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The Influence Of Student Engagement On Student Retention At A Midwest Urban Research Institution

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**THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
ON STUDENT RETENTION AT A
MIDWEST URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTION**

by

DENISE WILLIAMS MALLET

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2015

MAJOR: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

Approved by:

Advisor Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation and journey to my daughter, Lauren Denise Mallett,
she has given my life true meaning and purpose;
my husband, Conrad L. Mallett, Jr., for his love, support, guidance, and ability to transform my
days of complete disorder and confusion into manageable moments;
my father, Edward H. Hayes, for starting this journey with me on earth and has finished it with
me as he watches down from heaven;
my brother, Maurice D. Calhoun with whom I humbly share this degree because of his academic
capacity and brilliance but left this earth too soon;
and my mother, Rosie Calhoun Hayes, who I love with all my heart, for being both my
inspiration and motivation to “do better so I can be better”.

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I end by acknowledging Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. I thank you for being all encompassing in my mental, spiritual and physical life. This journey would not be have been possible without my faith and belief that I was not traveling alone.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Increasing student retention through purposeful student engagement continues to be a challenge for many institutions. Student retention is one of the more interwoven and intricate issues of modern higher education. The retention of college students is a complex issue, representing a relationship of personal, institutional, and societal factors, with a likely financial impact that has dramatic implications to all three areas (Brunsden, 2000).

Researchers have suggested that when a student is engaged there is a higher likelihood that that student would be retained and persist at an institution. Zhao and Kuh (2004) stated, “what students do during college counts more in terms of desired outcomes than who they are or even where they go to college” (p. 1). The necessity for students to belong and feel a part of a community speaks to the obligation that institutions of higher education have to “get it right,” in relationship to retaining students and creating an environment for them to persist.

Student engagement, as defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), includes five factors: “(a) level of academic challenge, (b) active and collaborative learning, (c) student interactions with faculty, (d) enriching educational experiences, and (e) supportive campus environment” (Kuh, 2003, p. 26). Universities that provide an environment that supports these factors are more likely to retain and graduate their students.

Student retention and persistence continues to be a serious problem facing higher education. In 1975, Tinto developed an important student disengagement model called the interactionist theory. The Tinto model suggested that withdrawing from college was like withdrawing from society, or similar to committing suicide. Tinto (1975) maintained that

students who withdrew from college failed to integrate successfully, academically, or socially into the college environment.

Kuh (2003) suggested that what students do during their time as a student is more important than their experiences prior to higher education or the institution they attend. Student engagement generally is considered to be among the better predictors of learning and personal development. Students, who spend more time studying or practicing a subject, tend to understand it better. Similarly, students who practice and get feedback on their writing, analytical, or problem solving skills are more likely to become adept writers, data analyzers, and problem solvers (Kuh, 2003). The act of being engaged enhances the foundation of skills and dispositions that are necessary for a productive and satisfying life after college. College students who engage in educationally productive activities are likely to form habits of the mind and heart that improve their desire for continuous learning and personal development (Shulman, 2002).

Student retention has been studied for many years, with retention and persistence programs implemented in several formats. Institutional programs that have an emphasis on student engagement have been found to increase student retention and persistence positively. Four theories that best support the impact of student engagement are: (a) Tinto's interactionist theory of voluntary student departure; (b) Astin's theory of involvement; (c) Milem and Berger's development of the behavior-perception-behavior cycle model of student persistence; and (d) Kuh's theory of student engagement (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE]). "If student engagement could deliver on its promises, it could hold the magic wand making all of this possible" (Trowler, 2010, p. 2).

This study examined student engagement at an urban, commuter, public, research university in the Midwest using data collected in the 2012 NSSE. The goal of this study was to

stimulate conversation between policy makers, staff, and students about ways to improve retention, learning, equality/social justice, institutional benefit, and economics. The study also examined African American students, as a subgroup, to determine if this population had similar or different experiences related to student engagement.

Statement of the Problem

Gates (2007) argued that “Education has always been the gate way to a better life in this country . . . innovation is the source of U.S. economic leadership and the foundation of our competitiveness in the global economy” (para. 2). Gates encouraged Americans to “demand strong schools so that young Americans enter the workforce with the math, science and problem-solving skills they need to succeed in the knowledge economy” (para. 6). He further asserted for America to remain competitive in the global economy, “we must....commit to an ambitious national agenda for education” (para. 9).

If the nation’s higher education institutions are not retaining their students, they are not graduating their students. The National Center on Educational Statistics (NCES; Aud et al., 2012) provided the following data regarding graduation rates for baccalaureate institutions in the United States. The six-year graduation rate for public and private baccalaureate institutions was 58.3%. Specific to baccalaureate public institutions, the six-year graduation rate was 56% (Aud et al., 2013). For this same institution type, the overall national graduation rate was 38.6% for African American students in comparison to 59.6% for European American students was (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2012).

Nearly half of all students who enter higher education fail to complete bachelor’s degrees within six years. As a result of this failure to complete educational programs in a timely manner, individual students and society in general could experience a broad array of negative

consequences. The national negative consequences include higher total incarcerations rates, lower levels of academic preparation among future generations, and lower rates of civic participation among citizens (Museus & Quaye, 2009).

In light of these considerations, fostering college student success has never been more important (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006). Forecasts suggest that, in the near future, approximately 80% of all high school graduates are expected to need additional education to achieve economic self-sufficiency and successfully navigate the increasingly complex cultural, social, and political environments they can expect to encounter (McCabe, 2000). Moreover, if racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment persist, projections indicate that the numbers of college-educated workers in the United States may fall far short of those needed to sustain economic and social growth, a reality that could have consequences for the nation's economy (Museus & Quaye, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

As depicted in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, "Love & Belonging" was an important factor in the motivation and persistence of human beings. According to Maslow, after physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, the third level of human need is interpersonal and involves feelings of belonging. Maslow believed that humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance among their social groups, regardless if these groups are large or small.

Over the last several decades in higher education, theorists (e.g., Tinto, Astin, Milem & Berger, and Kuh) have discussed, directly or indirectly, the importance of "belonging" as it relates to student retention and persistence. The notion of "belonging" in higher education has progressively evolved into the concept of student engagement.

Student engagement has been defined as “participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which lead to a range of measurable outcomes” (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008, p. 550). Krause and Coates (2008) argued that research in higher education has shown that students who are engaged in institutional events are more likely to experience high-quality academic outcomes and achieve their educational goals. Similarly, engagement has been defined as “the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes” (Kuh et al., 2008, p. 551).

Engagement also has been defined as:

Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimize the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution. (Trowler, 2010, p. 3).

Combining these perspectives, Kuh (2009) expanded his definition of student engagement as the extent to which students spend time and effort on activities that are associated with their anticipated college outcomes and the efforts of colleges and universities used to encourage students to become involved in these activities. Coates (as cited in Trowler, 2010) described engagement as a broad construct intended to encompass salient academic as well as certain non-academic aspects of the student experience (p.122). Trowler (2010) indicated that engagement was comprised as the following:

- Active and collaborative learning;
- Participation in challenging academic activities;
- Formative communication with academic staff;
- Involvement in enriching education experience;

- Feeling legitimated and supported by university learning communities. (Trowler, 2010, p. 7)

Tinto (as cited in Milem & Berger, 1997) supported the importance of student involvement for college students to experience positive educational outcomes. In addition, Tinto stressed that the relationship between the student engagement in learning and the influence of that engagement on student retention needs to be understood. According to Tinto:

There appears to be an important link between learning and persistence that arises from the interplay of involvement and the quality of student effort. Involvement with one's peers and with the faculty, both inside and outside the classroom, is itself positively related to the quality of student effort and in turn to both learning and persistence. (as cited in Milem & Berger, 1997, p. 387)

Astin's (as cited in Milem & Berger, 1997) "theory of involvement is rooted in a longitudinal study of college student persistence from which Astin concluded that factors contributing to persistence were associated with student involvement in college life" (p. 387). In contrast, students' noninvolvement was found to be a contributing factor in a student's decision to drop out of college. The core concept of the involvement theory was based on three components: inputs, environments, and outcomes. The core concepts of the theory are composed of three elements:

1. a student's "inputs" include their demographics, their background, and any previous experiences;
2. the student's "environment" accounts for all of the experiences a student would have during college;
3. "outcomes" are the characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values that exist after a student has graduated college (Astin, 1984, para 1)

Astin (1984) also developed five basic postulates about student involvement, including:

1. Involvement requires an investment of psychosocial and physical energy.
2. Involvement is continuous, and that the amount of energy invested varies from student to student.
3. Aspects of involvement may be qualitative and quantitative.
4. Students' gain from being involved (or their development) is directly proportional the extent to which were involved (in both aspects of quality and quantity).
5. Academic performance is correlated with the student involvement (Astin, 1984, p. 519)

Milem and Berger (1997) suggested that as students become more involved in college, they develop perceptions about the institutions that can influence institutional commitment and social integration. Using constructs from Astin's (1984) theory of involvement and Tinto's (1975, 1993) interactionalist model of student departure, Milem and Berger (1997) developed the behavior-perception-behavior cycle model to explain the process of student making a successful transition into the institution and becoming incorporated into college life. (Waters, 2008)

According to the Milem and Berger (1997), in the Behavior-Perception-Behavior Cycle Model, students come to the institution with "specific entry characteristics" and different levels of commitment to graduation from the institution. Milem and Berger referred to this phase as initial institutional commitment (IC1). As students encounter new experiences and ideas, as well as interact with staff, faculty and other students, they develop perceptions about these experiences and the institution. These perceptions influence the extent, to which students become incorporated or integrated into the setting, feel they "fit" at the institution and are supported by the institution. Milem and Berger (as cited in Waters, 2008) suggested that students' perceptions of their experiences could influence future levels of involvement and institutional commitment (IC2) or departure.

With the start of the NSSE in 2000, Kuh (2003) revealed that the intention was to measure “the extent to which students are engaged in empirically derived good educational practices and what they gain from their college experience” (p. 1). The visibility of the construct of student engagement within the field of higher education increased dramatically as institutions began to assess engagement in a more intentional and empirical way. As a result, colleges and universities are gaining an understanding of the levels of engagement of their first-year and senior students. In addition, universities are offered recommendations for practical ways to support and encourage this engagement (Schreiner & Louis, 2006).

In a study conducted by Waters (2008), student engagement of African American students was measured at an urban Catholic university using 2003 and 2005 data collected from the NSSE. Waters concluded that few differences were found for African American students’ perception of engagement between the two survey years. However, according to the results, African American students were spending less time preparing for classes (studying) and completing reading and writing assignments than Caucasian students. This finding regarding differences in the amount of reading and writing in which students were involved could suggest that students were not as engaged academically as faculty and administrator would expect and that African American students were even less engaged. This result was consistent with a study by Sailes (1993) that indicated the primary reason for African American student attrition was academic difficulty. (Waters, 2008).

Waters (2008) also found a difference between African American and Caucasian students’ participation in co-curricular activities. While the level of participation in co-curricular activities was low for all participants, African American students were less likely than Caucasian students to participate in co-curricular activities. However, the significantly lower participation

of African American students raised additional questions. Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) noted that the prevalence of White culture on predominantly White campuses may lead minority students to self-segregate. They may feel that they do not fit into the social culture of the institution and choose to avoid situations in which they are not comfortable. (Waters, 2008)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the importance of student retention and persistence and the role that student engagement has on that process. The study also will:

1. Examine if student engagement, as defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five factors (i.e., “level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment” [Kuh, 2003, p. 26]) differ between national outcomes as compared to those in an urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest,
2. Examine if student engagement differs between African-American students and Caucasian student at an urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest, and
3. Examine if a difference exists between perceptions of freshman and senior level students on the levels of engagement.

Research Questions

This study examined the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data of freshmen and senior level students at a Midwest urban institution. The NSSE five facets of engagement that will be consider are: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

1. Considering NSSE's five facets of engagement at an urban, research institution in the Midwest, is there a difference in perceptions of students' levels of engagement when compared to national outcomes?
2. To what extent is there a difference in the 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement between African American students and Caucasian students enrolled in an urban, research institution in the Midwest?
3. Considering 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement at an urban, research institution in the Midwest, is there a difference between perceptions of freshman and senior level students between the levels of engagement?

Significance of the Study

The literature suggests that student engagement contributes to successful retention and persistence to graduation. Understanding the importance of student engagement factors is essential to higher education administrators, governmental bodies, parents and students. Institutions that make it a strategic priority to enhance and influence their student's perception and ability to experience meaningful educational outcomes, both inside and outside the classroom, will position themselves to lead in the turnaround of student retention and persistence.

Students receive the benefits of engagement, by design—as summarized by Kuh (2009a):

...engagement increases the odds that a student's—educational and social background notwithstanding—will attain his or her educational and personal objectives, acquire the skills and competencies demanded by the challenges of the twenty-first century, and enjoy the intellectual and monetary advantages associated with the completion of the baccalaureate degree. (p. 698)

However, student engagement benefits more than the individual; information about student engagement also can be a useful tool for managers. Coates (2010) suggested colleges and

universities can determine areas of excellence along with identifying areas needing improvement by evaluating engagement and outcomes of their students. When institutions use strategic planning to distribute resources associated with teaching and support services, administration can distribute results of their outcomes to demonstrate the value of the feedback cycle.

According to Coates (2005):

Data on student engagement has the advantage of providing information on what students are actually doing. While this may appear self-evident, it has a broader significance for the management of institutions, students and academic programmes. Rather than work from assumptions or partial anecdotal reports about student activities, institutions can make decisions based on more objective information. Information about student activities would provide institutions with valuable information for marketing and recruitment and help them become more responsive to student learning needs. Only with accurate and reliable information on what students are actually doing can institutions move beyond taking student activities for granted. (p. 32)

This study also could assist administrators and instructors at an urban, research university in the Midwest to understand the outcomes of students' responses to a national survey on student engagement. The findings of this research could provide data to determine if programing designed to engage students at this institution is comparable to national outcomes, as well as establishing programs to increase retention and graduation rates. Results of this study could provide an impetus to examine cost effectiveness of implementing additional programs or eliminating ineffective programs that are designed to engage students. Moreover, this study could add to the body of research in determining if significant differences in engagement exist at this institution between African American student and Caucasian students.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations may affect the generalizability of this study:

- This study used data obtained from a public, urban, Midwestern, primarily commuter, research institution. The results of this study might not be applicable to other institution types (e.g. private) or those institutions in different geographic settings (e.g. suburban or rural).
- This study had components that focused on African American students; therefore, the results might not be applicable to students of other races and ethnic groups.
- The study obtained perceptual information from the students resulting in response bias. While the participants were expected to respond honestly, they may have answered in ways that reflected what they thought the researcher wanted.

Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms in this section is directly related to the research that were used throughout the research. The following terms should add precision and clarity of understanding.

Term	Definition
Academic integration	Grade performance in accordance with the academic standards of the institution and the student's "identification with the norms of the academic system" (Tinto, 1975, p. 194).
Academically underprepared	Students who did not meet the institution's criteria for regular admissions
African American or Black	People whose ancestry originated from Africa

American College Testing (ACT)	A standardized test that colleges and universities use as part of its admissions criteria to assess student achievement in high school and predict college outcomes
Attrition	The number of students who do not reenroll at their college or university.
At-risk	Students who may fall in the categories' of: minority, first-generation, academically underprepared or a low socioeconomic backgrounds
Cultural deficiency	Refers to a theoretical argument that the cultural attributes or practices often associated with historically disenfranchised racial/ethnic groups (specifically, blacks and Latinos) have prevented them from assimilating and attaining social mobility within U.S. society.
Dropout	A student who does not complete his or her academic goals by earning a degree or does not plan in the immediate future to continue their college education.
Embodied cultural capital	A students' disposition and behavior formed during the early socialization process, which influenced how they perceived and interacted with teachers.
Engagement	The extent to which students participate in a variety of college activities and are encouraged to do so by the institution to reach desired educational outcomes (e.g., demanding coursework, inclusive environments, frequent and educationally purposeful contact with faculty, administrators and peers). This term sometimes is used interchangeably with the term "involvement."
First time in any college (FTIAC)	An acronym for students who are attending college for the first time.
Graduation rate	The percentage of students who completed their coursework and graduated in a specified cohort within a specific period of time.
Hidden Curriculum	The unwritten and unspoken values, dispositions, and social and behavioral expectations that govern the interactions between teachers and students within schools.

Involvement	“The physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1984, p. 297). Examples of engagement include: time spent studying, participation in student organizations/extra-curricular activities, and interaction with faculty and other students.
Nontraditional student	A student over the age 25 and over, who generally works full-time, and/or has a family.
Persistence	Staying in a college or university from admittance through graduation.
Predominately White Institution (PWI)	Institution with a majority of White students. The term, Traditionally White, is used interchangeably with Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs).
Retention	A college/university’s ability to retain a student from admission to the university through graduation
Social integration	Interaction with and the successful incorporation of students with the various social systems of the institution (e.g., interactions with faculty in and outside the classroom, peers and other institutional staff, as well as involvement in extra-curricular activities).
Stop-out	A student who withdraws from an institution or system temporarily, with the intention of returning to complete his/her education.
Student engagement	Participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes.
Traditional student	Students who are under 25 years of age, typically single, and may be working part-time.
WASP	An informal term for a closed group of high-status Americans of English Protestant ancestry. The term applied to a group believed to control disproportionate social and financial power.
Withdrawal	Students who choose to leave a college or university campus.

Outline for the Study

Chapter 1 has presented an overview of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, limitations, and definition of terms. The second chapter provides a comprehensive review of related literature, with the methods used to collect and analyze the data, included in the third chapter. Results of the data analysis are provided in Chapter 4, followed by the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Undergraduate student retention continues to be an important contemporary issue facing higher education from both an academic and economic perspective. In today's world approximately half of students with dreams and aspirations based on their future receipt of an earned certificate or degree, leave the university with that dream either stalled or ended. This situation, coupled with issues of declining enrollment, brings forth the reality of a diminishing revenue stream that supports and drives the forward progress of institutions of higher learning (Swail, 2003).

Beyond the financial effects, institutions also have an ethical obligation to retain students. Students who leave before graduation—especially low-income and disadvantaged students—often do so with sizable loan burdens and poor prospects for employment without the degree they originally sought. As a further complication, these students have a high propensity to default on their student loans, affecting their credit rating and creating deeper financial concerns.

If the goal is to support student retention and foster their success, why are institutions still hesitating to make appropriate investments in retention programs? Many retention programs focus on reducing attrition rates among students, especially students of color and first-generation college students. These programs continue to operate from a cultural deficiency model. For instance, many retention programs, work under the assumption that certain students need help only with academic skills (e.g., reading, analytical, and writing skills). As a result, most retention programs provide students with services, such as tutoring, mentoring, remedial courses, freshmen seminars, and college survival skill courses (e.g., time management, note-taking, and

test-taking strategies). While these services are invaluable, access to a more comprehensive retention program that focuses on student engagement is increasingly important to students' academic success and retention through graduation.

The purpose of present research was to examine student retention and persistence along with the role of student engagement on that process as defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five factors (i.e., level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment, Kuh, 2003, p. 26). The topics included in the study:

1. Examined differences in student engagement between national outcomes as compared to those in an urban, commuter institution located in the Midwest,
2. Examined differences in student engagement between African-American and Caucasian students in an urban, commuter institution located in the Midwest, and
3. Examined differences in student engagement between perceptions of freshman and senior level students at an urban, commuter research institution located in the Midwest.

Over the last several decades, many leaders in higher education have endorsed theories that directly or indirectly speak to the importance of student engagement related to student retention and persistence. However, in attempting to determine the meaning of 'engagement,' "some authors have considered its antithesis—if a student is not engaged, then what are they?" (Trowler, 2010, p. 4). According to Mann (2001), engagement could be contrasted with *alienation*. He suggested that engagement – alienation dyad was a better way to appreciate the association that students have with their learning than the surface-strategic-deep triad (Marton &

Saljo, 1976), because both ‘surface’ and ‘strategic’ tactics used for learning are reactions to becoming alienated from the substance and the procedures related to learning (Trowler, 2010).

Krause (2005) listed “inertia, apathy, disillusionment or engagement in other pursuits” as alternatives to engagement for the student” (p. 4). In addition to the definitions of student engagement typically included in research literature, Krause found two explanations of the concept. The first explanation is similar to an appointment, such as “I have an engagement at two o’clock tomorrow afternoon,” indicating that engagement with classes and study was time delimited and needed to be recorded in their calendars. The second clarification was more aligned with student experiences:

For some students, engagement with the university experience is like engaging in a battle, a conflict. These are the students for whom the culture of the university is foreign and at times alienating and uninviting. (p. 4)

This concept of a “dark,” negative type of engagement contradicts Mann’s perception of alienation as the antonym of engagement. Engagement becomes a conceptual struggle that can be addressed by differentiating between the passive answer to alienation (withdrawal or apathy) and the active (conflict), which becomes a type of engagement (Trowler, 2010).

Researchers, who strive to understand and unravel the many dimensions of engagement, understand there are many facets that influence college persistence behavior that should be considered. Many of the dimensions of engagement, focus more on the desired outcomes of what students do during college than on who they are or where they attend college. What is paramount in the development of college students has much more to do with the time and dedication students apply to educationally purposeful activities. This type of engagement has been identified as a better predictor of a student’s ability to learn and personally develop. (Astin, 1993; Pace, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

There are institutional practices that have resulted in increased indicators of student engagement. One of the best known set of engagement indicators is the “Seven Principles for Good Practices in Undergraduate Education”:

1. Contact between students and faculty;
2. Cooperation among student;
3. Active learning;
4. Prompt feedback;
5. Time on task;
6. High expectation; and
7. Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning (Kuh, 2009b)

In addition to student learning, students also want to be a part of an institutional environment that promotes inclusiveness, belonging and a reasonably high level of academic expectations that are clearly communicated. Colleges and universities that value these factors and incorporate them into appropriate activities of engagement have had positive response to student satisfaction and achievement levels. (Educational Commission of the States, 1995; The Study Group, 1984).

Institutions that strategically use programing instruments that focus on contributing to a student’s perception and ability to experience valued educational outcomes, both inside and outside the classroom, compare favorably to other colleges and universities where student engagement is not the focus (Kuh, 2001). Student engagement is important to the success of student retention and persistence (Trowler, 2010).

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature on retention, persistence and student engagement of college students. In addition to the theoretical framework that underlies the present study, the topics that are included in this review are: The Importance of Student

Engagement; The Institution's Role in Student Engagement; The Global Effects of African American and Minority Student Retention; and the Consequences of the Hidden Curriculum.

Theoretical Framework

Over the last several decades, research studies that address student retention and persistence in postsecondary institutions have grown significantly. Various perspectives have derived from this research in both models and theories of student engagement. In many cases the research, theories and models acknowledge that student engagement is beneficial to the student. However, understanding that student engagement is critically important and has a residual impact on higher education administrators, governmental bodies and parents is equally important. For the present study, theories of academic and social integration (sociological), student involvement (behavioral), and student engagement (psychological) are the focus.

The theoretical framework underlying most research on first-year college students and retention is Tinto's (1975) student integration model that theorized students who persist and succeed in college are those who are able to integrate successfully into an institution's social and academic environment. Tinto's student integration model (1975), based in part on Durkheim's theory of suicide, was an important model of student disengagement. The model suggested that withdrawing from college was like withdrawing from society, or like committing suicide. Tinto (1975) maintained that students who withdraw from college have failed to integrate successfully, either academically or socially, in a college environment.

Tinto's descriptive theory was modeled most directly from the research of Spady (1971), who made a correlation between committing suicide and dropping out of school. Spady, comparisons suggest that in both cases a person leaves a social system. Émile Durkheim, the French philosopher, sociologist and researcher found that there were some people that committed

suicide because they lacked or did not value the role they played in the social system of which they felt they were supposed to belong and they felt a lack of support from a friend or family support system. (Bean & Eaton, 2001). Durkheim argued that two social facts influence suicide rates: integration, or the strength of attachment people feel to society, and regulation, or the degree of external constraint on people (Bean & Eaton, 2001).

At the core of his model, Tinto argues a student who failed to master some level of academic or social integration is likely to leave school. This thought pattern was borrowed by Tinto from Spady who used Durkheim's two hypothesized to identify concepts of social and academic integration. Social integration embodies the development of relationships and friendships with other students and faculty members that promote social contact and participation in student activities. Academic integration allows the sharing of academic values and information within a place of intellectual freedom that empowers both the student and teacher to interact more as peers or the same level socially. (Bean & Eaton, 2001).

Tinto (1974) theorized that students' social integration increases their institutional commitment, ultimately reducing the likelihood of student attrition. As Tinto (1975) wrote, "It is the interplay between the individual's commitment to the goal of college completion and his commitment to the institution that determines whether or not the individual decides to drop out" (p. 96).

In 1993 Tinto expanded on his initial model by introducing the notion that a student's departure from college has similar attributes of an individual who has failed to negotiate the rites of passage and thus feels pressure to leave the community. Tinto's exploration theorized that a student's continued presence in college was directly associated with the student's ability to separate themselves from old friends and family and then taking important steps which allows

them to fully engage and identify with values of new students and faculty and commit themselves to embracing the values and behaviors of their circumstance. (Bean & Eaton, 2001).

Building on Van Gennep's classic, *Rites of Passage*, Tinto (1988, 1993) asserted that student persistence includes three stages – (a) separation, (b) transition, and (c) incorporation. Students typically pass through these stages in completing their degree programs. Van Gennep (as cited in Tinto, 1988) described the rite of passage to adulthood as stages consisting of alterations in how individuals and other members of society interact. These interaction patterns include:

The first stage, *separation*, involves the separation of the individual from past associations and is characterized by a marked decline in interactions with members of the group from which the person has come. The second stage, *transition*, is a period during which the person begins to interact in new ways with members of the new group into which membership is sought. It is during this transitional stage that individuals come to learn the knowledge and skills required for the performance of their specific role in the new group. The third and last phase, *incorporation*, involves the taking on the new patterns of interaction with members of the new group and the establishing of competent membership in that groups as a participant member. (Tinto, 1988, p. 441)

Van Gennep's research was referenced by Tinto (1988, 1993) to develop a model to understand how students persistent in college by using an extension of the time-dependent process associated with student departure.

Tinto's model has been revised or enhanced by a number of researchers who used important aspects of Tinto's academic and social integration theory in the development of a psychological, rather than sociological, model, to help others understand specific psychological methods that are recognized in retaining students. Tinto (1997) later updated his student integration model to include the importance of classroom experiences on student success and persistence (Swail, 2003).

However, higher education theorists have questioned the applicability of Tinto's model, specifically analyzing his analogy between the first year of college and a cultural rite of passage (Kuh & Love, 2000; Tierney, 1992). Kuh and Love (2000) argued that rites of passage are defined as transitions that occur within a culture rather than taking place in the transition from one culture to another. Thus, by this definition, students' experiences when entering college should not be equated to this anthropologic stage.

Kuh and Love (2000) agreed that the first year of college is worthy of cultural study. They used a cultural lens to define a new model to explore student participation in and departure from higher education. This model is based on Martin's (1992) differentiation perspective, which argued that people interpret aspects of group life differently. Kuh and Love (2000) explained that this perspective consists of eight propositions:

1. The college experience, including a decision to leave college, is mediated through a student's cultural meaning-making system.
2. One's culture of origin mediate[s] the importance attached to attending college and earning a college degree.
3. Knowledge of a student's cultures of origin and the cultures of immersion is needed to understand a student's ability to negotiate the institution's cultural milieu successfully.
4. The probably of persistence is inversely related to the cultural distance between a student's culture(s) of origin and the cultures of immersion.
5. Students who traverse a long cultural distance must become acclimated to dominant cultures of immersion or join one or more enclaves.
6. The amount of time a student spends in one's culture of origin after matriculating is positively related to cultural stress and reduces the chances they will persist.
7. The likelihood a student will persist is related to the extensity and intensity of one's sociocultural connections to the academic program and to affinity groups.

8. Students who belong to one or more enclaves in the cultures of immersion are more likely to persist, especially if group members value achievement and persistence. (Kuh & Love, 2000, p. 201)

In the realm of college persistence, outside of Tinto's interactionist theory, Astin's theory of student involvement is among the most widely cited approaches in higher education literature. Astin's (1975) theory identified factors in the college environment that affects students' persistence. This theory was a longitudinal study that focused on college dropouts and their behavior. The theory suggested that positive factors were inclined to increase student involvement, while negative factor reduced involvement. The theory demonstrated that students that persisted in college were involved and those students that dropped out were not involved (Astin, 1999). According to Astin:

Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students. Conversely, a typical uninvolved student neglects studies, spends little time on campus, abstains from extracurricular activities, and has infrequent contact with faculty members or other students. (p. 518)

Astin (1999), who previously worked as a clinical psychologist, believed his theory of involvement closely resembled the Freudian concept of *cathexis*. Freud believed that people invested mental or emotional energy in a person, object, or idea. The student involvement theory has similar attributes, as described by learning theorists who traditionally referred to as *vigilance* or *time-on-task*. The concept of *effort*, although much narrower, is similar to the concept of involvement. (Astin, 1984)

Astin (as cited in Milem & Berger, 1997) suggested five basic postulates in his theory of involvement:

1. involvement means the investment of physical and psychological energy in different “objects” that range in the degree of their specificity;
2. involvement occurs along a continuum, with different students investing different amounts of energy in various objects at various times;
3. involvement includes quantitative and qualitative components;
4. the amount of students learning and personal development is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of involvement; and
5. the effectiveness of any educational practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase involvement (p. 387).

Astin (as cited in Milem & Berger, 1997) maintained that the final two postulates provided helpful “clues for designing more effective educational programs for students” (p. 387).

The theory of student involvement is centered on students and their motivation in the learning process. This theory suggests that the technical practices and execution of an educators teaching, books and resources are not what engages students. A student’s involvement has to do more with a student’s sense of engagement, personal commitment, and perception of belonging in an institution than any particular style or format of teaching (Astin, 1999).

Milem and Berger (1997) suggested that as students become more involved in college, they develop perceptions about the institution that can influence commitment and social integration. Using constructs from Astin’s 1984 theory of involvement and Tinto’s (1975, 1993) interactionist model of student departure, Milem and Berger (1997) developed the behavior-perception-behavior cycle model to explain the process of student making a successful transition into the institution and becoming incorporated into college life.

An examination of Astin and Tinto’s work lead to more specificity in the relationship between these two influential theories (Milem & Berger, 1997). The three questions driving the behavior-perception-behavior cycle model were:

1. What behavioral mechanisms in the campus environment(s) facilitate or inhibit the integration process?
2. Does the addition of behavioral involvement constructs improve our understanding of the integration process? and
3. What is the relationship between student behaviors and student perceptions in the integration process? (p. 388)

In their persistence model, Milem and Berger (1997) demonstrated that students begin to engage in a variety of behaviors that represent different forms and types of involvement (or lack of involvement). Furthermore, subsequent involvement can influence the level of student institutional commitment that can influence if students become integrated into the college's social and academic systems successfully.

Milem and Berger (1997) revealed that when students enter an institution they arrive with specific entry characteristics. Some students have stronger levels of commitment to graduating from a particular institution than others. Initial levels of institutional commitment can lead to varying degrees of involvement during the fall semester. Student involvement with the campus environment leads to perceptions of institutional and peer support. These perceptions of support can affect the levels of subsequent involvement in the campus environment during the spring semester. These involvement behaviors can influence subsequent levels of institutional commitment, which in turn affect students' departure decisions.

More specifically, Milem and Berger's model measured the interaction between students and their environment by examining how involvement behaviors affect perceptions, which in turn influence subsequent behavior. This behavior-perception-behavior cycle provides an explanatory mechanism for describing how students navigate the stages of incorporation (Milem & Berger, 1997).

The theory of student engagement suggested that institutions have the power of influence and play a vital role in the process of retaining students and building an environment of persistence (Kuh, 2003). Institutions that have programmatic interventions such as learning communities, first-year seminars, and service learning courses within the curriculum, support and promote student engagement (Zhao & Khu, 2004). The positive influence of these interventions has been demonstrated in the academic grades for both the first and last year of college. The success of the intervention on grades coupled with other pre-college characteristics linked with successful outcomes, such as merit aid and parental education, also effect positively, student engagement regardless of a student's racial and ethnic background.

Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2008) established in their research that the students at the same institutions that were successful on first-year grades and went on to persist to the second year of college, found benefit in these educational practices and considered themselves engaged in the culture of that institution. This sentiment holds true and perhaps more so for lower ability students and students of color, compared to White Students. Cruce, Wolniak, Seifer, and Pascarella (2006) suggest that the impact of engagement is so powerful and transformative for these populations that institutions should strategically seek ways to channel student energy towards educationally purposeful programs, especially for students arriving to college with two or more "risk" factors (i.e. first in their family to attend college, academically underprepared or a background of low income). An effective school program leader will understand who these students are, how they have been prepared academically, and what their expectations are of the college and university as well as themselves.

Pike and Kuh (2002, 2005) classified seven types of institutional engagement using results from the NSSE. These classifications were based on six factors, with no college or

university scoring exceptionally high or low on all engagement factors. These findings advised that colleges and universities have different views on how they engage students, and that these perspectives were not the outcome of conscious methods. Pike and Kuh's seven types of engaging colleges and universities are:

1. *Diverse, but interpersonally fragmented*: Students at these colleges and universities have extensive encounters with diversity and are likely to be technologically savvy. They do not perceive that their college or university provides sufficient support for their academic and social concerns. Students typically do not consider their peers are supportive or encouraging. As a result, the college or university is considered a difficult place to learn and live.
2. *Homogeneous and interpersonally cohesive*: While students perceive their peers at their college or university are supportive, the student body as a whole is not racially or ethnically diverse. These types of colleges and universities are opposite of the diverse, but interpersonally fragmented.
3. *Intellectually stimulating*: Students at these colleges and universities have opportunities to participate in different academic activities and are encouraged to interact with their instructors both in and out of the classrooms. These students also are involved in working collaboratively with their cohorts on academic projects that require using critical thinking and problem solving skills.
4. *Interpersonally supportive*: Students who enroll in these colleges and universities can expect to have many experiences with diverse students. They perceive their cohort group and their campus environment will be supportive of their academic efforts.

Students also can expect that they will be able to interact with faculty members both in and out of the classroom.

5. *High-tech, low touch*: The students who attend this type of college or university can expect to work on an individual basis as information technology has the greatest influence to the degree that interactions between students and faculty are sparse. Students do not collaborate, little academic challenge, and interactions among students are rare.
6. *Academically challenging and supportive*: At these types of colleges and universities, faculty has high standards and higher-order thinking and problem solving are emphasized. Although, the students are not engaged in working in groups, they perceive that the campus and other students are supportive of their efforts to learn. The college or university is viewed as typically pleasant and sociable to undergraduates who want to learn.
7. *Collaborative*: Colleges and universities that are categorized as collaborative encourage students to be helpful and understanding of their peers, although this type of environment may be facilitated with technology. Experiences with diversity are limited, with students able to interact with faculty who are considered supportive (Trowley, 2010)

Institutions that can identify its characteristics, from the seven types of engaging institutions distilled by Pike and Kuh, are perhaps more likely to understand the important role it plays in student engagement and perceptions of student engagement.

The Importance of Student Engagement

Student engagement has been defined in the literature in many ways. Trowler (2010) synthesized the definitions as follows:

Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimize the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution. (p. 3)

Kuh et al. (2007) defined student engagement as students being involved in practices that are considered academically in and out of class that can result in assessable outcomes. Krause and Coates (2008) asserted that “the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes” (p. 493). Similarly, Hu and Kuh (2001) defined engagement as “the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes” (p. 3). Implied in definitions of student engagement is that the purpose of engagement differs across the literature, resulting in variety of views on the goals and principles of engagement (Trowler, 2010).

Student engagement has become an authentic source for determining if a student is learning and developing personally in college. The engagement of a college student enhances their ability and willingness to study and practice a subject more, resulting in them learning more. Another important concept is, those students who are given opportunities to practice their skills, specifically in writing, analyzing, and problem solving are more likely to become adept at these skills (Kuh, 2003). The experience of engagement contributes to the mastering of basic skills and dispositions that are necessary for becoming productive citizens and enjoying a satisfying life post-graduation. According to Shulman (2002), students develop positive habits

while engaged in academic and social activities in their institutions that result in becoming lifelong learners.

With colleges and universities encountering problematic financial problems, recruiting and retaining students, providing experiences that result in satisfied students, and assuring students their education can help them achieve success is important. As it relates to student engagement, the importance of community and collaboration in learning comes from at least two groups. Social constructivists, such as Lev Vygotsky, emphasize that “students do not learn in isolation” while cognitive psychologists maintain “people naturally learn and work collaboratively” (Rovai, 2007, p. 79). Laurillard (2000) argued that colleges and universities must provide students with more than access to information and content. Colleges must include “engagement with others in the gradual development of their personal understanding” (Laurillard, 2000, p. 137). Engagement is developed through student interaction, with peers and instructor (Rovai, 2007).

Engagement with learning is essential, because it is engagement that leads to sustained interaction and practice. Coaching, instruction, and feedback become important to ensure that students develop good habits and increase their proficiency. Increased competence typically results in motivation to engage further, generating a cycle of engagement and developing competence that supports improved student achievement (Irvin, Meltzer, & Dukes, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, the focus examined student engagement through the lens of the five facets based on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the annual survey conducted among public and private higher educations in the US and Canada.

The five facets are:

1. *Academic challenge* – the extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn);
2. *Active learning* – students’ efforts to actively construct their knowledge);
3. *Student and staff interactions* – the level and nature of students’ contact with teaching staff);
4. *Enriching educational experiences* – student participation in broadening educational activities); and
5. *Supportive learning environment* – feelings of legitimation within the university community; Kuh, 2003, p. 26).

The Institution’s Role in Student Engagement

Attending college is more important than ever. The intensity and complexity of social and political issues are a reality that is impacting our world right now. The necessity to produce and employ workers with skills and competencies beyond a high school education is impacting every sector of our economy. The widespread interest in the quality of undergraduate education is not surprising. State legislators, accreditors, parents, employers, and others are interested in what students are learning and what they can do after graduation (Kuh, 2001).

Colleges and universities understand the adverse impact substandard retention rates have on the country’s race for global excellence. While the research does not address issues regarding policies focusing on finances, evaluation of academic outcomes, and quality of education, the concerns about low college completion and lack of student engagement in colleges and universities could become the focus. For example, if a policy was created that was concerned about student learning instead of teaching, colleges and universities would need to determine what students are learning instead of how institutions are supporting students. Funding could be

contingent on engagement rather than basic measures of quantity rates. Retention could allow funders a more nuanced view of value for money than the twofold ‘graduating’ vs. ‘dropping out’ frameworks (Trowler, 2010).

The development of a successful campus-wide retention program is necessary to support student retention and persistence. The creation of a retention policy in colleges and universities needs support from administration, readiness to make changes, and development of a comprehensive plan. If any of these factors are missing, the chances for success are limited. Ultimate success of a student retention effort depends on the unequivocal support from the office of the president or provost, the involvement of the entire campus in shaping program operations and the important practice of keeping ideology focused on the student (Swail, 2003).

In a time of declining enrollments, retention programs and student persistence is key to sustaining fiscal health in organizations of higher education (Tillman, 2002). However, many colleges and universities do not measure the cost-effectiveness of campus programs, leaving administrators without the information necessary to determine if student retention programs are worth the investment. Marlene B. Seltzer, president and CEO of Jobs for the Future stated, “For U.S. businesses and workers to remain globally competitive, the nation’s higher education system must find ways to graduate more students without spending more money” (Press Release: Are College Retention Programs a Smart Investment, n.d., para. 4)

For many institutions, the cost of attrition is extremely high for students, many of whom choose to dropout rather than “flunk” out, as well as also for society and culture. On average, it costs about \$6,000 to recruit, enroll, and process each new college or university student. Every student who leaves takes at least \$12,000 out the door with him or her. The average student dropout costs an institution the initial financial investment of \$6,000 to recruit and enroll him or

her, as well as the additional \$6,000 it take, to recruit and enroll a replacement. Since most drop outs are not replaced immediately, tuition revenue is also lost equal to the number of dropouts times tuition cost (Raisman, 2009).

Beyond the financial impact, institutions have ethical obligations to retain students. By admitting a student, an institution makes a commitment to that student and incurs a moral obligation to provide him or her with an appropriate level of education and support. Through admissions, the institution essentially asserts: “You belong here, and we’re here to help you.” Institutions that admit students without providing adequate resources and support are not doing themselves or their students any favors (Swail, 2003).

Institutions of higher education can no longer stand by and ignore the academic and economic implication associated with student attrition. There are huge missed opportunities for many institutions that are not investing in student retention programs. The return is invaluable, but the blueprint for success has a pathway that must be followed. Swail (2003) believed the development of any program, at any university requires a multifaceted process that requires soliciting and incorporating input from all campus officials, including administration, faculty, staff, and students. Leadership and faculty ownership are key variables in a successful retention program, with the message communicated from top management that retention is important and requires to the support of the campus staff. A successful retention program must incorporate the three principles that Tinto (1987) developed:

1. The program must be committed to the students that it serves. Program attention must be focused on the targeted population and not to other factors that may cause the direction of the program to go “out of focus.”

2. An effective retention program must be committed to the education of all students, and not just some. Thus, a retention program, while it may incorporate special interventions for special populations, must address the needs of all students if the institution is going to meet its mission of providing all students a quality education.
3. An effective retention program must be committed to the development of supportive social and educational communities on campus. Ensuring the social and academic integration of students is, according to Tinto, the most important issue for managing with student retention (Swail, 2003).

The design of retention programs may need to be different as colleges and universities are uniquely different. The use of assessment surveys can be expensive. Institutions that currently use formal surveys (i.e., NSSE) can add variables to collect data to identify specific factors that need to be addressed in their retention programs. Adding variables to an existing survey, or utilizing existing data better, can help institutions keep cost down.

An emphasis also has been placed on programs and services. According to Berger (2001) many efforts have been used to understand undergraduate persistence, but he builds on the assumption that colleges and universities are organizations and subsequently that the organizational perspective is an appropriate framework for gaining insight on improving undergraduate retention.

Berger (2001) examined five dimensions of organizational behavior that he considers building blocks of the organizational environment on college campuses: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic, and systemic. Berger (2001) argued that the bureaucratic dimension emphasized rationality in organizational decision-making by underscoring the importance of formal structure manifested in rules, regulations, hierarchy, and goals. The collegial dimension

describes organizational behavior in terms of collaboration pertaining to equal participation, human resources, and consensus in setting goals and making decisions. The political dimension refers to behavior due to competition for resources, as well as a variety of interests in individuals and the group. The symbolic dimension uses symbols to create meaning within the organization. The symbols Berger associated with a college campus included logos, seals, stories, myths, ceremonies, traditions, and artifacts. The systemic dimension provides a view of how the organizational system interacts with and relate to the external environment.

In an effort to retain students, many colleges provide programs for students who are grouped into categories, such as underrepresented, financially disadvantaged, disabled, women, and adults. Most colleges and universities have developed retention programs to provide students with services including: tutoring, mentoring, remedial courses, freshmen seminars, and college survival skill courses. These programs have done little or nothing to improve either retention from the first year to the second year or graduation rates. Findings support the need for academic and social integration in retention programs. Colleges and universities must take an integrated approach with their retention programs. Incorporating social factors into the development of retention programs can help address the social and emotional needs of students. The social factors that best combine with the academic factors are described as non-academic factors on the ACT Report, and include: academic self-efficacy, education and learning goals, commitment to the college or university, as well as both social support and involvement. Since the decision to complete a degree program is often made in the first year of a student's introduction to college, early intervention is key.

As important as student engagement can be on the success of a student's educational experience, it does not reflect the only reasons that should be considered when addressing the

inability of many colleges and universities to retain students, more specifically minority and underrepresented population. A university has to use a holistic examination of their processes and practices while exploring and benchmarking success of programs that already exist.

The Global Effects of African American and Minority Student Retention

Many universities have had issues with retaining their underrepresented and minority students for years. African American, Hispanics, and American Indian students are less likely to graduate from college than Caucasians. In 2003, the number of students of color increased from 21.8% in 1993 to 27.8% of 17 million college students in the United States. Although these gains in college enrollment are substantial, African American and Hispanic student enrollment and graduation rates continue to lag behind their Caucasian counterparts. From 2002 to 2004, a higher percentage of Caucasian high school graduates (47.3%) were attending college than either African American (41.1%) or Hispanic (35.2%) college students (American Council on Education, 2010).

Countless colleges and universities recognize that diversity has a positive impact on society, and improves education in college classrooms. In addition to the benefits of having diversity in higher education classrooms, increasing the retention of minorities in colleges and universities help meet the workforce needs of corporation and industry. While diversity on college campuses is good for the brown and black students, learning with people from a variety of backgrounds encourages collaboration and fosters innovation, thereby benefitting all students. The overall academic and social effects of increased racial diversity on campus tend to be positive, ranging from higher levels of academic achievement to the improvement of near- and long-term intergroup relations.

Efforts have been made by many of the nation's higher education communities to recruit more minority students and address some factors to assist retention of these students. Due to these efforts, the student demographics reflected on college and university campuses across America is relatively diverse. A stroll on the lawn at many institutions reveal student populations that vary in gender, age, racial and ethnic background, achievement level, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. The presence of students from culturally diverse backgrounds on college campuses (particularly at predominantly White institutions), has reduced the historical homogenous representation that was apparent in most campus environments (Simmons, 2010). The federal and state governments have focused on the accessibility of colleges and universities. Access to postsecondary education alone does not guarantee academic achievement or degree completion. Although access to higher education has increased, the gap in rates of college completion have not closed (ACT Report, 2010). According to the Minorities in Higher Education 2001-2002 study by the American Council on Education, 59% of Caucasian students graduate within six years of enrolling in college, whereas graduation rates are 38% for African American and Native American students, and 46% for Hispanic students. The disproportionate gap in the graduation rates underscores the need for the higher education community to rethink their strategies for improving the retention of students of color (American Council on Education, 2003).

President Barack Obama has revisited and recommitted to the idea of taking the lead in global academic excellence. To be competitive in today's global economy, the changing demographics of the nation and student body, as well as evolving workforce requirements must be addressed. The consequences of failing to do so could have far-reaching effects on society's quality of life and the nation's economic growth. Projections indicate that within 30 years,

Hispanic and African Americans can be expected to constitute over one-third of the American population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

With these projections, addressing the onset of recent race-neutral policies that have been implemented at the nations' higher education institutions is important. Research shows that race-neutral policies do not work. Scholars have already debunked the myth that a class-based admission system is an adequate replacement for a race-based admission policy as a means of creating greater levels of diversity. A study conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law found that enrollment of African Americans and American Indians fell by more than 70% after implementing a class-based admission system. Research concluded that race-conscious practices are necessary to achieve the level of diversity that reflects the racial/ethnic composition in the United States (Kerby, 2012).

The positive factor is that the majority of Americans support race-conscious policies in higher education. A CBS News/*New York Times* poll in 2009 indicated that the majority of Americans are in favor of promoting diversity on college campuses through race-conscious policies, including the Asian American population, a group that is inaccurately speculated to benefit from the ban of such practices. An Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund poll found that 75% of Asian Americans voters in Michigan rejected Michigan's Proposition 2, a 2006 state referendum seeking to ban race-conscious policies (Kerby, 2012).

Effectively addressing these issues could allow the development of an educated workforce that is prepared for the changing skills. Today, 6 out of every 10 jobs require some postsecondary education and training (ACT Report 2010). Unemployment is lowest among people with at least a bachelor's degree regardless of race. A great divide exists in the earnings for those with a high school diploma and those earning a bachelor's degree over a lifetime.

Average earnings information, as cited by Day and Newburger (2002), confirmed that the power of earning improves with higher levels of education. Aside from higher levels of spending power and savings, college graduates receive other intangible benefits. For example, a college graduate is more likely to have increased chances of professional mobility, therefore giving them an occupational edge. College graduates can improve the quality of life for their offspring, including having options in housing, education, and healthcare. College graduates also are more likely to be involved in hobbies, leisure and recreational activities. (Simmons, 2010)

A report published by the Carnegie Foundation discussed non-monetary benefits for students who participate in higher education. For example, post-secondary education students tend “to become open-minded, more cultured, more rational, more consistent and less authoritarian; these benefits are also passed along to succeeding generations” (Rowley & Hurtado, 2002). Furthermore, individuals who participate in college have lower levels of prejudice, are knowledgeable of world affairs, and have an improved social status (Porter, 2002). Alleman, Stimpson and Holly (2009) discussed the benefits of educated citizens to society. They emphasized that college graduates report better health, volunteer more frequently, give blood more often, turn out in greater numbers to vote, and are more engaged with their children's education. Educated citizens are more likely to support public and private assistance initiatives through their tax dollars and their voluntary giving. Thus, college educated individuals help to reduce the tax burden placed on state and local governments (Simmons, 2010).

The U.S. workforce is becoming more diverse. As of June 2012, people of color comprise 36% of the labor force. The proportion of people of color participating in the workforce is expected to increase as the United States becomes more racially and ethnically diverse. Census data predicts that by 2050 *no racial or ethnic majority* will exist in the United States. Further,

between 2000 and 2050, new immigrants and their children are expected to account for 83% of the growth in the working-age population (Burns, Barton & Kerby, 2012).

As the nation becomes more diverse, institutions of higher education need to reflect this diversity. The growing communities of color are America's future, and preparing people of color as future leaders is important. All students need to be exposed to diversity in education so that they can be more competitive in an increasingly global economy (Kerby, 2012).

The Consequences of the Hidden Curriculum

Many colleges and universities recognize that diversity has a positive effect on society, and improves educational experiences in the college classroom. Attending classes in a racially and ethnically diverse college or university can improve learning, reduce racial prejudice; increase acceptance of others regardless of diversity and facilitate student explorations of diverse perspectives. However, before institutions of higher education open their doors to unique and diverse populations that often need additional support, they must understand who they are, both positive and negative, as it relates to their philosophy or academic reputation. On a continuous basis, institutions must examine their policies and practices concerning inclusion and perception. An institution cannot engage its students if consciously, or unconsciously, the institution is designed to exclude some students and embrace others.

One barrier that can hinder successful student engagement and the graduation rates of minorities and underrepresented students is the issue of the hidden curriculum. The concept of the hidden curriculum can be traced back to sociologist Émile Durkheim's *Education and Sociology*, but the term became more widely used within educational research because of Apple's (1979) *Ideology and Curriculum*. This book refers to the unwritten and unspoken values,

dispositions, and social and behavioral expectations that govern the interactions between teachers and students within schools (Smith, 2004).

Phillip Jackson's *Life in the Classroom*, was one of the earliest studies of the hidden curriculum which established that elementary-school students learn to live with crowds, praise, and power. Students learned that what they perceived as success in school meant that a student has to survive among their peers, students and their teachers, who also seek for themselves personal survival and validation. Yet the most important skill that students learn in school is how to deal with authority, usually through passivity and conformity to rules. In this type of setting, the hidden curriculum plays a significant role in student progress. Many rewards and punishments that sound as if they are being dispensed based on academic success and failure are really more closely related to the mastery of the hidden curriculum. (Smith, 2004)

The formal curriculum postulates the values of scholarship, academic learning, fairness, and democratic participation in decision-making. The hidden curriculum, conversely, teaches students that those values are not realistic. To survive in school, students need to please authority figures, (e.g., apple polishing for the teacher) and comply with the institution's requirements. The formal curriculum does not contain realistic goals, while the hidden curriculum in fact delivers what students actually need to function in school effectively. The students soon learn that ignoring the hidden curriculum is a sure way to fail in school, both socially and academically (Massialas, 2001).

Whether or not the hidden curriculum is antithetical to the formal curriculum is a serious question. The formal curriculum preaches democracy, but the hidden curriculum imposes autocracy. The formal curriculum stresses academic knowledge and understanding, while the hidden curriculum stresses the political process as a means of school achievement. School and

classroom dynamics are not the only purveyors of the hidden curriculum. Hidden messages are conveyed through the formal curriculum as well. Standard textbooks, for example, convey a stereotypical picture of America, a two-child, nuclear, middle-class, Caucasian family. This portrayal indirectly legitimizes an institution that may appropriately represent only a fraction of the citizenry. As a result of this hidden message, students of minority groups, or what is now referred to as micro-cultures, students of single-parent families, or students of low income backgrounds can develop feelings of inferiority, rejection, and loss of identity. In this context, textbooks, as part of the formal curriculum, indirectly negate or contradict the traditional goal of American education, which is to provide equal opportunity to all children and youth to receive quality education and through it attain the American Dream (Massialas, 2001).

The curriculum in most higher education programs probably reflects a preponderance of works by Caucasian male scholars. This curriculum presents the unintended message that knowledge created by and about women and people of color lacks importance. Certain structural elements of a program in a hidden curriculum are what faculty unconsciously teach and students unconsciously learn. These elements include the social structure of the classroom, the teacher's exercise of authority, the rules governing the relationship between teacher and student, standard learning activities, and structural barriers in the institution (Townsend, 1995).

Many faculty and administrators do not acknowledge the existence of a hidden curriculum because they perceive the academic culture of higher education as normative and transparent to everyone. For instance, the educational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds of some students of color and first-generation college students have not adequately prepared them for successful navigation through the academic cultural minefields of higher education. While these students may be unfamiliar with the academic culture of postsecondary institutions,

it should not be inferred that they lack the intellectual capacity to learn the hidden curriculum (Smith, 2004). The concept of the hidden curriculum did not begin at the doors of colleges and universities. For these students, the issue began as early as elementary school, which is why parents must be advocates for their children and be aware of the school culture and curriculum (Massiales, 2001).

Anyon (as cited in Kentli, 2009) reported the findings of a study in five schools that investigated how children of different economic classes received different types of educations. For that reason, Anyon compared three working-class schools, a low-middle class school, an upper middle class school, and an elite school. She found a connection between the social class of the students, the type of education they receive in school, and the type of work. She observed that children in poor schools were prepared to become obedient laborers, while children in elite schools were prepared to become original thinkers and leaders (Kentli, 2009).

Many people do not even think that schools have hidden agendas. However, the school culture is a hegemonic value system under which schools operate. For example, in 2005, the Education Trust-West studied the largest schools districts in California and found that the schools serving African American, Latino, and other poor minority students spent an estimated \$3,000 less per teacher than schools in higher socioeconomic areas. These schools only recruited underpaid, less experienced, and newer teachers to teach minority students (Vang, 2006).

Parents usually think that the American public education system is so wonderful when they learn that their students are getting A's or B's and have perfect citizenship marks. Most parents, especially bilingual, immigrant, and refugee parents, do not ask about the curriculum or the instructional schemes used by the teachers. Parents tend to be more concerned about the grades and behaviors of their children than what or how they are learning. In some cultures,

receiving good grades means everything to students, their families, and their parents. Most parents trust teachers and respect them as authority figures (Vang, 2006).

Parents should keep in mind that academic grades must reflect the quality of education that their children received. Otherwise, receiving good grades is part of the covert social promotion used by schools that can inhibit minority students' future academic potential. The reality is, students often are not expected to pursue higher education or aspire to high-paying professions. Some schools are satisfied if students simply meet the minimum requirements for graduation. The academic future of these students is not being considered, since they are perceived to be noncollege bound (Vang, 2006).

These same schools offer promises of equality of opportunity for all, in actuality, as in the larger society, the school provides a system that treats students differentially. Social class, race, ethnicity, linguistic background, and gender are factors that influence school decision makers in organizing and delivering instruction. The hidden curriculum, manifested through the textbooks, teachers, and students, affects what categories of students learn. Minorities learn to be obedient and passive. WASPs learn to be aggressive and involved (Massialas, 2001).

Some students have excelled by exceeding society's expectation and prevailed against the obstacles of poor elementary and secondary education, coupled with inexperienced, underpaid teachers. These students arrive at college only to learn that their circumstances are far worse than they could ever imagine. The academic and social support they were promised by their admissions counselor typically consists of a one person operated department that identifies itself as "multi-cultural" support, but they find it does not hold to be true.

Many students admit they are confused about the higher education process. These students do not understand how they went from being an "A" student in high school to being a

“C” student in college. These students attained the level of competency in the skills and academic knowledge required to succeed in college. However, these students did not have access to the “institutional academic cultural knowledge,” that is, the rules of how to navigate through the academic culture of higher education. To achieve academic success, it was important for a student to attain a level of competency found both in the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum (Smith, 2004).

The consequences of the hidden curriculum can have serious penalties on the nation’s education system if it is not taken seriously. To resolve hidden curriculum problems, retention and persistence programs should not focus on refining college students’ embodied cultural capital (i.e., students’ dispositions and behaviors formed during the early socialization process) which influenced how they perceived and interacted with instructors. Instead, these programs should concentrate on how to teach students the academic cultural knowledge of the institution (e.g., the most appropriate way to engage in classroom discussions), regardless of what type of embodied cultural capital they brought with them to school (Smith, 2004).

Summary

This chapter provided a review of theoretical perspectives and studies on postsecondary student persistence and retention as well as its influence on higher education and the nation. Several theories and models have addressed the subject of student persistence and retention beginning with Tinto’s (1975) student integration model. The theory of first-year college student retention suggested that the students who persist and succeed in college are those who are able to integrate successfully into an institution’s social and academic environment. The model

maintains that students who withdraw from college have failed to integrate successfully, either academically or socially, in a college environment (Tinto, 1975).

Tinto's later model (1993) was similar in structure to his earlier model; however it offered another explanation of student departure: inability to make the change from high school to college or university. Other higher education theorists have questioned the applicability of Tinto's model, specifically critiquing his analogy between the first year of college and a cultural rite of passage (Kuh & Love, 2000; Tierney, 1992).

Kuh and Love (2000) agreed that the first year of college is worthy of cultural study. They used a cultural lens to define a new model to explore student participation in, and departure from, higher education. More directly, Kuh (2003) demonstrated that student engagement is generally considered to be among the better predictors of learning and personal development. Students who spend more time practicing and studying a concept tend to have better learning outcomes. Kuh (2003) suggested that providing feedback on classroom assignments and allowing students to practice their skills can result in mastery of the subject matter (Kuh, 2003). This type of engagement in academic life on a college or university can add to the basic skills and dispositions needed to become productive citizens in a global society. These students develop positive mindsets that help them evolve into lifelong learners (Shulman, 2002).

Astin's (1975) theory identified factors in the college environment that affects students' persistence. This theory was a longitudinal study that focused on college dropouts and their behavior. The theory suggested that positive factors were inclined to increase student involvement, while negative factor reduced involvement. The theory demonstrated that student's that persisted in college were involved and those student's that dropped out were not involvement (Astin, 1999).

Milem and Berger (1997) suggested that as students become more involved in college they develop perceptions about the institutions that can influence institutional commitment and social integration. The behavior-perception-behavior cycle model demonstrated that students begin to engage in a variety of behaviors that represent different forms and types of involvement (or lack of involvement). Milem and Berger's model measured the interaction between students and their environment(s) by examining how involvement behavior affected perceptions, which in turn affected subsequent behavior. The behavior-perception-behavior cycle provided an explanatory mechanism for describing how students navigate the stages of incorporation (Milem & Berger, 1997).

This study examined factors (i.e., level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment [Kuh, 2003, p. 26) that influence the extent to which students become engaged at a Midwest urban research institution. Chapter III provides a description of the methods used to answer the research questions posed for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The methods that were used to collect and analyze the data are described in Chapter III. The topics that were included are: restatement of the purpose, research design, setting for the study, participants, instrument, data collection methods, and data analyses.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the importance of student retention and persistence and the role that student engagement has on that process as defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five factors (i.e., level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment). The study also will:

1. Examine if student engagement differs national as compared to an urban, Research Institution located in the Midwest,
2. Examine if student engagement differs in African-American students and Caucasian student in an urban, Research Institution located in the Midwest, and
3. Examine if there is a difference in perception of freshman and senior level students between the levels of engagement.

Research Design

The framework for this study is a nonexperimental, ex post facto research design. The data had been collected previously by the university as part of their on-going efforts to provide quality educational programming for present and future students. Freshman and senior students at the urban university completed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE): The College Student Report in 2013.

Research Setting

The data were collected at a public urban university located in a large city in the Midwest of the United States. The institution has a Carnegie classification of research/doctoral extensive. Most students at this university commute from their homes to the school for classes.

The institution enrolls nearly 29,000 students, most of who are from the metropolitan area with the remainder from immediate outside area, other states and more than 60 countries. The institution has the most diverse student body among the state's 15 public universities, reflecting the cultural richness of the region. The student population is diverse in both age and background: About 40% are minorities (20% Black or African American); the mean age for all undergraduates is 22; for graduate students, 30; and for professional-level students, 25. Many students work while attending school. The mean high school grade point average for entering freshmen is 3.27.

The Institution has approximately 370 academic and certificate programs for graduates and undergraduates, and offers professional degrees in medicine, law, nursing, social work and pharmacy. The university has the nation's largest single-campus medical school, and partners with numerous specialty hospitals, health systems and research centers in training a high percentage of Michigan's physicians, as well as health care providers throughout the nation.

The university is organized into 13 schools and colleges:

- School of Business Administration
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts
- Graduate School

- Honors College
- Law School
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- School of Library and Information Science
- School of Medicine
- College of Nursing
- College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- School of Social Work

The institution has 2,945 faculty members, of whom 1,806 are full-time. Of the faculty, 58 percent are tenured or tenure-track and the university has an ongoing campaign to increase this number through recruitment. The university also has a large number of committed and talented part-time faculty members who provide students the benefit of their real-world experience.

Participants

A total of 1,241 students enrolled at the university in the Winter semester, 2012 participated in the survey. This number included 249 freshmen and 611 seniors. The other 381 students reported they were sophomore ($n = 53$), juniors ($n = 75$), unclassified ($n = 37$), or did not provide a response to this question ($n = 216$). The data for these students was dropped from the study. All data was obtained from university records, without any identifiers on individual students. No students will be contacted to participate in the study.

Instrument

The *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE; Kuh et al., 2001), first used in 2000, examines student engagement in college in an intentional and empirical way. By using the results

of this survey, colleges and universities can begin to understand the levels of engagement experienced by their first-year and senior students (Schreiner & Louis, 2008).

Student academic outcomes are not measured directly using the NSSE survey, the data provides information that college and university admissions and student services departments can focus efforts on ways to improve the academic and social experiences of students (Kuh, 2001).

The NSSE (Kuh et al., 2001) is administered to students at the urban university at regular intervals. The most recent year that was completed was 2012. The instrument measures five scales that are related to five categories of effective educational practices: “academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment” (Kuh, 2003, p. 26). The five scales and a definition of what they are measuring are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

National Survey of Student Engagement: Scales and Subscales

Scale	Description	Items on Survey
Academic Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of academic challenge • Extent of reading and writing • Hours spent in a typical week preparing for class 	Time spent preparing for class, amount of reading and writing, and institutional expectations for academic performance.	1r, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 10a <i>(1-4 scale)</i> 3c, 3d, 3e <i>(1-5 scale)</i> 9a <i>(1-8 scale)</i>
Active and collaborative learning	Participation in class, working collaboratively with other students inside and outside of class, tutoring, etc.	1a, 1b, 1g, 1h, 1j, 1k, 1t <i>(1-4 scale)</i>
Student interactions with faculty members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student interaction with faculty members • Worked with faculty on research project outside of school 	Talking with faculty members and advisors, discussing ideas from classes with faculty members outside of class, getting prompt feedback on academic performance, and working with faculty members on research projects.	1n, 1p, 1o, 1q, 1s, 7d <i>(1-4 scale)</i>
Enriching educational experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriching educational experiences • Individual enrichment experiences • Participation in co-curricular activities 	Interacting with students with different racial or ethnic backgrounds or with different political opinions or values, using electronic technology, and participating in such activities as internships, community service, or a culminating senior experience.	11, 1u, 1v, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h, 10c <i>(1-4 scale)</i> 9d <i>(1-8 scale)</i>
Supportive campus environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationships • Academic and social support 	The extent to which students perceive the campus helps them succeed academically and socially; assists them in coping with nonacademic responsibilities, and promotes supportive relatives among students and their peers, faculty members, and administrative personnel and offices.	8a, 8b, 8c <i>(1= Unfriendly, Unsupportive, etc. 7= Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging scale)</i> 10b, 10d, 10e <i>(1-4 scale)</i>

Note: Kuh et al., 2001, p. 5

Scoring. A total score is obtained by summing the students' responses to items on each of the five scales. The scores are based on ratings other than 1 to 4 have been transposed to reflect a 1 to 4 scale. For example, on the scales that are rates on a 5-point scale, with a neutral point, the scores at neutral have been eliminated and the 4 and 5 will be recoded for 3 and 4. On

the 8-point scales, the scores have been consolidated with 1-2 recoded as a 1, 3-4 recoded as a 2, 5-6 recoded as a 3, and 7-8 recoded as a 4.

Reliability and Validity. Extensive testing was completed to determine the reliability and validity of the NSSE. According to Kuh (2001), the survey has been tested for both internal consistency and stability. The results of the analyses were positive, indicating the NSSE has good internal consistency and is relatively stable over a short period. Testing for stability over a long period (one semester) was not possible due to changes that could affect the responses. Cronbach alpha coefficients has been obtained from the data used in this study, with results reported in the final dissertation.

Content and face validity were determined when the Design Team was developing the survey. They were responsible for making certain that the wording on the survey items was clear, well defined, and unambiguous.

Construct validity was determined using a principal components factor analysis. Each section of the survey was tested separately, with results indicating good construct validity. Based on information from Kuh (2001), the NSSE has good reliability and validity for use in research on student engagement.

Data Collection Procedures

The data being used for this study had been previously collected by the university. The Institutional Review Board was contacted and an exemption from review by the IRB was granted (See Appendix A.). Data from the NSSE for 2012 were obtained from the Institutional Research Department. The data were provided as both an Excel and IBM-SPSS file. No individual students were contacted to obtain additional data.

The freshman and senior students were asked to complete the survey in the Winter Semester. The students were contacted through the university website, with a link provided to the survey. Participation was voluntary and students were assured that all information would be confidential.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the surveys has been analyzed using IBM-SPSS (ver. 22). The data analyses are presented in Chapter IV in three sections. A combination of frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and measures of central tendency and dispersion were used to create a profile of the participants in the first section. Baseline information on the five scales, “academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment” (Kuh, 2003, p. 26) were obtained by using descriptive statistics in the second section. The third section of the analyses provides the findings of the inferential statistical analyses that answered the research questions. The first research question compared the outcomes of all participants at urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest with national scores for the same subscales using t-tests for one sample. As the variables are continuous, they are assumed to be normally distributed and usable for t-tests. The second research question compared African American and Caucasian students at the urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest. This group of students is at risk for not completing college programs and need to be examined for retention purposes. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test this research question. The third research question compared freshman and senior male and female students at an urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest using a 2 x 2 factorial MANOVA. The use of MANOVA decreases the probability of a Type 1 error as the numbers of analyses are

minimized. The use of a factorial MANOVA allows comparisons between the two main effects as well as the interaction effect between class and sex. The data are continuous and the parametric statistical analyses are appropriate, as they are more robust than nonparametric analyses in finding significance. A criterion alpha level of .05 was used to make decisions on the statistical significance of the inferential statistical analyses. Table 2 presents the statistical analyses that were used to address each research question.

Table 2

Statistical Analyses

Research Question	Variables	Statistical Analysis
1. Considering NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment at an urban institution in the Midwest, is there a difference in perceptions of students' levels of engagement when compared to national outcomes?	<u>Dependent Variables</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic challenge • Active and collaborative learning • Student interactions with faculty members • Enriching educational experiences • Supportive campus environment 	t-tests for one sample was used to determine the extent to which students at the university being studied differ from the national outcomes. The test statistics were national scores for the five scales.
2. To what extent is there a difference in the 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment between African American and Caucasian students enrolled in an urban institution?	<u>Dependent Variables</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic challenge • Active and collaborative learning • Student interactions with faculty members • Enriching educational experiences • Supportive campus environment 	A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the responses on the five scales between African American and Caucasian students at the university being studied. If a statistically significant difference is found on the MANOVA, the between subjects effects was tested to determine which of the scales are contributing to the significant results on the MANOVA. The mean scores for the students were examined to determine the direction of any differences on the five scales.
3. Considering 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment at an urban institution in the Midwest, is there a difference in perceptions of freshman and senior level male and female students between the levels of engagement?	<u>Dependent Variables</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic challenge • Active and collaborative learning • Student interactions with faculty members • Enriching educational experiences • Supportive campus environment <p>Independent Variable Freshman/Senior students Sex</p>	A 2 x 2 multivariate analysis of variance was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the responses on the five scales between freshman and senior male and female students at the university being studied. If a statistically significant difference is found on the MANOVA, the between subjects effects were tested to determine which of the scales are contributing to the significant results on the MANOVA. The mean scores for the students were examined to determine the direction of any differences on the five scales.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The results of the statistical analyses that were used to describe the sample and address the research questions developed for the study are presented in this chapter. The findings are presented in three sections. The first section provides a description of the students who participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement, with a description of the scaled variables provided in the second section. The third section presents the research questions along with the results of the inferential statistical analyses.

The purpose of this study was to examine the importance of student retention and persistence and the role that student engagement has on that process. The study also:

1. Examined differences in student engagement, as defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five factors (i.e., level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment) between national outcomes as compared to those in an urban, commuter institution located in the Midwest,
2. Examined differences in student engagement between African-American and Caucasian students in an urban, commuter institution located in the Midwest, and
3. Examined differences in student engagement between perceptions of freshman and senior level students at an urban, commuter research institution.

Description of the Sample

A total of 1,026 students participated in the sample. The participants provided information on the personal and academic demographics. Table 3 presents the frequency analyses of their responses regarding their personal.

Table 3

Frequency Distributions: Description of the Participants' Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	Number	Percent
Age		
19 or younger	256	25.0
20 to 23	285	27.9
24 to 29	215	21.0
30 to 39	116	11.3
40 to 55	128	12.6
Over 55	23	2.2
Total	1023	100.0
Missing 218		
Gender		
Male	349	34.0
Female	677	66.0
Total	1026	100.0
Missing 215		
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Other Native American	7	0.7
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	66	6.4
Black or African American	231	22.5
White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	492	48.0
Mexican or Mexican American	20	1.9
Puerto Rican	6	0.6
Other Hispanic or Latino	11	1.1
Multiracial	36	3.5
Other	66	6.4
Prefer not to respond	91	8.9
Total	1026	100.0
Missing 215		

The largest group of students ($n = 285$, 27.9%) reported their ages as 20 to 23, with 256 (25.0%) indicating they were 19 years or younger. Two hundred fifteen (21.0%) students were between 24 and 29 years of age, and 116 (11.3%) were between 30 and 39 years. One hundred twenty eight (12.5%) students reported their ages as between 40 and 55 years, with 23 (2.2%) indicating they were over 55 years of age. Two hundred eighteen students did not provide their age on the survey.

The majority of the participants in the study were female (n = 677, 66.0%), with 349 (34.0%) reporting their gender as male. Two hundred fifteen participants did not provide a response to this question.

The largest group of students reported their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian (nonHispanic; n = 492, 48.0%). Black or African American students (n = 231, 22.5%) were in the second largest group of students at the university, followed by Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander students (n = 66, 6.4%). Other racial/ethnic groups also were represented at the university. Ninety-one (8.9%) of the sample preferred not to provide their race/ethnicity on the survey and 215 did not respond to the question.

The students reported their academic characteristics on the survey. The responses were summarized using frequency distributions for presentation in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency Distributions: Description of the Participants' Academic Characteristics

Academic Characteristics	Number	Percent
Current Classification		
Freshman (1st Year)	249	24.3
Sophomore (2nd Year)	53	5.2
Junior (3rd Year)	75	7.3
Senior (4th Year)	611	59.6
Unclassified	37	3.6
Total	1025	100.0
Missing 215		
Type of Enrollment		
Less than full time	260	25.3
Full time	766	74.7
Total	1026	100.0
Missing 215		
Member of a fraternity/sorority		
No	973	95.4
Yes	47	4.6
Total	1020	100.0
Missing 221		

The largest group of participants self-reported their classification as senior ($n = 611$, 59.6%), with 249 (24.3%) indicating they were freshmen. Students also reported their classifications as sophomores ($n = 53$, 5.2%), junior ($n = 75$, 7.3%), and unclassified ($n = 37$, 3.6%). For the purpose of the inferential statistical analyses used to address the research questions, these students were eliminated as the survey was inclusive for freshmen and senior students. Two hundred fifteen students did not answer this question.

The majority of students ($n = 766$, 74.7%) reported they were enrolled full-time at the university, with 260 (25.3%) indicating they were enrolled part-time. Two hundred fifteen students did not provide a response to this question.

When asked if they were members of a fraternity or sorority, 47 (4.6%) of students answered affirmatively. The majority of the students ($n = 973$, 95.4%) were not members of either a fraternity or sorority. Two hundred twenty one students did not provide a response to this question.

Scaled Variables

The survey items were categorized into five subscales to measure student engagement: “academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment” (Kuh, 2003, p. 26). The summed scores for each of these subscales were summarized using descriptive statistics. Results of these analyses are included in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics – Subscales Measuring Student Engagement

Student Engagement	Number	Mean	SD	Median	Range	
					Minimum	Maximum
Academic Challenge	1114	54.89	14.12	54.71	0	100
Active and Collaborative Learning	1231	47.65	19.15	47.62	0	100
Student Faculty Interaction	1124	38.12	20.28	33.33	0	100
Enriching Educational Experiences	1064	35.39	17.25	33.33	0	100
Supportive Campus Environment	1047	55.42	19.32	55.56	0	100

The mean score for academic challenge was 54.89 (sd = 14.12), with a median of 54.71. Actual scores for academic challenge were from 0 to 100. Active and collaborative learning had a mean score of 47.65 (sd = 19.15), with median score of 47.62. The range of actual scores for active and collaborative learning was from 0 to 100. The mean score for student faculty interaction was 38.12 (sd = 20.28). Actual scores ranged from 0 to 100, with a median of 33.33. Enriching educational experiences had a mean score of 35.39 (sd = 17.25), with a median of 33.33. The range of actual scores was from 0 to 100. The mean score for supportive campus environment was 55.42 (sd = 19.32), with a median score of 55.56. Actual scores were from 0 to 100. Higher scores on each of these subscales indicated higher levels of engagement for students.

Research Questions

Three research questions were developed for this study. These questions were answered using inferential statistical analysis. The criterion alpha level of .05 was used for making decisions regarding the statistical significance.

Research question 1: Considering NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty

members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment at an urban institution in the Midwest, is there a difference in perceptions of students' levels of engagement when compared to national outcomes?

The scores for each of the subscales measuring student engagement at the urban commuter college were compared to the national average for that subscale using t-tests for one sample. See Table 6 for results of this analysis.

Table 6

t-Tests for One Sample – Comparison of Student Engagement to National Outcomes

Student Engagement	N	Mean	SD	Test Statistic	t-Value	Sig
Academic Challenge	1114	54.89	14.12	54.50	.92	.358
Active and Collaborative Learning	1231	47.65	19.15	44.20	6.32	<.001
Student Faculty Interaction	1124	38.12	20.28	35.90	3.66	<.001
Enriching Educational Experiences	1064	35.39	17.25	28.40	13.22	<.001
Supportive Campus Environment	1047	55.42	19.32	63.40	-13.37	<.001

Four of the five subscales measuring student engagement differed significantly from the national scores. The comparison of the mean score for active and collaborative learning ($m = 47.65$, $SD = 19.15$) with the national outcome of 44.20 was statistically significant, $t(1230) = 6.32$, $p < .001$. The findings from the t-test for one sample that compared the mean score of 38.12 ($sd = 20.28$) for student faculty interaction with the national mean score of 35.90 was statistically significant, $t(1123) = 3.66$, $p < .001$. When the mean score for enriching educational environment ($m = 35.39$, $sd = 17.25$) was compared to the national score for this subscale ($m =$

28.40), the outcome was statistically significant, $t(1063) = 13.22, p < .001$. The comparison of the mean score for supportive campus environment ($m = 55.42, sd = 19.32$) with the national outcomes ($m = 63.40$), the finding was statistically significant, $t(1046) = -13.37, p < .001$. Results for three of the four statistically significant subscales, active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational environment were in a positive direction, indicating that students enrolled at the urban commuter university were more likely to have higher levels of engagement. The findings for the fourth statistically significant subscale, supportive campus environment, was in a negative direction, providing evidence that the students at the urban commuter university did not find their campus environment as supportive as the national average. The first subscale, academic challenge, did not differ significantly from the national average.

Research Question 2: To what extent is there a difference in the 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment between African American and Caucasian students enrolled in an urban institution and national outcomes?

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if differences existed between African American and Caucasian students on the five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

One-way MANOVA – Facets of Engagement by Race/Ethnicity of Student

Hotelling's Trace	F	DF	Sig	η^2
.05	7.60	5, 702	<.001	.05

The comparison of the five facets of engagement by race/ethnicity of the student was statistically significant, $F(5, 702) = 7.60, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$. This finding indicated that at least one of the five facets of engagement was differing significantly between African American and Caucasian students. The effect size of .05 was small, providing evidence that while the differences among the students by race/ethnicity was significant, the findings have little practical significance. To determine which of the five facets of engagement were contributing to the statistically significant outcome on the MANOVA, the between subjects analysis was interpreted. See Table 8 for results of these findings.

Table 8

Between Subjects Analysis: Five Facets of Engagement by Race/Ethnicity of Students

Student Engagement	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig	η^2
Academic Challenge						
African American	228	53.01	13.89	7.08	.008	.01
Caucasian	480	55.92	13.47			
Active and Collaborative Learning						
African American	228	47.91	19.50	.10	.750	.01
Caucasian	480	47.44	17.86			
Student Faculty Interaction						
African American	228	36.75	18.83	.12	.732	.01
Caucasian	480	37.28	19.46			
Enriching Educational Experiences						
African American	228	32.62	15.11	12.23	.001	.02
Caucasian	480	37.26	17.10			
Supportive Campus Environment						
African American	228	59.51	17.18	9.83	.002	.01
Caucasian	480	54.94	18.58			

Three of the five facets of engagement (academic challenge, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment) differed significantly between African American and Caucasian students. When academic challenge was compared, Caucasian students ($M = 55.92$, $SD = 13.47$) had significantly higher scores than African American students ($M = 53.01$, $SD = 13.47$), $F(1, 706) = 7.08$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .01$. African American students ($M = 32.62$, $SD = 15.11$) had statistically significantly lower scores for enriching educational experiences than Caucasian students ($M = 37.26$, $SD = 17.10$), $F(1, 706) = 12.23$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Supportive campus environment differed significantly between African American ($M = 59.51$, $SD = 17.18$) and Caucasian ($M = 54.94$, $SD = 18.58$) students, $F(1, 706) = 9.83$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .01$. The obtained η^2 for the three statistically significant facets of engagement were low (.01, .02, .01 respectively), the results had little practical significance. The remaining two subscales, active and collaborative learning and student-faculty interaction, did not differ between African American and Caucasian students.

Research Question 3: Considering 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment at an urban institution in the Midwest, is there a difference between perceptions of freshman and senior level students between the levels of engagement?

A one-way MANOVA was used to determine if a difference existed between freshman and senior students on the five facets of engagement. The dependent variables were the five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

The independent variable was the class status, freshman or senior. Findings from the MANOVA are included in Table 9.

Table 9

One-way MANOVA – Facets of Engagement by Class Status of Student

Hotelling's Trace	F	DF	Sig	η^2
.11	17.96	5, 833	< .001	.10

The comparison of the five facets of engagement between freshman and senior level students was statistically significant, $F(5, 833) = 17.96, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$. Based on this finding, it appears that freshman and senior level students differ significantly on the five facets of engagement. The effect size of .10 was low to moderate, providing support that the finding has some practical significance. To determine the extent to which the five subscales differ between freshman and senior students, the between subjects analysis was interpreted. See Table 10 for results of this analysis.

Table 10

Between Subjects Analysis: Five Facets of Engagement by Class Status of Students

Student Engagement	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig	η^2
Academic Challenge						
Freshman	238	54.55	12.64	1.95	.163	.01
Senior	601	55.96	13.51			
Active and Collaborative Learning						
Freshman	238	42.29	16.87	29.03	<.001	.03
Senior	601	49.57	17.92			
Student Faculty Interaction						
Freshman	238	32.29	17.15	26.58	<.001	.03
Senior	601	39.99	20.36			
Enriching Educational Experiences						
Freshman	238	29.23	13.54	62.66	<.001	.07
Senior	601	39.07	17.21			
Supportive Campus Environment						
Freshman	238	57.15	18.69	2.58	.108	.01
Senior	601	54.78	19.42			

Three of the five facets of engagement, active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences, differed significantly between freshman and senior students. The comparison of active and collaborative learning between freshman ($M = 42.29$, $SD = 16.87$) differed from senior ($M = 49.57$, $SD = 17.92$), $F(1, 838) = 29.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$. When student-faculty interaction was compared between freshman ($M = 32.29$, $SD = 17.15$) and senior ($M = 39.99$, $SD = 20.36$) students, the difference was statistically significant, $F(1, 838) = 26.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Freshman students ($M = 29.23$, $SD = 13.54$) had statistically significantly lower scores for enriching educational experiences than senior students ($M = 39.07$, $SD = 17.21$), $F(1, 838) = 62.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$. The effect sizes for active and collaborative learning (.03), student-faculty interaction (.03), and enriching educational experiences (.07) were small, indicating that while the differences in mean scores were statistically significant, they had little practical significance. The remaining two subscales, academic challenge and supportive

campus environment were not statistically significant, indicating that freshman and senior students had similar perceptions of these two facets of engagement.

Summary

The findings of the quantitative data analyses used to describe the sample and address the research questions posed for the study have been presented in this chapter. The results confirmed that an urban, Research University in the Midwest, as compared to national student engagement rates, is competitive and rank above average. The university comparison of its African American students and Caucasian students reviewed that there are some disparities as it relates to lower perception of student engagement among African American students. The same university comparison of its senior level students and freshman level students indicated a significantly higher perception of student engagement.

The data suggesting that there is a perception of inconsistency in a student's engagement experience based on their populations or class ranking provides enough reason for further investigation. These issues should be addressed to ensure a holistic student engagement experience for all students as well as remove any perception of disparity. These actions can aid in the proactive efforts to promote social and academic inclusiveness and student retention. The importance of confronting these matters support Tinto (1974) theory that when students are socially integrated it increases their institutional commitment, ultimately reducing the likelihood of student attrition. This data may also be instrumental in determining if current programs designed to engage students is effective as well as establishing program models and interventions to increase retention and graduation rates of all students. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to examine the importance of student retention and persistence and the impact that student engagement has on that process. The study also will:

1. Examine if student engagement, as defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five factors (i.e., level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment) differ between national outcomes as compared to those in an urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest,
2. Examine if student engagement differs between African-American students and Caucasian students at an urban-commuter institution located in the Midwest, and
3. Examine if a difference exists between perceptions of freshman and senior level students on the levels of engagement.

The literature suggests that student engagement is instrumental in the successful retention and persistence to graduation of students. Institutions that are intentional about offering programming and learning environments that promote student engagement have benefited in the area of increased retention and persistence of their students. However, institutions that continue to doubt the importance of strategically approaching student engagement as an instrument that can improve the retention of their students will ultimately loss significant market share in enrolling and retaining their students (Waters, 2008).

According to Kuh (2009a), students are the primary beneficiaries of engagement because:

...engagement increases the odds that any students—educational and social background notwithstanding—will attain his or her educational and personal

objectives, acquire the skills and competencies demanded by the challenges of the twenty-first century, and enjoy the intellectual and monetary advantages associated with the completion of the baccalaureate degree. (p. 698)

However, the benefits of engagement extend beyond individual students. Understanding the importance of student engagement factors is important to higher education administrators, governmental bodies and parents. Coates (2010) suggested that college administrators can use information regarding student engagement as a tool to improve student retention. In assessing the extent to which students are engaged and the influence of engagement on academic outcomes, college administrators can determine factors associated with good practice, and identify areas in need of improvement. College administrators also can use the assessment to distribute costly teaching and support resources strategically, and demonstrate the effectiveness of the feedback cycle.

Coates (2005) suggested that information on student engagement could be used to determine how students were interacting on campus. This data has greater importance for the administrators of colleges and universities, their students, and academic programs. Instead of making assumptions or using qualitative reports regarding student involvement in campus activities, colleges and universities could base conclusions on objective data. Information focusing on student involvement in campus activities could provide administrators with evidence for marketing and recruitment processes and assist them in becoming more aware of student needs. With information that is both accurate and reliable regarding what student engagement, colleges and universities have the ability to take involvement in student activities seriously (Trowler, 2010).

Methods

A non-experimental, ex post facto research design was used to analyze previously collected data on college engagement at a large urban university. The data had been previously collected from freshman and senior students at the urban university. These students had completed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE): The College Student Report. Researchers lack control over the data collection process when using previously collected data.

The participating school in this study is a large research intensive university located in a large metropolitan area. The students who participated in the study reflected the demographics of the metropolitan area. The students were ethnically diverse with Caucasian students comprising the largest group, followed by African American students, and then Asian, Asian Americans, or Pacific Islander. Other ethnic groups included American Indian, Hispanic, Puerto Rican, and multiracial. The students ranged in age from 19 and younger to over 55, indicating the student body was both traditional (23 years of age or younger) and nontraditional (24 years and over). A greater number of females participated in the study than males. The largest group of students who participated in the study were seniors. The majority of students were enrolled full time and most did not belong to a fraternity/sorority.

The five subscales, measuring student engagement, included:

1. *Level of Academic Challenge* – An institution’s ability to establish a challenging intellectual and creative environment for students.
2. *Active and Collaborative Learning* – The level at which students are asked to collaborate with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material.
3. *Student Interactions with Faculty Members* – The extent to which students interact with faculty members inside and outside of the classroom.
4. *Enriching Educational Experiences* – An institution’s ability to foster complementary learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to augment academic programs.

5. *Supportive Campus Environment* – The extent to which institutions cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus. The mean scores for each of the subscales were obtained from the university. (Kuh, 2003, p. 26)

Findings

Three research questions were posed for this research. Inferential statistical analyses were used to answer the research questions, with a criterion alpha level of .05 was used for making decisions on the significance of the findings.

1. Considering NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment at an urban, research institution in the Midwest, is there a difference in perceptions of students' levels of engagement when compared to national outcomes?

This research question was tested using t-tests for one sample, with the mean score for each subscale compared to the nationwide mean score. Statistically significant differences from the national scores were found on four of the five subscales, active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. The mean score for the university in the study was significantly higher for active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences than the national score. The national score for supportive campus environment was significantly higher than the university's mean score. Academic challenge did not differ significantly between the university and national scores.

2. To what extent is there a difference in the 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment between African American and Caucasian students enrolled in an urban, research institution located in the Midwest?

The five subscales measuring student engagement between African American and Caucasian students were compared using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The results of this analysis provided evidence of statistically significant differences in academic challenge, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. When the mean scores for these three subscales were compared, Caucasian students had higher scores than the African American students. No statistically significant differences were found for active and collaborative learning and student faculty interaction.

3. Considering 2012 NSSE's five facets of engagement: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment at an urban, research institution in the Midwest, is there a difference between perceptions of freshman and senior level students between the levels of engagement?

The freshman and senior students on the five subscales measuring student engagement were compared using a one-way MANOVA. The academic level of the students was used as the independent variable, with the five subscales measuring student engagement used as the dependent variables. Statistically significant differences were found for three of the five subscales, active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences, differed significantly. Senior level students had significantly higher scores for these three subscales than freshman students. The other two subscales, academic challenge and supportive campus environment did not differ significantly between freshman and senior students.

Discussion

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a survey designed for undergraduate students to provide information about their undergraduate experiences, including their views about the quality of their education and how they spend their time both in and out of the classroom. The Midwest, urban, research institution in this survey is one of more than 575 universities and colleges from around the United States and Canada using the survey to measure student engagement. Incidentally, the primary reason most institutions participate in the NSSE survey is because the school wants to improve the undergraduate experience by learning more about what students think about opportunities for engagement on their campus.

The survey results are presented to participating institutions in an Institutional Report that summarizes responses from freshman and senior students who completed the survey at their institution. The report also provides comparisons among institutions nationwide and by Carnegie classifications. NSSE then provides an identifiable data file so the institution can further examine the information in different ways to enhance the educational experiences of their student's at the school. These analyses may include comparing undergraduate experiences between and within students who are full or part-time or between different academic major groups.

Research question one found significant differences on four of the five subscales (active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, enriching education experiences, and supportive campus environment) of the 2012 NSSE when comparing university scores and national scores. The mean score for the university in the study was significantly higher for active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences than the national score. The national score for supportive campus environment was significantly higher than the university's mean score. Academic challenge did not differ significantly between

the university and national score.

With the exception of the subscales measuring academic challenge (no significant difference) and supportive campus environment (a significant difference), the results demonstrated that students perceived the university as providing a learning environment that was active and collaborative, where student were interacting well with faculty. They considered their educational experience as enriching, at a higher level than the national average. However, scores for supportive campus environment were significantly lower than the national average indicating a need to examine ways to improve the perceptions of students' interpretation of the campus environment to improve faculty and administrator support at the university.

The findings also suggest that the university's administrative and faculty efforts to understand the many dimensions of student engagement have resulted in their students having positive perceptions regarding their educational experiences at the university. The areas of active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching education experiences speaks directly to Tinto's (1975) student integration model that theorized students who persist and succeed in college are those who are able to integrate into an institution's social and academic environment successfully.

According to the Milem and Berger (1997), the Behavior-Perception-Behavior Cycle Model, students come to the institution with "specific entry characteristics" and different levels of commitment to graduation from the institution. As students encounter new experiences and ideas, as well as interact with staff, faculty and other students, they develop perceptions about these experiences and the institution. These perceptions influence the extent to which students become incorporated or integrated into the setting, feel they "fit" at the institution, and are supported by the institution.

Several factors need to be considered if the university wants to reverse the lower than national average perceptions of students at the university have regarding a supportive campus environment — *the extent to which institutions cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus*. These factors should include influencing the college persistence behavior of students to assure they perceive that they are in a supportive campus environment that values everyone's thoughts, beliefs and contribution.

This university also has to consider that the majority of the students who attend their institution are commuters. When students commute to class, they may not have the opportunities to interact with other students or faculty at the same level as a college or university that is primarily residential. Students who commute generally arrive on campus in time to attend class and then either go to work or return home to work on homework. These factors may have influenced the responses that students had on the items from the NSSE that addressed “supportive campus environment,” resulting in significantly lower scores at the university when compared to the national scores. The NSSE questions asked students to rate their feelings, experiences, or perceptions of relationships with other students and faculty, as well as providing the support needed to help them succeed academically, helping to cope with their non-academic responsibilities and providing the support needed to thrive socially.

To address these issues, the focus should be on tailoring programs and services that are unique to serving commuter students in a large urban area in the Midwest. These programs and services should be designed to improve for instance, counseling, accessibility, and campus climate. *Counseling*: (a) Offers psychological and other health services to students to improve coping skills and (b) Career counseling that connects academic and financial advising to assist students in reaching their goals. *Accessibility*: (a) Partnering with local area transit systems to

increase access and transportation options to get to campus, (b) Maximizing online and distance learning technologies to expand offerings and support student participation, and (c) Offering classes in a variety of times and modalities. *Campus Climate*: (a) Develop social activities that build community among all campus constituencies, (b) Provide non-classroom opportunities for student-faculty interaction, (c) Provide a safe campus for all students, faculty, staff and visitors, and (d) build a supportive pluralist environment for students by embracing multiculturalism through campus leadership, faculty, staff, student enrollment, curricula, programming, and campus artifacts (Swail, 2003).

The results of research question two found no significant differences in the two subscales areas: active and collaborative learning and student faculty interaction between African American students and Caucasian students. However, results confirmed statistically significant differences between African American and Caucasian students for academic challenge (i.e., an institution's ability to establish a challenging intellectual and creative environment), enriching educational experiences (i.e., an institutions ability to foster complementary learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to augment academic programs), and supportive campus environment (i.e., the extent to which institutions cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus).

These findings are important and provide an excellent opportunity for this university to understand that there is a significant difference in the student experience and perception of engagement between their African American and Caucasian students. Understanding that these differences represent barriers that may keep African American students from successfully being retained and graduating from college is important. The disproportionate gap in the graduation rates underscores the need for the higher education community to rethink their strategies for

improving the retention of students of color (American Council on Education, 2003). More importantly, by one student population dissatisfied, all students may be dissatisfied. Research has determined that all students can benefit by being exposed to diversity in education so that they can be more competitive in an increasingly global economy.

Access, equality and a reasonable chance of succeeding is critical for African American, as well as other underrepresented students, to thrive in college. In addition to this institution acknowledging that there is a perception of disparity there must be a conversation with all stakeholders on the negative and global impact of not addressing these matters with a sense of urgency. It is also critical for this institution to stay relevant and competitive by preparing their faculty, staff and students for the global marketplace. To be competitive in today's global economy, the changing demographics of the nation and student body, as well as evolving workforce requirements and education must be addressed. The consequences of failing to do so could have far-reaching effects on society's quality of life and the nation's economic growth. Projections indicate that within 30 years, Hispanic and African Americans can be expected to constitute over one-third of the American population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). As the nation becomes more diverse, institutions of higher education need to reflect this diversity. The growing communities of color are America's future, and preparing people of color as future leaders is important. (Kerby, 2012).

The three subscales that was identified by African American students as significantly lower in the area of student engagement is imbedded in the academic experience, which is important for the success of all students. However, the perception that African American students are or feel less engaged in these three areas could have more significance on the successful engagement, persistence and ultimately the retention of this student population. Kuh

and Love (2000) believed that the first year of college is worthy of cultural study. They used a cultural lens to define a model to explore student participation in and departure from higher education. This model is based on Martin's (1992) differentiation perspective, which argued that people interpret aspects of group life differently.

If African American students at this urban, research University located in the Midwest perceive their level of engagement as being significantly lower than their Caucasian peer group in the areas of academic challenge, enriching educational experience and supportive campus environment, it is time for this institution to act. Again, this can be a huge opportunity for this institution to make a positive difference by taking a strategic approach to confronting and addressing these areas with thoughtful interventions and inclusive discussion with this student population.

The NSSE approached academic challenge by framing questions that asked students to assess or rate how much their coursework emphasized the mental activities such as analyzing, synthesizing, making judgments and applying theories. Another example of how academic challenge was explored in the survey was a series of questions that asked students how much writing have they done during the current school year. The options allowed them to check off a number from none to more than 20 times for 20 pages or more, between 5-19 pages, and fewer than five pages.

Using these two examples as a baseline, it is reasonable to suggest that if a significant portion of African American students did not acknowledge these areas of mental activities with an answer of "very much" or "quite a bit" or by reporting multiple opportunities to write papers compared to Caucasian students then they must be considered less engaged. A conclusion may also be drawn that there could be less opportunities given to African American students to

articulate mental activities that emphasize analysis or apply theories or even read and write a significant number of papers in a year. These factors could demonstrate lower expectation for this student population to produce or display their ability on the part of the university.

Realistically, can any student be at fault for not being afforded certain experiences, by not being given the knowledge, by not being aware of the importance of access/exposure or the lack of being given assignments? If a student is not taught how are they expected to know? Perhaps the real questions are, are there two different curriculums (a hidden curriculum) or different expectation of African American students as compared to Caucasian students?

Perhaps some faculty members or university administrators, in the name of supporting African American students, are inadvertently hindering them. Has this university unintentionally become enablers for this population by lowering expectation, excluding them from the conversation, not allowing them to demonstrate their ability or not giving these students the real tools they need to even the playing field? If this is the case, it can be augured that that is why there is such a significant difference and disconnect as demonstrated in the NSSE results of African American students as compared to their Caucasian counterparts.

If the university is truly interested in supporting all students, then they have to meet the students where they are. There is a thin line between support and enabling but the distinction has to be drawn. The university as well as departments that advocate and serve students should explore these questions. These groups must ensure every student has a similar academically challenging experience and they are all able to enter the global market prepared. They must advocate that all students are given the opportunity and resources necessary to ensure when asked to analyze subject matter, they understand what an analytical framework is and when asked to make a judgment, they have the necessary components to do so.

In the area of enriching educational experience it may be considered subjective as it relates to an individual's expectation and interpretation. As outlined by NSSE, having an enriching educational experience was captured in questions that asked students have they *done* or *plan to* participate in a practicum, internships, community service, foreign language course, study abroad, or a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project, or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.) before graduation or how many hours they spent during a 7-day week on participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.) With African American students rating the area of enriching educational experience significantly lower than Caucasian students suggests they find these experiences less valuable or important to their educational experience or have the value and importance not been conveyed as a criteria component or expectation of a successful educational outcome? Perhaps more disturbing is the possible unintentional exclusion of African American students from the opportunities given Caucasian students. For many African American students, this could be a direct or indirect example of the impact of the hidden curriculum.

Smith (2004) believed that many faculty and administrators do not acknowledge the existence of a hidden curriculum because they perceive the academic culture of higher education as normative and transparent to everyone. For instance, the educational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds of some students of color and first-generation college students have not adequately prepared them for successful navigation through the academic cultural minefields of higher education.

Massialas (2001) took a firmer stance on the hidden curriculum by suggesting that for a student to survive in school they would have to please authority figures and conform to the

institution culture and expectations. Massialas (2001) suggest that the formal curriculum promotes the values of scholarship, fairness, academic learning and democratic participation in decision-making. Equally, the hidden curriculum teaches students that those values are not realistic and in fact delivers what students actually need to function in school effectively. The students soon learn that ignoring the hidden curriculum is a sure way to fail in school, both socially and academically.

This is another opportunity for the university to educate a capable student population holistically by not ignoring the possibility and impact of a hidden curriculum. While these students may be unfamiliar with the academic culture of postsecondary institutions, it should not be inferred that they lack the intellectual capacity to learn the hidden curriculum or any content if appropriately exposed to it. Steps should be taken to be sure all students are aware of important opportunities and given a fair chance to participate.

In a similar determination in research question number one, university versus national outcomes, African American students, as compared to Caucasian students, expressed that they felt or perceived their campus environment as significantly less supportive. Based on the NSSE African American students perceived less engagement related to relationships with other students, relationship with faculty, feelings they were provided less support needed to help them succeed academically, feeling less helped when trying to cope with non-academic responsibilities, and receiving less support required to thrive socially. Considering these outcomes, this student population is more prone to leave the university and not graduate.

In Tinto's model, a student who fails to achieve some level of academic or social integration is likely to leave school. Tinto (1974) theorized that students' social integration increases their institutional commitment, ultimately reducing the likelihood of student attrition.

As Tinto (1975) wrote, “It is the interplay between the individual’s commitment to the goal of college completion and his commitment to the institution that determines whether or not the individual decides to drop out” (p. 96).

Research question three determined that the perception of engagement between freshman and senior level students differed significantly in three of the five subscales; “active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences” (Kuh, 2003, p. 26). Senior level students had significantly higher scores than freshman students. The other two subscales, academic challenge and supportive campus environment did not differ significantly between freshman and senior.

Senior-level students had higher scores in areas that included collaborating with others, solving problems, mastering difficulty material, interacting with faculty, and having the ability to foster complementary learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. These results may suggest that senior level students have reached a degree of academic maturity or self-actualization (reached one’s full potential). It is possible at this juncture in their academic career; seniors are engaged and have connected to or feel a level of “belonging,” both socially and academically (Maslow, 1943). These feelings could enable them to better articulate the benefits of their educational journey and their academic mastery resulting from their positive engagement with their university.

Questions on the NSSE directed at student interaction with faculty, demonstrated the confidence many seniors had when they responded “very often” or “often” to topics on: discussing grades or assignments with an instructor, talking about career plans with a faculty member or advisor, worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework, and worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.

Perhaps more opportunities are available at this stage of a student's academic career, with these opportunities having a positive influence on how they responded to the NSSE.

Freshman may not be any less motivated, but are at a point in their academic career where they are negotiating their positions and establishing their identities at the university both socially and academically, which potentially can be overwhelming. Research has emphasized that the freshman year is a critical period during which an institution has the ability to engage a student. Students who are retained from their freshman to their sophomore year are likely to commit to the institution (Berger & Braxton, 1998). This means it is necessary for institutions to embrace all students, especially freshman, to help influence the level of institutional commitment necessary for them to integrate into the college's social and academic systems successfully, resulting in a positive and holistic transition from high school to college.

Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

The findings of this research provided evidence that the level of engagement on three of the five subscales, active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences, was higher than the national average. University administrators could look at this as a positive outcome that needs continued attention to affect retention and graduation. They should use these data to create opportunities to continue to build on this platform to progress in the outcomes in these three areas as a way to attract and recruit new students, as well as retain their current students through graduation.

The subscale measuring supportive campus environment demonstrated that there is a disconnection with the students and a need for focus and development of a strategic plan of action to address the disconnection. When implementing a strategy, there must be acknowledgement that most students' commute to the university for classes and tend to spend

less time, in the traditional sense, interacting with faculty and peers. The university must develop traditional and nontraditional ways to communicate with and engage all student populations. The University currently has many traditional programs that include special support services, mentoring, freshman orientation, clubs, organizations, formal and informal study groups, as well as other special events. However, these programs may not be well promoted to students who commute. These programs and resources are valuable, but in many case these programs have minor impact on improving retention from the first year to the second year or graduation rates.

Findings support the need for academic and social integration in retention programs. Incorporating social factors into the development of retention programs can help address the social and emotional needs of students. The social factors that best combine with the academic factors are described as non-academic factors on the *ACT Report*. These factors include: academic self-confidence, academic goals, institutional commitment, social support, and social involvement. There also has to be a commitment to concentrate on how to teach students the academic cultural knowledge of the institution (e.g., the most appropriate way to engage in classroom discussions), regardless of what type of embodied cultural capital they brought with them to school (Smith, 2004).

The findings also provided evidence that there is a significant difference in the level of engagement of African American students and Caucasian students in three of the five subscales: academic challenge, enriching educational experiences and supportive campus environment. If this matter is not addressed the low retention rates and graduation rates of this student population will be the glaring outcome. It is necessary that this university implement meaningful programing to embrace the social and academic integration of African American students.

Research has determined that when a student is integrated into the fabric of a university it results into both a cumulative and compounding process, and the level of social integration within a given year is part of a cumulative experience that continues to build throughout their college experience. The establishment of peer relations and the development of role models and mentors are important factors in students' integration, both academically and socially. The university also should work to address the lack of diversity in areas like faculty, staff, and curriculum that often restrict the nature and quality of minority students' interactions within and out of the classroom, threatening their academic performance and social experience (Swail, 2003).

Finally, the findings revealed that there may be some characteristics worth exploring that exhibit in senior-level students that could be transferred in the areas of active and collaborative learning, student faculty interaction, and enriching educational experiences to assist in a more engaging academic experience for freshman students. These characteristics could be translated in peer and mentor coaching in the areas addressing, but not limited to, the importance of working with others students on projects, having serious conversations with students of a difference race or ethnicity than their own, having relationships with faculty members and seeking the support they need academically and socially.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations could limit the generalizability of this study beyond the university included in this study:

- This study used data obtained from a public, urban, Midwest, primarily commuter, research institution. The results of this study might not be applicable to other

institution types (e.g. private) or those institutions in different geographic settings (e.g. suburban or rural).

- The data from this study was provided by the Office of Institutional Research, with limited access that influenced the full scope of research.
- The study data was limited to only 2012 NSSE date results.
- This study had components that focused on African American students; thus, the findings might not be valid for students of different racial or ethnic groups.
- The study obtained perceptual information from the students resulting in response bias. While the participants were expected to respond honestly, they may have answered in ways that reflected what they thought the researcher wanted.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendation for further research can be used to broaden the understanding of student engagement and its impact on student retention, in an urban, research University in the Midwest, in its continued evolution of change.

- Compare findings of the North American version of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) to determine if this sixth subscale reveals any additional insight on student engagement. The AUSSE has been modified by adding a sixth subscale/aspect (work-integrated learning; integration of employment-focused work experience into study). Radloff and Coates (2009) defined student engagement as “students’ involvement with activities and conditions likely to generate high-quality learning, is increasingly understood to be important for superior education” (p. 3).
- Use a longitudinal research design to examine changes in students’ perceptions of

engagement on campus from their entry into the institution as freshman through completion of their programs as seniors.

- Develop a survey on student engagement to obtain perception from faculty on ways that students can become more academically involved in the institution.
- Provide student grade point average at the time of NSSE to identify academic strength or weakness.
- Develop a survey or focus group, exploring the existence and impact of the hidden curriculum at the institution.
- Offer a supplemental survey assessing or identifying student personality traits (*Myers & Briggs*) or strengths (*StrengthsFinder*). This could help better understand or draw evidence that the success of a student's true engagement may have just as much to do with their personality than their perception. This could lead to a more tailored approach to programing that could consider personality and strength as a factor.

Conclusion


The findings of this study have provided support needed for an urban, research University in the Midwest to consider what strategic direction the institution would like to take in maintaining or perhaps advancing its national competitiveness in student engagement. This university has an advantage because the data supports that nationally they rank higher than most in significant areas. One area worthy of consideration when working to maintain or advance in overall student engagement perception is to making sure thoughtful changes are considered when helping their largest student population, commuter students, become more engaged in the campus environments.

This study also provides additional data on the perception of student engagement among African American students as compared to Caucasian students. The results show African American students perception of student engagement is significantly lower than their Caucasian counterparts. The perceived disparity could potential result in lower retention and graduation rates of African American student. The university should work to make sure that diversity is celebrated, with all students made to feel that they are valued members of the student body. These actions can aid in the proactive efforts to promote social and academic inclusiveness and student retention.

The study provided support that senior level students have a significantly higher perception of student engagement than freshman level students. The University needs to implement innovative strategies and develop programs to increase retention among freshmen students and tackle the view of this population. Finally, this study may be instrumental in determining if current programs designed to engage students are effective at this institution, establishing program models and interventions to increase retention and graduation rates of all students and add to current and future bodies of research on this important and evolving topic of student engagement and its impact on student retention.

APPENDIX A

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION

		IRB Administration Office 87 E. Canfield, Second Floor Office (313) 577-1628 Detroit, MI 48201 http://irb.wayne.edu/index.php		RECEIVED APR 29 2014	
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Human Participant Research Determination Form					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use this form if you are unsure whether your project is considered human participant research. This form will walk you through the steps that we use. If you are still unsure, you can submit this form to the IRB for the determination. The IRB cannot retroactively grant IRB approval for a project previously deemed nonhuman participant research. All IRB submission forms <u>must</u> be the current form date (down load from http://irb.wayne.edu/forms-requirements-categories.php) and typed or computer generated. Submit this form hard copy to the IRB Administration Office. *Forward your @wayne.edu e-mail to your @med.wayne.edu, @karmanos.org, etc. e-mail in order to receive important e-mail communications regarding your study if you do not access your @wayne.edu e-mail OR go to Pipeline and enter the e-mail account that you wish to use. Non-WSU employees, please enter your e-mail. An e-mail address is required. Please call us if you have any questions along the way: (313) 577-1628 					
HPR Determination Number 2014 37					
<small>IRB Use ONLY</small>					
Section A: Project Information					
1. Name of person conducting the project:		Denise Williams		Phone:	(313) 622-5141
Department:				Fax:	()
Division:				*E-mail:	ax1811@wayne.edu
Campus Address:				Pager:	
2. <u>PIs who are students or trainees or those who are not WSU faculty or employees of WSU or an affiliated health care institution</u> must provide home mailing address and phone number in addition to the above information—this is where correspondence from the IRB office will be sent. If you are a student or not from WSU/affiliate and this is deemed research, you will be required to have a <u>local Faculty Supervisor or Sponsor</u> .					
Alternate or Home Address:		<input type="checkbox"/> N/A 19386 Cumberland Way, Detroit, MI 48203		Home Phone:	(313) 622-5141
3. Name of Faculty Sponsor or Faculty Supervisor assigned for this project (see note above):		Dr. Michael Owen <input type="checkbox"/> I do not have a Faculty Sponsor or Supervisor assigned.		*E-mail:	dx4206@wayne.edu
				Phone:	(313) 577-1692
4. Form completed by:		Denise Williams		Title:	Student
Phone:		(313) 622-5141		*E-mail:	ax1811@wayne.edu

5.	Project Title:	The Influence of Student Engagement on Student Persistence at a Midwest Urban Research Institution
6.	This project will use or is considered: check ALL that apply	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Behavioral, social, education, non-medical <input type="checkbox"/> Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Children are involved
7.	Description of Project: Please provide enough detail for us to make the determination.	<p>Purpose: For the purpose of my dissertation, the study will examine student engagement at an urban, commuter, public, and Research University in the Midwest, through the data collected in 2012 for the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The study will also examine African American students, as a subgroup, to find out if they had a similar or different experience as it relates to student engagement.</p> <p># and type of participants or charts/documents/specimens to be recruited/used: Wayne State student responses to the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement. The data will be stripped of names or student identification numbers prior to be obtained from the Office of Budget Planning and Analysis.</p> <p>Procedures and methods to be used: A secondary analysis of previously collected data will be used. The data will be obtained from the Office of Budget Planning and Analysis.</p> <p>How will you met the purpose? The data will be analyzed to determine if student engagement can be used to predict student retention.</p> <p>Attach a description of the project, if available.</p>
8.	Site/location of project:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WSU or affiliate location <input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary, junior, or high school setting <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Section B: Are Human Participants Involved Under the Common Rule?

9.	<p>Human Participants as defined by Common Rule (DHHS, §46.102)</p> <p>Will the activity involve <i>either</i> obtaining (1) data through intervention* or interaction** with a living individual, OR (2) identifiable private information*** about a living individual? Note: If the information that you are collecting is <i>from an identifiable source</i> (such as a medical record, etc.), then answer "yes" as you need identifiable info in order to gather the information.</p> <p>*Both physical procedures by which data are gathered and manipulations of the participant or the participant's environment that are performed for research purposes. ** Communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator & participant. ***Information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (e.g. Medical record). Private information is individually identifiable; <u>the identity of the person is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information.</u> Identifiable individuals may include third parties.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know:
----	---	--

If Yes: The project involves human participants. Continue to see if your project is research according to the Common Rule.
If No: Skip ahead to section D for application of FDA Definitions.

Section C: Is This Considered Research Under the Common Rule?

10	<p>Research as defined by the Common Rule (DHHS, §46.102)</p> <p>Will the activity involve a <u>systematic investigation</u>* (including research development, testing and evaluation)?</p> <p>*The implementation or use of specific methods of inquiry or data collection that is repeated with multiple participants. It is an activity that involves a prospective plan to incorporate data collection and data analysis to answer a question. Methodology alone does not determine the need for IRB review. More often than not, methods used in research (such as interviews or blood draws) are employed for reasons having nothing to do with research.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know:
<p>If yes, continue</p> <p>If no, this is not research under the common rule, skip ahead to section D to apply the FDA definitions.</p>		
10.	<p>Is your project <u>designed to develop or contribute</u>* to <u>generalizable knowledge</u>**?</p> <p>*Generalizable knowledge might include information presented or applied to a broader audience outside the institution or published with the intent of: a) drawing scientific conclusions from the data, or b) increasing the body of scientific knowledge on the topic of study, or c) analyzing the results for predictive value, or d) applying the results to the larger population, or e) informing policy. This would not typically describe projects that are intended solely for internal assessment purposes, such as quality improvement, or program evaluations. Publication should not be the sole factor used to make this determination, but rather what the intent is of publishing. If the data will be used to draw conclusions related to a larger audience, then the activity is often considered research.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know:
<p>If Yes, STOP- this is research as defined by the Common Rule and requires IRB approval. Refer to the website for the correct form. If you feel this may be in error, submit this form to the IRB office and we will review and make a determination.</p> <p>If No, this is not human participant research as defined by the common rule—continue to see if it is under the FDA, section D.</p>		

Section D: Is This Considered Research Under the FDA Regulations?

11	<p><u>Human participants as defined by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration)</u></p> <p><i>The FDA adopted the Common Rule regulations, but added additional requirements:</i></p> <p>Does this project involve human participants, as defined below by the FDA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research involves one or more living individuals who become a participant in research, either as a recipient of the test article (drug or device) or as a control. A participant may be either a health person or a patient; <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For medical devices, a living individual on whose specimen an investigational device is used. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If Yes: proceed to the next question.</p> <p>If No, stop-- this activity is not human participant research as defined by the FDA. Skip to section E</p>		
12	<p><u>Test article or research under the FDA</u></p> <p>A) Does the activity involve drugs* or biologics*, other than the use of a marketed drug in the course of medical practice?</p> <p>*A chemical or biological substance, other than food, that achieves its primary intended purposes through chemical action within or on the body or which is dependent upon being metabolized for the achievement of any of its primary intended purposes. This may include dietary supplements being studied for their effects on diseases (i.e. to cure, treat, mitigate, prevent, or diagnose disease including its symptoms). The drug is either not approved by the FDA for marketing, or the drug is not being used in the course of medical practice.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>B) The activity involves the use of a medical device*, other than the use of a marketed medical device in the course of medical practice?</p> <p>* An instrument, apparatus, implement, machine, contrivance, implant, in vitro reagent, or other similar or related article, including a component part, or accessory that is one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article is recognized in the official United States Pharmacopoeia, official Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States, or official National Formulary, or any supplement to any of them The article is intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease in humans or other animals The article is intended to affect the structure or any function of the body The medical device is not approved by the FDA for marketing or the medical device is not being used in the course of medical practice. 		

<p>C) Is the activity subject to the requirements for submission to the FDA? OR Is the activity intended to be submitted later to or held for inspection by the FDA as part of an application for a research or marketing permit?</p> <p>The activity is otherwise subject to FDA regulations because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Data from the activity will be submitted to, or held for inspection by the FDA; o The activity involves an FDA regulated article of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food or dietary supplement that bears a nutrient content or health claim Food or color additive for human consumption Infant formula Biological product for human use Electronic product for human use Other article subject to the FD&C Act <p>AND</p> <p>D) Does the activity involve human participants because one or more of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The test article will be used on one or more humans; OR o The test article is a medical device, used on human specimens, the activity is done to determine the safety or effectiveness of the device, and data from the activity will be submitted to, or held for inspection by, the FDA. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes to both C) and D)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><i>If you answered Yes to any of the above FDA questions, STOP-</i> this is research as defined by the FDA and requires IRB approval. Refer to the website for the correct form. If you feel this may be in error, submit this form to the IRB office and we will review and make a determination.</p> <p><i>If No to all,</i> this is not human participant research under FDA definitions. Continue to section E.</p>	

Section E: Next Steps?

- Submit this form to the IRB if you are unsure of your determination as to whether your activity is human participant research. If you have determined for sure that it is not, you do not need to submit this form unless you require an official acknowledgement from the IRB.
- Please keep in mind that if your project changes from nonhuman participant research, the **IRB cannot retroactively grant IRB approval**. IRB approval **must be gained before conducting** human participant research. See our website for additional info and forms if you need IRB approval: <http://irb.wayne.edu/>
- If you determined that your project is human participant research, but you are not sure if it **engages your institution**, please contact the IRB Administration Office at 313-577-1628. Generally, if you are a WSU or affiliate employee or student and you are collecting your data at a WSU or affiliate site, then the institution is engaged in the research.

I am unsure as to whether I made this determination correctly. Please help!

Comments:

Name of person conducting the project:

Denise Williams

I think that I made the determination correctly, but I wish to have an official acknowledgement from the WSU IRB via this form being returned with the reviewer's determination and signature.

IRB USE ONLY

IRB Reviewer Determination:

See next page.

Reviewer signature: _____ Date of review _____

Printed name of Reviewer: _____

IRB USE ONLY
IRB Reviewer Determination:


It is determined that this project does not meet the definition of research involving human participants (subjects) and therefore does not require IRB review. This project will examine student engagement at Wayne State University (WSU) by conducting a secondary analysis of student responses to the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement. The data will be de-identified prior to being obtained from the WSU Office of Budget Planning and Analysis and therefore, the data obtained for this study will not include private information which is defined as individually identifiable information. The identity of the respondents cannot be readily ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information obtained for the study. HHS regulations do not apply to projects that do not involve "human participants" as defined by Common Rule (DHHS, §46.102). The project also does not involve individuals who would receive a test article (drug or device) as participants and therefore the FDA regulations do not apply. Thus, this project does not require review or approval by the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board.

Please note that some changes to the study plan may impact this determination as to whether the project constitutes Human Participant Research. Please contact the IRB Administration office if there are changes to the study plan that may affect this determination.

Reviewer signature: Ray-Nitra Pugh Date of review 5/20/2014
 Printed name of Reviewer: Ray-Nitra Pugh

APPENDIX B

2012 NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE)



National Survey of Student Engagement 2012

The College Student Report

1 In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: or

	Very often	Often	Some-times	Never		Very often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Made a class presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	s. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	t. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	v. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Worked with other students on projects during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
i. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
j. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
l. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
m. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
n. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
o. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
p. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
q. Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

2 During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 During the current *school year*, about how much reading and writing have you done?

- a. Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-4 | 5-10 | 11-20 | More than 20 |
- b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-4 | 5-10 | 11-20 | More than 20 |
- c. Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-4 | 5-10 | 11-20 | More than 20 |
- d. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-4 | 5-10 | 11-20 | More than 20 |
- e. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-4 | 5-10 | 11-20 | More than 20 |

4 In a *typical week*, how many homework problem sets do you complete?

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | None | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 | More than 6 |
- a. Number of problem sets that take you more than an hour to complete
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 | More than 6 |
- b. Number of problem sets that take you less than an hour to complete
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 | More than 6 |

5 Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Very little | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Very much |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

6 During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Very often | Often | Some- times | Never | |
- a. Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very often | Often | Some- times | Never |
- b. Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very often | Often | Some- times | Never |
- c. Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very often | Often | Some- times | Never |
- d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very often | Often | Some- times | Never |
- e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very often | Often | Some- times | Never |
- f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very often | Often | Some- times | Never |

7 Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- b. Community service or volunteer work
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- d. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- e. Foreign language coursework
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- f. Study abroad
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- g. Independent study or self-designed major
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |
- h. Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Done | Plan to do | Do not plan to do | Have not decided |

8 Mark the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution.

- a. Relationships with other students
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
- b. Relationships with faculty members
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Available, Helpful, Sympathetic |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
- c. Relationships with administrative personnel and offices
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Helpful, Considerate, Flexible |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

9 About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

b. Working for pay on campus

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

c. Working for pay off campus

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

d. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

e. Relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.)

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

f. Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouse, etc.)

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

g. Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)

0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 More than 30

Hours per week

10 To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Using computers in academic work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11 To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Acquiring a broad general education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Writing clearly and effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Speaking clearly and effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Thinking critically and analytically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Analyzing quantitative problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Using computing and information technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Working effectively with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Voting in local, state, or national elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Learning effectively on your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Understanding yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Solving complex real-world problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Contributing to the welfare of your community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12 Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

13 How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

14 If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

Definitely yes

Probably yes

Probably no

Definitely no

15 Write in your year of birth:

16 Your sex:
 Male Female

17 Are you an international student or foreign national?
 Yes No

18 What is your racial or ethnic identification? (Mark only one.)
 American Indian or other Native American
 Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
 Black or African American
 White (non-Hispanic)
 Mexican or Mexican American
 Puerto Rican
 Other Hispanic or Latino
 Multiracial
 Other
 I prefer not to respond

19 What is your current classification in college?
 Freshman/first-year Senior
 Sophomore Unclassified
 Junior

20 Did you begin college at your current institution or elsewhere?
 Started here Started elsewhere

21 Since graduating from high school, which of the following types of schools have you attended other than the one you are attending now? (Mark all that apply.)
 Vocational or technical school
 Community or junior college
 4-year college other than this one
 None
 Other

22 Thinking about this current academic term, how would you characterize your enrollment?
 Full-time Less than full-time

23 Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?
 Yes No

24 Are you a student-athlete on a team sponsored by your institution's athletics department?
 Yes No (Go to question 25.)

On what team(s) are you an athlete (e.g., football, swimming)? Please answer below:

25 What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?
 A B+ C+
 A- B C
 B- C- or lower

26 Which of the following best describes where you are living now while attending college?
 Dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity/sorority house)
 Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance of the institution
 Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within driving distance of the institution
 Fraternity or sorority house
 None of the above

27 What is the highest level of education that your parent(s) completed? (Mark one box per column.)

Father	Mother
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not finish high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduated from high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Attended college but did not complete degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed an associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed a bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed a master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

28 Please print your major(s) or your expected major(s).

a. Primary major (Print only one.):

b. If applicable, second major (not minor, concentration, etc.):

THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR RESPONSES!

After completing the survey, please put it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and deposit it in any U.S. Postal Service mailbox. Questions or comments? Contact the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University, 1900 East Tenth Street, Suite 419, Bloomington IN 47406-7512 or nsse@indiana.edu or www.nsse.iub.edu. Copyright © 2011 Indiana University.

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ABSTRACT**THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
ON STUDENT RETENTION AT A
MIDWEST URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTION**

by

DENISE WILLIAMS MALLET**December 2015****Advisor:** Dr. Michael Owens**Major:** Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**Degree:** Doctor of Education

This study examined the importance of student retention and persistence and the role that student engagement has on those areas. Three research questions were posed for this study. The questions looked at the differences between national outcomes as compared to those in an urban, research University in the Midwest; the differences between African American students and Caucasian students at this Midwest institution and the perception of engagement of freshman and senior level students. Student engagement was measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five factors (i.e., level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experience, and supportive campus environment).

A nonexperimental, ex post facto research design has been used in this study. The university had previously collected the data. The data was collected from freshman and senior students using the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). A total of 1,241 students enrolled at the university in the Winter semester, 2012 participated in the survey.

Findings suggest that an urban, Research University in the Midwest, as compared to national student engagement rates, is competitive and rank above average. The university comparison of its African American students and Caucasian students revealed that there are some disparities as it relates to lower perception of student engagement among African American students. The same university comparison of its senior level students and freshman level students indicated a significantly higher perception of student engagement.

Findings suggest there is a perception of inconsistency in a student's engagement experience based on their student population or class ranking, which provides enough reason for further investigation. These issues are worth addressing to ensure a holistic student engagement experience for all students as well as remove any perception of disparity. These actions can aid in the proactive efforts to promote social and academic inclusiveness and student retention. These findings may assist in determining if current programs designed to engage students are effective as well as establishing new program models and interventions to increase retention and graduation rates of all students. Further research is needed to identify other barriers and factors associated with student engagement which could improve persistence.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

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Education

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Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
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Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan
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Professional Experience

- 2015—present Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan
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- 2014—2015 Wayne County Community College District, Detroit, Michigan
2014—2015: Provost, Division of Educational Affairs
- 2001—2014 University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, Michigan
2009-2014: Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
2007-2009: Associate Vice President for Enrollment & Students Affairs
2003-2007: Dean of Admissions
2002-2003: Director of Admissions
2001-2002: Associate Director of Admissions
- 1998—2001 Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan
2000-2001: Interim Director of Admissions
2000-2000: Assistant Director of Admissions
1998-2000: Admissions Counselor