. Receiving financial aid helped me to attend Rowan University. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

SECTION VI: Barriers faced during the college choice process:

24. The college application process

was stressful.

SA A N D SD

25. My high school counselors did

very little to help me.

SA A N D SD

26. Choosing a college to attend was very confusing.

SA A N D SD

27. The financial aid process was too complex.

SA A N D SD

28. I was afraid I might not get into college.

SA A N D SD

Open Ended Statement:

If you were advising a prospective minority high school student what would you recommend ?

(please describe).

Thank you for completing this survey.

