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Evaluating Support Services for African American Females at a Historically Black College

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Evaluating Support Services for African American Females
at a Historically Black College

by
Sabrina Ferguson Edwards

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Fischler School of Education and Human Services
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Sabrina F. Edwards under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Fischler School of Education and Human Services and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Abstract

Evaluating Support Services for African American Females at a Historically Black
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a Historically Black College (HBCU).

This study examined the effectiveness of the Women's Resources Assistance Program
(WRAP), a support service for African American females attending a historically black
college or university (HBCU). The study included 230 participants. The purpose of the
study was to gauge, through the use of surveys, each participant's knowledge and level of
participation in the WRAP.

The participants were issued questionnaires and interview forms to complete during the
study. The questionnaires contained 11 closed-ended questions that were designed to
determine the participating students' attitude towards WRAP as well as their level of
participation. Similarly, oral interviews were conducted to ascertain the participants'
attitudes towards WRAP. The interview form contained four open-ended questions that
allowed the participants to further elaborate on their attitudes and opinions.

The findings revealed that the participation levels of the students were high. The 230
participants who took part in WRAP provided evidence of the high participation levels.
The responses of the participants revealed that WRAP should be offered to every female
student as a support service program. The participants also expressed that they believed
the support services offered by WRAP are definitely needed to ensure academic success
for female students in higher education. The attitudes were examined along with an
academic profile to determine whether WRAP assisted the students in raising their level
of academic performance. Data that was collected during the study showed that the
participants are exceptionally satisfied with the services provided by WRAP. The
attitudes that were reflected in this study evinced a need for continuous services provided
by The Women's Resource Assistance Program. The need for monitoring and constant
evaluation of the program is essential to ensure academic success for female students
attending HBCUs.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Description of the Organizational Setting

Introduction. The subject college was established in 1866 to meet the educational needs of the newly emancipated slaves and their descendants. Today its enrollment continues to be predominantly African American students from the southeastern and northeastern regions of the United States, while also welcoming students from all racial and ethnic groups within the United States and from around the world.

The college is an accredited, private, four-year, liberal arts, co-educational, residential institution. As a result of its close affiliation with, and support from, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the institution is committed to Christian principles which emphasize high moral and spiritual values. It offers baccalaureate degrees in the arts and sciences and other career-based professional fields.

The college enrolls students with a wide range of educational foundations, and it seeks to develop in each of its students the high levels of competence in basic social, thinking, listening, speaking, reading, writing, mathematical, technological, and leadership skills that are the characteristics of an educated person. In addition, it seeks to develop within each student the breadth of knowledge, commitment to service, and adherence to high ethical values that are also the characteristics of a good citizen.

The institution strives to prepare its students to pursue further graduate and professional studies as well as to assume positions of leadership in commerce, industry, education, government, and community service. The college interacts with the surrounding community by providing continuing education, health, and human services, always with the signal purpose of promoting the growth and development of the larger

community through public service programs, economic development, and community revitalization. The college also endeavors to develop research strategies and facilities to address both academic and community issues**.**

Nature of the Problem. In examining issues of recruitment, retention and general survival of African American female students (AAFS) on traditional college campuses, one finds that social, personal and financial hardships have a negative impact on the academic standings of an extremely high percentage of this population, especially when compared with their Caucasian counterparts. These elements make the introduction to college life difficult for many of these first time college students. Studies have been conducted (Allen, 1986, Cureton, 2003, Littleton, 2003, Wallace, 1991, Williamson, 1999) that identify, isolate, and minimize the negative effect these elements have on the academic success of these students. Moreover, the introduction to a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), however similar to traditional colleges, can present an even greater challenge to this population of students because of the lack of immediate social acceptance by their peers, and the difficulties associated with making the transition to college life.

With the proper support services, the insecurity and timidity associated with the effort of seeking social acceptance can be alleviated during the transitioning process of AAFS entering a HBCU. An effective mentoring program, a strong family structure, and positive peer reinforcement can help make the transitioning process flow smoothly. Unfortunately, many of these support systems are not readily available or accessible on most HBCU campuses. In many cases, AAFS find themselves dealing with negative peer opposition, broken lines of communication with family members back home, and

mentors that are unqualified to guide them through the enrollment process at the college. Because of the aforementioned reasons, a comprehensive support service system, uniquely tailored to fit the needs of AAFS, must be developed and implemented on HBCU campuses nationwide.

AAFS often experience personal hardships when transitioning to an HBCU. The death of a friend or family member, break-up of a long-term intimate relationship, and unexpected financial burdens all contribute to the burdens sometimes felt by these students. The lack of childcare assistance, job placement services, and affordable housing on campus, can, and often do, exacerbate the situation. Addressing these and similiar issues is paramount to the success of AAFS attending a HBCU.

AAFS that are transitioning to an HBCU often experience problems related to their social status, or the lack thereof, that causes them to dropout or withdraw from the school. The need to "fit in" with the most popular student base on campus for immediate social acceptance is the only way that many of these students know how to survive college life at an HBCU. Some of them assume that popularity among an elite few will bring them automatic social acceptance throughout campus. Unfortunately, they are wrong. More often than not, the stresses and pressures associated with trying to be popular distract the student from their intended goal of making a smooth transition into a HBCU. However, this problem can be addressed through the use of comprehensive peer support services. Nowadays, AAFS do not have to seek popularity or a status to survive on an HBCU campus.

A comprehensive support system comprised of their peers can help AAFS make the transition into an HBCU without having to endure the hardships associated with

doing it alone. Students that face personal and financial hardships in their first year can now find the solace and strength to resolve their problems with the advice and guidance of their peers. This is a simple yet beneficial way to provide AAFS with the assistance and support they need to make a successful transition into an HBCU. But peer support alone will not shield these students from the many difficulties that they will face along the way. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) stated the following;

> [A]djusting to the campus climate is one of those difficulties: The academic, social, and psychological work inhabited by most non Caucasian campuses are substantially different in almost every aspect from those of their Caucasian peers (p. 644).

Many studies have suggested (Allen, 1992; Littleton, 2003; Williamson, 1999) that African American students share similar experiences in college because of the color of their skin. African American students report feelings of isolation even to the point of estrangement from the greater student body due to their race. In addition, a disturbing number of African American students attending predominantly Caucasian populated institutions report facing open hostility from the student body, many of whom question their academic ability or discounted their presence as simple the result of affirmative action. When gender is figured into the equation, the affects become even more trenchant. A portion of this study will seek to show that African American females attending college, especially an HBCU, are treated uniquely different than their African American male counterparts. These differences seem have an impact on how African American females are received by their peers on campus, as well as the choices they make when choosing a role model or mentor to guide them along their college careers. Student support services can be the difference between a student that is treated as an equal amongst his or her peers, and one that is considered an outcast.

The idea of acceptance is an important issue for African American females because of their desire to look towards one another for identity and affirmation of self (Fordham, 1996; Lewis & Hamrick, 2000). On multiracial or traditional campuses, both small and large, it has been demonstrated that African American females experience a tougher time making the transition to college life than students of other ethnic backgrounds (Littleton, 2003). Although there is research on African American females adjusting to college life on traditional campuses, there is limited information on this group adjusting to life at an HBCU. Hence, this study will seek to examine the experiences of AAFS attending an HBCU in Jacksonville, Florida. The study will focus on issues related to peer-oriented support services that promote social acceptance and academic success.

A study of services available to African American females on HBCU campuses is essential to the continued educational progress that women have enjoyed in the past two decades. Dramatic progress has been made in terms of these women seeking and obtaining higher education. Between 1991 and 1992, statistics show that women earned 54% of the baccalaureate degrees conferred by colleges and universities in the United States. They also earned 54% of the master's degrees and 37% of the doctorates (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1994). But despite the strong presence of women in higher education, anecdotal evidence suggests that women aren't well received at some institutions across America. According to research, women attending some colleges and universities are made to feel like second-class citizens. Reports indicate that some women experienced low cognitive development, low educational aspirations and attainment and low confidence and self-esteem.

Every student deserves a fair chance to succeed academically. Many freshman college students are well prepared for college life because of the college preparatory class or classes they attend while in high school. For the vast majority of these students, the transition from high school to college is seemingly flawless. But for students with little or no pre-college exposure, primarily those from troubled inner-city high schools, the transition into college can be an extremely difficult and seemingly overwhelming process. It is a process that requires a degree of remedial or developmental assistance that, at times, complicates the transition by adding prerequisite courses that cause undue stress on the student. Of course, students can turn to their peers or a faculty member for help with this problem, but many of them are reluctant to do so. This is especially the case with AAFS attending an HBCU.

Research is needed in this area to identify, isolate, and target this problem as it relates to AAFS attending college, more specifically an HBCU. Now, there are HBCU institutions that provide their students with adequate support services, but very few tailor these services to fit the student's individual needs. This research will examine the process and benefits of personalized student support services for African American females attending an HBCU. This project will seek to determine if personalized support services, with an emphasis on direct peer involvement, will improve the academic success rate of African American females at an HBCU. But improving the success rate of these students will require a lot more than simple peer involvement; it will also require a great deal of family support.

Herndon and Hirt (2004) recently published a qualitative study on the influence of family ties on the academic success of black college students. Their findings suggest that

families lay the groundwork for the success of African American students long before they step foot on an actual college campus. The term "family" as used in the study includes extended family such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, as well as neighbors, church members and friends. African American families that plan to send their children off to college need to establish academic expectations early in their children's lives (p. 505).

Family and friends can have a direct impact on a child's attitude with respect to race and gender issues. Most are aware of this impact and the influence it has on their child's academic future. How family and friends communicate their experiences with race and gender can determine their child's rate of cultural adjustment when entering college. When these children are exposed to multicultural settings with their parents at an early age, research suggests that they stand a better chance of surviving their first year of college, even more so than those with little or no exposure. Helping children, primarily minorities, better understand how to function in a diverse society can help them make wise decisions as they pursue higher education (Herndon & Hirt, 2004).

Having a mentor or role model is a motivator for pre-college students. Family and friends often fulfill these roles. However, mentors and role models are a scarce commodity for African Americans attending an HBCU. This fact becomes even more consequential in that these are commodities that African Americans female students opting to attend an HBCU cannot afford to do without. A mentor, preferably a peer, must be provided to the student as soon as possible upon their arrival at the institution, to ensure that they start their college experience off on the right foot. In the case of African American females, careful attention must be given to gender when assigning mentors.

The research showed that females are generally more receptive to other female input and advice, more so than males in the same position (Herndon & Hirt, 2004).

African American students often understand both the personal and academic rigors of post-secondary education. Herndon & Hirt explained in their study that college students are already serving as mentors in other capacities (i.e. siblings and cousins). Additionally, these students are taking on a much broader mentoring role, to include the development of middle age children in their community who seek to attain a higher education just as they do. Herndon and Hirt stated the following;

> Current [African American] students and alumni can also take action to assist others in the early college stage...adopting a little brother or sister for whom they can serve as a resource about navigating the academic and social milieus on campus. Campus administrators might assist African American students in succeeding once they matriculate. Actively helping students negotiate the new environment, for example, might involve offering seminars for small groups of [African American] students in which the problems they encounter are discussed and the successes they achieved are acknowledged. Such programs might also promote social networks among students and between students and staff. Administrators might offer more assistance in the area of spiritual support (p. 508).

Recruiting African American students to attend an HBCU requires the hard work and cooperation of a number of people. Perhaps, family members play the most important role when it comes to selecting the institution of higher learning that the student attends. Therefore, it is essential that school officials work with whole families to promote their college. This means introducing recruitment campaigns that target not only the college-bound student, but is inclusive of other children within the household as well. These programs must be designed in such a way that offers families a comprehensive look into the future of the college or university their children may someday attend. It might also be beneficial for college administrators to promote the diversity of their institution,

especially an HBCU, to distill any concerns or fears family members may have about discrimination. Programs that focus on recruiting young people can help boost a college or university's attendance as well as introduce to young people the many benefits associated with earning a college degree (Herndon & Hirt, 2004).

African American students often feel obligated to do well in school to establish or carry on a family legacy. As a first or second-generation family member attending college, African Americans generally feel a sense of guilt for any debt their family accrues while sending them to college. In addition, they feel a need to repay their families for the support given to them along the way. For some, becoming a role model serves as a source of debt repayment and family honor. More often than not, these students choose to mentor other members in their family, primarily younger siblings, to encourage the next generation to follow suit with their educational ambitions. In keeping with family tradition, many students seek the assistance of professional staff and faculty at their college campus to guide them through the mentoring process. A big part of learning to be a quality mentor is accessibility. Former college students often achieve this goal by joining an alumnus organization to tap into the enormous knowledge base and resources they provide. Alumni members, too, are given the opportunity to mentor to future generations and fulfill their own expectations of giving back. As part of a self-promoting developmental process, alumni, through this process of repayment, provide a base for others to mentor upcoming freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes (Herndon & Hirt, 2004).

Background of the Issue. According to the U.S. Department of Education in a published document, HBCU institutions were established to serve the educational needs

of African Americans. Prior to the establishment of HBCUs, and for a number of years thereafter, African Americans were denied admission to traditional college institutions largely due to racial discrimination. As a result, HBCU institutions became the principle means for providing post-secondary educational opportunities to these students. Today, HBCU administrators must fulfill educational goals and needs far beyond those originally set by their founders. President George Bush described the unique mission of African American colleges as follows: "At a time when many schools barred their doors to [African] Americans, these colleges offered the best, and often the only, opportunity for a higher education" (US Department of Education, 1991).

During the slavery era and the subsequent Civil War era, public policy and statutory provisions prohibited the education of African descendants in various parts of the nation. The Institute for Colored Youth, the first higher education institution for African Americans, was founded in Cheyney, Pennsylvania, in 1837. It was followed by two other institutions--Lincoln University, Pennsylvania (1854), and Wilberforce University, Ohio (1856). Although these institutions were called "universities" or "institutes" because of their founding, their mission was primarily the elementary and secondary schooling of Africans who had no previous education. It was not until the early 1900s that HBCU institutions began to offer post-secondary level education for these students (US Department of Education, 1991).

Public support for higher education of African American students was reflected in the enactment of the Second Morrill Act in 1890 following the Civil War. The Act required states with racially segregated public higher education systems to provide a land-grant institution for African students whenever a land-grant was established for

traditional based students. After the passage of the Morrill Act, public land-grants set aside specifically for African Americans were established in each of the southern and border states. As a result, some new public institutions were founded, and a number of formerly private schools for African Americans came under public control. In time, 16 African American institutions were designated as land-grant colleges. These institutions offered courses in agricultural, mechanical, and industrial correspondence, but few offered college-level courses (US Department of Education, 1991).

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* established a "separate but equal" doctrine for public education. In establishing racially segregated public schools, elementary and secondary, *Plessy* also encouraged African American colleges to focus on training instructors for their programs. At the same time, the expansion of these schools reduced the need for college preparatory instruction (US Department of Education, 1991).

By 1953, greater than 32,000 students were enrolled in private African American institutions such as Fisk University, Hampton Institute, Howard University, Meharry Medical College, Morehouse College, Spelman College and Tuskegee Institute, some of the more prominent HBCU campuses in America, as well as a host of smaller black colleges located in southern states.

In the same year, over 43,000 African Americans were enrolled in public colleges and universities. HBCU graduate program enrollment grew to 3,200 students by the year's end. These institutions mutually served the important mission of providing a college education for teachers, ministers, lawyers, and doctors throughout the African American population.

Many studies have been conducted (Allen, 1986; Cureton, 2003; Littleton, 2003; Wallace, 1991; Williamson, 1999) in an attempt to identify elements (i.e. retention, self-esteem, and social adjustment) and find remedies to address problems that underrepresented students face in college. The transition from high school to a traditional college campus with little or no African American representation can be difficult for many of these students to face. The lack of sufficient representation in numbers, coupled with limited administrative support and resources, adds to the difficult process of adjusting to college life. Administrative officials need to lend encouragement to African American students transitioning to their college or university, as well as ensure them that they have their full support during this difficult period in their lives.

According to Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) adjusting to the campus climate is one of those difficulties: The academic, social, and psychological work inhabited by most non [African American] campuses are substantially different in almost every aspect from those of their ... peers. Therefore, most African American students entering a traditional campus will face obstacles that other ethnic groups are not likely to face under the same or similar circumstances.

Examining information previously published on the difficulties of African American student's transitioning into colleges and universities, this research will focus on African American females attending an HBCU. In collecting information for this study, the researcher found that there was a limited amount of literature published on African American females attending college.

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate support services for African American females at an HBCU. The Stufflebeam's Context Input CIPP model

will be used to evaluate the program which is the focus of this study. The first two phases of this study, "Context" and "Input," will be used to develop and evaluate student support services targeting African American females for implementation at an HBCU. The "Context" phase of the evaluation will identify the necessary support services that are most likely to promote social acceptance and academic success among African American females attending an HBCU.

The "Input" phase will review the resources that are available at the program site to determine if there are barriers that discourage or prohibit voluntary participation in support services offered to students in this program. Phase 3 evaluates the components of the process to determine the overall effectiveness of the program. The final product will test and evaluate the success rate of each support service to determine if the intended goals are being met.

Significance of Research. Once a student has made that all important decision to attend college, Student Support Services has the potential to make a direct impact on their academic success or failure, and even the career field they ultimately choose. However, for a student who decides to attend a HBCU, there may be a dearth of such services dependent on the institution the student opts to attend. The findings in this study will allow for greater research in this area in order to identify other support services for African American females that may assist them in making a smooth, enjoyable transition to an HBCU.

Research Questions

1. What academic, personal, and social needs do AAFS have that may affect their academic success?

2. What services should the program provide?

3. What support services are there currently available at the program site?

4. How did the program meet your social, academic and personal needs?

Definition of Terms

Academic Support Services. This term refers a program implemented at institutions of higher education to ensure satisfactory academic progress.

Academic Success. For the purpose of this study, *Academic Success* is used to identify the progress of students meeting the necessary requirements as an enrolled college student.

African American Female Students (AAFS). This term refers to a group identified as descendants of Africans who are American citizens.

Enculturation. This term refers to the passing of family values and practices from one generation to the next.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCU's. These are institutions of higher education founded with the expressed purpose of providing increased educational opportunities for students of color.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction. There is a limited amount of research directed toward the study of African American females attending HBCUs. The scope of this research draws connections closely associated to research conducted by Pinkston (2004). Pinkston's research highlights the different support services available to students on college campuses throughout America.

Upon entering college, students inevitably face many adversities and are forced to adjust and adapt to a new environment and way of life. Although adjustment will take place throughout a college student's academic career, some of these adjustments will be more complicated and uncomfortable than others (Allen, 1986; Cureton, 2003). Most African American college students share an experience unique unto themselves and much different than the experience of students of other racial and ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Caucasian, Indian, Hispanic, etc.) For instance, take Caucasian females on traditional college campuses. There is a perception among other ethnic female groups that Caucasian females are received with open arms by campus administrators, while other students are left to fend for themselves.

The moment Caucasian students walk onto a college campus they are presented with an entourage of supporters who provide them with essential information (e.g. who runs the school, the people to contact in troubled times, and where to go when in need of financial advice and support). The power and social structure of the school is made crystal clear to these privileged few. This privileged status can be seen many times in the demographics of the student body, teachers and faculty of the school. These visual images are said to make African American females feel unwelcome, isolated, and

dejected (Jackson, 1998).

The Need for Support Services. African American females often feel uncomfortable in traditional college settings because of the color of their skin. Given this country's history of racial discrimination and gender inequity, it becomes almost inevitable that the difference in skin color can, and in many cases does, play a major role in how African American females are treated as opposed to their fellow college students. In fact, African American feminists have made light of the triad of oppression—racial, economic and gender—faced by African American women and other women of color. Students of color may tend to feel a degree of isolation that they each share with one another through members-only social groups and on-campus gatherings with other people of color. African American females in particular often view their race as a source of strength and unity when attending traditional colleges and universities. These colleges and universities rarely have an abundance of people of color attending their school, therefore making it difficult for African American females in their attempts to build social unity and connectivity (Alemán- Martínez, 2000; Jackson, 1998; Littleton, 2003). As a result, African American females are forced to make rapid adjustments to their environment.

African American females who become isolated on traditional college campuses are often forced to find other ways to cope with issues of diversity in numbers, many times at the expense of their own identity (Alemán- Martínez, 2000; Jackson, 1998). Isolation often takes place in the classrooms where African American females are frequently perceived as being extremely vocal about issues that they face while on campus. The classroom becomes, in effect, a court of last resort to a number of African

American females who feel that their voice is lost or comprised. Contrary to that of their Caucasian counterparts, African American females often find no solace in their numbers at traditional colleges, but experience comfort only through their skin color. On the contrary, Caucasian females are made to feel relaxed in this environment because of the comfort they experience in their numbers.

It is important that every individual be entitled the opportunity to attain a quality education. HBCU campuses admit undergraduate candidates from all walks of life, and from numerous places within the United States and abroad. While some of these individuals come well prepared to face the rigors of college life, making the transition from high school to college look like a seemly flawless process, many others, primarily inner-city youth, find the transition difficult and require a significant degree of remedial and developmental assistance. Of course, these students frequently turn to one another or to a faculty member for help with issues concerning their academic progress. These students, and others enrolled in an institution of higher learning, should be provided with access to support services that meet their needs.

According to Pinkston (2004), the needs of adult college students age 25 and older, and the support services that promote achievement and retention of these individual, warrants the need for boarder and more comprehensive research of this topic.

Much of the focus of this research will be on students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities. Close attention will be directed towards four types of academic needs that must be addressed in order to facilitate a learning environment: general understanding, basic skills, self-knowledge, and awareness. Additionally, this study will focus on some aspects of the adult student's social and nonacademic, or personal needs.

Because adult students are returning to college in record numbers, this study will examine components of student support services to determine how to best design them to fit the needs of these students.

Pinkston's literature also addresses adult students who participate in support programs and their rate of academic achievement and retention. Additional topics addressed in the author's literature include: types of barriers to adult student's participation in higher education; skills possessed by adults who have learned how to learn; and ways to serve adult students through support groups.

According to Ogbu (1981), African Americans have historically had limited access to opportunities and resources to higher education. However, this group as a whole has remained resilient despite being faced with racism, oppression, and poverty. The resilience of African Americans can be attributed to their religious beliefs, family bond, work ethics and educational ambitions.

African American culture promotes family structure, individual development, economics and social interactions. In a process referred to as enculturation, the cultural values and practices of families are transmitted from one generation to the next. It is through experiences, ethical teachings, modeling, and interactions with proximal processes, that these values and practices are transmitted. As a result, African American children learn self-esteem and autonomy as they develop into mature adults.

Johnson and Exum's (1998) review of common emotional and developmental challenges faced by female college students suggest that these challenges can be addressed through programs that stimulate the student's psychological growth and maturity. Historically, women in America have been wrongfully labeled based on their

gender. The burden that this created psychologically is difficult for many women to overcome.

Thomas (2002) examines motivators, obstacles, and support systems for women who are returning to college. The results indicate that the women are excited about the prospect of returning to college. They generally reported increases in self-confidence but viewed internal conflict as one of their major obstacles. Some barriers are particularly problematic for African American women who are returning to school. Of the barriers these students face, financial constraints and inadequate support systems are viewed as the most troublesome.

Thomas goes on to recommend ways to enhance women's experiences as they return to school, many for the fist time since high school, to complete their college degree. Juggling school and family is particularly challenging for women returning to college. Studies indicate that women have a tougher time balancing school and family than men, primarily because of their dual roles within their household (e.g. mother, wife manager, etc.). These roles significantly influence personal, vocational, and educational aspirations of women. In fact, more women over age 25 have sought to broaden their opportunities for personal and professional growth by returning to college. As older women become more visible on college campuses, they will undoubtedly play a prominent role in how undergraduate students are defined and how academic and support services are rendered.

Cross (1981) identified two major categories of barriers faced by older women returning to higher education: (a) situational barriers and (b) dispositional (psychosocial) barriers. Damas, Kuperminc and Sellers (1997) study provides a descriptive analysis of

four areas of African American women athletes' college life experiences: academic performance, alienation and abuse, and perceived social advantage.

Studies of the life experiences of African American female athletes are virtually nonexistent. Although African American female athletes are included in sample studies that focus on competitive sports, these studies seldom highlight the educational ambitions of African American female athletes.

Johnson and Newman (1998) focus on several common emotional and developmental challenges faced by African American female college students. The author suggests that these challenges can be addressed through programs that promote the psychological growth of these students. Johnson and Newman presented a cognitive development intervention strategy designed to promote healthy ego identity and development among African American female college students.

Dating provides another challenge for African American women. Hayes (1993) found that although the women established themselves as scholars in academic settings, they were concerned about establishing social relationships with young African American men. Similarly, these females were concerned about the way African American men perceived and treated them because of their college connection. In addition, African American women often express feelings of resentment about having to compete with women who are not African American. Concerns about acceptance, appearance, assertiveness, and external affirmation seem to be the driving force behind the student's feelings.

Collins (1990) explored the communicative process of African American women as they go about their every day lives. Attention was focused on providing a space where

African American women could describe their daily life experiences with one another from a cultural prospective. More specifically, Collins research centered on generating insight into two specific research questions: How African American women describe their communication with others and what communicative practices are enacted within their everyday encounters.

Dagley and Lyn, Howe, and Phelps (2001) concerned themselves with the encouragement and ethnicity of African American students attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and traditional institutions. Results indicated a positive relationship between ethnicity and pride and the view of others among the HBCU group. It also showed a positive relationship between ethnicity and pride and the encouragement scale for the traditional group. Ethnic worry was negatively correlated with the encouragement scale for both groups.

Lewis and Hamrick (2000) conducted a similar study that examined identity development and the involvement of urban African American women during their first year of college. The study found that many African American women sacrificed their academics for social acceptance within their communities. This study is a valuable tool for gaining knowledge of friendships African American women share in college, and how they endure the hardships that they face while on campus.

Students should feel welcome and supported on their college campus. If they do not feel welcomed, then adjustment to college life becomes difficult. As a result, some African American women find it extremely difficult to adjust to college life. A lack of role models (Allen, 1992; Littleton, 2003) further complicates the lives of these students. Littleton (2000) states that most African American females did not feel they had a black

female role model at their institution. These same students indicated that they, on the other hand, could turn to African American coaches for guidance and mentoring. It is for this reason that African American female non-athletes felt that they had a decreased chance of surviving a traditional college than they did an HBCU. The necessity to be conscious of their race and the role it plays in their college experience further exacerbates the problems many African American females face on traditional college campuses.

Jackson (1998) discusses the need for African Americans to fit in and be accepted by their community. The need to always be racially conscious in every decision they make forced these women to examine life from two standpoints at all times. In order to affirm their race, African American women felt a need to isolate themselves on campus. This feeling of isolation occurred more often in the classroom then any other place on campus.

Aleman Martinez (2000) states that "attending a [traditional] college means that they will often find themselves engaged in combative and defensive talk with [Caucasians] about racial and/or ethnic matters" (p. 141). Martinez explains that the pain and adversity that African American females often face in academic classrooms may be due to their low numbers in the classroom. Therefore, African American women on these campuses face many hardships that ultimately affect the rate they adjust to college life. Thus, it is important that these aspects be examined to develop a better understanding of African American women and how they adjust to traditional, as well as HBCU, college campuses.

It is valuable to look at the factors that affect African American women on traditional college campuses. Of the factors mentioned, friendships and breaking down

racial barriers seem to be the most important amongst African American students. Similarly, it is important to look at how these factors directly impact the African American female student population.

It appears that African American women are being forced to face many unnecessary hardships when attending traditional college campuses. Many of these hardships are the direct result of the lack of role models, academic advising and personal consultation. As a result, African American women are forced to turn to other women of color for these valuable tools, which may be seen as a good idea to some, and a bad idea to others.

According to Bliss, Bonham, and Boylan (1993), tutoring has consistently been found to have a positive impact on persistence and graduation, higher grades in courses for which tutoring was received, completion rates for courses in which tutoring or academic support was received, and in student attitudes toward instruction. Social problems such as poor interpersonal skills, low self-esteem, and financial difficulties are challenges that most students face during the first year.

Two variables, student characteristics and institutional characteristics, will affect any student's performance at a college or university. According to Tinto (1993), there must be a reasonable fit between the student's background, expectations, and abilities, and the institution's structure and processes for positive outcomes to occur. Early approaches for the improvement of college retention and graduation rates were based to a large degree on study skills and classes and development courses. Retention programs tended to focus on a single aspect of the college retention and graduation problem, rather than from using a holistic approach in order to satisfy basic human needs. The major

assumption was that if the deficit was eliminated, the student would do well.

Unfortunately as most studies have concluded these programs that only focus on a single aspect of the individual (student) has been generally ineffective, (Richardson & Skinner, 1990). In addition to traditional academic programs operating independently of academic departments, Rutgers University established a Gateway Program. The Gateway Program consists of faculty from ten academic departments which use alternative methods of instruction, group work, and one-on-one interactions with students. One-on-one interaction is very important to the success of the program. Gateway instructors integrated effective study strategies, reading techniques and note taking skills into their classroom activities.

Financial pressure on colleges and universities are major incentives to increase their retention rates by effectively providing quality services to assist with the holistic needs of students. Jones and Watson (1990) reports that academic support services are viable components designed to ensure college success for all students within institutions of higher education. In addition, Jones and Watson further discusses that institutions of higher learning must be responsible for developing strategies that will insure college success for at-risk students. Jones and Watson also reports that the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) reported that the nation bears the fundamental responsibility for ensuring that all of its citizens receive opportunities in all aspects of their lives and that education is the vehicle to ensure academic success (Younct, 1989).

Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham (1997) conducted a study drawing a sample of institutions from over 3,000 U.S. colleges and universities. Using a circular, systematic sampling procedure, they selected 160 institutions by institutional type and geographical

region to insure effective representation. The following factors were associated with student success: presence of centralized academic support program structure; presence of the mandatory assessment of students; availability of tutorial services; availability of advising/counseling services; and the presence of some means of program evaluation.

College assistance programs (tutoring, counseling) have been fixtures for institutions of higher education for many years. Reports indicate that college assistance programs such as tutoring and counseling prepare students for post secondary education (Brubacher & Rudy, 1986) and prepares all students to be academically successful towards degree completion.

According to Solomon and Solomon (1993), all students should be allowed access to higher education. Solomon and Solomon also report that there are many problems that under-prepared and at-risk students face. Examples of those problems associated with under-prepared and at-risk students includes poor study habits, low self-esteem and self-confidence, inadequate college preparation, financial problems, lack of decision-making skills, inadequate career advising, poor interpersonal skills and lack of social integration into the college (NCEOA Journal, 1995).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction. This research employed the Context, Input Process and Product (CIPP) model to evaluate the support services program at an HBCU site. The CIPP model was used to collect and analyze data from individuals participating in this study to determine the type(s) of support services that they felt were needed to enhance the academic success rate of AAFS attending a HBCU. This study examined the support services that are currently in place at an HBCU to determine their academic success rate on African American females now attending this HBCU. Additionally, this study evaluated a support service, Women's Resources Assistance Program (WRAP), as well as reviewed its implementation throughout parts of the HBCU campus to examine the current results or rate of success.

The participants of this study included 30 AAFS. These individuals took part in a survey, via interview form, designed to answer the 4 research questions posed in this study. In addition to these 30 participants, 200 students attending the HBCU were given a survey questionnaire. The information collected during the survey was analyzed and the results posted in Chapter 4 of this study.

The CIPP Evaluation Model. CIPP is a well-recognized decision-facilitation evaluation model. The CIPP model, originated by Fabirl Stufflebeam and Egon Guba (Popham, 1975), and refined by Stufflebeam, is comprised of four types of evaluation: Context Evaluation, Input Evaluation, Process Evaluation, and Product Evaluation.

The CIPP Definition of Evaluation. The CIPP evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives. Stufflebeam points out that "since evaluation is performed in the service of decision

making, it should emphasize the provision of information useful to those who must make decisions. Because evaluation is a continuing and cyclic process, it must be implemented as a systematic program." Stufflebeam believes that the four steps involved in the evaluation process are technical activities, or implementations carried out by the evaluator (Popham, 1975).

Stufflebeam (1975) further describes the three steps in the CIPP evaluation process:

1. Delineating refers to the focusing of informative requirements and explicating.

2. Obtaining refers to the collection, organization, and analysis of information using technical procedures such as measurement and statistic and;

3. Providing refers to the synthesizing of information so that it will be optimally useful for purposes of the evaluation.

Types of Evaluation. The Context Evaluation provide a rationale for the determination of educational objectives. In the Context Evaluation phase of this study, the research identified problems associated with WRAP as well as defined the support services students needed most in this type of educational setting. The research identified the goals and specific objectives of the WRAP program.

The Input Evaluation provide information about the resources available to achieve the objectives of the WRAP program. The Input Evaluation identified the available capabilities of the WRAP program. It determined appropriate strategies based on the college's current capabilities.

The Process Evaluation phase examined the implementation process of the WRAP program. The purpose of Process Evaluation was to identify any deficiencies in the procedural design, particularly in the planning phase of the WRAP program. In the

Process Evaluation, the research identified procedural events and activities as well as any deficiencies in the program's design.

The Product Evaluation measured and interpreted the credentials of the WRAP program. The product evaluation accessed whether the program goals are attained.

Evaluation Design for WRAP. The Context Evaluation phase of the WRAP program gauged the academic, personal and social needs of AAFS as well as their academic success rates while engaged in WRAP. In addition to evaluating WRAP, this study included an extensive literature review to determine what services best meet the current needs of AAFS.

The Input Evaluation gauged the structure of the program, information on the resources available and the most appropriate strategies to use to insure success. Likewise, the Comprehensive Input Evaluation phase of this study reviewed data from an HBCU site to determine the components of programs that are currently available. Prior to introducing changes to the program, interviews were conducted with 30 students and 6 HBCU personnel. These interviews were meant to provide additional information on the needs of African American females engaged in the program. Once the interviews were completed and the data was collected, a gap analysis was conducted to determine what support services were needed.

Administrators at a similar HBCU campus were interviewed as subject matter experts to verify information about support services that have been successful at their school. The interviews assisted the researcher in providing additional information on the components of these successful support services. The Process Evaluation phase took place during the implementation of the program. Within a month of implementing

changes in the program, a formal assessment was conducted to determine if the program met the needs of the students. A subsequent assessment was conducted using interview data collected from a focus group of participants to gain further insight into the quality of the program. In all, 30 participants took part in this portion of the study.

In the second month of the implementation process, an additional set of focus group interviews with participants who were not fully participating in the program was conducted to determine how they felt about the quality of the services being provided. Interviews with this group allowed for changes to be made rapidly to the support services that were not deemed beneficial to the students.

The Product Evaluation was conducted at the end of the semester in which the interviews were concluded. The evaluation assisted in determining if the program should be continued in its current state or further revised. Another focus group of female students who participated in the program was assembled and students were interviewed. The purpose of this group was to determine if further changes were needed. Seventy-five percent of the participants must support the services being provided in order for the changes to be implemented. The academic records of these students were used to help determine the success rate of the participants taking part in this study.

Participants and Procedures. In order to participate in the study, participants had to be at least 18 years old, currently attending an HBCU and willing to participate voluntarily in the study. All of the participants met the eligibility requirements. There were 30 female students recruited for the WRAP survey portion of this study. Additionally, 200 participants were issued a questionnaire consisting of 11 closed-ended questions (see Appendix A) to gauge their individual attitude towards WRAP at an

HBCU. The questionnaires were issued to individuals with a letter of participation. Each participant received instructions on how to fill out the survey prior to its issuance.

The results of the questionnaire were ranked in order according to the number of participants who selected the response. The order ranking was based on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Each question was used to gauge the participants' attitudes toward the effectiveness of WRAP. The results provided answers to the research questions.

Interviews were also used as part of the data-collection process. Thirty participants took part in the interviews. Each participant was given an Informed Consent Form to sign prior to being issued an interview form (see Appendix B). The form asked 4 questions that were specifically designed to gain an understanding of the individual's overall opinion of WRAP. Unlike the questionnaire, the interview form contained open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on their responses.

Participants' Confidentiality. Several measures were taken to protect the confidentially of the participants in this study. For starters, participants were given a letter and number (i.e., P1, P2, P3, etc) designation to identify their responses to the interview questions. The letter and number combination uniquely identified the participant's response during the examination of the data without compromising her name, age, ethnicity, or gender. A list that contained the participants' names and the letter and number designations were placed in a secure location.

Data Collection Instruments. A qualitative research approach was used in this study. Questionnaires, interviews, and written materials (i.e., books, articles, etc.) were among the instruments used to collect the data for the study. Each source provided insight

into the participants overall opinion of WRAP. Additionally, each participant determined whether the program provided effective support services for African American females electing to attend an HBCU.

The questionnaire that was used in the survey followed the Likert scale design. This scale, developed by R. Likert in the 1920s (Hitchcock & Porter, n.d.), was used to gauge an individual's attitude about a particular topic or issue. Participant responses to the survey questionnaire were along the lines of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Charles & Mertler, 2002).

Standardized open-ended interview questions were used in this study. The questions were presented to the participants in the same manner throughout the sample. Each participant was encouraged to the start with Question 1 and work his or her way through to Question 5. This was suggested to keep the participants focused on answering one question at a time instead of answering them out of sequence.

Validity of Interviews. All participants, prior to being issued an interview form, signed a consent form indicating their voluntary participation in the study. This was done to show the sources that were used were authentic (Charles & Mertler, 2002). After participants signed the consent form, they were issued a survey and asked to complete it in its entirety. Each participant was allowed to complete the survey without interruption.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP), a support service program at an HBCU. Subjects chosen for the study were participants of WRAP. The results of the data are reported in this chapter.

Participants were asked 4 open-ended questions in an one-on-one interview setting. The interviews were conducted to determine the participants' attitudes towards WRAP at the HBCU. In addition to the interviews, a survey was used to collect information from participants in this study. The surveys were issued to the participants at the HBCU to determine their attitudes and opinions towards WRAP. The participants were asked to circle the responses on the questionnaire that best reflected their attitude toward the questions. The responses ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

Finding Related to Research Questions

Research Question 1. What academic, personal, and social needs did AAFS have that affected their academic success? Seventeen or 57% of WRAP participants revealed that financial support and childcare affected their academic success and progress at the HBCU. Five or 17% stated that childcare was critically important to their academic growth and would like to have childcare services offered at the college. Five or 17% stated that employment full-time or part-time does not provide them the opportunity to study or prepare for upcoming assignments.

One or 3% stated that there were no academic, personal, or social needs that affected their academic success at the college. Two or 7% stated that living off campus allows obtaining a college education to become more affordable. However, these same

students felt that many times transportation and housing expenses offset the savings they enjoyed while living off campus. One or 3% stated that academic support programs in the evenings should focus more on tutorial services in mathematics and English. One or 3% stated that support from family members was low and various hardships made the choice of re-enrollment difficult each semester. Finally, one or 3% of participants stated that there were no sufficient peer groups available on campus.

Research Question 2. What services should WRAP provide? Nineteen or 63% of program participants stated that WRAP should provide students with financial assistance as well as more scholarship opportunities. This attitude was a direct result of financial hardships experienced by the majority of the participants (non-traditional students). In responding to the question, these students criticized the college's lack of childcare assistance and family support structure. Five or 17% stated WRAP should provide an on-campus childcare service that allows students to attend classes during morning and evening sessions. Five or 17% stated that more on-campus jobs are needed to give students the opportunity to gain hands-on training in their field of study, while earning much needed compensation at the same time.

One or 3% of program participants stated that they would like to see more counselors available during the evening hours instead of the normal 8 to 5 schedule. One or 3% of the participants felt that tutors were needed in the areas of mathematics and English in order to increase the success rate of African American females at the HBCU. Finally, two or 7% of participants stated that a health program and on-campus infirmary would assist students without health insurance.

Research Question 3. What support services are currently available at the program

site? Twenty-four or 80% of participants stated that WRAP should assist students in preparing essays for scholarships. The same number of participants stated that WRAP should provide them with more health awareness seminars. Twenty-six or 87% stated that WRAP should provide peer group meeting rooms for participants of the program. Twenty-two or 74% of participants stated that they were utilizing the mentoring program and study rooms. Twenty-six or 87% stated that WRAP provided them with adequate transportation resources.

Research Question 4. How did the program meet your social, academic and personal needs? Thirty or 100% stated that participating in the peer groups and the mentoring program improved their academic development. Twenty-five or 83% stated that WRAP provided resources for scholarships. Twenty-six or 87% stated that WRAP provided resources for transportation. Twenty-eight or 93% participants stated that WRAP allowed the participants to address problems with the program staff about issues that affected their academic progress at the HBCU.

Summary. The findings of this survey suggest that the services provided by WRAP did increase some of the students' grade point averages and helped to sustain a balanced retention rate. The program was meeting its stated goal of increasing the students' graduation rates at the institution. Additionally, WRAP assisted students in attaining higher academic grade point averages. WRAP participants also increased their self-awareness and felt less threatened by the challenges they faced as new students on an HBCU college campus. Table 1 reflects the participants' opinions of the available assistants, campus resources, schedule planning and job placement WRAP provided. Similarly, Table 2 reflects the participants' opinions of the academic goals, counseling

and services set by WRAP as well as their attitudes towards the WRAP center.

Table 1
Student's Overall Opinion of Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP) and Available Assistance,
Campus Resources, Schedule Planning and Job Placement

		Response				
Statement		Strongly				Strongly
Number	Statement	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
1	Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP) provides me with complete and accurate information when requested.	49	53	72	20	6
2	I feel like I can go to WRAP for help.	35	42	87	28	8
3	WRAP helps me better plan my schedule.	42	45	84	22	7
4	WRAP discusses potential job opportunities with me.	39	46	76	23	16

Table 2
Student's Overall Opinion of Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP) and Academic Goals,
Counseling, Services Provided and the WRAP Center

		Response				
Statement		Strongly				Strongly
number	Statement	agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	disagree
5	WRAP assist me in identifying my academic goals.	39	61	68	16	16
6	I am able to reach my WRAP counselor when necessary.	45	38	78	26	13
7	I am satisfied with the services that WRAP provides.	39	56	77	17	11
8	I am allowed to express my personal feelings in the WRAP center.	44	43	75	23	15

In response to the 11 survey statements, as well as the 4 interview questions, participants indicated that they were satisfied with the services offered by WRAP. Overall, a large majority of the participants believed that the services offered by WRAP were sufficient enough to ensure academic success.

One hundred or 50% of the participants felt that WRAP provides complete and accurate information when requested, and, according to survey findings, the participants have resources available to them at all times. Seventy-seven or 38% felt like they could go to WRAP for help, while eight-six or 43% felt that WRAP helped them better plan their academic and personal schedules. Eighty-five or 42% felt that WRAP discusses potential job opportunities and career options, and one hundred or 50% felt that WRAP assisted them in identifying their academic goals.

Eighty-three or 41% of participants felt that they were able to reach a WRAP counselor when necessary, while ninety-five or 48% indicated that they were satisfied with the services that WRAP provides. Eighty-seven or 43% felt that they were allowed to express personal feelings in the WRAP center.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction. The HBCU examined in this study was established in 1866. Located on Kings Road in the northwest sector of Jacksonville, Florida, this HBCU is positioned only minutes from the city's downtown business district. Teaching, research, and community outreach constitutes the foundation of this HBCU, along with its 837 students, 49% of which are female. The HBCU occupies approximately 50 acres and continues to expand, geographically, to meet increasing enrollment. Because of its rapid growth, this HBCU was highlighted in the *Florida Leader* magazine as "The Best of Florida Schools 2004 for the Biggest Growth for Private Colleges."

WRAP was established as a source of academic support for AAFS at the HBCU, many of whom might not have sought higher education without WRAP support. Although the male population attending the HBCU is greater than that of the female, the need for WRAP was justified because the males were shown to have a plethora of support services (i.e. Black Male Explorers and Tiger Brother Program's) already in place to assist them. Therefore, the WRAP program was not only warranted, but it was essential to African American females attending the HBCU.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of WRAP in contributing to the academic success of African American females attending the HBCU. The study sought to gauge the participant's attitude towards WRAP by surveying each of them using the interview form and questionnaires. The study included a total of 230 participants, all of whom were AAFS attending the HBCU. Prior to taking part in the study, all of the participants signed a consent form or was offered a letter of participation.

A sample group of the participants filled out a pretest questionnaire, as well as an

interview form, prior to the instruments being used to collect data for this study. Thirty participants conducted a sample one-on-one interview to gauge whether or not any revisions were needed to the questions on the interview form.

The questionnaire posed 11 closed-ended statements aimed at gauging the participant's level of participation in WRAP as well as their attitude about WRAP's effectiveness at the HBCU. The interview form asked 4 open-ended questions to determine how the participants felt about the support services offered by WRAP. The results were gathered and compared to data collected over a period of a year.

Context Evaluation. The researcher developed WRAP after extensive examination of freshmen students' academic records and finding that the majority of them were at or below a 2.0 grade point average (GPA). This was especially troubling since most of these students were considered high achievers at their high schools, and averaged well above a 3.0 GPA. The students expressed a need for services that were currently available through other HBCU support services and a need for some programs not offered (i.e. individualized counseling, peer mentoring and 24 hour financial assistance).

In addition, these students expressed the need for a program that would allow freshmen students to come together as a group and discuss issues that affected their everyday life. Financial assistance topped the list of issues of greatest concern to these students. The vast majority stated that they could use the support of other freshmen students experiencing similar problems to help them through their tough times. The biggest obstacle to establishing such a support group was creating a foundation that would support it. WRAP, in the researcher's opinion, was the perfect foundation.

Finally, the services provided by WRAP specifically address the concerns of

freshmen students at the HBCU. WRAP supplemented, if not replaced, many of the services that were currently offered by other struggling programs at the HBCU. In fact, several program leaders and advisors expressed their appreciation for the WRAP design and felt that it offered a true blueprint for future service at the HBCU.

Input Evaluation. The researcher examined the current services offered by the HBCU and determined that there was a void of services being provided. Of the services in greatest demand, financial assistance, childcare, scholarship assistance and supplemental income topped the list. There was limited funding to support these services for freshmen students which, in turn, created unnecessary financial hardships. Some examples included students having to choose between paying their tuition and buying school supplies or deciding whether to go to class or attend a minimum waged job off campus to earn extra money for food. Moreover, in some instances they had to determine whether to attend support services similar to that of WRAP as opposed to getting a second job to help support their families back home.

Additionally, a peer focus group was established for the purpose of discussing each of the support services offered by WRAP. The focus group included all the freshmen students primarily living on campus. Most of these students were from out-of-town and, therefore, had a vested interest in the success of WRAP. The students from out-of-town expressed the fact that they had little or no support in the city and could not afford to go back home without a college degree. The added pressure seemed to make WRAP a more attractive program for these students as opposed to those students who resided in the area. Nonetheless, both groups acknowledged that the success of WRAP and other similar programs were crucial to their success at the HBCU.

Process Evaluation. During the initial stage of the implementation process, the WRAP participants were asked to provide feedback of the services provided by the program. Some of the participants praised WRAP's financial services and its mentoring process to include individualized counseling and peer or group networking. There were a handful of participants that felt WRAP did not fulfill their needs as indicated in the introduction of the program. These students felt that the financial counseling was nothing more than a financial juggling act designed to make them think they were saving money when they were not. For the most part, these students also sharply criticized the mentoring services stating that the mentors acted more like parents than instructors or friends. This made it difficult for many of them to open up to their mentors throughout the process therefore rendering the mentoring services ineffective.

Last but not least, some students felt that the peer groups were more of a show than a help group. It was said that some of the participants were reluctant to discuss their displeasure for WRAP in front of the program counselors. The complaints were centered on the lack of confidence in the facilitators of the program as well as the services that it provided. Although the number of students expressing their dislike for the program was small, the problems they highlighted were huge and extensive. A great deal of monitoring in the areas mentioned will be needed in the future if WRAP is to become a complete success.

Impact Evaluation. In response to statements three through 11 of the survey, as well as the 4 interview questions, participants indicated that they were satisfied with the services offered by WRAP. Overall, a large majority of the participants believed that the services offered by WRAP were sufficient enough to ensure academic success. Eighty-

four percent of the participants felt that WRAP provided complete and accurate information when requested. According to survey findings, the participants have resources available to them at all times.

Ninety-nine percent felt like they could go to WRAP for help, while 96% felt that WRAP helped them better plan their academic and personal schedule. Eighty-eight percent felt that WRAP discusses potential job opportunities and career options, and 79% felt that WRAP assisted them in identifying their academic goals. Ninety-five percent of participants felt that they were able to reach a WRAP counselor when necessary, while 89% indicated that they were satisfied with the services that WRAP provided. Ninety-three percent felt that they were allowed to express personal feelings in the WRAP center.

The data clearly shows that WRAP services were successful in providing the added boost that the freshmen students need to become successful at the HBCU. A great percentage felt that the programs offered were adequate and met all their needs in the first year at the HBCU. Likewise, the students acknowledged, via recorded data, that the services increased their chance of academic success. It was clear towards the end of the survey that WRAP had earned its place among the programs most desired by the participants at the college. The success of WRAP amongst the participants leads one to wonder if the data can be improved upon. And if so, what changes would be required in order to move the program forward? These and other questions remain unanswered and should be examined in greater detail.

Product Evaluation. The success of WRAP was seen as a monumental accomplishment in the sense that it actually helped to improve the academic success of

most of its participants. The program was not a 100% success, but that only leaves room for the program's improvement. If the program was to be adopted, it would have to undergo some major modifications. For one, it would have to increase its resources to cover a larger group for a greater period of time, perhaps a second year. Also, it would have of be evaluated more extensively to ensure that all participants benefit equally from the services that the program provides. Finally, the services that were deemed ineffective by the participants will have to be discontinued or substituted for new and improved services. Nothing could be left to chance if the program was to be used on a campus-wide scale.

As the numbers indicate in the Impact Evaluation section of this study, most, if not all, of the services were successful in their goals. Some faired better than others, but the overall end result was the same—academic success across the board.

Future Research. Future research of this topic is recommended. Since the majority of the participants surveyed believed that WRAP was needed at the HBCU, it is important that the services used by the participants are consistently evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the program. Future research should focus on project funding because of the number of participants needing financial support (i.e. childcare or personalized services).

Survey information in this study covered the attitudes and opinions of participants involved in WRAP at the HBCU. All of the suggestions provided by the participants offered ways to strengthen WRAP. However, many of the recommendations will need the support of upper-level administrative officials, as well as members from the Office of Sponsored Programs and Grants. Any future changes in services offered by WRAP will

not take place without the buy-in of these individuals.

A campus wide committee of support programs directors and coordinators should be formed to examine the effects of WRAP. This examination should focus on the recommendations given by the participants to improve the support program for AAFS. A campus wide committee should also frequently examine the attitudes of WRAP personnel and participants who are directly involved in the process. Future research must also examine the impact that WRAP would have on AAFS at the HBCU, and ways to make the services available to all female students throughout the campus. WRAP was intended to be a support service for female students needing one-on-one personalized services.

Summary. WRAP met its goals of increasing retention and ensuring academic success for AAFS at the HBCU. The following objectives were attained as a result of WRAP: African American females maintain a GPA of 2.0 or greater; the majority of participants' personal, academic, and financial needs were met; and academic counseling offered via WRAP workshops prove effective at increasing the participants' overall academic success rate. WRAP is critically needed at the HBCU. Most AAFS insist that they are provided with the necessary academic support services such as WRAP.

This project provided the necessary research to improve the support services offered at the HBCU. Many of the participants demonstrated successful academic progress throughout the study. The study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the support services for AAFS attending a Historically Black College.

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Appendix A

WRAP Survey Instrument

Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP) has developed the following evaluation in order to learn about your opinions of and experiences with student support services. Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP) care deeply about the quality of support services and your feedback will help us provide more effective services to students. As you consider the following questions, please focus on your most recent academic advising experience. While the survey will only take about 10 minutes to complete, you may add additional comments in the appropriate areas after each question and at the end of the survey. Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.

1. What is your major? _____
2. What is your current GPA? _____
3. Women's Resource Assistance Program (WRAP) provides me with complete and accurate information when I request it.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

4. I feel like I can go to WRAP for help.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

5. WRAP helps to connect me with campus resources.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

6. WRAP helps me plan my schedule.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

7. WRAP discusses potential job opportunities with me.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

8. WRAP assists me in identifying academic goals.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

9. I am able to reach my WRAP Counselor when necessary.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

10. I am satisfied with the services that WRAP provides.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

11. I am allowed to express my personal feelings in the WRAP center.

   Strongly Agree○   **Agree**○   **Neutral**○   **Disagree**○   **Strongly Disagree**○

Appendix B

Interview Form

Interview Survey Form

1. What academic, personal and social needs do African American female students

    (AAFS) have that may affect their academic success?

2. What services should WRAP provide?

3. What support services are currently available at the program site?

4. How did the program meet the identified social, academic and personal needs?