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The Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program as viewed by underrepresented freshmen students

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THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND/MAXIMIZING ACADEMIC POTENTIAL (EOF/MAP) PROGRAM AS VIEWED BY UNDERREPRESENTED FRESHMEN STUDENTS

by
Lara E. Sader

A Thesis

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Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Said Diab and to my children Jason and Justin

Acknowledgments

I would like to recognize my husband, Said Diab, who has supported me and helped me overcome all the difficulties and the stressful moments during the last two years. While I was busy studying and working, Said was always there for our two lovely boys, Jason and Justin, who gave me the reason and strength to proceed.

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Abstract

Lara E. Sader

THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND/MAXIMIZING ACADEMIC
POTENTIAL (EOF/MAP) PROGRAM AS VIEWED BY UNDERREPRESENTED
FRESHMEN STUDENTS
2012/13
Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to investigate the Educational Opportunity
Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program through the attitudes of
freshmen students toward the services provided and their perceptions of the benefits in
regards to social skills, academic performance, and attainment in college. The study also
investigated students' suggestions to improve the program. This quantitative research
study explored institutional factors, socio economic characteristics, as well as pre-college
preparation (independent variables) and their relationships to EOF/MAP student success
at a medium sized four-year university. This study utilized a survey instrument to
collect data from EOF/MAP freshman during the spring of 2013. Data were analyzed
to investigate students' satisfaction with the program. The findings suggested that the
students were gratified with the program, but they also offered some recommendations
for improvement. The results of the study should help inform administrators about the
unique needs of target students in order to develop successful interventions to maximize
access, retention, and success in higher education. Such understanding is essential if the
university is willing to build stronger bridges and pipelines between the K-12 school
system and the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential
(EOF/MAP) program.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The United States of America is witnessing tremendous changes in its social fabric. The demographic shifts and the economic changes are continuously challenging the future of our nation. Policy makers, legislators, and educators should not deny the importance of these factors. More resources should be dedicated to attract students from minority groups, from low socio-economic status (SES), and underrepresented populations. Also required are new strategies to improve the education system starting at the K-12 level and raising a college going culture within schools. Making higher education accessible to a wider student population becomes an urgent national necessity for the United States to regain its leading place among the industrialized countries. Educational researchers started to point out the importance of diversity in the student body, faculty, and administrators (Hurtado, 1992). Colleges and universities started as well to implant these principles within their missions' statements and link them to learning outcomes.

Many children around the U.S. believe the stereotype about the affordability of colleges and universities; they believe that higher education is for rich people only and they view colleges and universities as a dream beyond their reach and can never come true. Thus, they take themselves out of their considerations so early in their lives. These children may not be aware of the various scholarships, grants, financial aid, and financial support that colleges and universities offer. Moreover, institutions are bound to

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organizing outreach programs and building stronger relationships with the K-12 system, and they should emphasize more efficient strategies such as effective counseling, need-based financial aid, and better communication and outreach to students regarding costs, educational, and career outcomes (Carnevale & Strohl, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

A person's zip code has a lot of implications in life; it reflects economic status, education attainment, and consequently one's career path. In short, a zip code can shape an individual's future. According to the Postsecondary Education Opportunity (2010), only 7.3% of students from families earning less than $38,000 a year earn a Bachelor's degree by age 24. In 2010, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned almost twice as much as those with only a high school degree. In addition, as of September 2012, the national unemployment rate for people 25 years and older was 8.2% for those with high school degree, whereas the unemployment rate was only 4% for those with bachelor's degree and higher (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Parents' level of education is another indicator of their children's attainment in school and their perceptions about higher education (postsecondary.org). Private organizations, state, and federal agencies are spending a substantial amount of time and money to attract minority students and those from lower income families to aspire to post-secondary education. They also implemented a variety of college preparation program, outreach programs, and financial assistance program to increase these students' access to higher education. Yet, the college attendance rate for these students remains substantially below their affluent, middle and upper-income families (McDonough, 1997)

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the pre-college experiences of students from low income families and from minority groups, and how the lack of financial, social, and cultural support influences their decision to go to college. The study investigated specifically the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program offered at Rowan University as a means to elaborate on the experiences of disadvantaged and at-risk students. The study investigated the program through the attitudes of freshmen students toward the services provided and their perceptions of the benefits in regards to social skills, academic performance, and attainment in college. The study also investigated students' suggestions to improve the program.

Significance of the Study

The services of the EOF/MAP program are not limited to students from specific ethnicity, race, and cultural backgrounds. Thus, in order to be eligible for funds, students must demonstrate economic hardship and educational disadvantaged background; family income should fall within the established income eligibility criteria, and at least one parent should not have a post-secondary education degree.

According to Rowan University 2012 annual report, the ethnic diversity of the full-time, first-time freshmen by race and ethnicity was as follow: 76% White, 9% Black, 8% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 1% Native American, and 2% not reported. Almost 10% of the total full-time, first-time freshmen were admitted under the EOF/MAP programs. These students were divided by race and ethnicity as follow: 15% White, 45% Black, 27% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 3% not reported. These data reflect two facts: the first is the

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wide gap between White and minority freshmen first time full-time students; the second is that Black and Hispanic students are more likely to enroll under the EOF program than their White counterparts.

Studying the EOF/MAP program from minority students' perspectives helps inform administrators about the special needs of target students in order to develop successful interventions to maximize access, retention, and success in higher education. Such understanding is also essential if the university is willing to build stronger bridges and pipelines between the K-12 school system and the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program.

Understanding the attitudes of selected students toward the services provided by the EOF/MAP program should help administrators identify strategies to increase students' awareness about financial support available, social skills, and academic performance needed to succeed in college.

Assumptions and Limitations

Many studies have focused on underrepresented and low-SES students' representation in higher education. It was assumed that precollege experiences and students/campus interaction are indicators of students' performance in colleges and universities. The EOF/MAP offered at Rowan University is seen as a useful opportunity for underrepresented students who are considering pursuing their post-secondary education; students are required to attend a six-week residential summer orientation session on campus through a program called Pre-College Institute (PCI). The PCI program is designed to help students in their transition to college life by offering academic, interpersonal, residential, and leadership assistance. However, the connection

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between this program and early intervention programs at the K-12 level was not well defined.

It is assumed that a stronger education system is necessary for promoting democracy and social equality. College education is viewed as an important tool for a brighter future, higher salaries, and a better quality of life. Hence, the demographic changes in our society presents the assumption that minority, underrepresented, and low-SES students access to higher education is the key to improving the nation's economy and help the United States of America recapture its rank in a global economy. Moreover, creating pipelines between the K-12 system and post-secondary institutions becomes a priority for these students to increase their chances to succeed in postsecondary education, obtain a degree, and increase their earning potential in life.

These assumptions explain the efforts of public and private policy makers, and the different programs that were implemented to increase access to higher education. Although the study provides general understandings of the difficulties underrepresented students might face in their college planning and the uncertainty they might experience, it fails to deliver a complete framework to ease the process for the struggling students. Policy makers and educators still have much to explore and research in order to promote equality in the education system.

Some limitations that might have affected this study include the subjects were students admitted to Rowan University through the EOF/MAP program. The students were all freshmen in their first year returning to their second semester in spring 2013. They were all from minority and underrepresented groups; these factors might have influenced the way the subjects responded to the survey questions in the study. A final

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limitation involved the probability of potential bias resulting from the status and characteristics of the researcher who is an immigrant, second language speaker, and currently an intern in the graduate admissions office.

Operational Definitions

The following definitions have specific meaning to the study:

1. Attitude: The feeling and thoughts of minority students as expressed in this study.

2. College: Is a term used to refer to Rowan University, a public post-secondary institution, located in Glassboro, New Jersey.

3. Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP): A preparatory program that provides access and assistance for students who lack financial support and academic preparation.

4. First generation students: Refers to students whose at least one parent that does not have post-secondary education.

5. Low Socio-Economic Status (low-SES): Refers to the students who fit under the eligibility scale of the EOF requirements.

6. Participants: Selected minority students enrolled at Rowan University through the EOF program during the spring 2013 semester who participated in the study.

7. Pre-college experiences: Refers to activities in which students participate while they are still in school and before they enroll in college.

8. Students at risk: Refers to first generation students in higher education who lack the academic preparation and those who are economically disadvantaged.

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9. Underrepresented and minority students: Terms used interchangeably to refer to African American, Hispanic, and other groups.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the impact of the social support and pre-college experiences on selected minority students and their decisions to attend Rowan University?

2. What are the attitudes of selected students toward the services provided by the EOF/MAP program?

3. What recommendations would the students enrolled through the EOF/MAP program suggest to improve the services?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of the literature relevant to this study. It outlines a brief history of minority students in higher education and scholarly findings related to improving students' access and success in college. This section also includes a review of the Educational Opportunity Fund program at Rowan University. Chapter III describes the methodology and procedures used in this study. It includes descriptions of the context of the study, the population and sample selection, the data collection instrument, the process used in gathering the data, and a brief description of how data were analyzed. Chapter IV presents the findings and results of the study and addresses the research questions posed in the first chapter. Chapter V includes a summary, discussion, conclusions, interpretation of the findings and their correspondence with the literature, and recommendations for practice and further research.

Chapter II

Literature Review

For the purpose of this study, the review of the literature focuses on a set of factors that influence underrepresented students in their transition from high school to college. The literature also examines some of the effective measures an institution can take to provide a welcoming environment for a more diverse student body, and the strategies that would maximize access, retention, and success for students at risk.

The United States is facing great challenges resulting from globalization and the demographic changes that result in a widely diverse society; people from different backgrounds and cultures do not share the same views, needs, and expectations. To overcome these challenges, colleges and universities should prepare students to achieve the cognitive, social, and democratic skills to participate in a diverse society. Yet, the achievement gap between middle-class White students and those from different racial and ethnic groups as well as those from lower socio economic status continues to challenge the education system banning a great portion of students from fulfilling their dreams. Students who do not have the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education will likely not have the opportunity for advancement in their life.

African American and Latino students are still underrepresented in colleges and universities. According to McDonough (1997), these students are more likely to come from lower income families, and thus college cost becomes one of their biggest concerns. They might not be aware of the various financial assistance programs, scholarships, and

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grants colleges and universities are offering to help them.

The achievement gap between White and minority students starts as early as kindergarten and continues to adulthood (Williams, 2011). Generally speaking, students who get off to a good start in elementary school have more chances to succeed in high school and college. Yet, a significant number of students leave high school unprepared for the rigors of higher education (Williams, 2011). A report from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU.org, 2012) looking at the issue of college readiness has concluded that "Education is like a pyramid: each level rests on what came before. Any weakness in a child's educational development jeopardizes all that follows, and gains made at an early age continue to benefit the child in future years" (¶ 3). AASCU institutions must work with their local communities to improve college readiness. The report- written by a dozen college presidents and released at the association's annual meeting- urges its member campuses to begin preparing students as early as preschool. Colleges should focus on areas with high concentrations of poverty, where children have the greatest disadvantages in academic preparation. Specifically, the report recommends that every member campus should be involved in: improving teacher-preparation programs, increasing the availability of dual-credit classes, aligning elementary and secondary curricula with college expectations, and giving high school reports on how their graduates are performing in college.

First generation college students and those from lower SES families depend on their schools to prepare them and inform them about the process of the

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college choice (McDonough, 1997). Unfortunately, these students attend disadvantaged schools, and thus they will not acquire the prerequisites for academic advancement. Determining the factors that cause the gap at the school level is the key to minimize disparities in our education system (Williams, 2011; aacsu.org, 2012). These disparities in the educational achievement are putting the United States on a downward trajectory, especially when compared with other developed and developing countries; significant resources are devoted to remedial education, and despite this, too many students are dropping without degrees but with significant debt.

This chapter provides a background and an overview of the history of minority students in higher education, a review of the theoretical and conceptual framework for this study, and a review of strategies, practices, and programs to address the problem. The literature review also includes research on the importance of the campus climate for student of colors. The review examines the barriers these students face and the factors that contribute to widening the achievement gap between White students and students of color. The review points out strategies and practices universities can use to improve access, retention and success for minority students. The review also examines the Educational Opportunity Funds Maximizing Academic Potentials (EOF/MAP) program offered at Rowan University to promote preparation, orientation, and academic support for first generation students, and for those who otherwise may face unique challenges in college due to economic, cultural, or educational circumstances.

The History of Minority Students in Higher Education

Colleges and universities in America suffered for decades the burden of discrimination, repulsion, and exclusion of various groups from the education system.

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The Supreme Court desegregation decision of 1954 in Brown v. Board of Education was a fundamental step toward reducing inequalities in schools (Wechsler, Goodchild, & Eisenmann, 2007). In this landmark case, the Supreme Court made segregation in schools unconstitutional.

The 1960s were a turning point; inequalities were followed by several protests, civil rights movements, and led to new legislations and acts such as the GI Bill, Civil Rights, and Affirmative Action. All these efforts have definitely contributed to improve the education system, giving access to women, Jewish, Gays, African Americans, and all other previously excluded groups (Wechsler et al., 2007). In the early 1970s, more efforts, public and private, were undertaken to increase college enrollment among minorities. In 1978, the *Bakke* case challenged race-based admissions procedures; the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Bakke, a student who claimed that the University of California's admissions process favored less academically qualified Black applicants over him. In this case, the Court stated that race is one of several factors employed in the admission process but it cannot be the sole or determining factor (Wechsler et al., 2007). The rollback of affirmative action admission policies at public colleges and universities has impacted the representation of African Americans and Latinos. In the mid-1980s, under the Reagan administration, affirmative action and other programs that aimed to assist minority students were opposed; the federal support for higher education was reduced and was substituted by student loans. These changes affected Black and other minority students who were more likely to come

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from low-income families, and thus the gap started to widen again between White students and students of color (Wechsler et al., 2007).

The changes in the student body composition became a challenge for higher education since universities were not yet prepared to deal with such diversity. Researchers began to study the effects of diversity in order to understand and explain its influence on the society, the workplace, and schools. As a result, universities started to place more emphasis on diversity in their missions and began to consider new strategies to function in accordance with their missions. With all these efforts, universities were trying to provide more assistance for underrepresented minorities to enhance their success, and to foster diversity on campuses (The College Board, 1999).

The Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by a set of theories on college student development: Tinto's theory of departure, Chickering's seven vectors of identity development, and racial and ethnic identity development theories

Tinto's theory of departure. Tinto (1988) emphasized that students must separate from their community in order to succeed in their new community within the college. Tinto built his model of retention and withdrawal from college based on Durkheimian's analysis of the social factors that lead to suicide or persistence in society. Durkheimian found that the stronger the relationships with other people, the more integrated the person is in society, and thus the person will persist in the society. Tinto used this analysis to understand the phenomenon of student persistence in college; the degree of academic and social interaction with the college environment will determine the student persistence or withdrawal. Tinto's theory of departure was also influenced by

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the work of Arnold Van Gennep in *The Rites of Passage.* According to Tinto (1988), a college career consists of three stages; separation, transition, and incorporation.

In the first stage, separation, students disassociate themselves from previous communities such as families, schools, and place of residence. Students must disassociate themselves physically and socially from their previous communities in order to become fully integrated in college (Tinto, 1988). In the second stage, transition, students are in the process of acquiring appropriate behavior to integrate in college, yet they are not fully disconnected from their past nor closely tied to the future. Students need a lot of assistance during this stage to overcome the stress they might face. The third stage in Tinto's theory is integration or incorporation into the community of the college by building relationships with faculty and peers. Failure to do that might generate a sense of isolation and consequently lead to departure from the institution.

In 1993, Tinto published his book *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition.* In this book, Tinto focused on students who are academically at-risk; he stated that proactive initiatives are the most effective for these students. Summer bridge programs might be an example of such initiative, yet it is important to assess students' achievement in these programs in order to identify at-risk students before they even start their first year or early in their first year. Effective programs will use the results of such assessment to require students who are not academically prepared to take basic skills courses to meet the academic challenges of the institution. Tinto (1993) noted that "programs for

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students of color commonly emphasize advising and counseling; social support; and community membership" (p. 185). He added that while role modeling is effective in promoting retention for all type of students, it is more important for disadvantaged students of color.

Tinto (2009) cited four conditions that would contribute to student success: expectation, support, feedback, and involvement. He claimed that students need to know what to expect in college and they must hold high expectations in order to succeed. In terms of support, he referred to social support and academic support such as supplemental instruction and basic skills learning communities. Tracking students' progress and continuous feedback are the third condition for student success; Tinto stated that early-warning systems are an example of using this strategy. The last condition for students to succeed is having them actively involved with faculty, staff members, and other students especially through learning activities in the classroom (Tinto, 2009).

Chickering's seven vectors of identity development. Chickering's theory of identity development was first introduced in 1969 specifically to examine the identity development process for students in higher education. In 1993, Chickering and Reisser revised and updated the original theory and suggested that identity development migrates through seven vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The vectors build on one another but they do not follow a strict sequential order. Students move through these vectors at different rates and they deal with issues from more than one vector at the same time. The seven vectors are developing competencies, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, establishing identity, developing mature interpersonal relationship, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

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Chickering and Reisser (1993) argued that educational environments apply powerful influences on student development. They stated that moving through the vectors is influenced by institutional factors such as objectives, size, student-faculty relationship, curriculum and teaching, friendships and student communities, and student development programs and services. Development occurs when students participate in campus life and are satisfied with the college experience. In regards to student-faculty relationships, Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that the accessibility and authenticity of faculty, the knowledge of students, and the ability to communicate with them facilitate a deeper intellectual identity for individuals. A curriculum that recognizes significant dimension of individual differences and aligns with students' background and prior experiences provides activities that help students integrate diverse assumptions and perspectives, and thus, will increase individuals' ability to reason through situations. Development is promoted through teaching strategies that encourage interdependence, cooperation, active learning, interpersonal sensitivity, and respect for individual learning differences. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted that students learn most from one another; interaction between students, friendships, and diverse student communities encourage development. Student development programs and services are very important as well; Chickering and Reisser suggested that the collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals is necessary to provide developmental programs and services. Positive development in the learning environment tends to increase through the integration of work and learning, recognition and respect for individual differences, and acknowledgment of the cyclical nature of learning and development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

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Racial and ethnic identity development theories. According to Phinney (1993), earlier research on identity development focused on factors such as sex role, religion, political orientation, where the samples were mostly white. Ethnicity was not considered as an important factor to influence the identity development. For the purpose of this study, three theoretical approaches are reviewed; Sue and Sue's racial/cultural identity development (RCID) model, Cross's nigrescence model, and Phinney's model of ethnic identity formation. These models share the idea of individual/environment interactions; environmental factors cause the individual to feel different.

The racial/cultural identity development (RCID) model. Sue and Sue (2003) introduced the Racial/Cultural Identity Development (RCID) model based on the minority identity development model introduced in the early 1970s by Atkison, Morten, and Sue. The RCID identified five stages through which individuals progress from a state of unexplored and unachieved racial identity to a state of explored racial identity. These stages are conformity, dissonance, resistance, introspection, and synergetic articulation and awareness. In the first stage- conformity- individuals have negative feeling about themselves and their race, deny their heritage, and tend to identify with the dominant culture of White Americans. In the dissonance stage, individuals start to question the dominant culture and become more interested to learn about their own race. Transition to this stage is caused by racial incidents and individuals become aware that racism does exist. In the third stage-resistance and immersion- individuals not only reject the White culture but they also view individuals from the dominant culture as racist. Introspection is the fourth stage; individuals realize that not everybody from the dominant culture is bad and they start to balance between the dominant culture and their own. Only

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individuals who successfully traversed the previous four stages will move to the last stage synergetic articulation and awareness. In this stage, individuals will accept themselves as different from the dominant group, they feel secure in their unique ethnic identity, and they appreciate both the dominant and their own cultures (Sue & Sue, 2003).

  Cross nigrescence model. In 1971, William Cross developed a theory explaining the process of becoming Black; the theory of Nigrescence. According to Cross (1971), individuals' achievement depends on their level of development and the way they perceive themselves in the dominant society. The theory identified four-stage model through which the identity of adult Black Americans develop; pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization-commitment. The importance of race varies in each stage; during the pre-encounter stage, individuals view race as not important, they are more likely to identify with the dominant White culture, and tend to hold negative self-image. Individuals will move to the next stage-encounter-as they face an event that makes them realize that race is an issue in this society; as an example experiencing discrimination just because of their color, individuals will feel anger toward the dominant culture and they will withdraw to some extent and experience some segregation. In the third and fourth stages, individuals will develop positive views toward the Black culture, but at the same time they will respect the dominant culture and they will develop a multicultural worldview (Cross, 1971).

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Phinney's model of ethnic identity formation. Phinney's model of ethnic identity formation was influenced by the work of both Erickson and Marcia but he made his model more applicable across ethnic groups (Phinney, 1993). Phinney stated that ethnic identity formation is the "way in which individuals come to understand the implications of their ethnicity and make decisions about its role in their lives, regardless of the extent of their ethnic involvement" (1993, p. 64). Phinney identified three stages of ethnic identity development: unexamined, moratorium, and ethnic identity achievement. During the first stage, individuals have not yet explored issues related to their own ethnicity, and thus ethnicity might be viewed as non-issue (diffusion) or as foreclosure; individuals accept the attitudes of the dominant culture. The second stage, moratorium, is characterized by an increased interest in one's ethnicity. The last stage in Phinney's model is ethnic identity achievement; individuals come to understand and accept themselves as ethnically different and they become more open to other cultures. Phinney (1993) found that for minority students ethnicity was as important as religion but more important than their political orientation as related to their identity.

The Campus Climate

A study conducted by Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1999) emphasized the importance of the campus climate on students' development, their transition to college, and their educational outcomes. The authors found that increasing the number of racially and ethnically diverse students on a campus will not generate positive outcomes unless the campus climate was attended. They suggested that improving the campus climate "involves understanding the environment from the perspectives of members from different racial/ethnic backgrounds" (p. iii). It also

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requires institutional efforts to put diversity at the core priorities for teaching and learning, and to create more opportunities for cross racial interaction both inside and outside the classroom. In studying the importance of promoting personal and social responsibility on campus, they found that more than half of the students and the majority of professionals agreed on the importance of taking seriously the perspectives of others on campuses.

Another study conducted by Hurtado in 1992 revealed that the racial tension vary among institutions. It is difficult to increase racial/ethnic diversity on campus without addressing the effects of a racial climate on student development. Institutions can promote a welcoming environment and a healthy racial climate through support systems such as tutoring, mentoring programs, and by hiring more diverse faculty and staff. While building relationship with friends and peers is an indicator of student integration in college (Tinto, 1988), Hurtado (1992) found that the role of in-group friendships for minority is two folded; it is a great source of support but at the same time it may emphasize the students' perceptions of ethnic and racial discrimination

College Choice for Students of Color

In 1997, McDonough conducted a study to examine the factors that affect students' perceptions of college education. The study was guided by the cultural capital theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu; it explained how and why class status plays a role in educational achievement. McDonough's study was very significant because it explained how everyday experiences within the social class communities and the schools affect students' achievement. She focused on the social class (low SES, high SES), high

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school guidance, and the influence of family, friends, and school network. McDonough (1997) also wanted to demonstrate the essential role of values as they are embedded in everyday life and in the decisions about where to go to college. She explained that the high school is an intermediate institution in the educational system, and the transition to postsecondary level is driven by individual achievement and motivation. The link between high schools and colleges is usually loosely coupled. Yet some schools have tight coupling which includes college preparatory, advanced placement classes, networking with colleges, and they equip students with information about the admission process. According to McDonough (1997), enrollment in college is embedded in three-stage process; the decision to attend college (predisposition), searching for a college (search), and selecting a college (choice). These stages are influenced by individual, social-cultural, and organizational policy variables.

The process of searching for a higher education institution could be influenced by several variables such as school preparation, socio-economic status, and parents' education level. According to Morrice (2011), the research on college choice can be approached from several theoretical frameworks: economic, sociological, and socio-psychological. The economic frameworks focus on econometric models and human capital theory; students would consider the costs of education and their decisions will be affected by whether the benefits of education outweigh the benefits of work. Thus, the college choice is viewed as a financial investment, and the financial constraint will be the most important factors to influence students' choice. Almost one third of all postsecondary students attended community colleges in 2001 and they were mostly from low-income and underrepresented students (Morrice, 2011). The sociological frameworks

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investigate how the college choice is influenced by social and cultural capital (McDonough, 1997). The socio-psychological frameworks examine institutional and individual psychological factors that influence student decision; organizational, social, cultural, and individual factors will influence students of color's choice (Morrice, 2011).

Risk Factors

In order to increase minority student enrollment in colleges and universities, these institutions should first be aware of the risk factors these students face. Yeh (2002) conducted a study on Asian American students and she classified risk factors into four groups: individual risk factors include language, education, and immigration status; family risk factors include parent's level of education, socioeconomic status, and family support and guidance; institutional risk factors include inadequate academic preparation, institutional climate, and inadequate institutional support programs; community and societal factors includes model minority stereotypes and intragroup socioeconomic gap.

Data from the National Center for Educational Services (NCES, 2008) in 2007–08 on first-year students who reported having ever taken a remedial college course at four-year institutions were as follow: public non-doctorate institutions (39% of students), public doctorate institutions (24%), private not-for-profit non-doctorate institutions (26%), and private not-for-profit doctorate institutions (22%). The report also shows the data based on race and ethnicity of undergraduate students as follow: Black (45%), Hispanic (43%), Asian (38%), and White (31%). The data provided in this report show that a large number of

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students are graduating from high schools lacking the necessary academic skills to do well in college, they also show that Black and Hispanic students are more likely to take remedial courses in college, which reflects the fact that they are less academically prepared than their White and Asian American counterparts. According to Kinzie, Gonyea, Shoup, and Kuh (2008), remedial courses are indicators of attrition; more than a quarter of four-year college students who took three or more remedial classes leave college after the first year. These findings implicated that Black and Hispanic students are at higher risk to leave college.

Persistence Factors

Barbatis (2010) identified four themes to interpret the factors contributing to persistence and success for underprepared ethnic students; precollege characteristics, external college support/community influences, social involvement, and academic integration. Each theme contains several subthemes. Precollege characteristics include six subthemes: sense of responsibility, goal orientation, resourcefulness, determination, cultural and racial self- identification, and faith. External college support and community influences include parents and extended family, K-12 friends, and high school teachers. Social involvement on campus refers to involvement in different clubs and organizations and interaction with other students. Academic integration includes the development of positive interactions with faculty, acknowledgment of college expectations, and effective study habits.

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Strategies and Practices

Arellano and Amado (1996) conducted a study at a highly selective university to examine the factors that contributed to the success of Latino undergraduate students. Both male and female students were interviewed and were asked about their college experiences. The students were divided into three groups of 10 based on their parents' education level: one or more parents with fewer than 11 years of education (group 1); one or more parents with a high school diploma (group 2); and one or more parents with a college degree (group 3). Through a demographic questionnaire, an educational resiliency scale, and a semi-structured interview, Arellano and Amado (1996) found that students from groups 1 and 2 were "at-risk" but they achieved higher educational achievement because of supportive families and faculty. Despite the overt and subtle racism that at least half of the respondents mentioned, all of the respondents succeeded at an elite university without disowning their cultural heritage. The final results of this study highlighted the importance of personal, family, and school resources for Latino students; about 73% of the students were identified in elementary school as gifted, lending support to the importance of enriched school programs for Latinos.

Hernandez (2002) suggested that institutions should involve students' families in programs through which they could become better acquainted with the college, faculty, and curriculum. This would give them a greater awareness of the challenges their children will face during their transition and provide them with suggestions of further ways to support them.

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Kuh (2008) stated that higher education institutions are hiring consulting firms and are spending a substantial amount of money for advice in areas such enrollment management, recruitment, and retention. Kuh critiqued the use of such firms, suggesting that universities can use these resources to develop effective programs to target at–risk population. He also recommended the use of research and instructive findings that are accessible and could be found free of charge. Kuh stated that even though policy makers and state-university officials always emphasize student success, they are not holding institutions accountable (Kuh, 2008). He added that "incentive structures need to change if more students - especially those from historically underserved backgrounds - are to survive and thrive in college" (p. 72). As an example, Kuh stated that many students are not familiar with articulation agreements between two-year colleges and four-year universities, and thus they do not get all the benefits when transferring. Some other students, especially first generation college students, might not know how to finance their higher education and they are not aware of the several aid programs available. Colleges and universities are entitled to implement strategies that will increase recruitment of minority students by communicating with schools and providing a pipeline for high school students.

In their study on summer bridge programs, Walpole, Mack, Mills, Scales, Simmerman, and Albano (2008) found that underrepresentation and persistence problems are due to difficulties students experience in their academic and social adjustment. Summer bridge programs target high school students who are admitted to the college in the fall semester; they are designed to remediate academic skill deficiencies, provide information regarding college campus life, orient students to the institution's culture, and

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develop student self-esteem and sense of efficacy. This type of programs often target underprepared, low-income college students and students of color and have been shown to be critical for the successful admission and retention of these populations. Walpole et al. (2008) found that the majority of summer bridge participants were engaged academically and socially, completed courses successfully, and were retained through their junior year. The progress of the students in this study made the researchers conclude that underprepared students are capable of success in college if they got the assistance needed in the process. "Until all students have equal access to educational resources, summer bridge programs, including the one under study here, can be important mechanisms for reducing inequity in the educational system" (Walpole et al., 2008, p. 26).

Kinzie et al. (2008) found that students will perform better academically, be more satisfied, and persist when attending institutions that employ, among others, well designed placement testing, peer tutoring and mentoring, adequate financial aid and on campus work, internships, and service learning. As important as these factors are, it is not enough to just simply offer them; institutions should link these programs to courses and faculty, in order to benefit students.

In his study, Barbatis (2010) offered several recommendations for higher education administrators, faculty, and staff working with underprepared students. He suggested developing programs and strategies that target parents and extended families since his study has shown that these people are catalyst for students' success in college. He also suggested developing new programs to address different types of student learning experiences.

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Educational Opportunity Funds Programs

In November 1967, after the summer's race riots in Newark, Ralph A. Dungan the newly-appointed Chancellor of Higher Education, directed a memorandum to the presidents of all of the state's institutions of higher education proposing a program to assist students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The presidents' response was immediate, widespread, and overwhelmingly favorable. Following this initiative was the establishment of a broad range of programs to address the basic conditions the Commission had cited as contributing to the summer's riots. Among those programs was the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF). These programs were developed in New Jersey to provide access to higher education for financially disadvantaged students who are first- and second-generation college attendees (Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007). Among the many powerful strategies implemented by EOF are precollege articulation, basic skills testing and remediation, systematic retention efforts, peer counseling and peer tutoring, academic support courses, multicultural curricula and human relations programming, student leadership development, and outcomes-based program evaluation (Rowan.edu, 2012). The EOF program provides disadvantaged students the opportunity to gain access to higher education through remedial programs and financial assistance.

Maximizing academic potential program (MAP). Deeply committed to supporting the continued and increased enrollment of a diverse population, Rowan University developed the Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP) program in 1986 as a means to provide access for underprepared, first generation students who do not qualify under the financial eligibility guidelines of the EOF program (rowan.edu). New Jersey

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residency and financial income are not requirements for MAP. Students admitted under the EOF/MAP program at Rowan University will receive a wide array of services such as counseling, tutoring, scholarship and housing. But, first they are required to attend a summer enrichment program called the Pre-College Institute (PCI).

The Pre-College Institute (PCI). The Pre-College Institute is a six-week residential summer orientation session at the Rowan University campus. The program is designed to help student in the transition from high school to college by introducing them to the rigors of college study and campus life. Students meet five days a week for about 7.5 hours per day. The program features a full day orientation, a three-day retreat, academic course work, and concludes with an award ceremony. During the orientation, students and their parents meet faculty and administrators, and they are introduced to the program requirements. The retreat emphasizes the social and leadership skills. The academic components of the program include an introduction to college English, Math, Science, a course on strategies for academic success, and a public speaking course (Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007). Students also get an advanced look at the different clubs, organizations, and activities available at Rowan University (rowan.edu). Clauss-Ehlers and Wibrowski (2007) conducted a study on the effect of a six-week EOF summer academic institute for first and second generation college students; they found that the intervention program helped students who had negative pre-college experiences, and they expressed their desire for an EOF counselor to work with them academically and help them succeed.

Mentoring program. Dr. Harley E. Flack developed the mentoring program at Rowan University in 1992 to address concerns related to student satisfaction, retention,

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and graduation for African American males who were disproportionately represented as compared to their White counterparts. As the population of Latino males matriculating at the university increased, similar concerns as those expressed by their African American counterparts began to surface. In the meantime, African American women seeking mentorship initially approached the male mentors for support. In the spring of 1995, the female component to the program –*Ujima*-was established. In 1996, the program grew further to open the door for all underrepresented and underprepared students, working class, and first generation students who were facing the same challenges faced by African American and Latina/o students (rowan.edu).

　All Pre - College Institute freshmen are assigned a peer mentor through the Harley E. Flack Student Mentoring program**.** The program aims to improve the academic and professional success, retention rates, and graduation rates of active program participants; it is committed to the development of students through an array of student, faculty and staff support, academic, cultural and social programs and services. Each individual who is being mentored should at the same time be serving as a mentor. Thus, in an effort to support the growth and development of first year participants, they are encouraged to participate in the *High School Mentoring Initiatives* and serve as mentors to some high school students in Rowan's neighboring community (rowan.edu).

　To ensure that program participants receive the most effective and relevant guidance, all mentoring peers and professional mentors receive ongoing training starting with an initial extended training at the start of each semester and monthly training meeting throughout the semester.

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Summary of the Literature Review

Research on college access, retention, and success has provided valuable information on factors that impact minority students: precollege academic experiences; academic achievement; social interaction with the college environment; the sense of belonging, validation, and stereotype threat; student background characteristics; race; socio-economic status. These factors help determine the student persistence or withdrawal from college. It was also clear in the literature that the precollege experiences for minority students are different than those of their White counterparts. New research has been helpful in finding strategies and practices to attract more diverse students to higher education institutions. Several studies show that at-risk students who participate in pre-college interventions increase their chances to succeed in higher education. A good example found in the literature was summer bridge programs; such programs increase college preparedness for disadvantaged students. The EOF/MAP program provides access for academically underachieved students and students from low-socioeconomic status. The Pre-College Institute plays an important role in preparing students to develop the social and academic skills needed to succeed in college. The *High School Mentoring Initiatives,* offered through the Harley E. Flack Student Mentoring program**,** aim to support the growth and development of first year participants by serving as mentors to some high school students in Rowan's neighboring community.

However, additional research is needed to validate the findings on the effectiveness of the EOF program on disadvantaged students; the impact of the services offered through the program on students' social skills and academic performance. More research is also needed to investigate strategies the EOF/MAP program can employ to

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reach out for more students who may qualify for its services. It is also necessary to understand the impact of the EOF/MAP program as seen from the standpoint of selected minority students. This study aims to examine the attitudes of students toward the program and its services and how they perceive its effects on their social and academic skills in order to maximize their educational attainment in college.

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Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

The study was conducted at Rowan University, a mid-size public higher education institution accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and located in Glassboro, New Jersey. This institution started as a two-year training school with a mission to address the lack of teachers' preparation in New Jersey. In 1923, the school opened with 236 students and it was known then as Glassboro Normal School. Throughout its 90 years, the institution has grown tremendously; its name has changed several times to reflect the evolving mission of the institution; New Jersey State Teachers College at Glassboro; Glassboro State College. In 1992, the college was named after Henry Rowan who donated $100 million to the institution, the largest gift ever given to a public college or university. In 1997, the college achieved university status and changed its name to Rowan University. The Cooper Medical School of Rowan University is the most recent addition to the institution. The medical school was the result of a partnership with Cooper Health System in Camden. In the summer of 2012, the school started the first class with 50 students.

As of today, the University's two campuses include nine colleges; Business, Biomedical Science, Communication & Creative Arts, Education, Engineering, Humanities & Social Sciences, Performing Arts, and Science & Mathematics, the College

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of Graduate & Continuing Education, and the School of Medicine. Rowan University also offers courses on-site at area community colleges, and online courses.

The University offers a wide range of programs; 57 bachelor's, 3 accelerated bachelor's-to-master's, 27 graduate certificates, 31 master's, 3 professional post-master's, 3 post-master's certificates, 2 doctoral. It awards the following degrees; B.A., B.F.A., B.M., B.S., B.S.N., M.A., M.B.A., M.Ed., M.E.M., M.M., M.S., M.S.T., Ed.S., Ed.D., M.D.

As of 2012, 12,183 students were enrolled at Rowan University; 10,750 undergraduates, 1,383 graduates, and 50 professionals. The ethnic diversity of the freshmen student as of 2012 was as follow 76% White, 9% Black, 8% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 1% Native American, and 2% not reported.

The average SAT scores for the students accepted for freshman admission at Rowan University for fall 2012 was 1,186 (rowan.edu). More than half of the students (7,276 students) received financial assistance in the 2011-2012 academic year through federal, state, or institutional funds. The university has a total of 2,057 employees (1,294 faculty, 763 staff – full and permanent part-time). One quarter of the students live on campus in 8 residence halls, 5 apartment complexes and Rowan's International House. There are 141 total student clubs and organizations (115 campus clubs and organizations, 26 Greek Life organizations) at Rowan University.

The EOF/MAP office at Rowan University is located in Savitz Hall on the third floor (rowan.edu). The staff consists of the EOF/MAP director, four counselors, and two secretaries. The state of New Jersey developed the Educational Opportunity Fund program in 1968 to provide students from economically and educationally disadvantaged

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backgrounds the opportunity to gain access to higher education. The EOF sponsors more than one-third of the African American and Latino students at the state colleges and New Jersey's independent institutions. The EOF enrolls about 12.5% of the first-time, full-time New Jersey freshmen who enter the state's colleges and universities each fall. Students receive financial assistance through grants ranging from $200 to $2,500. These grants are renewable annually based upon continued eligibility.

The Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP) program was developed by Rowan University in 1986 as a means to provide access for underprepared, first generation students who do not qualify under the financial eligibility guidelines of the EOF program (rowan.edu). New Jersey residency and financial income are not requirements for MAP.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was all freshman students from disadvantaged economic and social backgrounds. The available population was all the freshmen enrolled at Rowan University under the EOF/MAP program during 2012-2013 academic year on both Glassboro and Camden campus. The sample consisted of 137 freshmen students enrolled at the main campus in Glassboro under the EOF/MAP programs in 2012-2013. The subjects were previously enrolled in the Pre-College Institute and they passed the academic institute as a requirement to gain admission into Rowan University under the EOF/MAP program. The director of the EOF/MAP program sent an email out to all the subjects, explained to them the purpose of the study, and asked them to stop by the office to fill out the survey.

Entrance into the program was based on income eligibility meaning that the student's household income should fit under the eligibility scale set by the state of New

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Jersey. Students are also required to prove that both parents or only one parent did not attend college.

The self-identified racial/ethnic composition of the freshmen students enrolled under the EOF/MAP program for the 2012-2013 academic year was as follow: 61 African Americans, 45 Hispanic, 16 White Americans, and 11 Asian Americans, and 4 students did specify their race/ethnicity (rowan.edu).

Instrumentation

The instrument used was a 52 item survey designed by me for the purpose of this study (Appendix A). The survey was divided into three parts: the first part collected demographic data about the participants: age, gender, race, and ethnicity. It also included information about the area (rural, urban, or suburban), the type of high school attended, the average income, the household size, the parents' status, the educational level of parents, and information about activities students were participating in before college. The items selected for the first parts of the survey were based on the EOF/MAP eligibility criteria, as a means to examine the social and educational backgrounds of the participants.

The second part of the survey consisted of three sections: the experiences of students before college; the students' experience with the Pre-College Institute; and their transition and adjustment to Rowan University. Items in these three sections were based on Tinto's theory of departure (1988) and Chickering's seven vectors of identity development. These two research studies linked success in college to the identity development and to the environment in which students learn. Several other studies guided the survey instrument as well: McDonough's study that examined the factors that affect

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students' perceptions of college education (McDonough, 1997); Barbatis's study that examined the factors contributing to the persistence and success for underprepared ethnic students (Barbatis, 2010); Arellano and Amado's study that examined the factors that contributed to the success of Latino undergraduate students at highly selective institutions (Arellano & Amado, 1996); Walpole et al. study on summer bridge programs (Walpole et al., 2008). The three sections followed a Likert scale based on a 6 point scale with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 given respectively to responses not applicable (NA), strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the three Likert scale sections were 0.693, 0.901, and 0.833 respectively indicating internal consistency among the items.

The third section included two open ended questions; the first question asked about other services the EOF/MAP should offer to better serve them, and the second question asked about recommendations the participants would give to improve the program (Appendix A).

The director and the assistant director of the EOF/MAP are experts in this field of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and they always conduct surveys with their students to assess the services provided through the EOF/MAP. To determine content validity, these experts were given the survey to examine the clarity and completeness of the items, and the degree to which the items measure predetermined criteria. They also checked the statements and judged the criticality and importance of various parts of the instrument. Based on their comments, revisions were made especially in regards to some of the statements that were vague; they were reworded to remove any ambiguity.

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Following approval from the Institutional Review Board of Rowan University (Appendix B), and approval of the director of the EOF/MAP program (Appendix C) a pilot test of the survey was conducted with a group of 10 students. None of the students reported any problems understanding the survey statements, and they noted that it took them less than 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Procedure of Gathering Data

The assistant director of the EOF/MAP program sent out emails to all of the freshmen students enrolled at Rowan University under the EOF/MAP programs on the main campus in Glassboro during the academic year 2012-2013 to stop by his office to complete the survey. The emails explained to students the purpose and the benefits of the study, and the confidentiality of the process. One week later, the students received follow up reminders to complete the survey. The response rate was not high enough with the paper survey; only 38 surveys were completed, with a response rate of 27.74%. I used an online version of the survey, and the assistant director sent it electronically via emails to the students who at that time had not completed the paper survey. A week later, 31 surveys were completed using the online version.

Data Analysis

The independent variables in the study included age, gender, race, and general information about the school attended and the education level of the parents. Information for these variables was collected in the first part of the questionnaire. The dependent variables investigated the students' experience in their schools, their knowledge about the EOF/MAP program and its services, and their transition and adjustment to the freshmen year. Variations in the dependent and independent variables were explored using the

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Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data were analyzed using tables. The impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables was studied using the analysis obtained through SPSS.

Two open ended questions were included in the survey providing a space for qualitative analysis as a means of further explanation of the findings. The questions focused on students recommendations to improve the program. The method of data analysis in the open ended questions draws on recommendations by Miles and Huberman (1994). They describe three major phases of data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In qualitative analysis, cases that do not appear to fit the pattern or trend are not treated as outliers. Rather, exceptional cases should be taken as a challenge to further elaboration and verification of an evolving conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data were subjected to content analysis to identify emergent themes in students' recommendations. Themes were coded and each code was numbered.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The subjects for the study were the freshmen students enrolled under the EOF/MAP program at Rowan University the main campus in Glassboro in spring of 2013. A total of 137 surveys were distributed with 70 completed for a return rate of 51.09%. Table 4.1 shows the demographic distribution of the participants; there were 46 females (65.7%) and 23 males (32.9%). The subjects were between the age of 18 years and 22, with the majority (61.4%) being 18 years old. Almost half of the participants were African American (45.7%), while 30% were Hispanic or Latino/a, 17.1% were White, Asian American 4.3%, and only 1.4% identify as other.

Table 4.1

Demographic Data (N=70)

	f	%
Gender		
Male	23	32.9
Female	46	65.7
Missing =1		
Age		
18	43	61.4
19	22	31.4
20	2	2.9
21	1	1.4
Other	1	1.4
Missing =1		

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	f	%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	12	17.1
Asian	3	4.3
African American	32	45.7
Hispanic or Latino/a	21	30
Other	1	1.4
Missing=1		

Table 4.2 contains data on the type of high schools attended, the area in which the participants grew up, and the social and educational status of parents. The majority of the participants (92.9%) stated that they attended public high schools, whereas 4.2% came from private high school, and only 2.9% did not specify their school. Almost half of the students (48%) reported that they lived in urban areas, around 34% lived in suburban areas, and only 14% lived in rural areas. The majority of the participants (65.7%) come from families with income equal to or less than $30,000, almost 13% reported a family income between $31,000 and $40,000, whereas only 20% of the participants reported family income of $41,000 or more. Table 4.2 also indicated the educational level of the students' parents; the majority of students reported that both their father and their mother had high school degree or less (72% and 62% respectively).

Table 4.2

Economic and Social Status (N=70)

	f	%
School		
Public	65	92.9
Private	3	4.3
Missing=1		
Area		
Urban	34	48.6
Rural	10	14.3
Suburban	24	34.3
Missing=2		

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Income

$ 21,600 or less	29	41.4
$ 21,700 to $ 30,000	17	24.3
$ 31,000 to $ 40,000	9	12.9
$ 41,000 to $ 50,000	7	10
$ 51,000 or more	7	10
Missing=1		

Parents Status

Living together	28	40.6
Separated or divorced	35	50.7
One deceased	4	5.8
Both are deceased	2	2.9
Missing=1		

Highest educational level of Father

High School or Less	48	71.6
Associate Degree	6	9.0
Bachelor Degree	11	16.4
Master Degree or Higher	2	3.0
Missing=3		

Highest educational level of Mother

High School or Less	43	62.3
Associate Degree	9	13.0
Bachelor Degree	11	15.9
Master Degree or Higher	6	8.7
Missing=1		

Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: What is the impact of the social support and pre-college experiences on selected minority students and their decisions to attend Rowan University?

To answer the first research question on the impact of the social support and pre-college experiences on selected minority students and their decisions to attend Rowan University, Table 4.3 has data on students' parental support, peers' influence, high school experiences, and academic preparation. The majority of students (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that their parents expected them to go to college. Participants reported positive peer influence; almost 68% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their high school friends encouraged them to go to college, and 82.9% agreed or strongly

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agreed that their high school friends were planning to go to college. Yet, half of the students reported that their friends were looking for a job after high school, and 33% agreed or strongly agreed that it was necessary to work during high school.

The majority of students (84%) noted that their high school offered AP courses, and 81.5% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that their high school encouraged them to take the P-SAT, however only 47% of the students reported that the school prepared them for the SAT and ACT tests. More than half of the students (64%) agreed or strongly agreed that the EOF/MAP was their only way to get into Rowan University, and about 63% agreed or strongly agreed that they learned about the EOF/MAP while they were in high school.

Table 4.3

Students' Prior to College Experiences

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Do Not Apply	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
My family expected me to go to college N=70, SD=.734, M=5.65, Missing=4	50	71.4	11	15.7	4	5.7			1	1.4		
My parents and I discussed going to college N=70, SD=1.056, M=5.52, Missing=4	50	71.4	9	12.9	1	1.4	3	4.3	3	4.3		
My high school encouraged me to take the P-SAT N=70, SD=.985, M=5.46, Missing=5	44	62.9	13	18.6	4	5.7	3	4.3			1	1.4
My high school offered AP courses N=70, SD=1.104, M=5.36, Missing=4	41	58.6	18	25.7	1	1.4	3	4.3	2	2.9	1	1.4
My high school teachers emphasized the importance of college N=70, SD=.824, M=5.42, Missing=4	38	54.3	21	30	5	7.1	1	1.4	1	1.4		
My counselors in my high school guided me in the college choice process N=70, SD=5.17, M=1.145, Missing=4	36	51.4	15	21.4	8	11.4	4	5.7	3	4.3		
I learned about financial aid and scholarships while I was in high school N=70, SD=1.032, M=5.17, Missing=4	32	45.7	20	28.6	9	12.9	3	4.3	2	2.9		
The EOF/MAP program was my only way to get into Rowan University N=70, SD=1.073, M=5.05, Missing=4	31	44.3	14	20	15	21.4	5	7.1	1	1.4		

Item	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
My high school friends were planning to go to college *N=70, SD=.812, M=5.32*, Missing=5	31	44.3	27	38.6	5	7.1	1	1.4	1	1.4		
I completed my homework and assignments on time *N=70, SD=.858, M=5.18*, Missing=4	30	42.9	19	27.1	16	22.9	1	1.4				
My high school friends encouraged me to go to college *N=70, SD=1.080, M=5.06*, Missing=4	30	42.9	18	25.7	12	17.1	4	5.7	2	2.9		
My siblings encouraged me to go to college *N=70, SD=1.636, M=4.59*, Missing=4	30	42.9	6	8.6	18	25.7	4	5.7	1	1.4	7	10
I learned about the EOF/MAP program while I was in high school *N=70, SD=1.404, M=4.76*, Missing=4	28	40	16	22.9	8	11.4	6	8.6	8	11.4		
My high school prepared me for the SAT/ACT Tests *N=70, SD=1.134, M=4.62*, Missing=4	20	28.6	13	18.6	23	32.9	8	11.4	2	2.9		
My high school friends were looking for a job after high school *N=70, SD=1.134, M=4.51*, Missing=5	13	18.6	22	31.4	19	27.1	8	11.4	2	2.9	1	1.4
Working during high school was a necessity *N=70, SD=1.326, M=4.11*, Missing=4	13	18.6	10	14.3	24	34.3	11	15.7	6	8.6	2	2.9
My family did not care about what I did after high school *N=70, SD=.761, M=2.28*, Missing=5	1	1.4	1	1.4	2	2.9	8	11.4	52	74.3	1	1.4

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Research Question 2: What are the attitudes of selected students toward the services provided by the EOF/MAP program?

To answer the second research question about the attitudes of students toward the services provided by the EOF/MAP program, examined are experiences at the Pre-College Institute, students' perceptions of the first year seminar, and their relationships with counselors. Also examined were the EOF/MAP students' transition into college, their relationships with faculty, and their overall Rowan experience. Table 4.4 shows the attitudes of students toward services received through the EOF/MAP program. The majority of students reported positive influence of the Pre-College Institute, and they agreed or strongly agreed on its impact on their academic performance (86%), relationship with peers (86%), feeling comfortable about the campus life (83%), diversity (82%), social skills (80%), and relationships with faculty (79%). Fifty one percent of the students agreed or strongly agreed that first year seminar was beneficial, and 58% agreed or strongly agreed that academic coaches were beneficial, while more than 70% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the meetings with the counselors were helpful, and being part of the EOF/MAP program helped them develop time management and organization skills.

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Table 4.4

Students' Attitudes Toward the Services Provided by the EOF/MAP Program

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Do Not Apply	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
The PCI helped me feel comfortable about the campus life *N=70*, *SD=.731*, *M=5.52*, Missing=5	42	60	16	22.9	6	8.6	1	1.4				
Being identified as an EOF/MAP student does not bother me *N=70*, *SD=.917*, *M=5.42*, Missing=5	40	57.1	16	22.9	7	10			2	2.9		
The PCI gave me the opportunity to build positive relationships with faculty *N=70*, *SD=.989*, *M=5.34*, Missing=5	38	54.3	17	24.3	6	8.6	2	2.9	2	2.9		
The PCI positively impacted my social skills *N=70*, *SD=.947*, *M=5.32*, Missing=4	36	51.4	20	28.6	7	10	1	1.4	2	2.9		
The PCI enhanced my academic performance *N=70*, *SD=.797*, *M=5.36*, Missing=4	33	47.1	27	38.6	4	5.7	1	1.4	1	1.4		
The PCI program helped me build friendships with students *N=70*, *SD=.847*, *M=5.39*, Missing=6	32	57.1	16	28.6	5	8.9	1	1.8	1	1.8		
The PCI staff emphasized the importance of diversity *N=70*, *SD=.880*, *M=5.36*, Missing=6	29	51.8	17	30.3	5	8.9	2	3.6	2	3.6		
I learned time management and organization skills *N=70*, *SD=.745*, *M=5.23*, Missing=5	26	37.1	29	41.4	9	12.9	1	1.4				
The meetings with my counselor were helpful *N=70*, *SD=1.102*, *M=4.94*, Missing=5	20	28.6	31	44.3	9	12.9	2	2.9	1	1.4	2	2.9
Academic coaches have helped me in my first semester *N=70*, *SD=1.530*, *M=4.42*, Missing=5	15	21.4	26	37.1	11	15.7	4	5.7	2	2.9	7	10
The first year seminar is beneficial *N=70*, *SD=1.288*, *M=4.46*, Missing=5	15	21.4	21	30	17	24.3	3	4.3	9	12.9		

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Table 4.5 shows the EOF/MAP students' perceptions of the campus climate, and their experience with faculty and staff at Rowan University. The majority of the students (77.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that Rowan University provides a welcoming environment, 60% agreed or strongly agreed that students at Rowan University accept diversity, and 65.7% agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy for them to build relationships with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at Rowan University. Only 21.5% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they were concerned about their race and ethnicity at Rowan University.

In terms of their relationships with faculty and staff, the majority of students (82.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and staff set high expectations, 72.8% agreed or strongly agreed that they received continuous feedback, 77.1% agreed or strongly agreed that faculty members believe in EOF/MAP students' ability to succeed, and 51.4% agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and staff understand the unique needs of minority students.

Table 4.5

EOF/MAP Students' Transition and Adjustment to College

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Do Not Apply	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	*%*
Faculty believe in my abilities to succeed *N=70*, *SD=.846*, *M=5.31*, Missing=5	33	47.1	21	30	10	14.3			1	1.4		
Faculty and staff set high expectations *N=70*, *SD=.773*, *M=5.32*, Missing=5	30	42.9	28	40	6	8.9			1	1.4		
I am satisfied with my experience at Rowan University N=70, SD=.846, M=5.18, Missing=5	27	38.6	26	37.1	9	12.9	3	4.3				
Rowan University provides a welcoming environment *N=70*, *SD=.834*, *M=5.17*, Missing=4	26	37.1	28	40	9	12.9	3	4.3				
It is easy to build relationships with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at Rowan University *N=70*, *SD=1.054*, *M=5.00*, Missing=6	26	37.1	20	28.6	11	15.7	6	8.6	1	1.4	0	
I am engaged in campus and/or community activities N=70, SD=1.044, M=4.95, Missing=4	25	35.7	21	30	13	18.6	6	8.6	1	1.4		
Students at Rowan University accept diversity *N=70*, *SD=1.002*, *M=4.89*, Missing=5	22	31.4	20	28.6	18	25.7	4	5.7	1	1.4		
Faculty and staff understand the unique needs of minority students *N=70*, *SD=1.065*, *M=4.74*, Missing=5	19	27.1	17	24.3	25	35.7	2	2.9	1	1.4	1	1.4
I receive continuous feedback on my work N=70, SD=.738, M=5.05, Missing=5	18	25.7	33	47.1	13	18.6	1	1.4				
I am concerned about my race and ethnicity at Rowan University *N=70*, *SD=1.322*, *M=3.42*, Missing=5	6	8.6	9	12.9	11	15.7	20	28.6	18	25.7	1	1.4

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Research Question 3: What recommendations would the students enrolled through the EOF/MAP program suggest to improve the services?

To answer the third research question, two open ended questions provided a space for the EOF/MAP students to state their opinions and their suggestions to improve the program. The first question was: What else do you think the EOF/MAP program should offer to better assist you? Sixty two percent of the students responded to this question (n=44); 45.5% stated that the program has nothing else to offer, while 22.7% noted that the program should provide more financial assistance, and 18.2% thought that the program should focus on academic preparation (new courses and seminar), and 9.1% asked for additional activities that foster social skills (Table 4.6). One student commented "I feel as though the EOF/MAP program offered me a positive and welcoming environment. I think though that it would be a nice idea to have monthly meetings with people we graduated the program with in order to stay connected."

Table 4.6

Students' Recommendations for More Services (n=44)

Theme	f	%
Nothing	20	45.5
Financial Assistance	10	22.7
Academic Preparation	8	18.2
Extracurricular Activities	4	9.1
Diverse EOF/MAP Staff	1	2.3
Diverse Interaction with Peers	1	2.3

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The open-ended second question: What are your recommendations to improve the program? A total of 37 participants (52.9%) recommended other services that should be offered to better assist the EOF/MAP students; 45.9% of the students stated that the program has nothing else to offer, 10.8% provided recommendations related to diversity and increased interaction with students outside the EOF/MAP program; and 5.4% recommended additional financial support (Table 4.7). Most of the students commented that the EOF/MAP program is already offering great services and they think that nothing else can be done. One student commented that "the program has to do absolutely nothing. Their assistance thus far is excellent especially with helping my transition through college." One student reported that "there was too much structure during the program-this is extremely misleading for potential college students. Students create their own schedules and use time management in application to their own schedules." Another student reported that "although I was given a better sense of managing time, when I came into my Fall Semester, I was used to being told when to do anything, so I had to adjust."

Table 4.7

Students' Recommendations for Improvement (n=37)

Theme	f	%
Nothing	17	45.5
Other	9	24.3
Scholarships	2	5.4
Diverse Interaction with Peers	4	5.7
Extracurricular Activities	3	8.1
Academic Preparation	1	2.7
Improving Staff Attitude	1	2.7

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The students noted that even though Pre-College Institute taught them many skills, they felt that when they were on their own they met some difficulties. Integration into campus was also mentioned in students' recommendations. One student suggested "have stuff open for everyone instead of fencing EOF students into their own circle, that's what I feel is the best way to diversify. Not that hard once you step outside comfort zone."

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the pre-college experiences of freshmen students from disadvantaged backgrounds and how Rowan University can elaborate on the experiences of these students. The study focused on the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program as seen by selected freshmen students, their attitudes toward the services provided, and their perceptions of the benefits in regards of their social skills, academic performance, and attainment in college. The study also presented students' suggestions to improve the services provided.

The subjects in this study were all the freshmen students enrolled under the EOF/MAP program at Rowan University the main campus in Glassboro during the spring of 2013. The self-developed 52 item survey was divided into three sections: the first section collected demographic data about the participants; the second part focused on the students' experiences prior to college and their transition to Rowan University; and the third section included two open ended questions on students' recommendations to improve the EOF/MAP program. The number of completed surveys was 70, yielding a 51% response rate. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the frequency, mean, and standard deviation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

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Discussion of the Findings

The majority of the participants in this study were first generation college students. The literature shows that these students are less likely to have parental support but in this study, students stated that their parents expected them to go to college and they encouraged them to apply to colleges and universities after high school. Parents who did not attend college themselves will not have the cultural capital and likely possess limited knowledge about the admission process, financial aid policies, and thus, might not be able to provide enough information for their children. Hernandez (2002) suggested that institutions should involve parents in programs through which they can learn more about college in order for them to better assist their children. The majority of students stated that they had positive influence from their high school friends. Barbatis (2010) emphasized the impact of parents and extended family, K-12 friends on students' success and retention in college specifically for students at risk.

More than 80% of the participants reported that their schools offer AP courses and encouraged them to take the P-SAT, yet less than half reported that their schools provided adequate preparation for the SAT and ACT tests. Low income students are usually less prepared for college than their higher-income peers since the schools they attend do not typically offer rigorous curriculum (Kinzie et al., 2008; Kuh, 2008; McDonough, 1997).

The literature states that students from disadvantaged backgrounds need assistance and support on college campuses, yet they are often unaware of the services that might be available to them (McDonough, 1997; Walpole et al., 2008). The EOF/MAP students reported many benefits and they stated that their transition into

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college was impacted by the services the program offers; the majority of students reported positive influence of the Pre-College Institute in terms of their academic performance, social skills, feeling comfortable about the campus life, relationships with faculty, relationship with peers, and diversity. The findings on the impact of the PCI are similar to the study conducted by Walpole et al. (2008) on summer bridge programs. In that study, the researchers found the majority of summer bridge participants were engaged academically and socially, completed courses successfully, and were retained through their junior year. Students reported that academic coaches and the first year seminar were beneficial, meetings with the counselors were helpful, and that being part of the EOF/MAP program helped them develop time management and organization skills. According to Tinto (1993), students from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit most from advising, counseling, and social support.

The data show that EOF/MAP students were not concerned about their race and ethnicity at Rowan University. Sue and Sue's, Cross', and Phinney's models of identity development were all based on stages through which individuals move from the state of unexplored identity to an achieved identity. It is important to understand in which stage the participating students reported. The finding might be two-folded; it could mean that students are still in the first stage where identity is a non-issue for them, or it could mean that students are in the last stage. The students stated that it was easy for them to build relationships with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and they reported a welcoming environment at Rowan University. Yet, in response to one of the open ended questions, some students suggested that more diversity among faculty and staff are needed in order to increase cross racial relationships.

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Tinto (2009) cited four conditions that would contribute to students' success: higher expectation, support, feedback, and involvement. The EOF/MAP students reported that faculty and staff at Rowan University understand the unique needs of minority students, they believe in their ability to succeed, they provide continuous feedback, and they set high expectations. Tinto emphasized the importance of being actively involved with faculty and staff. The majority of the students (78.6%) noted that the PCI provided an opportunity to build positive relationship with faculty.

The EOF/MAP students provided some suggestions to improve the program; more than half of them stated that they need to learn more about financial support and scholarships, tutoring, time management, internship, part time jobs. These suggestions are typical for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Kinsie et al. (2008) found that students will perform better academically, be more satisfied, and persist when attending institutions that employ peer tutoring and mentoring, adequate financial aid and on campus work, internships, and service learning.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted that the collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals is necessary to provide developmental programs and services. Positive development in the learning environment tends to increase through the recognition and respect for individual differences, and acknowledgment of the cyclical nature of learning and development According to a College Board report (1999), universities are trying to provide more assistance to underrepresented minorities to enhance their success, and to foster diversity on campuses. In their study on the campus climate, Hurtado et al. (1999) found that improvements require an understanding of the environment from the perspectives of members from different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

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Institution should put diversity at the core priorities for teaching and learning, and create more opportunities for cross racial interaction both inside and outside the classroom.

The EOF/MAP students are mostly African American (45%) and Latino (30%), in a mostly White institution, the majority reported that Rowan University provides a welcoming environment, and building relationships with friends from different racial and ethnic background was easy. For some students though, being identified as "EOF" was an issue; one student mentioned "stop calling us EOF/MAP, it's embarrassing putting a label on people," another student suggested to "have stuff open for everyone instead of fencing EOF students into their own circle, that's what I feel is best way to diversify. Not that hard once you step outside comfort zone." The PCI program offered in the summer helps students develop their social skills, and encourages intergroup relationships. But since the majority of the students in this program are students of color, they are not having the opportunity to interact or develop friendships with White students. According to Hurtado (1992), in-group friendship for minority is a great source of support, yet it may emphasize the students' perceptions of ethnic and racial discrimination. The EOF/MAP students should be encouraged to participate in campus wide activities and have the opportunity to increase interaction with White students.

Conclusions

The study investigated the pre-college experiences of minority students and those from low income families, and the impact of the financial, social, and cultural support on their decision to go to college. The findings illustrated the importance of the support systems for these students. Even though the majority of the students were from low income families and they were first generation college students, their parents encouraged

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them to go to college. The majority of students noted that their high school offered AP courses and they were encouraged them to take the P-SAT, however most of the students reported that they did not receive adequate preparation for the SAT and ACT tests. The students reported financial constraint, and the majority noted that the EOF/MAP was their only way to attend college.

The findings illustrated the effects of the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program offered at Rowan University and the attitudes of students toward services received through the EOF/MAP program. The findings revealed positive influence of the Pre-College Institute on students' academic performance, social skills, and relationships with faculty and friends. The first year seminar, the academic coaches were also found beneficial by the majority of the students. These findings support Walpole et al. (2008) study; underprepared students are capable of success in college if they got the assistance needed in the process.

The study also investigated students' suggestions to improve the program. The students noted that the courses they took during the summer helped their academic transition to college, and the activities they participated in were an opportunity to meet new friends. The students suggested adding more courses, such as chemistry and calculus to the program. They also proposed more extracurricular activities during freshmen year that would give them the opportunity to interact with different groups across campus rather than just focusing on activities designed for EOF/MAP students.

The results of this study generally confirmed the findings of previous studies on all types of support college students need in order to succeed and attain a college degree.

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Even though the EOF/MAP students reported positive experiences, the number of minority students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds remains relatively low at Rowan University.

Recommendations for Practice

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following suggestions are presented:

1. The university should emphasize diversity in its core mission, and hire a more diverse faculty and staff.

2. Encourage student affairs and academic affairs professionals to develop shared goals and align their efforts to better assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3. Enhance articulation and stronger reporting system between the Director and the counselors of the EOF/MAP program and faculty.

4. Communicate the university's expectations with schools, build stronger bridges, and establish partnerships with the neighboring K-12.

5. Orientation and information sessions should involve parents.

6. The Pre-College Institute should focus on content knowledge and improving students' academic performance. Engaging students in this manner may be critical to servicing students from school districts that typically have less rigorous academic curriculum.

7. Students of color are minority at Rowan University, thus it is important to provide a space for intergroup relationships. EOF/MAP administrators should work with various groups across campus to organize activities and events to

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help students quickly integrate into the social environment of the college campus.

8. Once enrolled in college, students should be served in a holistic manner. They should participate in a freshman seminar course and develop a social network that includes peers in the residence halls, as well as, on campus employers.

9. Provide students with on campus jobs or internship opportunities.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further in-depth qualitative research studies on the perception of students at risk toward interventions and programs offered at colleges and universities are necessary to understand the unique needs of this population. The importance of academic preparation prior to college suggests that pre-college programs' emphasis on content knowledge could enhance students' readiness for the rigors of college courses. More studies should be conducted to analyze this relationship. Most of the students in this study were first generation college students, yet they were encouraged by their parents to attend college. More research should be conducted on the relationship between higher aspiration and the intent to attend college for students from disadvantaged background. A follow-up analysis could also be done with the subjects in their senior year to validate the findings in terms of retention and graduation rates.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

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Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential Program Survey

My name is Lara Sader, a student in the M.A. in Higher Education Administration program. The purpose of the study is to investigate the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program as seen by freshmen students.

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to respond to any of the questions herein, your participation is very important and will be very well appreciated. If you chose to participate, please understand that no personal identification is requested and all your responses are strictly anonymous. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent on your willingness to participate. If you are younger than 18 years of age, please disregard this survey. If you have any questions or problems concerning your participation in this study, please contact Lara Sader at 609-744-0110 or saderl71@students.rowan.edu, or my advisor Dr. Burton Sisco at 856-256-4500, ext. 3717 or sisco@rowan.edu

Section I- Demographic Information (Please select all that applies):

1- **Age:**   18 ( )   19 ( )   20 ( )   21 ( )   Other (please specify) ————

2- **Gender:**
   ( ) Male
   ( ) Female

3- **Race:**
   ( ) White
   ( ) Asian
   ( ) African American
   ( ) Hispanic or Latino/a
   ( ) Other (please specify) —————

4- **The area where you grew up:**
   ( ) Urban
   ( ) Rural
   ( ) Suburban

5- **Type of High School Attended:**
   ( ) Public
   ( ) Private

6- **Average Family Income:**
   ( ) $ 21,600 or less
   ( ) $ 21,700 to $ 30,000
   ( ) $ 31,000 to $ 40,000
   ( ) $ 41,000 to $ 50,000
   ( ) $ 51,000 or more

7- Please enter the number of people in your household including yourself: ———

8- Parent Status:
  ( ) Living together
  ( ) Separated or divorced
  ( ) One deceased
  ( ) Both are deceased

9- Highest Education Level of Parents:

Father   **Mother**
  ( ) High School or Less   ( ) High School or Less
  ( ) Associate Degree   ( ) Associate Degree
  ( ) Bachelor Degree   ( ) Bachelor Degree
  ( ) Master Degree or Higher   ( ) Master Degree or Higher

10- Your current job type
  ( ) Part time
    ( ) Full time
  ( ) None

11- Activities before college
  ( ) Sports
  ( ) Clubs/Organizations
  ( ) Volunteering
  ( ) Other, specify   ——————
  ( ) None

12- Program you are in
  ( ) EOF
  ( ) MAP

For each of the following statements, please select how you feel: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD).

Description of the Survey Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not Apply
Section II- Experiences prior to College (family-school-friends)						
13- My family did not care about what I did after high school						
14- My family expected me to go to college						
15- My parents and I discussed going to college						
16- My siblings encouraged me to go to college						
17- My high school offered AP courses						
18- My high school encouraged me to take the P-SAT						
19- I completed my homework and assignments on time						
20- My high school prepared me for the SAT or ACT Tests						
21- My counselors in my high school guided me in the college choice process						
22- My high school teachers emphasized the importance of college						
23- My high school friends encouraged me to go to college						
24- My high school friends were planning to go to college						
25- My high school friends were looking for a job after high school						
26- Working during high school was a necessity						
27- I learned about financial aid and scholarships while I was in high school						
28- I learned about the EOF/MAP program while I was in high school						
29- The EOF/MAP program was my only way to get into Rowan University						

Description of the Survey Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not Apply
Section III- The Pre-College Institute (PCI) program						
30- The PCI enhanced my academic performance						
31- The PCI positively impacted my social skills						
32- The PCI helped me feel comfortable about the campus life						
33- The PCI gave me the opportunity to build positive relationships with faculty						
34- The PCI program helped me build friendships with students						
35- The PCI staff emphasized the importance of diversity						
Section IV- Transition and Adjustment – Freshman Year						
36- I am concerned about my race and ethnicity at Rowan University						
37- Being identified as an EOF/MAP student does not bother me						
38- Faculty and staff understand the unique needs of minority students						
39- Faculty believe in my abilities to succeed						
40- Faculty and staff set high expectations						
41- I receive continuous feedback on my work						
42- Rowan University provides a welcoming environment						
43- Students at Rowan University accept diversity						
44- It is easy to build relationships with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at Rowan						
45- I am engaged in campus and/or community activities						
46- Academic coaches have helped me in my first semester						
47- The first year seminar is beneficial						
48- The meetings with my counselor were helpful						
49- I learned time management and organization skills						
50- I am satisfied with my experience at Rowan University						

51- What else do you think the EOF/MAP program should offer to better assist you?

52- What are your recommendations to improve the program?

Appendix B

IRB Approval Letter

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Rowan University

January 30, 2013

Lara E. Sader
103 Thomas Avenue
Maple Shade, NJ 08052

Dear Lara E. Sader:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has exempted your project, category 2.
IRB application number: 203-132

Project Title: The Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) Program as Viewed by Underrepresented Freshmen Students

If you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to Dr. Harriet Hartman (hartman@rowan.edu or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Shreekanth Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research (shreek@rowan.edu or call 856-256-5150).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c: Burton Sisco, Educational Services, Administration, Higher Education, James Hall

Office of Research

Bole Hall
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

856-256-5150
856-256-4425 fax

Appendix C

Approval of the EOF/MAP Director

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November 17, 2012

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter to attest, as the Director of the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOF/MAP) program at Rowan University, that I am aware of the research study that Mrs. Lara Sader plans to conduct involving freshmen students in the Educational Opportunity Fund/Maximizing Academic Potential (EOFIMAP) program. I have discussed the purpose and limits of this research with Mrs. Sader and I will support her research. I will help Mrs. Sader by providing the survey instruments to students through the EOFIMAP office.

Mrs. Sader has assured me that the research study involving human subjects will be conducted in accordance with the Internal Review Board's guidelines.

If you have any questions, please contact me at barnesp@rowan.edu or 856-256-4087

Sincerely,

Penny M. Barnes, EdD
Assistant Dean of Academic Enrichment/
Director of EOF/MAP

EOF/MAP
Savitz Hall
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028

856-256-4080
856-256-4470 fax