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A STUDY OF SELECTED STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FACTORS THAT  
INFLUENCE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

by  
Marquis L. Bennett

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  
March 26, 2007

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Date approved 4/19/07

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## ABSTRACT

Marquis L. Bennett

### A STUDY OF SELECTED STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

2006/07

Dr. Burton Sisco

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of selected African-American male college students and the impact of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support on academic achievement at Rowan University. The study sought to determine if any of these factors had a significant relationship with academic achievement.

Academic achievement was measured by a self-reported GPA of 2.76 or higher, which was higher than Rowan University's minimum requirement (2.5) for graduation, and honors achievements (awards, certificates, honor societies). Responses were measured using a Likert scale of 1-Strongly Agree to 5-Strongly Disagree.

Respondents reported that financial aid (69%), college/community acceptance (63%), role-modeling (78%), family support (92%), and high school preparation (51%) influenced them most. Respondents who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher also reported that financial aid (63%), college/community acceptance (63%), role-modeling (61%), family support (60%), and high school preparation (59%) influenced most. According to the mean response rate, respondents who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher recognize the influence of family support (60%) and role-modeling (61%) as having the greatest impact

on academic achievement. There was a significant relationship between the statement “I feel well prepared to take college courses” and academic achievement.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fulfillment is the feeling of accomplishment. My work on this study has taught me that dedication to the task and focus on the goal is the best way to achieve.

My first acknowledgment goes out to my Lord for providing me the strength and commitment to complete this endeavor. As the many obstacles and challenges awaited me, I was imbued with the willingness to continue on and complete my research. Although, I was discouraged on many fronts, I was still able to press on and move forward.

I would also like to thank Dr. Sisco for staying with me through some very trying personal times as I struggled to complete my project. His patience and compassion was much needed and appreciated. He allowed me the time I needed to function not only as a student but as a man of family and of faith as well.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my parents, Joyce and Steven Parker and my loving family, Najee, Illyana (in memoriam), Mason, and Maisha for being the motivation I needed. They also provided the distractions for me when the work seemed too hard and the challenge too great. Without their love and support, this work would not have been completed.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

When Harvard College first opened in 1636, the growth and development of the American higher education system could not have been imagined. In 1636, Harvard started with only nine students and a single professor. Today, the institution has grown to an enrollment of over 18,000 degree candidates, including undergraduates and graduate students in 10 principal academic units. An additional 13,000 students are enrolled in one or more courses in the Harvard Extension School (Harvard University, 2004).

As Harvard's enrollment grew, the composition of students admitted began to change. In the first class, Harvard admitted only males. However, with the onset of the women's and civil rights movements, a more diverse student body enrolled. Harvard, as well as, many other institutions began to recognize the need to enroll students regardless of gender. Unfortunately, even though all students were granted equal access to various institutions of higher learning, not all succeeded at the same rate.

The history of America is rich with stories of how women and people of color were initially excluded from attending institutions of higher education. As a result, these groups were left behind in the world of higher education. In the past three decades, this pattern has changed. For example, women have shown significant gains in both enrollment and academic performance while African-American males have not shown similar gains. Although all student groups have shown some signs of academic improvement in relation to enrollment and persistence to graduation, the research suggests that African-American males have not advanced at comparable rates. As a

result, researchers have begun to investigate the reasons for the lag in attendance and performance among African-American males in higher education.

#### Statement of the Problem

Investigative studies (Rosenthal & Wilson, 2003; Evelyn, 2002; Furr & Elling 2002; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1992) have been conducted to determine the specific factors that have contributed to the lag of African-American performance in higher education, specifically in terms of graduation and retention rates. However, there is a paucity of studies that focus specifically on the lag of African-American males as compared to the total student population. Austin (1996) concluded that African-American males were not competing at the same level as their counterparts of other ethnic origins (Hall & Rowan, 2001). Hall and Rowan (2001) suggest that there are many factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of African-American males in higher education. They suggest that the developmental process of African-American males is more problematic, stressful, and unpredictable than that of African-American females. The researchers conclude that this developmental process is part of the reason why it has been so difficult to determine the reasons for discrepancy in performance of African-American males as compared to the same race females. Consequently, research is needed to determine what developmental factors have the greatest impact on performance of African-American males in higher education.

#### Significance of the Problem

The American higher education system continues to grow at a rapid pace. With this growth comes the added responsibility of meeting the needs of diverse students. Institutions have tried to address the growing achievement gap between African-

American male college students and other students but have struggled in determining what factors contribute to this trend. Consequently, politicians, legislators, and elected officials have exerted increasing pressure on all levels of education to close the gap.

President George W. Bush signed the, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, better known as, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act into law on January 8, 2002 and with it came the added pressure for all of America's schools to close the achievement gap between the nation's ethnic minorities and the total student population. Every state is now required to provide evidence that students are receiving and have access to the necessary tools needed to excel in school.

The signing of NCLB has sent a signal to the nation's colleges and universities that America is taking a much stronger stance on the quality of education for all students. Moreover, the achievement gap is not only a problem within elementary and secondary institutions but continues throughout the nation's colleges and universities. According to one source, the problem originated in many of the high schools that minority students attended where financial troubles, lack of resources, and social isolation existed ("Officials Look," 2000). In New Jersey colleges, Caucasian students are graduating at a 60% rate in comparison to only 40% for African-American and Hispanic students ("Officials Look," 2000).

The pattern of under-achievement should be of significant concern to those institutions whose ethnic minority populations are suffering in terms of total enrollment and academic achievement. Therefore, these institutions must continue to address the significant difference in achievement. Further study of the factors that contribute to these problems may help to provide applicable solutions.

### Purpose of the Study

Previous research has identified the factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support as having a significant impact on the academic achievement of African-American students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of selected African-American male college students and the impact of these factors on academic achievement at Rowan University. Also, study sought to determine if any of these factors had a significant relationship with academic achievement.

### Rationale for the Study

African-American males are increasingly endangered on college campuses across America (Suggs, 2003). While counterparts from other ethnic backgrounds and gender have flourished at a steady and comparable rate, African-American males continue to perform less well academically. As more African-American males enroll in colleges and universities across the country it is important to determine what factors affect academic achievement.

### Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that the subjects of the study acknowledged that various factors contributed to academic achievement. It is also assumed that these factors would have a significant relationship with academic achievement. Additionally, it is assumed that a combination of factors affected academic outcomes. Furthermore, it was assumed that the participants were aware of the influences that surround them and how such influences related to their level of performance. The subjects in this study were expected to provide concise and honest answers to the survey items.

There were a number of limitations that arose with this study. First, time was limited, as was the period in which data were collected (Spring 2005 semester). The subjects participating in the study may not have accurately reflected the overall target population of the university.

Additionally, the researcher's previous interaction with the subjects may have caused bias due to familiarity with most of the African-American male population. Students who did not take the survey may have provided less than honest answers, although this would be difficult for the researcher to determine since truthfulness was assumed. Finally, the campus population may not be representative of other higher education institutions, so any generalization of the findings and conclusions should not be made.

#### Operational Definition of Important Terms

1. Achievement Gap: Range between African-American male academic performance and the academic performance of the total student population.
2. African-American: Term used to describe all persons of African-American descent and persons of African, Haitian, and other Caribbean and Cape Verde descent.
3. African-American Male: Male offspring of persons of African-American descent and persons of African, Haitian, and other Caribbean and Cape Verde descent.
4. Full-Time Student: Student enrolled in the 2004/2005 academic year at Rowan University taking 12 or more credits per semester.

5. Rural: Characteristic of the country.
6. Student Achievement: Term used to describe students' positive academic performance. Includes grade point average GPA (4.0 scale) of 2.76 or higher which is higher than Rowan University's minimum requirement (2.5) for graduation, and honors achievements (awards, certificates, honor societies)
7. Suburban: Located or residing on a suburb.
8. Urban: Densely populated area.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the attitudes of selected African-American male students toward the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support on academic achievement at Rowan University?
2. Of the identified factors, what do selected African-American male students report as having the greatest impact on academic achievement at Rowan University?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the attitudes of selected African-American male students toward the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support and academic achievement at Rowan University?

## Organization of Remaining Chapters

Chapter two provides a review of the related literature. Chapter three focuses on the methods and procedures for collection of the data. Also provided is a brief description of the instrument and how the data were analyzed. Chapter four provides a description of the research findings organized in table and narrative form. Chapter five provides a summary of the study, discussion of the findings and offers conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

African-American males have historically failed in higher education, encountering racism and various other forms of oppression. The manifestations of racism are deeply rooted in the American psyche and are reflected in the practices and policies—however subtle—of higher education today. In the aftermath, African-American males are disproportionately imprisoned, have disproportionately higher unemployment rates and poverty rates, and, for some, disproportionately higher rates of suicide. Simultaneously, African-American males are disproportionately less educated, making it apparent that such disproportions are a correlation to the various forms of racism and/or societal oppression (Hall & Rowan, 2001).

This was an excerpt from Bobby Austin, who was a member of the National Task Force on African-American men and boys. The group conducted a study in 1996 and concluded that African-American males were not competing at the same level as their counterparts of other ethnic origins. However, despite this and other arguments to the contrary, African-American males can and have succeeded in higher education and continue to make major contributions to society, and, indeed, the world (Hall & Rowan, 2001).

The contrasting arguments are a sample of the case being made today that African-American males are succeeding in higher education but not at a favorable rate. The research suggests that African-American males may be subject to factors that may contribute to a lack of sustained high level performance in higher education.

## Socio-Economic & Other Influences

Peer pressure and lack of parental support are among the reasons fewer black men than black women choose to attend college (“Georgia Regents Push,” 2003). African-American men are subjected to different role models and peer mentors as compared to female counterparts. Influences range from deadbeat fathers to drug dealers, to the local minister. Another factor, according to the report, is that as early as middle school, some African-American males are steered toward choosing vocational courses rather than college preparation courses (“Georgia Regents Push,” 2003). As a result, they are already behind in courses that can lead to a productive college career. McAdoo (1988) asserts that because it is becoming increasingly laborious for African-American males to attain personal goals, a smaller percentage are enrolled in higher education as compared to female counterparts (Hall & Rowan, 2001).

Researchers suggest that the experiences of African-American males are generally less favorable than that of African-American females (Hall & Rowan, 2001). In 2000, Wilson addressed the plight of the African-American male. He discussed several factors that may contribute to the lack of performance in higher education, including, lack of financial aid, socio-cultural challenges, and institutional incompatibility.

The argument has since been made that African-American males are not in college because more of them are likely to be incarcerated or killed in a violent act, and are more likely to drop out of high school than to enroll in college (Wilson, 2000). For several years official incarceration data told the shocking truth: though African-Americans make up about 12% of the national population, they represent close to half of

those who are incarcerated for crimes (Coker, 2003). An estimated 12% of African-American men ages 20 to 34 were either in jail or in prison in 2002 (Coker, 2003).

Most African-American males have been subjected to many of the ills of today's society. African-American males seem to suffer most from these interactions (Hall & Rowan, 2001). Hall & Rowan (2001) suggest that the experiences of African-American males are generally less favorable than that of African-American females in their family, school, and community environments. African-American males are also influenced very early in their interactions with their communities, families, and schools.

Walker & Satterwhite (2002) studied the effects of the family on academic performance. The research maintains that the affect of family involvement on academic achievement is small; however the family remains important at the college level. Furthermore, Walker & Satterwhite (2002) contend that African-American students at predominantly white institutions often experience higher levels of stress, have lower persistence rates, and lower self-esteem than their white counterparts due to their minority status.

In 2000, the National Education Association (NEA) profiled Professor Vernon Polite's book that addressed some of the issues. Polite explored the barriers to learning that African-American males face throughout the K-12 years, into college and beyond (NEA, 2000). As early as second or third grade, African-American males begin receiving subliminal messages about who they are in society (NEA, 2000). Polite believes that African-American males are treated with much less patience. "In terms of their treatment, the number of expulsions and disciplinary actions taken in school, and the

disproportionate referrals to special education as opposed to gifted and talented programs, these students get the message that they are a problem population” (NEA, 2000, p.22).

Furthermore, African-American males do not see the African-American role models or those individuals of authority that they should be emulating. The paucity of black male role models available as mentors at predominantly white campuses remains a serious problem (Wilson, 2000).

Evans (1993) discusses the lack of African-American males’ persistence to college. While working as a college admissions officer he was shocked by the lack of African-American male candidates. Often in high schools that are 90% black, all the African-American students who come to the presentations are female. This gender disparity persists to college matriculation where the black male population almost never equals that of the female (Evans, 1993). Evans concluded that perhaps the lack of diverse, positive African-American role models in the media may have something to do with the attendance pattern.

Television images of black males are not particularly positive or diverse. The usual roles are to display physical prowess, sing, and dance, play a musical instrument or make an audience laugh. These roles are enticing and generously rewarded. But the reality is that success comes to only a few extraordinarily gifted performers or athletes (Evans, 1993). In the inner city these images are portrayed to African-Americans as the only way out. They are not frequently exposed to images of intelligent African-American male role models and thus, have no frame of reference. As a result, most African-American males are exposed to improper images (Evans, 1993).

Although, familial environmental factors such as parents' education level and socioeconomic status are assumed to exert some impact upon educational orientation, for African-American males there is increasing evidence in the literature suggesting that such factors in isolation do not account for variations in outcomes (Hall & Rowan, 2001). Consequently, there may be a combination of factors that contribute to the inferior performance of African-American males in higher education.

Most African-Americans grow up in impoverished neighborhoods, surrounded by drugs, dirty communities, and violence. Furthermore, because of the lack of money in these areas, many of the school systems are under-financed and under-prepared. They do not have the resources or the personnel to provide students with the quality education needed to succeed at the college level. African-American male students suffer the most in these areas as evidenced by an absence from high school graduation. Towns (1997), recalls the reaction of Dr. Dorothy Lord, President of Coastal Georgia Community College, who had attended two local high school graduation ceremonies. "I was struck by the small number of black men crossing the stage" (Towns, 1997, p.34).

While African-American males from more affluent neighborhoods were more apt to perform well academically, they reported less familial support (Hall & Rowan, 2001). There seemed to be a trade off of familial support for economic stability. Subsequently, African-American males' differences in achievement may be better explained by interpersonal relationships (Hall & Rowan, 2001). The presence of significant family members may help to bolster their academic achievement levels. So in connection with previous statements, positive influences are important to African-American males'

psychological growth and maturity. These influences are even more effective when they are present within the males' familial environment.

### Redirecting Interests

Educators and policy officials are still pondering other reasons as to why African-American males are enrolling at lower rates than female ethnic counterparts. For example, Roach (2001) alludes to the fact that African-American women are scoring better in higher education while African-American males have either remained stagnant or shown very little improvement in recent years. The research is confounded because African-American males have graduated from high school at a comparable rate to Caucasian males and have performed well as compared to African-American women in the classroom and on standardized tests such as the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) (Roach, 2001).

In April of 2001, scholars and administrators gathered at Morehouse College in Atlanta, for "Reconnecting Males to Liberal Education: A National Symposium on Higher Education's Shifting Gender Balance" to present and debate ideas as to why males are not choosing to pursue college at rates comparable to females. Scholars, who explored the data on African Americans, pointed to the high incidence of black males entering the military; the availability of employment after high school; the disproportionately higher levels of incarceration among young black men; and the lack of familiarity with the college environment as likely reasons to explain the lag in black males' pursuit of a college education (Roach, 2001).

## The Story of African-American Male Enrollment

The research suggests that African-American enrollment has steadily and rapidly increased over the years. For example, at Dillard University, a private historically black college in New Orleans, Louisiana, efforts to boost enrollment have produced great success. From 1997 to the fall of 2000, Dillard grew enrollment from 1,549 to 1,953 students, a 26% growth in the student body (Roach, 2001). However, at a symposium the President of Dillard, Dr. Michael Lomax, revealed a telling statistic. While female enrollment rose from 1,168 to 1,517, a 30% jump, male enrollment went up from 381 to 436, a 14% jump (Roach, 2001). Lomax stated, "Our enrollment growth has been a cause for celebration," however, he would go on to remark that the enrollment increase of only 55 men had proven to be disappointing (Roach, 2001, p.18).

Education officials around the country have lamented about the growing gap between the participation of African-American men and women in higher education (Roach, 2001). According to the U.S. Department of Education, among the 1,949,000 African-American women from age 18 to 24 completing high school in 1997, 33% enrolled in college while only 25% of the 1,701,000 African-American males from the same range enrolled (Roach, 2001).

### Recruitment

The number of African-American males 25 years and older enrolled in college has increased from 143,000 in 1990 to 267,000 in 1995 to 335,000 in 2000 (Spradley, 2001). As a result of this influx, many post-secondary institutions have had to adapt to a changing clientele and design programs to address the special needs of the adult learner (Spradley, 2001).

Towns (1997) chronicles Dr. Lord's initiative to improve her own school's programs. After extensive talks with faculty members and leaders in the communities along the state's sea island coast, the Coastal Georgia Minority Outreach Program, a college-community partnership aimed at young African-American males was born (Towns, 1997). The program targets 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys living in surrounding neighborhoods along the southeast coast of Georgia. The program is designed to take the youth of Georgia and plant the seeds of higher education.

Towns (1997) states:

One of the primary causes of kids dropping out has to do with the fact that they are ill-prepared to go from one grade to the next. The further they move along the further they fall behind. This program gives them the intensive training that is needed to get a better handle on the things they need. (p.34)

There have been other techniques used to address the issue of African-American male enrollment. The University of Georgia's Board of Regents has adopted an initiative to examine the phenomenon of African-American male enrollment and how to increase participation. The board accepted a report and 15 recommendations which called for new efforts to bring African-American males into Georgia's 34 public colleges and universities ("Georgia Regents Push," 2003). The recommendations ranged from public service announcements aimed at students to assessments of how African-American men perceive the attitude toward cultural diversity at each of the state's campuses ("Georgia Regents Push," 2003).

## Strategies for Educating

National colleges and universities as well as other authorities around the nation have begun to take an active role in not only recruiting young African-American males but also in creating interactive and meaningful education programs. Mentoring is one of the ways that colleges have begun to address the needs of African-American males.

Initial recommendations to address the plight of traditional age African-American male college students include increased attention to mentoring, as mentors have the potential of assisting African-American males in negotiating the enormous intricacies of the higher education pipeline (Wilson, 2000). Students are paired up with faculty members, professors, and leaders from the campus community. In this role, students are granted immediate access to resources across the campus. Faculty members play the role of mediating the ways in which people approach learning (Spradley, 2001). In other words, faculty members are directly responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the learning that takes place (Spradley, 2001).

In Georgia, the Board of Regents' initiative to attract more African-American males to college has also drawn interest. They created a task force that recommended several ways to get more African-American males on campus. The recommendations included: programs for teachers and guidance counselors to help them better understand issues affecting African American males; summer enrichment programs for college-bound black males; increasing the number of high-quality teachers in urban schools and rural areas; and recruiting more black males to teach in middle and high schools (Suggs, 2003).

The feeling is that African-American males need to be reinforced at the high school level. They need to believe that there is a place for them in the college community. They also need to have positive role-models that are readily accessible and stationed in their own communities. As reported by Suggs (2003), in May the board appropriated \$300,000 for the project. "The plan shows a great deal of foresight," says William B. Harvey, vice president and director of the American Council on Education's Office of Minorities in Higher Education (Suggs, 2003, p. 11).

#### Summary of the Literature Review

College administrators and community officials have begun to address the issue of African-American male enrollment. The research suggests that although African-American males are graduating high school at an acceptable rate, they are not as prone to attend colleges and universities. Some of the contributing factors include lack of familial support, lack of diverse role models, disproportionate incarceration levels, frequency of military enlistment, and lack of financial support.

The research also suggests that university and college officials and community leaders have eagerly begun to institute programs and policies that will help to alleviate the problem. In Georgia, the Board of Regents has created an initiative to get more African-American males to attend college. Other officials have decided to address the problem at the intermediate level with the Coastal Georgia Minority Outreach Program, a college-community partnership aimed at young African-American males in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Continued research needs to be conducted on the quality and effectiveness of these programs. Research is also needed to see if there are many more of these programs

around the country. Although, these programs have been implemented in the state of Georgia, there seems to be no research on the applicability of these programs to other regions around the nation. The concentration of this research to the south may also hinder the generalizability to other colleges and universities in other parts of the country.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Context of the Study

Rowan University is located in Glassboro, New Jersey of Gloucester County. Glassboro is a small town located approximately 20 minutes south of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The original landscape of the area was due to the workings of the Unalachtigo Indian tribe who referred to themselves as “the people who lived near to the ocean.” The Unalachtigo Indians occupied and traversed the land in and around Glassboro (“Glassboro Online,” n.d.).

The early settlers of Glassboro did not encounter the Unalachtigo Indians because the tribe was long gone prior to their arrival. Solomon Stanger, the original deed holder of the land now known as Glassboro purchased it from Jacob Gosling for 700 pounds on September 23, 1779 for 200 acres of ground. In 1780, Stanger established the Stanger Glass Works on that land (“Glassboro Online,” n.d.).

Presently, Glassboro is home to a population of 19,068 with a median family income of \$50,131. The racial makeup of the borough is 74.53% White, 19.47% African American, 0.17% Native American, 2.31% Asian, 0.09% Pacific Islander, 1.48% from other races, and 1.95% from two or more races. Nearly 4% of the population is Hispanic or Latino of any race, according to the 2000 national census (“Encyclopedia4u”, n.d.). In Glassboro, there are three elementary schools, one middle, and one senior high school. Rowan University, which is located in the center of the community and bordered by the senior high school, is arguably the town’s major attraction. The institution began in 1923

as the Glassboro Normal School, a school for the training of elementary school teachers. From these beginnings the school grew and was recently recognized by *US News and World Report* as one of the nation's top public universities in the north (Rowan University, 2004). The university enrolls over 9500 students from the Mid-Atlantic States and 30 foreign countries.

Total undergraduate enrollment for the Glassboro campus Spring 2005 was 8082. The population breakdown is listed for full-time, undergraduate, matriculated and non-matriculated students as follows; 291 (3.1%) Asian, 854 (9.0%) Black/African-American, 522 (5.5%) Latino/Hispanic, 29 (.3%) American-Indian/Native Alaskan, 7514 (79.5%) Caucasian/White and 244 (2.6%) unknown (Rowan University, 2005).

#### Population and Sample Selection

From the total Glassboro campus undergraduate population of 8082 students, a random sample was selected for this study. African-American male undergraduate (freshman- senior) students enrolled full-time in the spring 2005 semester constituted the population for this study. The students were chosen based on a random sample of the total, 235, undergraduate, full-time African-American male student population. The students ranged in age from 17-32.

#### Instrumentation

The data were gathered using a self-designed 30 item survey (Appendix D). The survey was based on Mason's Final Conceptual Model of African American Male Persistence (Spradley, 2001). Other statements included in the survey were taken from the work of Walker and Satterwhite (2002), as well as, individual statements developed by the researcher specifically for this study. The survey assessed the relevance of five

factors shown to relate to academic performance and persistence to graduation of African-American male students; financing, role-modeling, high school preparation levels, community and campus acceptance, and family involvement.

The survey used a 5-point Likert scale to measure responses; 1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree. The survey also contained a demographics area which reported age, year classification, major of study, cumulative GPA, and high school classification. The survey was initially presented to Dr. Sisco for approval of the overall design to improve content validity. He made recommendations for improvement and the addition/omission of statements within the survey. The survey was also field tested with a group of five African-American male students. The students suggested that the questions not be grouped together but spread out randomly throughout the survey. The survey was further improved based on this consultation and input from the pilot sample.

#### Data Collection

After receiving approval from the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (Appendix B) and the supervising professor, the researcher distributed the survey materials to the students via email and hand delivery. The students were also provided with a brief introduction of the study and a description of the instrument. Students were instructed that they were not required to participate in the survey and that all responses would remain confidential. Subjects were asked to complete a consent form (Appendix C) to read and sign, or submit electronically prior to completing the survey. Subjects were also reminded that submission of the survey electronically released consent to the researcher.

On April 5, 2005, 235 surveys were distributed via email and hand delivery to the selected African-American male population at Rowan University. The email included an introduction to the research, instructions on returning the survey, a cover letter, and the 30 question instrument. The researcher collected the surveys via email and from the mailbox located in the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Thirty-two surveys were initially returned to the researcher. After determining that this would not be enough to do a valid calculation of the data a follow-up mailing was conducted. The researcher collected an additional 33 surveys for a total response rate of 27.7%.

#### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed to determine African-American male students' attitudes toward specific factors that affect academic achievement. Data were also analyzed to determine if there was a significant relationship between academic achievement and the five selected factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college-community acceptance, and family support. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software program. SPSS group statistics was used to produce means, percent, and frequency for each factor. A Pearson Coefficient was calculated to determine the significance of academic achievement to the five selected factors. Correlations were identified as significant at the  $p < .05$  level. A comparison of the means was also conducted to determine statistical significance.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### Profile of the Sample

Of the 235 selected African-American male students asked to participate in the survey, there were 65 responses, for a response rate of 27.7%. Fifty-five percent were freshmen, followed by sophomores (21.5%), juniors (10.8%) and seniors (12.3%). Table 4.1 depicts this distribution.

Table 4.1

#### *Selected Demographics*

Variable	<i>N</i> =65 <i>f</i>	%
Year in School		
Freshman	36	55.4
Sophomore	14	21.5
Junior	7	10.8
Senior	8	12.3

Table 4.2 depicts the high school classification distribution. Forty-one percent attended an urban high school, 56.3% attended a suburban high school, and 3.1% attended a rural high school.

Table 4.2

*High School Classification*

Variable	<i>N</i> =65 <i>f</i>	%
Urban	28	43.1
Suburban	36	55.4
Rural	1	1.5

Table 4.3 depicts the ages of the subjects. The majority of participants were between the ages of 18-19 (60%). Table 4.3 displays the complete breakdown.

Table 4.3

*Age of Subjects*

Variable	<i>N</i> =65 <i>f</i>	%
17	5	7.7
18	23	33.8
19	17	26.2
20	6	9.2
21	3	4.6
22	4	6.2
23	2	3.1
24	2	3.1
25	1	1.5
30	1	1.5
32	1	1.5

Table 4.4 depicts the college major of the participants. The majority of the participants were either business majors or undeclared at 25% and 22% respectively.

Table 4.4

*College Major*

Variable	<i>N</i> =65 <i>f</i>	%
Biology	3	4.6
Business	16	24.6
Communication	7	10.8
Computer Science	4	6.2
Education	3	4.6
Engineering	5	7.7
Health	5	7.7
Law & Justice	4	6.2
Mathematics	1	1.5
Psychology	1	1.5
Sociology	2	3.1
Undeclared	14	21.5

Table 4.5 depicts the cumulative GPA of participants.

Table 4.5

*Cumulative GPA*

Variable	<i>N</i> =65 <i>f</i>	%
Below 2.0	3	4.6
2.01-2.25	5	7.7
2.26-2.50	7	10.8
2.51-2.75	10	15.8
2.76-3.00	19	29.2
3.01-3.25	11	16.9
3.26-3.50	4	6.2
Above 3.51	6	9.2

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of selected African-American male students toward the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college-community acceptance, and family support on academic achievement at Rowan University?

Table 4.6 provides data on African-American male students' attitudes toward the five identified factors. Each statement is listed individually along with the mean, standard deviation and frequency (*f*).

Table 4.6

*Student Attitudes Toward Identified Factors*

Variable	<i>f</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
My family supports my decision to attend college	65	1.12	.375
I am prepared financially to attend college	65	2.95	1.178
I receive some form of financial aid	65	1.77	1.196
I feel pressure from my family to do well	65	2.08	1.108
My family is proud of me	65	1.25	.434
I feel like the same person when I go home to visit	64	2.89	1.416
My subjects in high school prepared me well for college	64	3.02	1.303
I receive some form of financial aid	65	1.85	1.202
I feel accepted at Rowan University	64	2.03	.776
Rowan University fosters a caring community	65	2.29	.805
There are students that I can relate to at Rowan	65	1.58	.583
My high school curriculum focused on college prep	65	2.45	1.212
I can attend college without financial aid	63	4.25	1.077
I do not want to disappoint my family	65	1.22	.484
I have to work to support my college education	65	2.71	1.169
My friends treat me the same when I go home	65	2.37	1.306
Rowan University makes me feel welcome	65	2.12	.944
I feel that I can be a role-model at Rowan University	65	1.71	.701
My family believes in me	65	1.23	.425
My high school experience (academically) has benefited me in college	64	2.73	1.212
There are faculty and staff that I can relate to	65	2.15	.815
My high school often hosted college prep workshops and info fairs	65	2.82	1.249
My parents expected me to attend college	65	1.72	1.068

Table 4.6 Continued

*Student Attitudes Toward Identified Factors*

Variable	<i>f</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
I feel well prepared to take college courses	65	2.11	.954
There are role-models at Rowan for me to relate to	65	1.98	.910
My friends and I still talk about the same things when I go home	63	2.57	1.304
I expect to finish college without the assistance of financial aid	64	4.02	1.266
Role-models are important to my college career	65	2.00	1.000
I took classes in high school that were designed to get me into college	65	2.78	1.88
I feel that there are mentors at Rowan who support me	65	1.88	.801

Table 4.7 provides data on African-American male students' attitudes toward the five identified factors. Each variable was measured using six individual statements. The percentages were calculated using the total of the number of responses (*f*) for each statement from each survey. The maximum number of possible responses is 390. Each percentage represents the magnitude of subjects who reported a measured level of influence of that factor.

Table 4.7

*Student Attitudes Toward Identified Factors (Combined)*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Financing	387	69.0
Role-Modeling	390	77.9
High School Prep	388	50.8
Coll/Comm Accep	386	63.0

Table 4.7 Continued

*Student Attitudes Toward Identified Factors (Combined)*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Family Support	390	92.3

Research Question 2: Of the identified factors, what do selected African-American male students report as having the greatest impact on academic achievement at Rowan University?

Table 4.8 represents the percentage of respondents who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher.

Table 4.8

*Percentage of Self-Reported GPA for the Five Identified Factors*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
GPA	65	61.5

Table 4.9 represents the percentage of respondents who reported a level of influence of selected factors and who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher.

Table 4.9

*Percentage of GPA 2.76 or Higher in Relation to the Five Identified Factors*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Financing	167	62.5
Role-Modeling	184	60.5
High School Prep	197	58.9
Coll/Comm Accep	243	63

Table 4.9 Continued

*Percentage of GPA 2.76 or Higher in Relation to the Five Identified Factors*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Family Support	360	59.7

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between the attitudes of selected African-American male students toward the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support and academic achievement at Rowan University?

Table 4.10 represents the Pearson Correlations of the five selected factors in relation to academic achievement. Only one statement showed a significant correlation. Frequency (*f*) represents the total number of students who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher.

Table 4.10

*Pearson Correlation*

Variable	<i>f</i>	Correlation ( <i>r</i> )
I feel well prepared to take college courses	40	.328*

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.11 represents the mean response rate of the participants who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher. Factors are grouped by statement. Frequency (*f*) represents the number of responses on a Likert scale from 1-Strongly Agree to 5-Strongly Disagree.

Table 4.11

*Mean Comparison by Statement*

Cumulative GPA		My family supports my decision to attend college	I feel pressure from my family to do well	My family is proud of me	I do not want to disappoint my family	My family believes in me	My parents expected me to attend college
2.76 or higher	<i>Mean</i> <i>f</i>	1.18 40	2.18 40	1.30 40	1.33 40	1.28 40	1.95 40
Cumulative GPA		I am prepared financially to attend college	I receive some form of financial aid	I receive some form of financial aid	I can attend college without financial aid	I have to work to support my college education	I expect to finish college without the assistance of financial aid
2.76 or higher	<i>Mean</i> <i>f</i>	2.85 40	1.83 40	1.88 40	4.26 38	2.58 40	4.05 40
Cumulative GPA		I feel like the same person when I go home to visit	I feel accepted at Rowan University	Rowan University fosters a caring community	My friends treat me the same when I go home	Rowan University makes me feel welcome	My friends and I still talk about the same things when I go home
2.76 or higher	<i>Mean</i> <i>f</i>	2.80 40	2.00 39	2.28 40	2.38 40	2.18 40	2.55 38
Cumulative GPA		My subjects in high school prepared me well for college	My high school curriculum focused on college prep	My high school experience (academically) has benefited me in college	My high school often hosted college prep workshops and info fairs	I feel well prepared to take college courses	I took classes in high school that were designed to get me into college
2.76 or higher	<i>Mean</i> <i>f</i>	3.08 39	2.55 40	2.72 39	2.83 40	2.13 40	2.80 40
Cumulative GPA		There are students that I can relate to at Rowan	I feel that I can be a role model at Rowan University	There are faculty that I can relate to	There are role-models at Rowan for me to relate to	Role-models are important to my college career	I feel that there are mentors at Rowan who support me
2.76 or higher	<i>Mean</i> <i>f</i>	1.63 40	1.68 40	2.08 40	2.05 40	1.98 40	2.00 40

Table 4.12 represents the mean comparison by factor in relation to a reported GPA of 2.76 or higher. Frequency (*f*) represents the total number of responses on a Likert Scale from 1-Strongly Agree to 5-Strongly Disagree.

Table 4.12

*Mean Comparison by Factor*

Variable	<i>f</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Family Support	240	1.53
Financial Aid	238	2.89
College/Community Acceptance	237	2.35
High School Preparation	238	2.88
Role-Modeling	240	1.90

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Study

African-American males at Rowan University were expected to produce responses that reflected their attitudes toward identified factors that research has shown impact academic achievement. Financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support produced varying responses. Of all the respondents, 92% reported family support influenced them at Rowan University. Sixty-nine percent needed some form of financial aid. Sixty-three percent felt accepted at Rowan University and within their own communities. Fifty-one percent felt that high school prepared them academically for Rowan University. Seventy-eight percent felt that role-modeling was present or important at Rowan University. Of the respondents who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher in relation to the five identified factors, 63% reported financial aid, 63% reported college/community acceptance, 61% reported role-modeling, 60% reported family support, and 59% reported high school preparation influenced them at Rowan University. There was a significant correlation ( $r = .328, p < .05$ ) between the statement, "I feel well prepared to take college courses" and academic achievement. There were no other significant correlations.

The mean response rate for the five selected factors for students who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher are 1.53 (family support), 2.35 (college/community acceptance), 2.89 (financial aid), 2.88 (high school preparation), and 1.9 (role-modeling). Based on these

data, students reported that family support, and role-modeling had the greatest influence on their academic achievement.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate selected African-American undergraduate student attitudes toward factors influencing academic achievement. Responses were needed to gauge the generalizability of earlier research to the Rowan University community. Research suggests (McAdoo, 1988; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1992; Wilson, 2000; Roach, 2001; Spradley, 2001; Evelyn, 2002; Furr & Elling 2002; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002; Evans, 2003; Rosenthal & Wilson, 2003; Suggs, 2003) that there are many factors that contribute to student achievement at colleges and universities.

A sample of African-American males were asked to respond to 30 statements that addressed the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support. These responses were then used to determine student attitudes toward factors that impacted academic achievement. The responses of students' attitudes toward these identified factors were used to answer three research questions posed in chapter one.

### Methodology

African-American male undergraduate (freshman- senior) students enrolled full-time in the spring 2005 semester were asked to participate in this study. The students were chosen based on a random sample of the total, 235, undergraduate full-time African-American male students attending Rowan University. The students range in age from 17-32.

In order to protect the rights of the participants an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application (Appendix A) was completed on March 9, 2005 and submitted to Rowan University IRB for approval. The application was approved by the IRB on April 4, 2005 (Appendix B). Participants were asked to complete a consent form (Appendix C) to read and sign, or submit electronically prior to completing the survey. Participants were also reminded that submission of the survey electronically released their consent to the researcher.

Data were collected using a 30 item survey that measured financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support. A five-point Likert scale was used to address the level of agreement with statements that addressed each of the five factors. There was also a demographics section to allow the researcher to further synthesize the data. This section included age, year in school, GPA, type of high school attended, and college major.

On April 5, 2005, 235 surveys were distributed via email and hand delivery to the selected African-American male population at Rowan University. The email included an introduction to the research, instructions on returning the survey, a cover letter, and the 30 item instrument. The researcher collected the surveys via email and from the mailbox located in the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Thirty-two surveys were initially returned to the researcher. After determining that this would not be enough to do a valid calculation of the data a follow-up mailing was conducted. The researcher collected an additional 33 surveys for a total response rate of 27.7%.

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed to determine African-American male students' attitudes toward specific factors that impact academic achievement. Data were also analyzed to determine if there was a significant relationship between academic achievement and the five identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. SPSS group statistics was used to produce means, percent, and frequency for each factor. A Pearson Coefficient ( $r$ ) was calculated to determine the significance of academic achievement to the five selected factors. Correlations were identified as significant at the  $p < .05$  level. A comparison of the means of the five selected factors was also conducted to determine statistical influence.

## Findings

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of selected African-American male students toward the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college-community acceptance, and family support on academic achievement at Rowan University?

Data were analyzed to calculate the frequency, mean, and standard deviation for each statement using standard SPSS software. According to the data, all respondents reported that financial aid (69%), college/community acceptance (63%), role-modeling (78%), family support (92%), and high school preparation (51%) influenced them at Rowan University. The mean response was 1.44 (family support), 2.93 (financial aid), 2.37 (college/community acceptance), 2.65 (high school preparation), and 1.88 (role modeling). The research (McAdoo, 1988; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1992; Wilson, 2000;

Roach, 2001; Spradley, 2001; Evelyn, 2002; Furr & Elling 2002; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002; Evans, 2003; Rosenthal & Wilson, 2003; Suggs, 2003) suggests that all or a combination of these factors are present at colleges and universities. This study confirmed that these factors were present at Rowan University and that the participants recognized their influence.

Research Question 2: Of the identified factors, what do selected African-American male students report as having the greatest impact on academic achievement at Rowan University?

According to the data, respondents who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher also reported that financial aid (63%), college/community acceptance (63%), role-modeling (61%), family support (60%) and high school preparation (59%) influenced them at Rowan University. The mean response rate for the five identified factors for students who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher was 1.53 (family support), 2.35 (college/community acceptance), 2.89 (financial aid), 2.88 (high school preparation), and 1.90 (role-modeling). The study suggests that the participants who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher recognized the influence of family support (1.53) and role-modeling (1.90) as having the greatest impact on academic achievement.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between the attitudes of selected African-American male students toward the identified factors of financing, role-modeling, high school preparation, college/community acceptance, and family support and academic achievement at Rowan University?

According to the data there was a significant relationship between the statement, "I feel well prepared to take college courses" and academic achievement. However, there

were no other significant relationships. The data suggest that all of the factors were related to academic achievement at similar levels but that no one factor is more significant than the other.

### Discussion and Conclusions

According to the data there were no significant relationships between academic achievement (self-reported GPA of 2.76 or higher) and the five identified factors. There was a significant relationship between the statement “I feel well prepared to take college courses” and academic achievement.

Participants in the study did recognize the influence of the five identified factors. According to the data, family support (92%) and role-modeling (78%) were the most influential among all of the participants at Rowan University. However the influence of those factors was relatively equal for students who reported a GPA of 2.76 or higher ranging from 63% for college/community acceptance to 59% for high school preparation.

Prior research (McAdoo, 1988; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1992; Wilson, 2000; Roach, 2001; Spradley, 2001; Evelyn, 2002; Furr & Elling 2002; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002; Evans, 2003; Rosenthal & Wilson, 2003; Suggs, 2003), suggest that there are numerous factors that contribute to academic achievement at colleges and universities. The research isolated five select factors and determined that African-American male student attitudes were similar in relating their impact on academic achievement.

Although family support does not affect academic achievement directly, the presence of the family on the college level is significant, similar to what was previously discussed by Walker and Satterwhite (2002). This implies that African-American males view family support as very significant to their college career at Rowan University.

African-American males also viewed role-modeling as highly influential at Rowan University. This supports the research of Spradley (2001) who explored the idea of social interaction among college students as an influence to reach higher educational goals

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations are made for further research:

1. A larger study involving full-time and part-time African-American male students should be conducted. Part-time students may have submitted much different responses in relation to the five identified factors.
2. African-American female students should be included to draw comparisons to their male counterparts to determine if their attitudes in relation to the five identified factors are similar.
3. A study of the relationship of each factor would be beneficial in determining if any one factor has a direct or indirect influence on the other.
4. Lastly, a longitudinal study of the factors should be conducted to determine if there is a significant change in influence, importance, or presence of these factors throughout the college career of African-American male undergraduate students.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Application

**Rowan University**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Check all appropriate boxes, answer all questions completely, include attachments, and obtain appropriate signatures. Submit an **original and two copies** of the completed application to the Office of the Associate Provost for Research Expediter(s). Be sure to make a copy for your files.

**FOR IRB USE ONLY:**  
Protocol Number: IRB-\_\_\_\_\_  
Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Exemption: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
Category(ies): \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Step 1: Is the proposed research subject to IRB review?**

All research involving human participants conducted by Rowan University faculty and staff is subject to IRB review. Some, but not all, student-conducted studies that involve human participants are considered research and are subject to IRB review. Check the accompanying instructions for more information. Then check with your class instructor for guidance as to whether you must submit your research protocol for IRB review. If you determine that your research meets the above criteria and is not subject to IRB review, **STOP**. You do not need to apply. If you or your instructor have any doubts, apply for an IRB review.

**Step 2: If you have determined that the proposed research is subject to IRB review, complete the identifying information below.**

Project Title: A STUDY OF SELECTED STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSISTENCE TO GRADUATION

Researcher: Marquis L. Bennett

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Faculty Sponsor (if student)\* Burton Sisco

Department: Educational Leadership Location: Rowan University

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**Step 3: Determine whether the proposed research eligible for an exemption from a full IRB review.**

Federal regulations (45 CFR 46) permit the exemption of some types of research from a full IRB review. If your research can be described by one or more of the categories listed below, check the appropriate category(ies), complete questions 1-5, and complete the Assurances on the last page of the application.

If your research cannot be described by any of these categories, your research is not exempt, and you must complete the entire "Human Research Review Application."

- Category 1** - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as: (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies; or (b) research on the effectiveness of, or the comparison among, instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- Category 2** - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that the human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (b) any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.  
*(Note: Exemption for survey and interview procedures does not apply to research involving children. Exemption for observation of public behavior does not apply to research involving children except when the investigator does not participate in the activities being observed.)*
- Category 3** - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under Category 2 above if: (a) the human participants are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (b) federal statute requires without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
- Category 4** - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.
- Category 5** - Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (a) public benefit or service programs; (b) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (c) possible changes in or alternatives to these programs or procedures; or (d) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
- Category 6** - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies: (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed; or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.  
*(Note: Exemption categories cannot be applied to research involving fetuses, pregnant women, human in vitro fertilization, or prisoners.)*

**Please answer Questions 1-5 below**

**1. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH?**

To explore specific factors that contribute to African-American males persistence to retention and graduation.

**2. DESCRIBE THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INCLUDING WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF SUBJECTS (ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEET IF NECESSARY):**

The research is designed based on previous studies done by Spradley (2001), Walker, K. L., & Satterwhite, T. (2002), and Rosenthal, B.S., & Wilson, C.W. (2003). The study uses a survey questionnaire and demographics form.

**3. DESCRIBE THE SUBJECTS WHO WILL BE PARTICIPATING (NUMBER, AGE, GENDER, ETC):**

African-American male undergraduate (freshman- senior) students enrolled full-time in the spring 2005 semester were asked to participate in this study. The total undergraduate, full-time African-American male population ranging in ages from 17-24 will be used in this study.

**4. DESCRIBE HOW SUBJECTS WILL BE RECRUITED (e.g. ADVERTISEMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CLASS, E-MAIL, INTERNET)**

Subjects will be contacted via email.

**5. WHERE WILL THE RESEARCH BE CONDUCTED:**

Rowan University

**NOTE: IF THE RESEARCH IS TO BE CONDUCTED IN ANOTHER INSTITUTION (e.g. A SCHOOL, HOSPITAL, AGENCY, etc.) A PERMISSION LETTER FROM AN ADMINISTRATOR ON THE LETTERHEAD OF THAT INSTITUTION MUST BE ATTACHED.**

**IF THE RESEARCH IS TO BE CONDUCTED AT ANOTHER UNIVERSITY, A SIGNED COPY OF THE IRB APPROVAL FORM FROM THAT UNIVERSITY MUST BE ATTACHED.**

**ATTACH THE CONSENT FORM TO THIS APPLICATION.** The Consent Form must address all of the elements required for informed consent (SEE INSTRUCTIONS).

**NOTE: IF THE ONLY RECORD LINKING THE SUBJECT AND THE RESEARCH WOULD BE THE CONSENT DOCUMENT, AND THE RESEARCH PRESENTS NO MORE THAN MINIMAL RISK OF HARM TO SUBJECTS, YOU MAY USE AN ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE FOR CONSENT. IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM THE IRB TO USE AN ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE, ATTACH A COPY OF THE FIRST PAGE OF YOUR RESEARCH INSTRUMENT OR A LETTER WITH THE REQUIRED INFORMATION (see Instructions).**

**If you are requesting an exemption from a full IRB review, STOP. Complete the last page of this application (“Certifications”), and forward the completed application to the Office of the Associate Provost for Research, The Graduate School, Memorial Hall.**

**IF YOU CANNOT CLAIM ONE OF THE EXEMPTIONS LISTED ABOVE, COMPLETE ALL OF THE ABOVE AS WELL AS THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR A FULL IRB REVIEW.**

Does your research involve a special population?

- Socioeconomically, educationally, or linguistically disadvantaged, racial/ethnic group
- Pregnancy/fetus
- Cognitively impaired
- Elderly
- Terminally ill
- Incarcerated
- No special population

At what level of risk will the participants in the proposed research be placed?

*(Note: "Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to the participant's dignity and self-respect as well as psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk.)*

Minimal Risk     More than Minimal Risk     Uncertain

**1. HOW WILL SUBJECTS BE RECRUITED? IF STUDENTS, WILL THEY BE SOLICITED FROM CLASS?**

**2. WHAT RISKS TO SUBJECTS (PHYSIOLOGICAL AND/OR PSYCHOLOGICAL) ARE INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH?**

**3. IS DECEPTION INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH? IF SO, WHAT IS IT AND WHY WILL IT BE USED?**

**4. WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE SUBJECTS AFTER THEIR PARTICIPATION? IF DECEPTION IS USED, IT MUST BE DISCLOSED AFTER PARTICIPATION.**

**5. HOW WILL CONFIDENTIALITY BE MAINTAINED? WHO WILL KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THE SUBJECTS? IF A PRE-AND POSTTEST DESIGN IS USED, HOW WILL THE SUBJECTS BE IDENTIFIED?**

**6. HOW WILL THE DATA BE RECORDED AND STORED? WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE DATA? ALL DATA MUST BE KEPT BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR A MINIMUM OF THREE YEARS.**

**CERTIFICATIONS:**

Rowan University maintains a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. This Assurance includes a requirement for all research staff working with human participants to receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors.

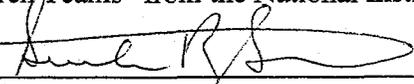
Please attach a copy of your "Completion Certificate for Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams" from the National Institutes of Health.

If you need to complete that training, go to the Web Tutorial at <http://cme.nci.nih.gov/>

**Responsible Researcher:** I certify that I am familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human participants from research risks and will adhere to the policies and procedures of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board. I will ensure that all research staff working on the proposed project who will have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting this research (including students fulfilling these roles) will complete IRB approved training. I will not initiate this research project until I receive written approval from the IRB. I agree to obtain informed consent of participants in this project if required by the IRB; to report to the IRB any unanticipated effects on participants which become apparent during the course or as a result of experimentation and the actions taken as a result; to cooperate with the IRB in the continuing review of this project; to obtain prior approval from the IRB before amending or altering the scope of the project or implementing changes in the approved consent form; and to maintain documentation of consent forms and progress reports for a minimum of three years after completion of the final report or longer if required by the sponsor or the institution. I further certify that I have completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years as indicated below my signature.

Signature of Responsible Researcher:  Date: 3/9/05

**Faculty Advisor** (if Responsible Researcher is a student): I certify that I am familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human participants from research risks. I further certify that I have completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years as indicated below my signature (attach copy of your "Completion Certificate for Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams" from the National Institutes of Health).

Signature of Faculty Advisor:  Date: 3/9/05

APPENDIX B

Institution Review Board Approval Form

Rowan University  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION**

RECEIVED MAR 09 2005

INSTRUCTIONS: Check all appropriate boxes, answer all questions completely, include attachments, and obtain appropriate signatures. Submit an **original and two copies** of the completed application to the Office of the Associate Provost for Research Expediter(s). Be sure to make a copy for your files.

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Protocol Number: IRB- 2005-85

Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemption:  Yes  No

Category(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

Approved J. J. J. (date)  
4/4/05

**Step 1: Is the proposed research subject to IRB review?**

All research involving human participants conducted by Rowan University faculty and staff is subject to IRB review. Some, but not all, student-conducted studies that involve human participants are considered research and are subject to IRB review. Check the accompanying instructions for more information. Then check with your class instructor for guidance as to whether you must submit your research protocol for IRB review. If you determine that your research meets the above criteria and is not subject to IRB review, **STOP**. You do not need to apply. If you or your instructor have any doubts, apply for an IRB review.

**Step 2: If you have determined that the proposed research is subject to IRB review, complete the identifying information below.**

Project Title: A STUDY OF SELECTED STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSISTENCE TO GRADUATION

Researcher: Marquis L. Bennett	
Department: Educational Leadership	Location: Rowan University
Mailing Address: 201 Mullica Hill Rd. Box 929 Glassboro, NJ 08028	(Street) (Town/State/Zip)
E-Mail: bennet37@students.rowan.edu	Telephone: 856-256-6458
Co-Investigator/s: N/A	
Faculty Sponsor (if student)* Burton Sisco	
Department: Educational Leadership	Location: Rowan University
E-Mail: <a href="mailto:sisco@rowan.edu">sisco@rowan.edu</a>	Telephone: 856-256-3717

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

## **Informed Consent Form**

I agree to participate in a research project entitled "A Study of Selected Student Attitudes Toward Factors that Influence Achievement and Persistence to Graduation", which is being conducted by Marquis L. Bennett as an assignment in partial fulfillment of the Master's Degree in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to African-American male students' persistence to graduation; specifically those factors that hinder and contribute to academic achievement. The data collected from this study will be compared with data from previous studies and will be submitted as part of a research paper.

I understand that my responses will be anonymous and that all data gathered will be confidential. I agree that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for publication or education provided that I am in no way identified and my name is not used.

I understand that my email address will not be used to solicit information from me that is not compliant with the purposes of this study.

I understand that there are no physical or psychological risks involved in this study, and that 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 other project facilitator.

If I have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study I may contact Marquis L. Bennett at (856) 256-6458 or Dr. Burt Sisco at (856) 256-3717.

## APPENDIX D

### Student Attitudes Toward Factors Influencing Achievement Survey

## Student Attitudes Toward Factors Influencing Achievement

*This survey is being administered as part of a master's degree research project. While your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested.*

Listed below are statements which reflect student attitudes toward factors that influence student achievement. For each statement highlight, in red, the response that best applies to you.

**Sample:**

1. My parents expected me to attend college. SA A N D SD

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

1	My family supports my decision to attend college.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2	I am prepared financially to attend college.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3	I receive some form of financial aid.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4	I feel pressure from my family to do well.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5	My family is proud of me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6	I feel like the same person when I go home to visit.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7	My subjects in high school prepared me well for college.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8	I receive some form of financial aid.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9	I feel accepted at Rowan University.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10	Rowan University fosters a caring community.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11	There are students that I can relate to at Rowan.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12	My high school curriculum focused on college prep.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13	I can attend college without financial aid.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14	I do not want to disappoint my family.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15	I have to work to support my college education.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16	My friends treat me the same when I go home.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17	Rowan University makes me feel welcome.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18	I feel that I can be a role-model at Rowan.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19	My family believes in me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20	My high school experience (academically) has benefited me in college.	SA	A	N	D	SD

21	There are faculty and staff that I can relate to.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22	My high school often hosted college prep workshops and information fairs.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23	My parents expected me to attend college.	SA	A	N	D	SD
24	I feel well-prepared to take college courses.	SA	A	N	D	SD
25	There are role-models at Rowan for me to relate to.	SA	A	N	D	SD
26	My friends and I still talk about the same things when I go home.	SA	A	N	D	SD
27	I expect to finish college without the assistance of financial aid.	SA	A	N	D	SD
28	Role-models are important to my college career.	SA	A	N	D	SD
29	I took classes in high school that were designed to get me into college.	SA	A	N	D	SD
30	I feel that there are mentors at Rowan who support me.	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Demographics:** The following questions are for reporting purposes only. They are important in regards to relating the information to my research. Please answer them as honestly and completely as possible.

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Year Classification    \_\_\_ Freshman    \_\_\_ Sophomore    \_\_\_ Junior    \_\_\_ Senior

Major \_\_\_\_\_

Cumulative GPA    \_\_\_ Below 2.0    \_\_\_ 2.01-2.25    \_\_\_ 2.26-2.50    \_\_\_ 2.51-2.75  
                              \_\_\_ 2.76-3.00    \_\_\_ 3.01-3.25    \_\_\_ 3.26-3.50    \_\_\_ Above 3.51

High School Classification:    \_\_\_ Urban    \_\_\_ Suburban    \_\_\_ Rural

**Thank you for your time and assistance.**

