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AN INVESTIGATION OF FACULTY INFLUENCE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL

VARIABLES AFFECTING THE PERSISTENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relevance of psychosocial variables as they relate to the persistence of African American students at a predominantly white university (PWU). Although it is difficult to measure persistence (i.e. the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion), this study ranks African American undergraduate student perceptions regarding non-faculty and faculty influenced factors that arguably helps or hinders persistence. Repeated themes arose from the literature review that identified salient factors associated with African American undergraduate student persistence at PWUs.

The study analyzed the responses of 327 web survey participants. The population of interest is African American undergraduates attending The Pennsylvania State University. The target population was asked to rank the levels of importance placed on psychosocial factors of persistence as perceived by them. The study found that psychosocial variables are significant contributors to the persistence and retention of African American students at PWUs. However, the results do not support that African American undergraduate students at PSU have expectations that are significantly motivated by culture or are significantly affected by perceptions of prejudice and racism as the literature may suggest.

According to Berlak and Moyenda (2001), it is widely accepted that teachers of color are fundamentally better equipped to provide culturally relevant curriculum and instruction to students of color. However, the study concludes that faculty behaviors that may be more supportive of African American students are not exclusive to African American faculty. Moreover, the results show that the nonacademic entry characteristics of African American students may have greater effect on their persistence than their social-communicative exchanges at PWUs. For example, students from higher socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds more than

likely have already acquired or are more easily able to adopt characteristics that are ideal for persistence (e.g. commitment to personal goals, biculturalism, and intrinsic motivation) than students from lower SES backgrounds. Therefore, it is recommended to consider within group distinctions when conducting racial, ethnic, and cultural related studies in an effort to obtain a more comprehensive assessment of the role of various factors on persistence outcomes.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

U.S. public state universities have experienced major difficulties in retaining underrepresented students. There are many variables and influences that affect persistence in efforts to acquire a degree from a college or university. One body of research has examined the lack of sufficient financial aid as a contributor to student persistence. In addition, the Mismatch Hypothesis of Alon and Tienda (2005) propose that the low persistence of African Americans at predominately White universities (PWUs) is due to a mismatch between student academic credentials and choice of university. Other theories consider the racial climates of PWUs and their geographic locations as playing a major role in the persistence of African American students. Yet, other explanations point towards ambition, study habits, and PWUs willingness to admit African Americans with substandard academic credentials.

Historical Perspective

The U.S. Supreme Court recognized the importance of racial diversity approximately 60 years ago. In the 1950 *Sweatt v. Painter* decision, the Court ruled that the University of Texas Law School could not restrict admissions to Whites only. Furthermore, the Court ruled that the Law School must admit Blacks because of the gross disparity in resources between that school and law schools for Blacks (Moses & Chang, 2006).

In 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* held that race could be one of the factors considered in choosing a diverse student body in university admissions decisions. However, the use of a quota system for achieving a diverse

student body was ruled illegal. This was considered a *modern* landmark decision supporting affirmative action and upholding a U.S. university's decision to consider race as a variable among other variables of consideration for admission. Issues of affirmative action, diversity, and race-conscious admissions continue as a topic of contention among academics and politicians.

The 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decisions involving the University of Michigan (UM), upheld the university's position that race is a legitimate factor of consideration among many other factors for admissions to public institutions of higher education. The Court's rulings on *Grutter v. Bollinger*, and *Gratz v. Bollinger* affirmed the importance of racial and ethnic diversity in higher education. Prior to the UM ruling, researchers began empirical pursuits attempting to understand the significance of racial diversity in higher education (e.g., Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Maruyama & Moreno, 2000; Orfield, 2001). This scholarship and other related works were used in defense of Grantz and Gutter to justify that diversity, particularly racial diversity, was a compelling state interest (Moses & Marin, 2006).

Although the decisions from our highest court continue to support race-conscious admissions, more compelling are the societal circumstances that continue to support the need for race-conscious admissions. Race-conscious admission policies exist to diversify student body populations as long as race-neutral policies do not achieve the goal of considerable student diversity. Race-neutral admission may not reach fruition because race is an unavoidable issue that is a part of America's foundation. Race-neutral admission policies carry the same aspirations as a color-blind society. Both are desirable, but neither is currently attainable. The cited Court decisions affirmed the importance of racial and ethnic diversity in higher education and in each case provided a diversity rationale upon which their decision was rendered. For example, in 1978, Justice Powell's plurality opinion conceptualized the diversity rationale as encompassing the contribution of a variety of viewpoints to the "robust exchange of ideas" in the university setting (Weinberg, July/August 2008). Approximately 28 years separates the 1950 and 1978 Supreme

Court decisions while 25 years separates the 1978 and 2003 Court decisions. Yet, the need for race-conscious admission policies persists. While gaining admission into a college or university gives individuals access to knowledge, persisting to degree completion is the main goal of attending colleges or universities.

There are several models used to address student persistence in general. Tinto's (1988) expanded persistence model was sociologically based and described a three stage process through which students became socially integrated into the college culture. Bean and Eaton (2000) brought a more psychological approach and revised Tinto's (1988) expanded persistence model. Rogers and Summers (2008) revised Bean and Eaton's (2000) model to make it more applicable to how African American students attending PWUs may experience the persistence process. Close analyses of the three models reveal that faculty contact is high or moderate in key areas that influence student persistence. In fact, faculty contact is a variable embedded in all the models.

The scholarly literature and studies on African American experiences at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) presents a suitable method for better identifying and understanding the behavioral characteristics of faculty that are favorable to African American student persistence. Examining PWUs and HBCUs as they relate to student and faculty experiences with each other, offers a framework to identify significant differences that may affect African American student persistence at PWUs.

This study conducts an empirical analysis of how faculty may influence the persistence of African American students at PWUs. For example, graduate students at HBCUs report satisfaction with serving as teaching assistants for Black faculty, but dissatisfied with the lack of such opportunities at PWUs (Willie, Grady, & Hope, 1991). This may suggest the possibility that African American faculty afford more academic opportunities to African American students than White faculty. However, due to the consistency, frequency, and duration of classroom contact

between student and faculty, faculty experiences may be most influential on undergraduate student persistence.

The Problem

Psychosocial variables are notably absent from the empirical literature explaining factors influencing graduation rates of African Americans (Henderson & Kritsonis, 2007). This study used scientific inquiry to measure the significance of faculty behavior in contributing to the psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of African American students. Some research examines racial, ethnic and cultural similarities between student and faculty and concludes that positive support based on these shared characteristics contributes to positive outcomes. However, not enough contemporary research deconstructs faculty behaviors that are previously associated with these shared characteristics and ranks their levels of importance to persistence as perceived by African American students.

Although not the environment represented in the study, HBCUs present a context for understanding the possible influences of faculty on African American students due to the proportion of African American students enrolled at such universities. Provasnik and Shafer (2004) indicated that in 2001, PWUs accounted for 78.5% of undergraduate degrees conferred upon African American students, although 87.1% of African Americans attended PWUs. Comparatively, the remaining 12.9% attended HBCUs. Yet the HBCU undergraduate degrees conferred accounts for 21.5% of these earned by African Americans (Provasnik & Shafer, 2004). PWUs graduate a disproportionately smaller number of African Americans in spite of having a much larger enrollment. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data (2006), only 60% of college students in the U.S. are obtaining their degrees, while African Americans are only 38% of the degree obtaining population (NCES, 2006). Therefore, an inquiry

of faculty behaviors at HBCUs may further assist in identifying faculty attributes that may aid African American student persistence.

Furthermore, up-to-date research is needed to revisit correlations between the presence of African American faculty and the persistence of African American students. It is widely accepted that an increase in African American faculty will lead to an increase in the percentage of African American students persisting at PWUs. This theory has remained consistent for over two decades. According to Blackwell (1981), research showed that the presence of African American faculty members is the most persistent, statistically significant predictor of graduation of African American graduate and professional students. It is widely accepted that teachers of color are more likely to understand and embrace the culture of their minority students, thus making them fundamentally better equipped to provide culturally relevant curriculum and instruction (Berlak & Moyenda, 2001). In addition, some scholars contend that faculty of color provide minority students with diverse role models, more effective mentoring, and are supportive of minority-related areas of scholarship (De la Luz Reyes & Halcón, 1991; Mickelson & Oliver, 1991). The literature recognizes the existence of faculty behaviors that are more supportive of African American students and more prevalent with African American faculty. However, this study addressed whether these behaviors are a condition or limitation of race, ethnicity, or culture. In other words, can faculty behaviors that support the persistence of African American students at PWUs be adopted by non Black faculty if desired? For example, a White scholar named John Monro (1978) taught English in two HBCUs (Miles College in Alabama, and Tougaloo College in Mississippi). In one of the schools which he taught, two-thirds of the first-year college students were in the bottom 10% of the national distribution of scores in English skills and had reading scores at the ninth-grade level (Willie, 1994). Of these students, over 50% of them graduated, and some of them eventually received honor records (Monroe, 1978). Monro attributes students'

interest and success to the curriculum chosen because much of it came from African American authors.

A study published in The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE) (2002), among others, agrees that Black faculty remain significantly underrepresented in higher education. If the belief that increasing Black faculty will help improve Black student persistence, it is reasonable to question the continuous underrepresentation of Black faculty at PWUs.

Weinberg's (2008) granular approach demonstrates a lack of racial parity among full-time faculty across university departments. For example, when examining data from a large urban private research university located in the northeast, Weinberg observed a Black faculty clustering effect in the humanities department. In general, full-time Black faculty across the humanities department appeared well represented relative to their respective national pool data. However, in the 15 humanities departments with six or more full-time members, only 5 departments had full-time Black faculty members. Further examination unveiled more clustering. For example, the five departments represented by Black full-time faculty primarily teach ethnic related courses, such as Black History within the history department, Caribbean Literature within the Spanish department, and Jazz within the music department (Weinberg, July/August 2008).

The Purpose

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of faculty as it relates to the persistence of African American students at a predominantly White university (PWU). Although the persistence of African American students at PWUs has been extensively discussed in a plethora of research, there remains a gap when exploring psychosocial and culturally significant variables resulting from contact with faculty in general. Furthermore, little research exists that explores how faculty led classroom experiences shape student persistence and satisfaction

(Demaris & Kritsonis, 2008). The study purports to provide the context for reflecting on the ways in which current student persistence theories might be modified to account more directly for the role of faculty in the process of African American student persistence at PWUs.

Significance of Study

Most studies of student retention are quantitative, while studies of persistence are fundamentally qualitative. Retention studies fall short of making significant contributions to understanding the process (i.e. persistence) of retention. This study contributes to the knowledge base by utilizing qualitative studies that identify factors of persistence, while conducting a quantitative study for generating broader implications. A contemporary quantitative study that furthers the inquiry of cultural significance, and the effects of psychosocial variables as an outcome of faculty behavior on the persistence of African American students at PWUs, is a valuable contribution to the field.

Universities are ethically bound to provide a learning environment that encourages academic development for all students. If an identified segment of the student population consistently does not reach this development, then it may be evidence of university structures that are possibly promoting significant barriers to African American student persistence. A university's brand image suffers when there is a gross disparity of who is receiving this currency and who is not.

The lack of persistence of underrepresented students is one of the most salient measurements used for questioning a university's commitment to providing a learning environment conducive to the needs and sensitivities of underrepresented groups. A university is not just an institution for teaching and research. It is a place that facilitates the growth and development of future leaders. When the Supreme Court rendered their decision in the *Grutter*

case, they stated that "universities, and in particular, law schools, represent the training ground for a large number of our Nation's leaders" (Weinberg, 2008).

Hypotheses

This study addressed the following hypotheses:

- Psychosocial variables are significant influences on undergraduate African American students' persistence at a PWU.
- Faculty behavior is a significant variable affecting persistence among African American students at a PWU.

Limitations of the Study

The study does not control for particular fields of study that historically may contribute (positively or negatively) to the persistence of African American students. Furthermore, limited presence and exposure to African American faculty may affect faculty behavior correlations and outcomes between African American students' perceptions regarding African American faculty. Moreover, Black and African American are used interchangeably and consist of members of African origin. However the racial categorizing omits sub-cultures, nationalities, historical, and environmental differences which may have a significant influence on student entry characteristics, motivators, and perceptions. The study makes an attempt to eliminate ethnic and nationality variances within the population, however the study does not control for cultural identity variances.

The data collection yielded a response rate of only 21.8 percent of the surveyed population, thereby creating the risk of drawing conclusions based on an inadequate respondent

size. However, more studies suggest that the effect of nonrespondents may not be as obvious as was once thought (Curtin, Presser, and Singer 2000; Keeter et al. 2000) and that bias may not necessarily be a result of low response rates. Nevertheless, it may be better to err on the side of caution and concede that a 21.8 percent response rate is insufficient to offer conclusive findings. As an alternative, the results should be treated as suggestive only.

The Kruskal-Wallis test compares three or more groups and gives a significant result on the overall test. However, it does not identify which pairs of groups or conditions are significantly different. Thus, the data analyses of this study only conclude a statistically significant difference between two conditions when appropriate. For example, when the Kruskal-Wallis test identifies a significant difference within a factor or group, the mean rank will display at least one obvious statistical difference, which is the difference between the highest mean rank and the lowest mean rank. An exception to this approach of claiming statistically significant difference is when one of the conditions with the highest or lowest mean has a very low respondent number. There is a greater chance of error when claiming statistically significant difference with low respondent amounts. In general, post hoc or "follow-up pairs" tests are needed to get the exact result and to discover statistically significant differences between three or more conditions. The PI chose not to perform post hoc tests given that the Kruskal-Wallis test is used for supplemental data analyses and does not directly address the hypotheses.

Definition of Terms

Academic Self-concept: How a student views their academic ability compared with other students (Cokley, 2000).

African American or Black: A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "Black, African American, or Negro," or provide

written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Assimilation: Immersion in a culture not one's own (Birman, 1988).

Color Blind Racism: Not recognizing racial or class distinctions.

Diminutive: Pertaining to or productive of a form denoting smallness, familiarity, affection, or triviality, as the suffix -let, in droplet from drop.

Diversity: The inclusion of diverse people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization.

Efficacy: The power to produce an effect.

Fit: The degree to which the institution offers what students want and need, whether academically or socially (Rogers & Summers, 2008, p. 175)

Graduation Rate: Percentage of first-time full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students earning a bachelor's degree within six years - Title IV degree-granting institutions.

Granularity: The relative size, scale, level of detail or depth of penetration that characterizes an object or activity. It is the extent to which a larger entity is subdivided.

Historically Black College and University (HBCU): An institution of higher education in the United States that was established before 1964 with the intention of serving the Black community.

Kruskal-Wallis test: A nonparametric one-way analysis of variance for comparing more than two groups of subjects (Gall et al. 2003, p. 315).

Multivariate Correlational: Any statistical analysis (e.g., multiple regression or factor analysis) that expresses the relationship among three or more variables.

Negriscence: The process of becoming Black.

Nonparametric test of statistical significance: A type of test of statistical significance that does not make assumptions about the distribution and form of scores on the measured variable (Gall et al. 2003, p. 630).

Nurturing: To promote or encourage the development of students.

Othermothering: A student-centered approach from faculty that goes beyond "professional" boundaries (Guiffrida, November/December 2005).

Persistence: The desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion.

Psychosocial: of or pertaining to the psychological development of the individual in relation to his or her social environment.

Retention: Ability of an institution to retain a student from admission to graduation.

Self-efficacy: The belief in one's capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997).

Assumptions

The study includes the following assumptions:

- Student responses on questionnaire are genuine.

- Faculty behavior has a significant psychosocial effect on student persistence.

- Race, ethnicity, and culture are relevant influences.

Theoretical Framework

Psychological Model of Retention

Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model of Bean and Eaton's *Psychological Model of Retention* is the theoretical framework that motivates the study. The model specifically relates to African American students attending predominantly White universities. Moreover, the model provides the psychosocial variables for the proposed study. Furthermore, the model highlights the significance of faculty's position in the psychosocial processes of student persistence. Although not explicitly labeled in the model, faculty is embedded in the core psychological components of the model.

The revised model also includes a visual representation of Cross's (1971) negriscence model to demonstrate how Cross's model corresponds with processes addressed in Bean and Eaton's (2000) model. The applicability of Cross's model of racial identity development is not addressed in this study. However, the racial identity development of African Americans at PWUs is arguably a stable factor in the Black experience of attending PWUs and is worth noting where applicable.

According to Bean and Eaton's model, each student brings a set of *Entry Characteristics* that are unique to them. These characteristics affect the *Environmental Interactions* composed of on-campus and off-campus experiences, which directly influence a student's *Psychological Processes* leading to *Psychological Outcomes*. Positive psychological outcomes transfer to *Intermediate Outcomes* that include academic and social integration, and conclude with academic performance. When students are integrated socially and academically, positive *Attitudes* develop about their university and will affect their *Intention* to persist (Bean & Eaton, 2000).

The model does not address factors of persistence associated with race, ethnicity, or culture. It describes the interaction between students' self-systems and the university environment in an attempt to predict persistence. However, when discussing African American students, race and culture must be considered to contextualize the experience. Therefore, this study used Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model due to its utilization of the psychological aspects of the persistence process in a culturally sensitive framework. The revised model does not propose revisions to Entry Characteristics, nor to Environmental Interactions. However, in the revised model, Environmental Interactions directly affect students' Attitudes, which impact their Psychological Processes leading to Psychological Outcomes. Positive Psychological Outcomes transfer to Intermediate Outcomes which include academic and social integration, and will affect their Intention to persist. The significance and cultural relevance of these variables are discussed in detail in the literature review section.

As previously mentioned, faculty behavior and the effects of faculty interactions are embedded in the Environmental Interactions, Attitudes, Psychological Processes and Psychological Outcomes, and Intermediate Outcomes stages of the model. These factors are the *heart* of the model and are salient to influencing students' persistence. Faculty behavior particularly is a key component to the psychosocial variables in the model.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of faculty as it relates to the persistence of African American students at a predominantly White university (PWU). Although the persistence of African American students at PWUs has been extensively researched, there remains a gap when exploring psychosocial and culturally significant variables resulting from contact with faculty in general. Psychosocial variables are notably absent from the empirical literature examining graduation rates of African Americans (Henderson & Kritsonis, 2007). This study uses scientific inquiry to measure the significance of faculty behavior in contributing to the psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of African American students. Previous research has focused on racial, ethnic, and cultural similarities between students and faculty, and concludes that these shared characteristics contribute to positive support. However, not enough contemporary research deconstructs faculty behaviors that are presumably associated with these shared characteristics and ranks their relative importance to persistence as perceived by African American students.

Psychosocial Variables

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) assert that "what happens to students after they arrive on campus has a greater influence on academic and social self-concepts than does the kind of institution students attend" (p.184). Values of students, particularly African Americans, are essential to understanding psychosocial dynamics. Thornton's (1994) study demonstrated that African American university students have a lesser preference for identity and career pursuits

than religion and family. It is conceptually plausible that many African American students'

motivators for persistence may not follow the pattern found in previous research.

Another psychosocial factor that affects persistence is academic self-concept. Often

African American students are characterized as having poor academic self-concept, largely due to

poor academic achievement (Ford, 1996). Duncan (2005) explained that African American

college students could benefit from interventions aimed at addressing psychosocial distresses.

Faculty members can be ideal for initiating these interventions because of their frequent contact

with students, and their ability to assess student performance.

Minority students' interactions with faculty are found to be problematic especially in

graduate schools where faculty and student relationships are of utmost importance. Historically,

minority students quite often do not view themselves as belonging to the mainstream of their

academic departments, and typically feel alienated and isolated (Carrington & Sedlacek, 1976;

Allen, Haddad, & Kirkland, 1984; Clewell, 1987). Nettles (August 1990) found that these

feelings of alienation and isolation can be combated with graduate fellowships and assistantships

because these types of financial assistance are related to the amount of interaction students have

with faculty. Nettles (1990) believed that this interaction is related to doctoral grade point

averages (DGPAs) and doctoral program satisfaction. In other words, a greater amount of

interaction between faculty and minority students leads to better student performance, which

results in a greater amount of student satisfaction, which leads to the greatest chance of

persistence. Although this study is concerned with undergraduate student persistence, the

experiences of African American graduate students should be noted for their psychosocial

relevance.

Schwitzer, Ancis, and Griffin (1998) constructed a model of social adjustment for

African American students at PWUs. The model identified four distinct features affecting social

adjustment: 1) a sense of underrepresentation; 2) direct perceptions of racism; 3) hurdle of

approaching faculty; and 4) the effects of faculty familiarity. Two of the four features are faculty related and are psychosocial in nature. Although this research focuses on the role of faculty, perceptions of racism can also have psychosocial effects on students; particularly if students hold perceptions that racism exist among faculty members.

Trying to ascertain whether some African American students are psychologically predisposed to perceive racism at PWUs may be of concern to universities. However, what is more salient are the lived experiences of African Americans while attending PWUs as it relates to student and faculty interaction. Therefore, taking a closer look at the classroom phenomenon at PWUs may be crucial in the efforts to understand what influences persistence of African American students.

"Othermothering"

Students of color are more likely to seek academic help from family, friends, or academic counselors who are minorities than from White faculty (Guiffrida, 2005). This finding is inconsistent with research showing high levels of out-of-class interaction among African American students and White faculty at PWUs. In an effort to bring consistency to these apparently contradictory findings, the quality of these interactions must be examined. Eimers and Pike (1996) found that African Americans at PWUs indicated less satisfaction with their universities, although they reported higher levels of contact with faculty than White students reported. The frequency of contact between African American students and faculty is less important than the quality of the contact (Nettles, Thoeny, and Gosman, 1986). These results suggest that African American students may generally have different expectations than Whites regarding their interactions with faculty at PWUs.

African American students at an HBCU perceived and often expected supportive Black faculty to be willing to go "beyond the call of duty" to help them succeed (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). Black participants in the Hall and Closson (2005) study echoed a similar perception of Black faculty giving them a higher level of service because they are of the same racial group. An indication of what some African American students expect from White faculty is found in Fries-Britt's (1995) qualitative study of African American students attending a PWU. She concluded that students valued relationships with White faculties who were "sincere and interested" (p. 12). This is an indication that behavior can *trump* race, especially when expectations of Black faculty are unfulfilled and White faculty behavior exceeds expectations. Authors of both studies provided examples, but did not explicitly define the ways in which faculty went beyond the call of duty, gave a higher level or service, or how sincerity and interest was clearly demonstrated. This study identifies and brings clarity to identifying positive faculty characteristics that were represented in the preceding literature.

Guiffrida (November/December 2005) connected positive faculty characteristics that facilitated meaningful relationships with African American students to the long-held tradition of education within African American culture called "othermothering." Othermothering is a comprehensive term, which, when used in the context of education, it describes a student-centered approach from faculty that goes beyond "professional" boundaries. The definitions of student-centeredness by participants in the Guiffrida (November/December 2005) study, described the behavior of faculty who served as mentors as providing:

> …professional contacts, advice, and leading by example; as their academic coaches by providing tutoring, encouragement, and pushing them to reach their full academic potential; as their advocates by pleading their cases and defending them to others on campus and at home; and finally as their counselors by listening to their academic and personal problems, supporting them, and giving them sound advice. (p. 715).

Othermothering was one framework used by Guiffrida (November/December 2005) for "conceptualizing the unique needs, expectations, and experiences of some African American students" who attend PWUs (p. 708).

Learning from Classroom Phenomena at Predominantly White Universities

The classroom is a major feature of the learning experience. The degree of social and academic integration occurring in the classroom makes the experience a substantial influence within the structure of higher education. The role of faculty as the orchestrator of the social and academic integration, particularly in the classroom, is often overlooked by researchers. An abundance of research has focused on the role of pedagogy (McMillan, 1987) as well as curriculum (Forrest, 1982) and classroom activities (Volkwein, King, & Terenzine, 1986) as predictors of student learning instead of directing attention toward faculty behavior. Research indicates that classroom interactions between faculty and students clearly favor non-minority class members (Levin & Levin, 1991). In Jones, Castellanos, and Cole's (2002) examination of ethnic minority student experiences at PWUs, students gave mixed reviews of academic departments. For example, ethnic minority students perceived some faculty as supportive and very helpful while others were perceived to perpetuate stereotypes of minorities and had lower academic expectations of them.

Some students in the Jones et al.'s (2002) study reported being offended by multicultural insensitive comments of faculty. For example, a professor was reported to have asked a class with a Native American student, "How many of you played Indian this weekend?" (p. 31). The professor also referred to cowboys and Indians as a "minimal incident and a credible part of history" (p. 31). The Native American student was offended by these comments and reported them as dismissive.

Another illustration of minority students' experiences at PWUs is when they are called upon to represent their entire racial/ethnic group. Students felt that they had to be experts of their culture (Jones et al., 2002). Sometimes they were called on in class just to give the minority perspective, thus having feelings of isolation and tokenism (p.31). It is vital for PWUs to acknowledge students psychosocial effects from negative and culturally insensitive faculty behaviors. Jones et al. (2002) says:

> …faculty members should assess their interactions in the classroom and monitor their delivery and cultural sensitivity while not minimizing the role of presenting curriculum and a learning experience. Furthermore, they should be held accountable for their actions in the classroom, and faculty promotion guidelines should include evaluation based on not only knowledge of their area of expertise but cultural sensitivity and multicultural competency. (p. 35)

Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) concluded that African American students at a PWU perceived White faculty as unapproachable and insensitive to African American culture. Faculty insensitivity is demonstrated when they neglect to acknowledge or incorporate culturally diverse perspectives into the curricula (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). This neglect conveys to students that their histories and traditions are not valued (Marchesani & Adams, 1992).

A perception that PWUs harbor a climate of racism, including insensitivity within the classroom dynamics, is prevalent among African American students. It is important to not overlook that faculty insensitivity is not always attributed to what faculty say. Sometimes it is what they do not say that contributes to perceptions of faculty prejudices, biases, and insensitivity. For example, in a study conducted by Ann Marie Frank (2003), designed to investigate the perceptions of African American educators' at a PWU, revealed that the pre-service teachers perceived some racism among classmates, but did not perceive racism among

faculty. However, they felt that faculty failed to address and challenge racist comments (p. 699). It is possible that some students may feel that faculty who implicitly support or perpetuate classroom inequity, by allowing perceived racist comments, are as responsible as the initiator.

It is necessary that faculty become self aware of their own conscious and subconscious views of race and culture by examining their ideas concerning their own academic socialization and how that process interacts with their social and cultural background; and the ways these ideas have affected their beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning (Norman & Norman, 1995). As expressed by Marchesani and Adams (1992):

> The tendency of individuals from dominant cultural groups to see their norms
> and traditions as universally valued and preferred supports cultural embeddedness that
> makes it extremely difficult to acknowledge the extent of negative assumptions and
> stereotypes toward those with other educational values or beliefs. Although we are not
> responsible for the cultural-specific beliefs we grew up with, we are surely responsible
> for examining and questioning them as adults and as educators. (p. 14)

The Linguistics of Racism

This section highlights Bonilla-Silva's (2002) study, which argued that color blind racism is the central racial ideology of the post-civil rights era and its peculiar style is characterized by slipperiness, apparent nonracialism, and ambivalence. The content of his study is meaningful to this study in several ways. Firstly, it is meaningful because it demonstrates how the appearance of racism is covertly communicated through language and behavior within the university context. Secondly, his study is meaningful to this research because data analyzed from the Bonilla-Silva (2002) study comes from interviews gathered as part of two projects: the 1997 Survey of College Students Social Attitudes (CSSA), and the 1998 Detroit Area Study (DAS). All participants in

both projects were exclusively White Americans. The results from the former are showcased in this section. The results make sufficient inferences to the social integration of African American students at PWUs. Thirdly, the study recognizes that universities are microcosms of the larger society. Within the larger society, racism exists; therefore racism is not seized at the doorsteps of the Academy. Faculty members are not exempt from potentially possessing racist ideologies that are subtle at least, and obvious at worst. Perceptions of a racist campus climate add to the experience of African American students at PWUs and can negatively influence the psychosocial outcomes of the persistence process. Fourthly, the study supports why African Americans consistently perceive an environment of racism at PWUs. Lastly, Bonilla-Silva's (2002) study supports the psychosocial emphasis of this research.

Avoiding Direct Racial Language while Expressing Racial Views

In current times, using racist language or words that sound or can be perceived as racist is socially unacceptable, especially in a university context. However Edsall and Edsall (1992) and other researchers have shown that Whites talk about non Whites publicly, but in a very careful, indirect, hesitant manner and, occasionally, even through code language. Out of the 41 interviews from the CSSA survey, only one university student used traditional Jim Crow terminology (i.e. "colored" or "Negroes") when referring to Blacks. However, it is important to point out that in spite of White college students not using racial slurs as legitimate terms in *public* discussions does not mean that they do not use these terms or derogate Blacks in other forms in *private* discussions (p. 45). For example, most college students in Bonilla-Silva's (2002) study acknowledged listening or telling racist jokes with friends and some of the college students told the jokes in the interviews. One female student said, "Okay [laughing] it was, it's terrible, but, um, what do you call…a car full of niggers driving off a cliff? A good beginning" (p. 45). In

addition, racist terminology is current in the life of students as illustrated by the fact that over half of them acknowledge having friends or close relatives who are "racist" (p. 45).

Semantic Moves

Contemporary societal norms do not approve of open expressions of direct racial views and positions, therefore White students, faculty, and administrators have developed a concealed way of voicing them. Bonilla-Silva (2002) examined the most common verbal strategies used by Whites in post-civil rights' race talk. Among the participants, some college students used the phrase, "I'm not prejudiced, but" in their answers. For example, one college student inserted a version of the move to soften his opposition towards affirmative action. After a back-and-forth conversation between the interviewer and student, the interviewer explicitly asked the student if he would oppose affirmative action. The student said:

> Yeah…I would say. I don't know if that's racist or what, but I don't know. I don't really talk about that much with people, you know. So, I really haven't developed such a strong, a really strong opinion about it, but I guess I do oppose it now. (p. 46)

The back-and-forth dialogue between the interviewer and student in an attempt to flush out the student's view on affirmative action is indicative of the student's attempt to suppress an unpopular collegiate position in this post-civil rights era. Also revealed within the study are White students' views regarding the admission of Blacks in universities. Without knowing the academic background of Black students, some White students leap to the belief that affirmative action is the main source providing university admission to Black students without taking account of students' abilities. Often, this belief leads to some resentment or devaluing of Black students' presence at PWUs and can affect the social and academic integration of Black students.

A tactic to deny racist ideology is the "Some of my best friends are…" phrase that was used by college students in the study to signify that they could not possibly be "racist" (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). For example, one college student said four times that some of her best friends were "Oriental" at the high school she attended. However the strategic nature of her claims made it easier for her to state all sorts of anti-minority positions in the interview.

Another rhetorical move typical of color blind racism is the "anything but race" strategy (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). This strategy involves interjecting comments to dismiss the fact that race plays a role in the respondent's life. For example, the college students were asked questions regarding a fictitious company that was 97% White. Most of the college respondents would not consider that discrimination had any involvement in why the company was only 3% minority. Thus, the college students' responses amounted to "anything but race" (p. 53).

The Role of Diminutives in Race Language

Maintaining a non-racial color blind viewpoint is a key position for Whites according to Bonilla-Silva (2002). Therefore, it is advantageous for them to use diminutives to soften their racial blows (p. 57). For example, one of the college participants in Bonilla-Silva's (2002) study used diminutives to make the claim that people at his university were oversensitive about matters regarding race or sexual orientation (p. 57). In addition, he mentioned that people have to watch everything they say because there could be retributions for the *slip of the tongue*. When the interviewer asked to elaborate on what kind of "slips" he was referring to, he said:

> Like, I mean, if you hear a professor say something, like a racial slur, or something just like a little bit, ya' know, a little bit outta hand, ya' know. I mean…I mean, I would just see it as like…ya' know, he was just, you took it out of context or something, but, ya' know, is just little things like that. It's just, it's so touchy. Everything is so touchy it

seems like around here. And I don't, like…I don't like to get into debates about stuff and, ya' know, about cultures and stuff like that. 'Cause I've seen it, I've seen it around here, ya' know, plenty, ay know, about like, with religious stuff and gay stuff and minority stuff. And it's just nothin' of that; I just don't like to get into that stuff. (p. 58)

This student's response used diminutives to state that people at his university are hypersensitive because they protest when a professor does "little things" like saying "a racial slur" in class (p. 58).

Presence of African American Faculty at PWUs

A report in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE) (2002) and similar studies conclude that African American faculty remains significantly underrepresented in universities, with the exception of HBCUs (Kulis, Shaw, & Chong, 2000). The U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): National Studies of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPSF) convey national information on the respective average percentages of Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, and White faculty based on the respective numbers of each ethnic group relative to the total number of faculty for each college or university included in their national samples (Weinberg, 2008). Tables 1 and 2 show this information arranged by program area. Humanities include English and literature, foreign languages, history, and philosophy (Weinberg, 2008). Natural sciences include biological sciences, physical sciences, mathematics, and computer sciences (Weinberg, 2008). Social sciences include economics, political science, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences (Weinberg, 2008).

Table 1

Percentage Distributions of Full-time Instructional Faculty and Staff in Degree-granting

Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and by Program Area: Fall 1998

Program area and year	Race/Ethnicity				
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic non-Hispanic	White non-Hispanic
1998					
All program areas [a]	0.7	5.8	5.1	3.3	85.1
Agriculture/home economics	1.0	2.9	4.0	1.3	90.7
Business	1.3	5.2	5.3	1.7	86.7
Communications	0.3	3.8	5.4	3.1	87.5
Education	1.8	3.6	8.6	3.2	83.8
Engineering	0.6	16.1	2.4	3.9	77.0
Fine arts	0.6	2.4	6.7	1.2	89.2
Health sciences	0.8	6.2	4.4	3.3	85.5
Humanities	0.3	4.7	4.5	6.5	83.9
Law	1.3	2.4	4.9	1.3	90.0
Natural sciences	0.3	8.1	3.1	2.9	85.6
Social sciences	1.3	5.0	6.7	3.0	84.0
All other fields	0.4	4.2	7.0	2.1	85.6

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 and 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99; NSOPF: 04).

Note: This table includes only faculty and staff with instructional responsibilities for credit (e.g., teaching one or more classes for credit or advising students' academic activities). Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

a. All public and private not-for-profit Title IV degree-granting institutions in the 50 states and the District of Columbia are represented

Table 2

Percentage Distributions of Full-time Instructional Faculty and Staff in Degree-granting

Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and by Program Area: Fall 2003

Program area and year	Race/Ethnicity				
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic non-Hispanic	White non-Hispanic
2003					
All program areas[a]	1.4	9.1	5.6	3.5	80.3
Agriculture/home economics	1.0	6.4	2.3	2.5	87.8
Business	1.7	12.2	4.5	2.3	79.4
Communications	2.0	2.5	5.3	3.4	86.8
Education	2.2	4.8	7.9	4.7	80.5
Engineering	1.0	20.1	5.4	2.6	70.9
Fine arts	1.5	2.9	6.0	3.3	86.4
Health sciences	1.7	10.7	5.0	3.0	79.7
Humanities	1.8	5.8	5.0	5.1	82.3
Law	0.2	4.8	7.3	3.3	84.4
Natural sciences	0.9	14.5	4.0	2.9	87.6
Social sciences	1.5	5.3	7.8	4.3	81.2
All other fields	1.3	7.9	9.1	2.9	78.7

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 and 2004 National Study of

Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99; NSOPF: 04).

Note: This table includes only faculty and staff with instructional responsibilities for credit (e.g., teaching one or more

classes for credit or advising students' academic activities). Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

a. All public and private not-for-profit Title IV degree-granting institutions in the 50 states and the District of Columbia

are represented

According to Table 1, in 1998, Black full-time faculty made up 5.1% of all faculties over all program areas, and made up 5.6% in 2003 (see Table 2). However, within the three disciplines of the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences, one observes variation across these disciplines from 1998 to 2003. In particular, the increase in Black full-time instructional faculty in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences is 11%, 18%, and 29% respectively. This suggests that closer scrutiny should be applied to university data, specifically, but not limited to data representing faculty diversity.

Weinberg (2008) used data from a large PWU located in the northeast to demonstrate the value of assessing faculty diversity in a "more granular way" (p. 374). For example, the number or representation of Black faculty is consistent with relevant national pool data (Weinberg, 2008). However, with further analysis and a much closer examination of data, Weinberg (2008) observed that Black faculty are found in only a small ratio (1/3) of humanities departments at the university (see Table 3).

Table 3

Utilization Analyses for Black Full-time Faculty in the Humanities at a Private Research

University (Academic Year 2003-2004)

	Actual		Expected	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
1. Classics	0	0.00%	0	1.47%
2. Comparative Literature	2	14.29%	1	5.74%
3. East Asian Studies	0	0.00%	0	1.35%
4. English	4	8.70%	1	2.32%
5. Fine Arts	0	0.00%	0	1.81%
6. French	0	0.00%	2	5.51%
7. Germanic Languages/Literature	0	0.00%	0	1.39%
8. Hebrew & Judaic Studies	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
9. History	7	16.28%	2	3.56%
10. Italian	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
11. Middle Eastern Studies	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
12. Music	1	6.67%	1	4.07%
13. Philosophy	0	0.00%	0	0.66%
14. Slavic Languages & Literature	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
15. Spanish & Portuguese Lang/Lit	1	2.70%	1	2.11%

Proceeding with a more granular approach, Weinberg (2008) saw that Black faculty in these five departments mostly taught courses with ethnic content (data not available in this paper). For example, representative courses included Black history within the history department, Caribbean literature within the Spanish department, and jazz within the music department (Weinberg, 2008). It should be noted that the percentage of Black full-time faculty in the humanities at the northeastern PWU in Weinberg's (2008) study is approximately 4.6%. However, the denseness of the location of this faculty is not captured within the 4.6%. One can hypothesize that the location of Black faculty is often relegated to courses and departments where an African American viewpoint is deemed acceptable. Therefore, with the evidence presented, the slow progress of racial parity in full-time faculty positions at PWUs becomes clearer. In addition, one must look beyond the obvious numbers to get a clearer picture of the representation of Black faculty at PWUs.

The data analyzed in Weinberg's (2008) study represent a recent 2003-2004 academic year. To highlight the consistency of this phenomenon, one can refer to an article in the JBHE (1997), which reads:

> Just as corporations traditionally hire Blacks to serve as equal employment opportunity officers or urban affairs executives, universities tend to engage Black faculty members almost exclusively to do research and to teach courses on race relations. It seems that Black scholars are somewhat like designated hitters in baseball. Their assigned courses are Black history, race relations, and urban sociology…. In history departments Black scholars at the nation's leading universities almost always specialize in African-American history, slave studies, the civil rights movement, or the history of the South. (p. 40)

The chances of achieving vertical and horizontal faculty diversity (i.e. an increase and across disciplines) in PWUs appears very slim if current trends continue. Underrepresented

minority (URM) full-time faculty turnover is identified as a barrier in a study of 27 colleges and universities conducted by Moreno, Smith, Clayton-Pedersen, Parker, and Teraguchi (2006). They reported that, "58% of all URM new hires were replacement hires – nearly three out of every five URM core faculty hired simply took the place of URM faculty who had left the institutions" (p. 11). Vertical and horizontal faculty diversity cannot be achieved if PWUs are habitually replacing minority faculty with other minority faculty in courses and departments, upholding a form of faculty segregation. If some scholars hold the view that African American faculty have a positive impact on the persistence of African American students, then the clustering of African American faculty within a few departments limit African American students from experiencing African American faculty in the classroom.

Persistence at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

In order to better grasp psychosocial influences of university experiences on African American students, we can look at HBCUs for insight. HBCUs present favorable environments for examining psychosocial dynamics affecting African American students, largely due to the robust literature that directly and indirectly addresses psychosocial phenomena at HBCUs. Furthermore, examining persistence efforts at HBCUs and experiences of White minority students and faculty may lead researchers toward conceptual frameworks that are transferable to PWUs.

Hall and Closson (2005) studied the social adjustments of White graduate students at HBCUs. They compared the experiences of White graduate students at HBCUs to the experiences of Black graduate students at PWUs. Findings suggest concerns related to social exclusion, particularly among minority Whites at HBCUs (Hall & Closson, 2005). In addition, expectations of enrolling in an HBCU had a bearing on White graduate students' perceptions of social climate

(Hall & Closson, 2005). They felt that being underrepresented would lead to Black students and faculty treating them unpleasantly differently. White students' who participated in the Hall and Closson (2005) study held unfavorable anticipations regarding African American faculty at HBCUs. However, the experiences of Whites attending the HBCU dispelled their predisposed assumption that Black faculty would facilitate inequities of students due to race (p. 36).

Interestingly, the *reality* of the White students' experiences once they attended the HBCU, were quite different from their apprehensions about being underrepresented. Hall and Closson (2005) reported:

> Contrary to their expectation, they quickly became comfortable. The general consensus from the White students was that there was not special treatment from White professors or less than equal treatment from Black professors. Any true conflict about being a minority came from feedback and ridicule from other White friends or co-workers off campus who made comments such as, "I wouldn't let my wife go there," or "Aren't you scared to go there?" (p. 36)

HBCUs are often characterized as nurturing universities. John Monro (1978) describes the faculty at HBCUs as "interested in teaching students, rather than just teaching a subject" (p. 236). The nurturing component of HBCUs remains consistent over time. The Black focus group in Hall and Closson's (2005) study reported a general sense of comfort and acceptance, using words such as "supportive," "nurturing," and "togetherness" as descriptors. One of the students further expressed her opinion regarding the support offered by African American faculty and their desire to help African American students (Hall & Closson, 2005).

African American students direct perceptions of racism are prevalent throughout studies concerning African American students at PWUs. It is not unreasonable to assume that White students at HBCUs perceive racism toward them. However in the Hall and Closson (2005) study,

White students expressed feelings of exclusion, but were unable to distinguish whether the exclusion was caused by prejudice or personalities of Black students. They reasoned that their exclusion was social, not racial (Hall & Closson, 2005).

Both Black and White students in Hall and Closson's (2005) study described faculty as supportive and helpful. White students expressed no hesitation in approaching faculty, including non-White faculty. Black participants found it easy to approach Black and White faculty as well. However, Black participants perceived that Black faculty gave them a higher level of service because they are of the same racial group (Hall & Closson, 2005).

Overall, White participants in the Hall and Closson (2005) study reported a general sense of comfort. These findings are consistent with previous research by Hazzard (1988) and Conrad and Brier (1997), who reported White students' general satisfaction with HBCUs. On the contrary, a body of literature on Black students attending PWUs offers a different scenario.

Social Integration Position

Social integration theorists argue that developing a sense of connection with the university is the key to persistence. Tinto (1987, 1993) is largely responsible for such theories and helped reshape the notion that student deficiencies are the main explanation for the lack of student persistence. Tinto (1993) understood the connection with the university as an interactive relationship between a student and university. More precisely, he understood the connection as an interactive relationship between a student and various facets of the social and academic spheres of a given college or university. This realization is especially significant when considering students of color, who tend to leave colleges and universities at higher-than-average rates (Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000). However, Tinto's theory, as well as those of other social integrationists,

has been criticized for failing to consider group dynamics such as identity and cultural context. For example, Tierney (1992) argued against Tinto saying:

> … (Tinto) has conceptualized college-going at the individualist level rather than a collective one. From a social integrationist perspective individuals attend college, become integrated or not, graduate or depart. Conformity is the norm and it is the responsibility of the individual (p. 610).

Tierney views Tinto's model as an assimilation approach to student persistence. In other words, marginalized students are expected to conform to the social norms of PWUs. Considering this framework, marginalized students at PWUs, particularly African Americans, may find their experiences more challenging if university norms conflict with their own.

Multicultural Position

Social integrationists placed the responsibility of connecting to the university strictly on the individual student. However, multiculturalists place the onus mostly on the universities. Multiculturalists claim that universities alienate students of color through monocultural practices, policies, and structures (Bensimon, 1995; Rendón, 1994; Tierney, 1992, 1993). Tierney (2000) sees faculty and administrators as the key facilitators for multicultural changes in universities. Unlike the social integrationists, multiculturalists see students as members of cultural groups with similar characteristics that accompany definitions of culture. Multiculturalists seek to challenge the structure of universities and convert them to be inclusive of the values and norms of their diverse student population. The inclusiveness concept of a multicultural framework is believed to assist in developing a sense of connection between African American students and the PWUs they attend.

In a recent student persistence study conducted at the University of Wisconsin, Madison by Maldonado, Rhoads, and Buenasvista (2005), an interview with a student organizer, emphasized the importance that knowledge of cultural differences brings and its crucial role in recruiting and retaining students, "We recognize that different communities represent different cultures, different personalities, different values and ideas, different philosophies; they have different origins. So the methods we use to approach them, of course, have to be different" (p. 624).

Rendóns (1994) also opposes Tinto's emphasis on assimilation to the dominant culture. Rendón's work suggests that culturally validating experiences positively influence academic success and persistence of students of color. Alienation of African American students is in direct contradiction to cultural validation. Unfortunately, alienation enacted by the dominant culture may be quite common for many African Americans attending PWUs. Fanon (1963, 1967) describes alienation as symbolic violence due to its psychological dimensions. Madison by Maldonado, Rhoads, and Buenasvista (2005) gives a description of this assault on cultural identity in the example of a Chicano/a student being forced to study the literature of Western civilization as an example of the "best of what society has to offer."

Student Persistence and Retention Models

Tinto's (1975) student persistence model is probably the most commonly referenced model in student retention literature. Central to the model is the extent to which the individual is integrated into the social and academic aspects of the university. Vitally important are both the degree to which the student is committed to their goal (i.e. graduating) and the extent to which the student is committed to the university. Tinto's original model asserts that persistence may be

dependent upon the degree to which they are able to separate themselves from their past connections and life patterns (see Figure 1).
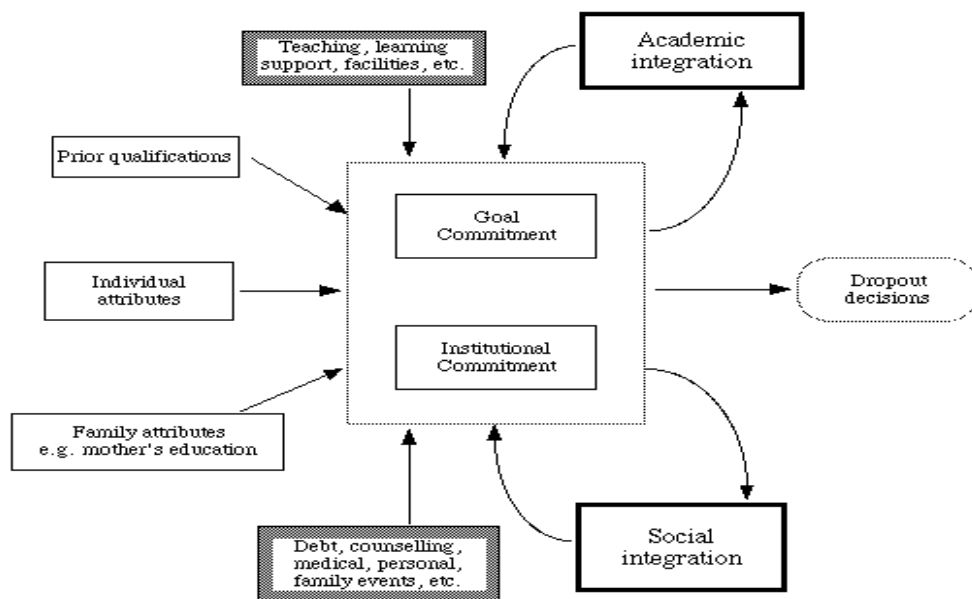
Figure 1. Adapted from Tinto,V. (1975). Dropout from Higher Education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. Review of Educational Research, *45(1), 89-125.*

The model also illustrates that academic and social integration, and goal and institutional commitment have a distinct relationship that influences each other. According to Tinto (1975), academic integration directly influences the student's goal commitment while social integration directly influences commitment to the specific institution. Student persistence may not depend on both goal and institution commitment. According to Tinto (1975), students may remain in a university with little institutional commitment provided that they have sufficient goal commitment.

In order to become socially and academically integrated, students must assimilate into the university culture (Tinto, 1988). Tinto addressed racial and ethnic relevance later in his writings and theorized that the expectation of assimilation may not hold for African Americans (Tinto, 1993). Instead, for African American students at PWUs, persistence may depend upon how well

they maintain an identity with their ethnic group as well as developing an identity as a member of the larger university culture. This is referred to as *biculturalism*. Therefore, African American students at PWUs, who are able to demonstrate bicultural competence, are successfully socially and academically integrated into the university community (Tinto, 1993).

Bean and Eaton's (2000) retention model attempts to predict student persistence by using psychological aspects to describe the interaction between students' entry characteristics and the institutional environment. The purpose of the model, according to the authors, is to "help others visualize how individual psychological processes can be understood in the retention process" (p. 55). According to Bean and Eaton's model (see Figure 2), each student brings a set of Entry Characteristics that are unique to them. These characteristics affect the Environmental Interactions composed of on-campus and off-campus experiences, which directly affects a student's Psychological Processes leading to Psychological Outcomes. Positive psychological outcomes transfer to intermediate outcomes which include academic and social integration, and conclude with academic performance. When students are integrated socially and academically, positive attitudes develop about their university and affect their intent to persist, and ultimately, actualize persistence (Bean & Eaton, 2000).

Entry Characteristics | Environmental Interactions | Psychological Processes | Psychological Outcomes | Intermediate Outcomes | Attitudes | Intention | Behavior

Past Behavior

Personality

Initial Self-Efficacy

Initial Attributions

Normative Beliefs

Coping Strategies

Motivation to Attend

Skills and Abilities

Bureaucratic Interactions

Academic Interactions

Social Interactions

Interactions External to Institution

Self-Efficacy Assessments → Positive Self-Efficacy

Coping Process Approach/ Avoidance → Reduced Stress; Increased Confidence

Attributions Locus of Control → Internal Attribution & Motivation

Academic Integration & Performance

Social Integration

Institutional Fit

Institutional Commitment (Loyalty)

Intent to Persist

Persistence

Feedback

Figure 2. Bean and Eaton's (2000) psychological model of retention (adapted from Bean &
Eaton 2000, p. 57).

As shown in Figure 2, a desired outcome of *Self-Efficacy Assessments* is *Positive Self-Efficacy*. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997). These processes and outcomes are in the *core* of the model and are psychologically significant for student persistence.

Rogers and Summers (2008) revised Bean and Eaton's (2000) model to make it more applicable to how African American students attending PWUs may experience the persistence process (see Figure 3). The authors believe that student retention models must consider the context of racial and ethnic identity when predicting African American persistence at PWUs. Revisions in the Bean and Eaton (2000) model are in bold.
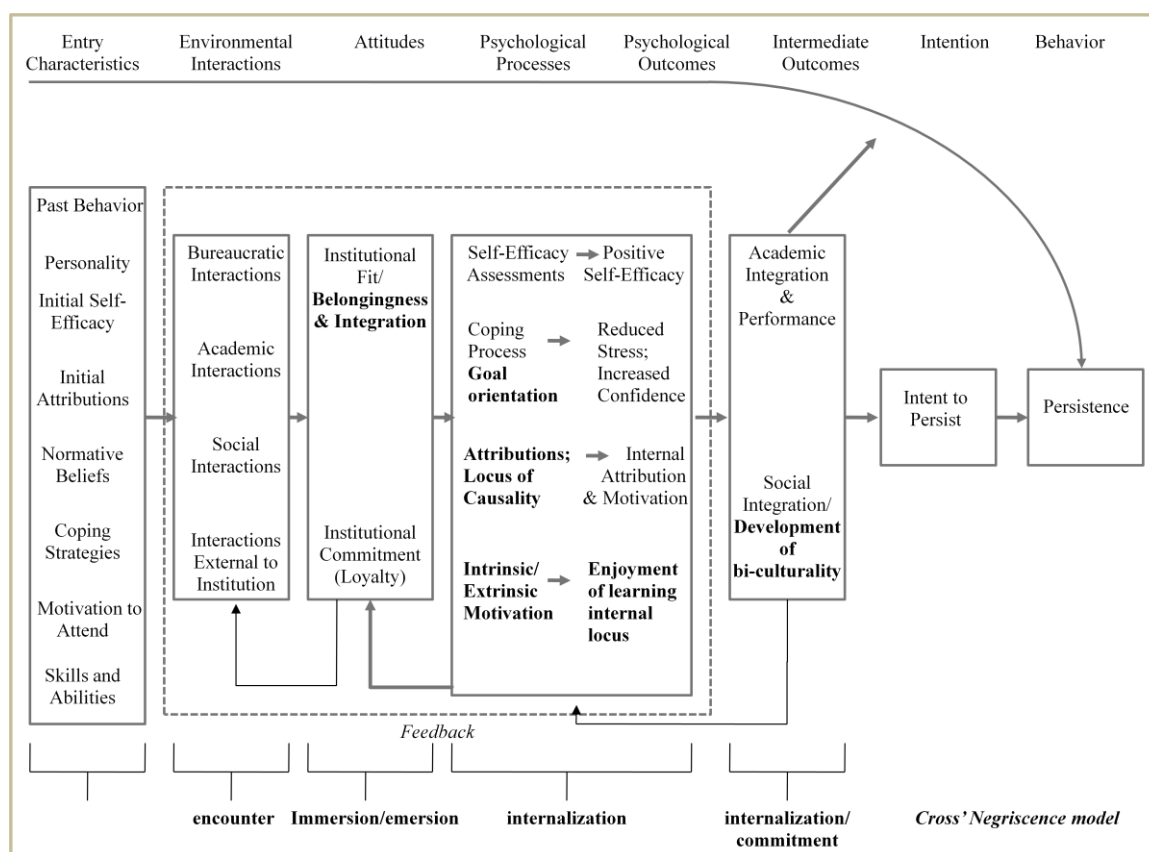
Figure 3. Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model of retention for African American students at PWUs (Rogers & Summers, 2008, p. 174).

Environmental Interactions is the first external predictor and is inclusive of faculty (embed in academic) interaction, which is a focal point of this study. The four environmental interactions in the revised model mediate the relationship between entry characteristics and attitudes. The environmental interactions will impact the *fit* between individual entry characteristics and university environment. Rogers and Summers (2008) define fit as "the degree to which the institution offers what students want and need, whether academically or socially" (p. 175). The effects of social support for university students are widely covered in higher education literature (e.g. Calsyn, Winter, & Burger, 2005; Dulin, Hill, & Ellingson, 2006). Professors are situated in positions of power and influence over students. They are dual contributors to students'

academic and social support. Therefore, faculty support has major implications when measuring the fit between student and university. This is evidenced by Eimer and Pike's (1996) findings that African American students attending PWUs expressed less satisfaction with faculty contact, although they reported more contact with faculty than White students.

Attitudes is the predictor category added in the revision model by Rogers and Summers (2008). Within this category, institutional fit or belongingness & integration is realized by the student. A sense of belonging is a necessary component of the overall attitude that students develop about their university (Rogers & Summers, 2008). Freeman, Anderman, and Jensen (2007) associated university belongingness with students' social acceptance and professors' pedagogical caring. Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, and Sullivan (2002) affiliate university belongingness with professors' openness to diversity. Furthermore, students' sense of belongingness in classrooms has been affiliated with adaptive motivation for achievement (Freeman et al. 2007; Summers & Svinicki 2007).

Chapter Summary

Preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data from the data sets in Bonilla-Silva's (2002) study suggests that younger, educated, middle class people are more likely than older, less educated, working class people to make full use of the resources of color blind racism. In other words, they are more equipped to navigate through America's contemporary racial landscape and to know all the stylistic tools available to save face (p. 62). The implications of this study recognize the plausibility of Black students' consistent perceptions of university-wide racism at PWUs.

It is widely accepted that teachers of color are more likely to understand and embrace minority students of their own culture, thus making them fundamentally better equipped to

provide culturally relevant curriculum and instruction (Berlak & Moyenda, 2001). In addition,

some scholars contend that faculty of color provide minority students with diverse role models,

more effective mentoring, and are supportive of minority-related areas of scholarship (De la Luz

Reyes & Halcón, 1991; Mickelson & Oliver, 1991). Black student perceptions of White faculty at

HBCUs as opposed to PWUs suggest that behavior is a representation of culture, but not

exclusive to a particular culture. Therefore, the racial or ethnic background of faculty, although

important, may not be as important or effective as faculty behavior when considering the

persistence of African American students. However, the influence of culture should not be

understated because culture is something that is transmitted within groups. Therefore, it is

plausible that a characteristic, such as nurturing, could be more prevalent within a cultural

context. Moreover, Antonio's (2002) study showed that faculty of color surpass the commitment

of White faculty in every one of the eight goals examined in the study: 1) Help students develop

their personal values; 2) Provide for students' emotional development; 3) Develop moral

character; 4) Prepare students for family living; 5) Enhance students' self-understanding; 6)

Enhance the out-of-class experience of students; 7) Prepare students for responsible citizenship;

and 8) Instill in students a commitment to community service (p. 591). Consequently, it is

apparent that the position of faculty within a university setting may be the single most significant

variable for the persistence and retention of African American students at PWUs as demonstrated

by Guiffrida (November/December 2005) and others. Although Guiffrida (November/December

2005) did not ask the student participants directly about their relationship with faculty, when

asked to describe assets and liabilities to their college experiences, students in every focus group

interview raised the theme of faculty support. In fact, Astin (1985) considers quality interaction

with faculty as the most important factor determining minority students' persistence.

The mandate for faculty to embrace racial diversity and assist in the persistence of

students, specifically underrepresented populations, would not be as challenging for them except

that values and motivators of students can be vastly different from those of many faculty members. These differences in values and motivators reportedly result from various factors such as race, gender, work ethic, and historical context (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Within the cultural context of African Americans, uplifting lower socio economic African American communities is a high priority. HBCUs have taught their students that education has the dual goal of individual enhancement and community advancement (Willie, 1994). Moreover, the African American participants in the Hall and Closson (2005) study defined opportunity as the chance to accomplish and give back to the community. Similarly, the African American participants considered attending an HBCU as a means to serve the Black community (Hall & Closson, 2005). In contrast, the White students defined opportunity as growing personally and having a unique experience (Hall & Closson, 2005).

Research supports compatibility between African American students' idea of opportunity and the mission of HBCUs. Gary Paul (2002) noted, "HBCUs were established to serve the community, produce leaders, develop responsible citizens, and to strengthen civil and democratic society" (p. 205). However, there was a mismatch between White students' idea of opportunity and the mission of HBCUs in Hall and Closson's (2005) study. Further research is needed to see if the inverse holds true at PWUs. Could a mismatch theory apply to psychosocial characteristics rather than or in addition to academic characteristics? If so, the nurturing cultural component of African Americans may not be supported at PWUs that emphasize career goals of personal success and gain. The role of faculty to mediate this mismatch may be invaluable to the persistence African American students at PWUs. Therefore, it is necessary for faculty to be more aware of their own racial, cultural and social ideas that they bring with them to interactions with students from different racial, social, and cultural backgrounds.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of faculty as it relates to the persistence of African American students at a predominantly White university (PWU). Although the persistence of African American students at PWUs has been extensively researched, there remains a gap when exploring psychosocial and culturally significant variables resulting from contact with faculty in general. Psychosocial variables are notably absent from the empirical literature examining graduation rates of African Americans (Henderson & Kritsonis, 2007). This study uses scientific inquiry to measure the significance of faculty behavior in contributing to the psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of African American students. Previous research has focused on racial, ethnic, and cultural similarities between students and faculty, and concludes that these shared characteristics contribute to positive support. However, not enough contemporary research deconstructs faculty behaviors that are presumably associated with these shared characteristics and ranks their relative importance to persistence as perceived by African American students.

Hypotheses

This study addressed the following hypotheses:

- Psychosocial variables are significant influences on undergraduate African American students' persistence at a PWU.

- Faculty behavior is a significant variable affecting persistence among African American students at a PWU.

Population

The population for this study is the full-time, degree seeking Black undergraduate students at the University Park (UP) campus of The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) in the United States, who have completed at least one semester. The university's characteristics according to the Carnegie Foundation are: high undergraduate enrollment, more selective, lower transfer-in, large size, primarily residential, and "RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)" (CFAT, 2007). The University reports having 1,368 degree seeking Black students at University Park for the 2009-2010 academic year (see Table 4). The 2009 fall semester database received from PSU's Multicultural Resource Center reports 1,861 undergraduate students at the UP campus of PSU who claimed the ethnic/race background of Black or African American or two or more races in which one is Black or African American, thus explaining the difference in the reported size of the population.

Participants

Survey methodology was used to rank the levels of importance placed on variables hypothesized to affect persistence by full-time enrolled undergraduate African American students at a PWU. Undergraduate students were chosen because the persistence and retention literature favors undergraduates due to their larger enrollment and significance to university reputation.

In order to make the connection that a relationship exists between the role of faculty behavior and the persistence of African American students, persistence must have characteristics that are identified and measurable. Moreover, these characteristics must be ranked by levels of importance by African American students. An instrument was designed, by the primary investigator (PI), to simultaneously rank the influences on persistence as well as identify the

significance of faculty's role compared to other psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of African American students at PWUs.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was administered to the population of 1,861 degree seeking undergraduate students who self-identified themselves as African American students enrolled at the beginning of the Fall 2009 semester at University Park campus of the Pennsylvania State University. The group also includes students who self-identified themselves as members of two or more racial/ethnic categories including the category of Black or African American.

The persistence paradigm begins as soon as a student enters the university environment, thus the second semester first-year student is appropriate for the study. Since the database represents students who were enrolled during the Fall 2009 semester, and the study was conducted during the Spring 2010 semester, it was reasonable to concur that the overwhelming majority of the population had completed at least one semester, thus are eligible for the study. The data collected supported the assumption. Only two respondents (.5 percent) reported a first year/first semester enrollment status.

A small portion (2.1%) of the respondent group reported that they were not students at the UP campus. Although the UP campus students were the target group, the small percentage of non UP students is an insignificant amount to affect the results of the study. Future inquiry may isolate the non UP students for comparison studies.

Table 4

Enrollment by Racial/Ethnic Category at Penn State University Park (Academic Year 2009-2010)

	Degree-seeking First-time First-year	Degree-seeking Undergraduates (include first-time first-year)
Hispanic/Latino	417	1,609
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	30
Asian	279	1,871
Black or African American	277	1,368
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	27
Two or more races	147	567
White	4,878	29,549
Race/ethnicity unknown	68	1,284
International	468	1,550
Total	6,560	37,855

Source: Penn State Fact Book, University Budget Office. Note: This table is adapted from 2009-2010 Common Set Data.

Variables

The study focuses on ascertaining which factors, represented by a set of variables, are most salient to students. As a student progresses through the Rogers and Summers (2008) model, the designation of dependant variables changes, however the ultimate dependant variable is "Persistence." Since "persistence" is not a quantifiable variable, the variables used in the study are critical to modeling the factors influencing persistence.

The variables for the study representing personal characteristics of the population include (a) student's college and academic major, (b) gender, (c) ethnic/race background, (d) nationality, (e) age, (f) current year of enrollment, (g) current enrollment status, (h) number of colleges and universities attended, (i) GPA, and (j) parents/guardian yearly household income. Not all of the

variables are used in the analyses conducted for this particular study. However, some student characteristic variables may be useful in future studies of the target population.

The other variables are psychosocial factors related to student persistence. Due to the large number of these variables, they were divided into two groups (i.e. non-faculty contributors and faculty contributors) for the purpose of conducting more manageable analyses. The non-faculty variables are: (a) family support, (b) school friends and social interaction, (c) religious beliefs, (d) assimilating into the dominant culture, (e) commitment to personal goals, (f) helping own community after graduation, (g)financial aid awards, (h) encounters or perceptions of racism toward Blacks, (i) establishment of own cultural identity, (j) faculty behavior towards me, (k) my overall satisfaction with the university, (l) belief in own ability to succeed, (m) feelings of tokenism, (n) my coping, (o) reduced stress, (p) feelings of belongingness, (q) enjoyment of learning, and (r) biculturalism. The faculty variables are: (a) faculty nurturing, (b) cultural inclusive classroom curriculum & instruction, (c) faculty's role helping students feel a sense of belonging, (d) student-centered teaching, (e) faculty being approachable, (f) multicultural insensitive comments from faculty, (g) having faculty as role models, (h) having faculty as mentors, and (i) taking courses taught by African American faculty. The variables were derived from the literature review.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used to rank influences of the various student characteristic variables on persistence and gauge the levels of significance for each. The instrument is grouped into three parts: Part I – Personal Characteristics, Part II – Perceptions of Contributors to Student Persistence, and Part III – Faculty Influence as it Relates to Student Persistence. Furthermore, researchers increasingly are using the World Wide Web to administer questionnaires (Gall et al.

2003). Gall et al. (2003) identifies the advantages over conventional paper-and-pencil mailed questionnaires:

Postal costs are eliminated; the possibility of missing data within questionnaires is eliminated; and there is no need to transfer data manually from the questionnaire onto an electronic format and check for possible errors in the transfer process. Also, Internet questionnaires can be designed to be interactive: Items can be tailored to the individual respondent, and respondents can be given feedback as they complete the items (p. 230).

Data Collection

A pilot study was designed, but not implemented. It was designed to select a random sample of 200 students from the 1,861population. The remaining 1,661 students would have been the target group for the main study. A robust sample would have fulfilled the purposes of the pilot study. The pilot study would have served the purpose of testing the survey instrument and method since it is a rather new approach to isolating, measuring, and comparing student perceptions of psychosocial factors influencing their persistence. There was no precedent for the procedure in the research literature. In addition, the pilot study would have tested the understanding and interpretation of the questionnaire by participants. Moreover, it would have provided an estimation of the response rate expected from the main study. A low response rate resulting from the pilot study would have provided an opportunity for making adjustments to increase the response rate of the main study. Finally, the pilot study results could have been used for a component of the triangulation method in validating the findings of the main study.

The Survey Research Center (SRC) did not meet the timeline required to run a pilot and make any necessary changes before surveying the remaining population by the anticipated February 1, 2010 start date. Although the pilot study would have served multiple purposes as

previously described, the SRC thought the instrument was "in very good condition and a pilot would not provide any extra information about the instrument." Likewise, the instrument proved to be reliable based on the multicollinear variables.

Researchers have found that the response rate increases from contacting the target group prior to sending a questionnaire (Gall et al. 2003). This is referred to as a precontact. A precontact involves the researchers identifying themselves, discussing the purpose of the study, and requesting cooperation (p. 231). However, this study omitted a precontact due to a lack of effective communication between Primary Investigator (PI) and the Survey Research Center (SRC).

Electronic questionnaires were emailed to members of the population. Web surveys were run on a firewalled web server with 128-bit SSL security. Surveys were stored in a SQL database which can only be accessed locally. ID numbers were generated for each survey. Participants were allowed to go back and review their answers. All web data was backed up nightly. All answers were kept confidential and only aggregate results were reported.

The Pennsylvania State University's Survey Research Center (SRC) conducted the web survey by administering and collecting the data. The SRC formatted the questionnaire into their Perseus web software, set up and hosted the web survey on the SRC's web servers for administration over the web, conducted a trial run with the primary investigator before administration, sent out emails to the target population with imbedded URL and ID requesting a response, sent out two or three reminder emails with imbedded URL and ID requesting a response, cleaned and produced a dataset; and wrote a short methodology report detailing the procedures used and response rates.

A cover letter accompanying the questionnaire was emailed to the population on Thursday, January 21, 2010 (see Appendix A). According to Gall et al. (2003), a cover letter accompanying the questionnaire strongly influences the return rate. Furthermore, an incentive for

completing the questionnaire was conveyed in the cover letter. The target population was informed that participants would be entered into a raffle with a chance to win one of three prizes. The participants email addresses were randomly selected from a list of students who completed the questionnaire. Thus, three Student Book Store Gift Cards were raffled and awarded to three participants. The dollar values were $300, $200, and $100. Gift Card recipients were awarded during Black History Month on the following dates: February 1, 2009 ($300), February 8, 2009 ($200), and February 16, 2009 ($100). Winners were notified via email and had the option of receiving the Gift Card via the United States Postal Service, or collecting it in person.

This data collection method was based on Creswell's (2003) suggestion to implement the four-phased data collection sequence outlined by Salant and Dillman (1994), excluding the pre-notice email phase indicating that a questionnaire is on the way. An adaptation is as follows:

Phase I.   Send an email explaining the study and ask for a response to the accompanying questionnaire.

Phase II.   Follow-up with a friendly reminder email for the nonrespondents to complete and return the questionnaire.

Phase III. Email a replacement questionnaire (if necessary) and communicate a more personal and noticeable tone to complete and return the survey.

A total of 406 participants completed the survey. Twenty-six declined by choosing "I do not consent to take this survey" option or closing the survey at the point of consent (see Table 5).

Table 5

Response Rate of Survey

Final Outcome	
Completes	406
Refusals	26
No Response	1430
Total	1861
Response rate	21.8%
Note. Response rate is the number of completed surveys divided by (completed + refusals + non-respondents); or 406/1861 = 21.8%.	

Honing the Target Population

The target population of this study is full-time Black degree seeking undergraduate students at the University Park (UP) campus of The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) in the United States, who have completed at least one semester at the UP campus. The email addresses received from PSU's Multicultural Resource Center includes students who claim two or more races in which one is Black or African American. Black and African American are used interchangeably and consist of members of African origin. In an effort to reduce variances associated with identity, ethnicity, sub-culture, nationality, and history, the data collected were honed to provide a target group that best represents African Americans in a historical and cultural context associated with the United States. The refinement of the target group reduced the data from 406 to 348 respondents (see Table 6).

Table 6

Result of Initial Refinement of Respondents for Analysis of Study

		Black or African American	Not of Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity	American Nationality
N	Valid	325	322	327
	Missing	23	26	21
Total (N = 348)		348	348	348

Further scrutiny of the missing values revealed unusable data. After controlling for unusable data, what remained for analysis was 327 respondents fitting the main descriptions of the target population (see Table 7). The missing values are insignificant because the respondents associated with the missing values satisfy two of the three descriptive variables relating to identity.

Table 7

Result of the Final Refinement of Respondents for Analysis of Study

		Black or African American	Not of Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity	American Nationality
N	Valid	325	322	327
	Missing	2	5	0
Total (N = 327)		327	327	327

Note. The missing values are insignificant because the respondents linked to the missing values satisfy two of the three descriptive variables relating to identity.

Data Analyses

The goal was to rank the various influences on persistence and determine their levels of significance as perceived by undergraduate African American students. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the main findings in quantitative terms. Although not the focus of the study, the relationship between students' entry characteristics and their perceptions of persistence cannot be omitted from a thorough inquiry. Characteristics of students provide a context for the social-communicative exchanges with faculty and are key determinants of a student's intent to persist. Therefore, ranking student opinions regarding persistence is not complete without having descriptions of the students' characteristics. Collecting and analyzing student characteristics allow correlations that enhanced the findings.

Exploratory Data Analysis

Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) is critical to showing the importance of individual variables and how they are correlated. Leinhardt and Leinhardt (1980) explains EDA as a method for discovering unforeseen or unexpected patterns in the data and thus gaining new insights and understanding of natural phenomena. A nonparametric statistical test was used for the analysis. Two response variables are defined as the mean scores from two areas of responses on the questionnaire (i.e. non-faculty contributors to student persistence, and faculty contributors). This approach is used to compare the effects from different types of responses and other demographic variables.

Data Preparation

There were a total of 27 questionnaire items pertaining to both non-faculty and faculty contributors to student persistence. The large number of responses would have caused some difficulty analyzing the data. Thus, the number of responses was reduced by using the mean (average) as the representative response. For example, the average of all responses in Part II – Perceptions of Contributors to Student Persistence, represents the impact of non-faculty contributors to student persistence. Likewise, the average of all responses Part III – Faculty Influence as it Relates to Student Persistence, represents the impact of faculty contributors. For each respondent, two means are calculated - - the mean of non-faculty contributors to student persistence and the mean of faculty contributors.

Nonparametric Statistical Methods

Nonparametric statistics are tests of statistical significance that do not rely on any assumptions about the shape or variance of population scores (Gall et al. 2003). In other words the underlying population does not usually need to be normally distributed or conform to any other known distribution. Many nonparametric tests are "ranking tests" where the data is ranked from high to low and the data are not exactly quantifiable. For instance, a participant in the study might rank the importance of family support in terms of its influence on completing their degree as: no significance (1), low significance (2), moderately low significance (3), moderately high significance (4), or high significance (5). This does not mean that high significance is twice as good as moderately low significance. It just means that one is better than another, but it is unknown how much better high significance is when compared to moderately low. Nonparametric statistics is used to help quantify this type of ordered data.

ANOVA/Kruskal-Wallis

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique, which is developed to compare group means. In order to use an ANOVA model, there are two assumptions: 1) all populations are normal distributed, and with the same variance; and 2) all the samples must be selected independently. Kruskal-Wallis is the nonparametric version of ANOVA with the data replaced by their ranks, and it permits for testing equality of population medians (instead of means) among two or more groups. Unlike the analogous one-way ANOVA, the Kruskal-Wallis statistical technique does not assume a normal population.

Validity

The statistical methods selected for the data analysis are the result of consultation received from the Statistical Consulting Center (SCC) on the University Park campus. SCC is an educational and service unit in Penn State's Department of Statistics. The service consisted of two meetings with two doctoral student consultants. The first meeting explained the project's goals and discussed statistical challenges. During the two weeks following the initial meeting, the consultants worked with SCC faculty consultants and developed a data analysis recommendation report. In the second meeting, the two doctoral student consultants presented a data analysis recommendation report. The instrument has content validity according to the Penn State Survey Research Center (SRC) staff, and face validity according to the SCC doctoral student consultants and their faculty supervisors.

Timeline

On Thursday, January 21, 2010, an email explaining the study and asking for completion of the accompanying questionnaire was sent to the student population of 1,861 (see Appendix A). Eight days later, on Friday, January 29, 2010, friendly reminder emails were sent as follow-ups, requesting nonrespondents to complete and return the questionnaire. A professional appeal was used in the initial letter; therefore a personal appeal was used in the first follow-up email that included a picture of the primary investigator (PI) for a more personable effect. The second or final reminder was emailed on Friday, February 12, 2010 (see Appendix B). Data collection concluded on Sunday, February 21, 2010.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of faculty as it relates to the persistence of African American students at a predominantly White university (PWU). Although the persistence of African American students at PWUs has been extensively researched, there remains a gap when exploring psychosocial and culturally significant variables resulting from contact with faculty in general. Psychosocial variables are notably absent from the empirical literature examining graduation rates of African Americans (Henderson & Kritsonis, 2007). This study uses scientific inquiry to measure the significance of faculty behavior in contributing to the psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of African American students. Previous research has focused on racial, ethnic, and cultural similarities between students and faculty, and concludes that these shared characteristics contribute to positive support. However, not enough contemporary research deconstructs faculty behaviors that are presumably associated with these shared characteristics and ranks their relative importance to persistence as perceived by African American students.

Overview of Statistical Procedures

The study determines the overall scale of significance of psychosocial variables influencing African American student persistence at a PWU. Moreover, the study participants were asked to rank non-faculty and faculty psychosocial contributors to persistence from (1) No significance through (5) High significance as perceived by the target group. Thus, the "score" of each Likert scale item is used to determine the variable's relative importance. For example, if a

score of the questionnaire item is five, or in other words "high," then the item is highly

significant or important to the respondent's persistence. However, this is not well defined for

statistical analysis because there are no independent measurements for "persistence." Statistics

are used to construct relationships between response variables and factors, and to make

comparisons between different levels of factors. An EDA is critical for showing the importance

of individual variables and how they are correlated. Consequently, the results from the EDA

display the level of importance respondents place on each persistence variable. In addition,

statistics are used to define two response variables as the mean scores from different types of

questions (i.e. non-faculty and faculty). The method is used to compare the effects from different

types of items, including variables associated with student characteristics.

Exploratory Data Analyses

Hypothesis 1: Psychosocial variables are significant influences on undergraduate African American students' persistence.

The mean scores of non-faculty related psychosocial factors of persistence in Table 8

shows that the respondents collectively rank "Commitment to personal goals, Belief in own

ability to succeed, and Family support" as the most significant influences on the persistence of

respondents. Furthermore, the two highest of the three factors (i.e. Commitment to personal

goals, and Belief in own ability to succeed) are psychological outcomes associated with positive

self-efficacy, increased confidence, and internal attribution and motivation as demonstrated in the

Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model of retention for African American students at PWUs.

Notably, three racially and culturally specific factors (i.e. Assimilating into the dominant culture,

Feelings of tokenism, and Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks) rank low to moderately low in importance, suggesting that racial and culturally relevant non-faculty psychosocial factors are relatively low influences on persistence as perceived by the target population. This pattern is also supported in Table 9.

Mean scores ranking non-faculty psychosocial factors clearly demonstrate their relevance to the persistence of African American undergraduate students at The Pennsylvania State University. Moreover, "Faculty behavior" has an above midpoint ranking, which validates its' importance and provides the *segway* to exploring the types of behavior that are perceived to be more important than others. However, for a *richer* understanding of the perceived effects of these factors on the target population's persistence, relationships between these variables and selected variables (i.e. student characteristics) are further explored.

Hypothesis 2: Faculty behavior is a significant variable affecting persistence among African American students at a PWU.

The mean scores of faculty related psychosocial factors of persistence in Table 9 shows that the respondents collectively rank most of the faculty factors as equally important to their persistence. With exception to the last two variables, the mean scores range approximately between 3.50 and 4.20, representing moderate through moderately high rankings. As indicated previously, the majority of racial and cultural specific factors rank at the bottom, which suggests that culturally relevant social-communicative exchanges with faculty are moderately low influences on persistence as perceived by the population of the study. While the mean scores ranking faculty behavior factors are not as high as the non-faculty factors, they clearly demonstrate an above average significance on the perceived persistence of African American

undergraduate students at The Pennsylvania State University, UP campus. However, to gain a fuller understanding of the perceived effects from these factors on the target group's persistence, relationships between these variables and selected variables representing student characteristics are further explored.

Table 8

Mean Scores Ranking the Significance of Non-faculty Related Psychosocial Variables

Non-faculty Related Psychosocial Factors of Persistence	N	Missing	Mean
Commitment to personal goals	314	13	4.758
Belief in own ability to succeed	313	14	4.690
Family support (e.g. encouragement, financial, etc.)	316	11	4.547
Enjoyment of learning	314	13	4.188
Overall satisfaction with the university	313	14	4.115
School friends and social interaction	314	13	3.975
Financial aid awards[a]	313	14	3.891
Coping skills	316	11	3.861
Helping own community after graduation	314	13	3.847
Reduced stress	311	16	3.701
Faculty behavior towards me	315	12	3.619
Developing an identity while maintaining own ethnic group identity	316	11	3.551
Feelings of belongingness	312	15	3.455
Establishment of cultural identity	316	11	3.440
Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks	312	15	3.267
Feelings of tokenism	312	15	3.173
Religious beliefs	310	17	2.981
Assimilating into the dominant culture	316	11	2.858
Valid N (listwise)	279		

[a]Not a psychosocial variable, but often cited as one of the most significance influences on the persistence of students in general. Used to compare with the psychosocial variables.

Table 9

Mean Scores Ranking the Significance of Faculty Related Psychosocial Variables

Faculty Related Psychosocial Variables of Persistence	N	Missing	Mean
Faculty being approachable.	311	16	4.174
Having faculty as mentors.	312	15	3.782
Student-centered teaching.	311	16	3.768
Faculty nurturing (e.g. supportive and encouraging students).	313	14	3.738
Faculty's roles in helping students feel a sense of belonging.	313	14	3.626
Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum	313	14	3.604
Having faculty as role models.	314	13	3.589
Multicultural insensitive comments from faculty.	311	16	3.167
Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	312	15	3.106
Valid N (listwise)	298		

Supplemental Analyses

Spearman Rank Correlations

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient or otherwise known as Spearman's rho was used to measure the degree of association between two variables. It does not assume any assumptions about the distribution. It was used to check if multicollinearity exists among the variables representing student characteristics. Multicollinearity is when an "independent" variable is linearly explained by another "independent" variable. The height and weight of a person are examples of multicollinear predictors, as well as years of education and income. Table 10 identifies five pairs of correlated variables representing student characteristics, indicating that one variable is linearly explained by the *paired* other variable. For example, there should be linear

relationships between academic major and college, age and current year of enrollment (i.e. age increases with the year of enrollment). Furthermore, historically and currently, though to a slightly lesser degree, women are more likely to major in the humanities, health or biology, and education fields, while men are more likely to major in business, engineering, and professional fields (Daymont & Andrisani, Summer 1984), thus, explaining the linear relationship between gender and academic major. Moreover, there is no dispute in the persistence and retention literature that undergraduate African American females perform better and graduate at a higher rate than African American males. Hence, the linear relationship between gender and GPA is explained. Further inquiry is needed to explain the linear relationship between the current year of enrollment and the college (school within a university) of attendance. However, the other four reliable multicollinear relationships are indications that the relationship between these two variables is rational. The five pairs of correlated variables shown in Table 10 is an indication that the respondents' answers on the questionnaire are genuine. Likewise, confidence in the collected data increases due to the sensibility of the multicollinear variables representing student characteristics.

Table 10

Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient and P-values of Selected Student Variables

		College	Academic major?	Gender	Age	Current year of enrollment	Overall (GPA)
College	(r)	1.000	.309**	.080	-.103	-.142*	-.048
		.	.000	.151	.064	.010	.390
Academic major	(r)	.309**	1.000	.134*	.047	.010	-.075
		.000	.	.016	.398	.852	.185
Gender	(r)	.080	.134*	1.000	-.079	.009	.120*
		.151	.016	.	.155	.874	.032
Age	(r)	-.103	.047	-.079	1.000	.823**	.039
		.064	.398	.155	.	.000	.490
Current year of enrollment at Penn State	(r)	-.142*	.010	.009	.823**	1.000	.066
		.010	.852	.874	.000	.	.244
Overall GPA?	(r)	-.048	-.075	.120*	.039	.066	1.000
		.390	.185	.032	.490	.244	.

Note: Table shows significant student characteristic variables at 0.05 confidence (2-tailed test). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Kruskal-Wallis One-way Analysis of Variance

The Kruskal-Wallis One-way Analysis of Variance model examines whether the variable of interest has a significant effect on the response. For example, using the explanatory variable "gender," the following testing problem is constructed: H_O: population median (male) = population median (female). The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show that there is a

statistically significant difference among gender perceptions of the importance of faculty

behavior toward them. (see Table 11).

Table 11

Testing Equality of Population Medians among Gender Using Non-faculty Psychosocial

Variables

	Significance of Factor: a. Family support (e.g.. encouragement, financial, etc.)	Significance of Factor: b. School friends and social interaction	Significance of Factor: c. Religious beliefs	Significance of Factor: d. Assimilating into the dominant culture	Significance of Factor: e. Commitment to personal goals	Significance of Factor: f. Helping my community after graduation
Chi-Square	3.135	0.017	0.039	2.005	1.306	2.388
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	0.077	0.895	0.843	0.157	0.253	0.122
	Significance of Factor: g. Financial aid awards	Significance of Factor: h. Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks	Significance of Factor: i. Establishment of my cultural identity	Significance of Factor: j. Faculty behavior towards me	Significance of Factor: k. My overall satisfaction with the university	Significance of Factor: l. Belief in my ability to succeed
Chi-Square	0.173	0.027	0.002	3.979	1.532	0.053
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	0.677	0.871	0.961	**0.046**	0.216	0.818
	Significance of Factor: m. Feelings of tokenism	Significance of Factor: n. My coping skills	Significance of Factor: o. Reduced stress	Significance of Factor: p. My feelings of belongingness	Significance of Factor: q. My enjoyment of learning	Significance of Factor: r. Developing an identity while maintaining own ethnic group identity
Chi-Square	0.466	1.543	1.127	0.329	0.74	0.201
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	0.495	0.214	0.288	0.566	0.39	0.654

To further explore this difference, Table 12 identifies the mean rank associated with the response "Faculty behavior towards me". The result from the Kruskal-Wallis Mean Ranks test identifies males as having the significantly higher mean score. We conclude that the persistence of African American males at the PWU is significantly more affected by faculty behavior towards them than female students.

Table 12

Mean Rank of Genders Responses to Faculty Behavior toward Me

	Gender:	N	Mean Rank
Significance of Factor: j. Faculty behavior towards me	Male	98	**172.05**
	Female	216	150.90
	Total	314	

The same test was performed to see if gender has a significant effect on faculty behavior specific responses. There are no statistically significant differences among gender when analyzing the faculty behavior description responses (see Table 13). We conclude that there are no specific faculty behavior characteristics that one gender perceives more influential to their persistence than the other gender.

Table 13

Testing Equality of Population Medians among Gender using Faculty Psychosocial Variables

	Significance of Faculty Behavior: a. Faculty nurturing (e.g. supportive and encouraging students).	Significance of Faculty Behavior: b. Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum	Significance of Faculty Behavior: c. Faculty's role helping students feel a sense of belonging.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: d. Student-centered teaching.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: e. Faculty being approachable.
Chi-Square	0.031	2.084	0.106	0.042	0.201
df	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	0.86	0.149	0.745	0.837	0.654
	Significance of Faculty Behavior: f. Multicultural insensitive comments from faculty.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: g. Having faculty as role models.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: h. Having faculty as mentors.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: i. Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	
Chi-Square	0.431	1.054	1.46	1.582	
df	1	1	1	1	
Asymp. Sig.	0.511	0.305	0.227	0.208	

Similarly, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to investigate other student characteristic variables of interest to see if they have a significant effect on non-faculty and faculty behavior specific responses. The student's current year of enrollment, grade point average, and parents/guardians yearly household income are student characteristic variables that are of interest to this study because each represent noteworthy influences from the student's entry characteristics to their intent to persist, as represented in Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model of retention for African American students at PWUs. The following tables explore their relationships with non-faculty and faculty behavior specific responses. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show that there is a significant difference among students' year of enrollment and feelings of tokenism when analyzing the non-faculty psychosocial responses (see Table 14).

Table 14

Testing Equality of Population Medians by Enrollment Year using Non-faculty Psychosocial

Variables

	Significance of Factor: a. Family support (e.g.. encouragement, financial, etc.)	Significance of Factor: b. School friends and social interaction	Significance of Factor: c. Religious beliefs	Significance of Factor: d. Assimilating into the dominant culture	Significance of Factor: e. Commitment to personal goals	Significance of Factor: f. Helping my community after graduation
Chi-Square	1.344	1.758	3.33	6.71	6.015	5.522
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.854	0.78	0.504	0.152	0.198	0.238
	Significance of Factor: g. Financial aid awards	Significance of Factor: h. Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks	Significance of Factor: i. Establishment of my cultural identity	Significance of Factor: j. Faculty behavior towards me	Significance of Factor: k. My overall satisfaction with the university	Significance of Factor: l. Belief in my ability to succeed
Chi-Square	6.123	1.839	4.599	2.113	8.652	5.909
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.19	0.765	0.331	0.715	0.07	0.206
	Significance of Factor: m. Feelings of tokenism	Significance of Factor: n. My coping skills	Significance of Factor: o. Reduced stress	Significance of Factor: p. My feelings of belongingness	Significance of Factor: q. My enjoyment of learning	Significance of Factor: r. Developing an identity while maintaining own ethnic group identity
Chi-Square	12.816	1.287	6.511	8.295	3.755	3.176
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	**0.012**	0.864	0.164	0.081	0.44	0.529

To further explore this difference, Table 15 identifies the mean rank associated with the

response. The results from the Kruskal-Wallis Mean Rank test shows that the target group

collectively experience feelings of tokenism significantly more during the second semester of

their first year. These feelings carry over to the second year of attendance prior to the feelings of

tokenism significantly decreasing during the third year of enrollment, and then with a slight

increase during the fourth year of enrollment.

Table 15

Mean Rank of Students Responses to Feelings of Tokenism

	What is your current year of enrollment at Penn State (University Park campus only)?	N	Mean Rank
Significance of Factor: m. Feelings of tokenism	1st year/1st semester	1	131.50
	1st year/2nd semester	73	**176.08**
	2nd year	60	164.94
	3rd year	86	**133.28**
	4th year	83	141.11
	Total	303	

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show that there is a significant difference among

students' year of enrollment and their perception of the effects of cultural inclusive classroom

curriculum on their persistence (see Table 16).

Table 16

Testing Equality of Population Medians by Enrollment Year using Faculty Behavior Variables

	Significance of Faculty Behavior: a. Faculty nurturing (e.g. supportive and encouraging students).	Significance of Faculty Behavior: b. Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum	Significance of Faculty Behavior: c. Faculty's role helping students feel a sense of belonging.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: d. Student-centered teaching.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: e. Faculty being approachable.
Chi-Square	4.229	11.746	7.92	4.781	4.787
df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.376	**0.019**	0.095	0.311	0.31
	Significance of Faculty Behavior: f. Multicultural insensitive comments from faculty.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: g. Having faculty as role models.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: h. Having faculty as mentors.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: i. Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	
Chi-Square	1.722	3.067	6.85	5.996	
df	4	4	4	4	
Asymp. Sig.	0.787	0.547	0.144	0.199	

To further explore this difference, Table 17 identifies the mean rank associated with the response. The result from the Kruskal-Wallis Mean Rank test shows that the target group collectively values the importance of cultural inclusive classroom curriculum more often during their second year of enrollment.

Table 17

Mean Rank of Students Response to the Effects of Cultural Inclusive Classroom Curriculum on their Persistence

	What is your current year of enrollment at Penn State (University Park campus only)?	N	Mean Rank
Significance of Faculty Behavior: b. Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum	1st year/1st semester	2	26.00
	1st year/2nd semester	72	156.87
	2nd year	60	**176.82**
	3rd year	87	144.34
	4th year	83	142.72
	Total	304	

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show that there is a statistically significant difference among students' GPA and commitment to personal goals when analyzing the non-faculty psychosocial responses (see Table 18).

Table 18

Testing Equality of Population Medians by GPA Using Non-faculty Psychosocial Variables

	Significance of Factor: a. Family support (e.g.. encouragement, financial, etc.)	Significance of Factor: b. School friends and social interaction	Significance of Factor: c. Religious beliefs	Significance of Factor: d. Assimilating into the dominant culture	Significance of Factor: e. Commitment to personal goals	Significance of Factor: f. Helping my community after graduation
Chi-Square	1.399	8.106	7.065	7.633	9.533	4.536
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.844	0.088	0.132	0.106	**0.049**	0.338
	Significance of Factor: g. Financial aid awards	Significance of Factor: h. Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks	Significance of Factor: i. Establishment of my cultural identity	Significance of Factor: j. Faculty behavior towards me	Significance of Factor: k. My overall satisfaction with the university	Significance of Factor: l. Belief in my ability to succeed
Chi-Square	8.299	6.584	5.255	6.818	4.295	1.514
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.081	0.16	0.262	0.146	0.368	0.824
	Significance of Factor: m. Feelings of tokenism	Significance of Factor: n. My coping skills	Significance of Factor: o. Reduced stress	Significance of Factor: p. My feelings of belongingness	Significance of Factor: q. My enjoyment of learning	Significance of Factor: r. Developing an identity while maintaining own ethnic group identity
Chi-Square	4.355	6.788	6.841	5.247	1.659	2.136
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.36	0.147	0.145	0.263	0.798	0.711

To further explore this difference, Table 29 identifies the mean rank associated with the response. The results from the Kruskal-Wallis Mean Rank test (see Table 19) imply that African American students with a GPA between 3.00 and 3.99 are the most committed to their personal goals. Goal orientation leads to increased confidence according to Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model of retention for African American students at PWUs (Rogers & Summers, 2008, p. 174). The process of goal commitment leading to increased self confidence is psychologically significant to student persistence.

Table 19

Mean Rank of Students Response to Commitment to Personal Goals

	What is your overall Grade Point Average (GPA)?	N	Mean Rank
Significance of Factor: e. Commitment to personal goals	0	1	185.00
	1	6	160.33
	2	131	144.26
	3	165	**161.62**
	4	3	86.33
	Total	306	

Although the highest mean rank represents a GPA of less than 1.0, and the lowest mean rank represents a 4.0 GPA, their results are insignificant due to the low representation of the population. Conversely, results from the Kruskal-Wallis test (see Table 20) reveal that students' GPAs are not explained by any of the faculty related variables as defined by $p<0.05$. However, it should be noted that there is a close to statistical significance difference among students GPA and their perception of the effects of taking courses taught by African American faculty.

Table 20

Testing Equality of Population Medians by GPA Using Faculty Behavior Related Variables

	Significance of Faculty Behavior: a. Faculty nurturing (e.g. supportive and encouraging students).	Significance of Faculty Behavior: b. Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum	Significance of Faculty Behavior: c. Faculty's role helping students feel a sense of belonging.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: d. Student-centered teaching.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: e. Faculty being approachable.
Chi-Square	5.552	1.068	5.781	7.49	2.396
df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.235	0.899	0.216	0.112	0.663
	Significance of Faculty Behavior: f. Multicultural insensitive comments from faculty.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: g. Having faculty as role models.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: h. Having faculty as mentors.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: i. Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	
Chi-Square	4.374	3.538	2.311	9.322	
df	4	4	4	4	
Asymp. Sig.	0.358	0.472	0.679	0.054	

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show that there is a statistically significant difference among students' parents/guardians yearly household income in four non-faculty psychosocial responses (see Table 21). To further explore the differences in Factors d: Assimilating into the dominant culture, g: Financial aid awards, j: Faculty behavior towards me, and k: My overall satisfaction with the university, Table 22 identifies the mean rank associated with each response.

Table 21

Testing Equality of Population Medians by Parents/Guardians Yearly Household Income using

Non-faculty Psychosocial Variables

	Significance of Factor: a. Family support	Significance of Factor: b. School friends and social interaction	Significance of Factor: c. Religious beliefs	Significance of Factor: d. Assimilating into the dominant culture	Significance of Factor: e. Commitment to personal goals	Significance of Factor: f. Helping my community after graduation
Chi-Square	5.491	8.768	9.361	10.482	7.289	9.127
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.241	0.067	0.053	**0.033**	0.121	0.058
	Significance of Factor: g. Financial aid awards	Significance of Factor: h. Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks	Significance of Factor: i. Establishment of my cultural identity	Significance of Factor: j. Faculty behavior towards me	Significance of Factor: k. My overall satisfaction with the university	Significance of Factor: l. Belief in my ability to succeed
Chi-Square	30.57	6.501	7.648	12.808	10.073	4.383
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	**0.00**	0.165	0.105	**0.012**	**0.039**	0.357
	Significance of Factor: m. Feelings of tokenism	Significance of Factor: n. My coping skills	Significance of Factor: o. Reduced stress	Significance of Factor: p. My feelings of belongingness	Significance of Factor: q. My enjoyment of learning	Significance of Factor: r. Developing an identity while maintaining own ethnic group identity
Chi-Square	2.055	5.996	3.983	9.308	5.507	4.232
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.726	0.199	0.408	0.054	0.239	0.375

The result from the Kruskal-Wallis Mean Rank test (see Table 22) implies that students from the high through highest household incomes perceive the significance of assimilating into the dominant culture as affecting their persistence significantly more than students from the lowest household income. Furthermore, as one can expect, students from low household incomes perceive the significance of receiving financial aid as affecting their persistence more than the students from the highest income levels. Students from the moderately high household income

level perceive the significance of faculty behavior as affecting their persistence more than students from the lowest and highest household income levels. Lastly, students from the relatively high household income level perceive the significance of being satisfied with the university as affecting their persistence more than students from the low household income level.

Table 22

Mean Ranks of Students' Parents/Guardians Yearly Household Income on Non-faculty

Psychosocial Variables

	What is your parents/guardians yearly household income?	N	Mean Rank
Significance of Factor: d. Assimilating into the dominant culture	$0 - $25,000	47	**100.33**
	$25,001 - $50,000	65	113.97
	$50,001 - $75,000	38	106.79
	$75,001 - $100,000	48	**140.02**
	over $100,000	35	124.53
	Total	233	
Significance of Factor: g. Financial aid awards	$0 - $25,000	47	133.33
	$25,001 - $50,000	65	**139.65**
	$50,001 - $75,000	37	103.58
	$75,001 - $100,000	48	106.84
	over $100,000	34	**73.26**
	Total	231	
Significance of Factor: j. Faculty behavior towards me	$0 - $25,000	47	**99.72**
	$25,001 - $50,000	65	113.72
	$50,001 - $75,000	38	131.72
	$75,001 - $100,000	47	**137.40**
	over $100,000	35	**99.60**
	Total	232	
Significance of Factor: k. My overall satisfaction with the university	$0 - $25,000	47	116.56
	$25,001 - $50,000	64	**104.12**
	$50,001 - $75,000	37	109.26
	$75,001 - $100,000	48	**140.00**
	over $100,000	35	111.19
	Total	231	

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show that there is a statistically significant difference among students' parents/guardians yearly household income and taking courses taught by African American faculty as it relates to the perceived affects on students persistence (see Table 23).

Table 23

Testing Equality of Population Medians by Parents/Guardians Yearly Household Income using Faculty Behavior Variables

	Significance of Faculty Behavior: a. Faculty nurturing (e.g. supportive and encouraging students).	Significance of Faculty Behavior: b. Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum	Significance of Faculty Behavior: c. Faculty's role helping students feel a sense of belonging.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: d. Student-centered teaching.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: e. Faculty being approachable.
Chi-Square	2.829	1.165	0.705	2.044	2.251
df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.587	0.884	0.951	0.728	0.69
	Significance of Faculty Behavior: f. Multicultural insensitive comments from faculty.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: g. Having faculty as role models.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: h. Having faculty as mentors.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: i. Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	Significance of Faculty Behavior: e. Faculty being approachable.
Chi-Square	4.971	1.365	1.814	9.552	2.251
df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.29	0.85	0.77	**0.049**	0.69

To further explore the difference in this factor, Table 24 identifies the mean rank associated with the response. The results from the Kruskal-Wallis Mean Ranks test (see Table 24) implies that students from the low household income level perceive that their persistence is positively affected from taking courses taught by African American faculty significantly more than the students in the highest household income level.

Table 24

Mean Rank of Students' Parents/Guardians Yearly Household Income of Faculty Related

Variable i: Taking Courses Taught by African American Faculty

	What is your parents/guardians yearly household income?	N	Mean Rank
Significance of Faculty Behavior: i. Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	$0 - $25,000	46	105.57
	$25,001 - $50,000	64	**134.20**
	$50,001 - $75,000	38	107.43
	$75,001 - $100,000	47	118.95
	over $100,000	35	**98.50**
	Total	230	

Summary of Results

The results of the study show that psychosocial variables are significant influences on undergraduate African American students' persistence at a predominantly White university. A lack of sufficient financial aid is often referenced as one of the most determinant factors of persistence. However, when comparing the mean scores of non-faculty behavioral types of psychosocial variables, 6 other factors ranked above the financial aid factor.

The results of the study show that faculty behaviors are significant variables of persistence among African American students at a predominantly White university. Moreover, males are significantly more influenced by faculty behavior towards them than females. However, there is no significant difference regarding any of the types of behavior. Contrary to the literature, the results show that racial and cultural variables are marginalized influences on the persistence of the target population.

Supplemental findings show that student personal characteristics have a direct influence on their persistence. For example, students with GPAs above 3.00 reports a higher commitment to personal goals as affecting their persistence than students with GPAs below 3.00.The results also show that students from the higher income households carry stronger persistence *traits* than students from lower income households. Some additional positive persistence traits, as agreed upon in the previously cited persistence and retention models, are: positive self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation (e.g. enjoyment of learning), and commitment to personal goals.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of faculty as it relates to the persistence of African American students at a predominantly White university (PWU). Although the persistence of African American students at PWUs has been extensively researched, there remains a gap when exploring psychosocial and culturally significant variables resulting from contact with faculty in general. Psychosocial variables are notably absent from the empirical literature examining graduation rates of African Americans (Henderson & Kritsonis, 2007). This study uses scientific inquiry to measure the significance of faculty behavior in contributing to the psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of African American students. Previous research has focused on racial, ethnic, and cultural similarities between students and faculty, and concludes that these shared characteristics contribute to positive support. However, not enough contemporary research deconstructs faculty behaviors that are presumably associated with these shared characteristics and ranks their relative importance to persistence as perceived by African American students.

Discussion

The study addresses the significance of psychosocial variables on influencing the persistence of the undergraduate African American population at a PWU. "Significance" is also a statistical term, which may cause confusion in a quantitative study. Therefore, the word "significance" is sometimes replaced with one of its synonyms (e.g. importance) while holding constant when used in the statistical manner.

Separating the 27 psychosocial variables into two categories (non-faculty and faculty) was done to accommodate the large number of variables. Without doing so, each table would be too large to meet the requirement of fitting completely on one page. "Faculty behavior towards me" response is grouped with the non-faculty category to determine its overall significance to students. The faculty category describes specific behaviors of faculty, thus the distinction is made.

Interpretation of Each Result

The lack of sufficient financial aid is often cited as a relevant contributor to student persistence. The study utilized "financial aid awards" as the main non psychosocial variable for the purposes of comparing and evaluating the psychosocial variables. The financial aid awards factor did not provide evidence to suggest that it is more significant than the overwhelming majority of psychosocial factors chosen for the study. Moreover, it did not rank among the leading non-faculty psychosocial factors. Therefore, although financial aid is important to persistence, the results show that it is not distinctively important compared to many other factors of persistence for African American undergraduate students at the UP campus of The Pennsylvania State University.

Faculty behavior scored a consistent above average through moderately high (over 3.50 through less than 4.50 out of 5.00) rank; with the exception of two factors scoring moderately low (slightly higher than 3.00). Although none of the faculty descriptive behaviors scored near the high rank of 5.00, the consistent above average scores provide sufficient evidence to conclude that types of faculty behavior are significant to the persistence of African American undergraduate students at the UP campus of The Pennsylvania State University. Although the

respondents clearly perceive psychosocial variables as significant factors to their persistence, descriptions of the respondents help to better analyze the results.

Gender plays a role when perceiving the significance of faculty behavior in general. African American males view faculty behavior toward them as significantly more influential in their persistence than African American females. However, the results do not identify any particular faculty behavior that is more significant to males, raising an interesting question. Are African American male undergraduates treated significantly different than African American females by professors?

The respondent's enrollment year provides an indication of when and what types of factors are significant to their persistence. "Feelings of tokenism" and a faculty behavior that utilizes a "Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum" are the only two factors that can be described as significantly affected by the enrollment year of the student. It appears that from the second semester of the first year through the second year of enrollment, students are more perceptive of their identity as an underrepresented minority. As demonstrated in Rogers and Summers (2008) revised model of retention for African American students at PWUs, it is conceivable that these periods of enrollment correspond with students' initial university environmental encounters (i.e. bureaucratic, academic, and social) leading to the formation of attitudes regarding their fit within the university. The model shows that feelings of belongingness and integration occur during the "Attitudes" stage. A sense of belonging is defined by Rogers and Summers (2008) as feelings of membership in the larger community. It is a critical part of the overall attitude that students develop about their university. In general, a sense of belongingness in the classroom has been associated with adaptive motivation for achievement (Freeman et al. 2007; Summers & Svinicki, 2007). A sense of belongingness and integration can be encouraged through cultural inclusive classroom curriculum.

A Black racial identity model called Cross' Negriscence model coincides with Rogers and Summers (2008) model. The "Encounter" stage in Cross' model occurs simultaneously as the Environmental Interaction stage in Rogers and Summers model. The Encounter stage is when a Black person encounters a significant racial incident which causes an individual to explore their Black identity. Feelings of tokenism, valuing a cultural inclusive classroom curriculum, and encountering the first racial incident will most likely occur early in a Black student's enrollment, hence may be the reason why second semester and second year students ranked the variables much higher than the other students.

The positive correlation between high GPA and commitment to personal goals is consistently supported in studies related to goal and motivational orientations, academic integration and commitment, and individualist and competitive learning environments. Côté and Levine (1997) concluded that students with personal-intellectual motivational orientations possess qualities of "the ideal scholar" and universities should focus on recruiting these types of students. The results from Thompson and Fretz (1991) emphasized the need to better understand minority students' goal commitment by viewing commitment through the lens of collectivism and individualism. Their results suggested that African Americans, as well as other minority students with more collectivist orientations, may have difficulty becoming integrated into the more competitive, individualist academic and social culture that prevails at many PWUs (Guiffrida, Summer 2006). Furthermore, Thompson and Fretz's results suggest that academically successful African American students are equipped with individualist goal commitment to succeed at universities.

Student's household income is perhaps the most influential student entry characteristic that may affect nonacademic persistence factors. There is evidence to suggest a positive relationship between socio economic status (SES) and key psychosocial factors of persistence. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that a student's SES improves their academic performance

based on the assumption that one's SES background determines the quality of K-12 education, thus making a student more or less academically prepared to succeed at the university level. Table 10 shows the only correlations among the student characteristic variables. There is no significant relationship between students' parents/guardians yearly household income and students' GPA.

The results showing that students from high (i.e. $75,000 - $100,000) family household incomes recognize the significance of assimilating into the dominant culture to a much greater degree than the lower family household income groups, which may suggest that these students, more than the others, recognize the importance of developing an identity as a member of the larger university culture (i.e. biculturalism). Furthermore, the results support Tinto's (1993) assertion that successful social and academic integration by African American students attending PWUs is greatly influenced by their ability to demonstrate bicultural competence. Successful social and academic integration is realized by a student's overall satisfaction with the university. With this is mind, the students from the $75,000 - $100,000 family household income range also rank the value of being satisfied with the university significantly higher than the other income groups.

Student's family household income also influenced students' perception regarding the significance of receiving financial aid awards on their persistence. As expected, students from the lowest through low income family households (i.e. $50,000 or below) appear to be in the most need of financial aid and hold different perceptions regarding financial aid than the higher family household income groups. In other words, receiving financial aid awards is relevant to their persistence.

Lastly, the relationship between student's family household income and the significance of faculty behavior toward them is not clearly understood. On one hand, a connection can be made that faculty behavior toward them is an indication of the success or failure of their assimilation into the dominant culture and biculturalism. However, this theory is only applicable

to the high household income group (i.e. $75,000 through $100,000) since they were also the

group who held the significance of assimilating into the dominant culture as significantly

different. Yet, the middle family household income group also ranked faculty behavior toward

them different than the highest and the two lowest household income groups. The primary

investigator does not offer a plausible explanation for this result. Similarly, there is not enough

evidence to offer a plausible explanation as to why students from the low household income

group (i.e. $25,001 through $50,000) rank the significance of taking courses taught by African

American faculty higher than the other household family income groups, other than having

previous exposure to African American teachers throughout their K-12 schooling. In other words,

it is plausible that schools in low urban SES neighborhoods employ more minority teachers than

schools in high SES neighborhoods.

Implications for Future Research

Racial and cultural themes were not generally perceived as significant factors to the

overall participants. Perhaps the lack of outcomes supporting the abundance of literature

attributing persistence issues to race and cultural factors is the most convincing implication for

future research regarding variations in the SES of African Americans and its relevance to social

class and entry characteristics that are ideal for psychosocial positive outcomes. The

Pennsylvania State University undergraduate African American population at the University Park

campus consists of a large presence of students from families with relatively *high* annual

incomes. Out of 233 responses reporting parents/guardians yearly household income, 83 students

report a range of household income of $75,000 to over $100,000 annually, representing 35.62%

of the respondents. If we add the 38 students from yearly household incomes ranging from

$50,001 through $75,000, which is considered lower middle to middle class by most standards,

51.93% of the respondents lie in the lower middle through upper middle class, and potentially inclusive of upper class as it relates to income. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that a majority portion of African American undergraduate students at the Pennsylvania State University arrive with bicultural skills or come from backgrounds that enable them to easily acquire bicultural skills, thus greatly diminishing their need for racial or cultural social dependence or even preference. Furthermore, the variation in the SES of African Americans has significant consequences as it relates to the need for financial aid awards. The study clearly demonstrates the importance of receiving financial aid awards is greatly diminished according to parents/guardians household income levels. Thus, a thorough analysis of African American persistence must include the backgrounds or entry characteristics of the target group to capture phenomena that is only evident by screening in-group variations.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from this research and the consequent implications, the following recommendations are offered:

1. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to define an African American in a cultural context due to Americanization/Naturalization, thus increasing cultural variations and influences. When conducting studies regarding race, ethnicity, and culture, distinctions must be made between the three to obtain precise results. Researchers must take time to be more descriptive with population sampling and not settle for the generic racial and ethnic categories that currently exist. When conducting student persistence and retention studies, the student entry characteristics are necessary to forming accurate conclusions. Although we know the psychosocial influences that can affect student persistence, student characteristics mediate the influences. Student motivations, awareness, and reactions to phenomena are largely based on

their background and experiences. In contemporary times, assumptions should not be made about a student based on race. This study exemplifies the importance of student characteristics on outcomes, therefore future studies should put less emphasis on cultural generalizations.

2. In an effort to improve the overall persistence to graduation of African American students at colleges and universities, practitioners should equip future postsecondary students with skills to overcome psychosocial challenges along with academic preparation. Moreover, practitioners should assist students in finding intrinsic motivators and accelerating their goal commitment prior to entering colleges and universities.

3. More research is recommended on how undergraduate African American males perceive faculty behavior toward them and their ability to cope with the perceptions as it relates to their persistence.

4. Future research should also look at the long-term effects of university implementation of minority recruitment tactics. Particularly, if the recruitment of minority students from advantaged demographic areas are targeted more frequently and persistent than minority students from less preferred demographic areas. Selective minority recruitment will most likely improve persistence and graduation rates; however, it may also promote a type of covert discrimination by not affording as much university access to minority students from less privileged demographic areas.

5. Future research may consider how psychosocial variables affect the persistence of other ethnic or racial groups, especially Hispanic students due to their similar high attrition rates.

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Paper version of survey

Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research - The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: The Investigation of Faculty Influence on Psychosocial Variables Affecting the Persistence of African American Students at a Predominantly White University

Principal Investigator: Shakoor Ward, 301 Keller Building, University Park, PA, 16802; saw305@psu.edu, 814-232-1718

Advisor: Edgar I. Farmer, PhD, 411D Keller Building, University Park, PA, 16802; eif1@psu.edu, 814-863-3858

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of faculty as it relates to the persistence of African American students at The Pennsylvania State University. For the purposes of this study, persistence is the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion. The proposed study purports to provide the context for reflecting on the ways in which current student persistence theories might be modified to account more directly for the role of faculty in the process of African American student persistence at The Pennsylvania State University.

Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to participate in an on-line survey. For each answer, you will be asked to select the one that represents you the most.

Duration/Time: The time required to complete participation in this research is approximately 10 minutes.

Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The survey does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Right to Ask Questions: Please contact Shakoor Ward at (814) 232-1718 with questions or concerns about this study.

Payment for participation: Three Student Book Store Gift Cards will be raffled and awarded to three participants. The dollar values are $300, $200, and $100. The participants email addresses will be randomly selected from a list of students who have completed the questionnaire. Gift Card recipients will be selected and awarded during Black History Month on the following dates: February 1, 2009 ($300), February 8, 2009 ($200), and February 15,

2009 (<u>$100</u>). Winners will be notified via email and have the option of receiving the Gift Card in the mail, or collect it in person.

Total payments within one calendar year that exceed $600 will require the University to report these payments to the IRS annually. This may require you to claim the compensation that you receive for participation in this study as taxable income.

Voluntary Participation: Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion and submission of the survey implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research. <u>A PDF version of the consent form is located</u> <u>HERE</u>.

Ward's Psychosocial BAA Undergraduate Student Persistence Questionnaire

Rationale: You have been selected to participate in a survey of Penn State undergraduate students at University Park campus. This survey will provide very important information about student persistence at Penn State. This survey is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. Individuals will not be identified, and only group data will be reported.

You must be at least 18 years of age at the time of completing the survey.

Definition: For the purposes of this study, persistence is the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion.

Directions: Please read and answer each question carefully. For each item, select the response that best describes you.

Survey: The design of the survey was adapted with permission from a previous instrument developed by Dr. Edgar I. Farmer at the Pennsylvania State University.

Questions concerning this project should be directed to:

Shakoor A. Ward
PhD Candidate, College of Education
Workforce Education & Development
The Pennsylvania State University
301 Keller Building
University Park, PA 16802-1303
(814) 232-3727
Email: saw305@psu.edu

- ❍ I agree to take this survey [Goto question Q1]
- ❍ I do not agree to take this survey [Goto question End]

Part I - Personal Characteristics

College and Academic Major
1. Please indicate your College
- ❍ The College of Agricultural Sciences
- ❍ The College of Arts and Architecture

- ○ The Smeal College of Business Administration
- ○ The College of Communications
- ○ The College of Earth and Mineral Sciences
- ○ The College of Education
- ○ The College of Engineering
- ○ The College of Health and Human Development
- ○ The College of Information Sciences and Technology
- ○ The College of the Liberal Arts
- ○ The Eberly College of Science
- ○ The Division of Undergraduate Studies
- ○ Other: (please specify) _____

1a. What is your academic major?
- ○ Agriculture and natural resources
- ○ Architecture and environmental design
- ○ Visual and performing arts
- ○ Biological/life sciences
- ○ Business
- ○ Communications
- ○ Computer and information systems
- ○ Education
- ○ Engineering and engineering technologies
- ○ Health professions, allied health services, and recreational services
- ○ Humanities and languages
- ○ Interdisciplinary studies
- ○ Physical sciences and mathematics
- ○ Social sciences
- ○ University Libraries
- ○ Other: (please specify) _____

2. Gender:
- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Ethnic/Race Background
3a. What race best describes you? (Select only one)
- ○ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ○ Asian
- ○ Black or African American
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ○ White

3b. Is your ethnicity Hispanic/Latino?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

4. What is your nationality?
- ○ American
- ○ Non-American

5. What is your age?
        Age ___

6. What is your current year of enrollment at Penn State (University Park campus only)?
        ○ 1st year/1st semester
        ○ 1st year/2nd semester
        ○ 2nd year
        ○ 3rd year
        ○ 4th year
        ○ I am not a student at University Park

7. Your current student enrollment status is:
        ○ Part-time
        ○ Full-time
        ○ Not enrolled

8. How many colleges and universities have you attended since leaving high school?
        Number ___

9. What is your overall Grade Point Average (GPA)?
        GPA ___

10. What is your parents/guardians yearly household income?
        ○ $0 - $25,000
        ○ $25,001 - $50,000
        ○ $50,001 - $75,000
        ○ $75,001 - $100,000
        ○ over $100,000
        ○ Do not Know

11. What motivates you the most to obtain a college degree?
        _____
        _____
        _____

Use the space below for any clarity needed for questions 1 through 11:
        _____
        _____
        _____

Part II - Perceptions of Contributors to Student Persistence

12. There are many factors that play a role in obtaining a college degree. Please indicate the level of significance for each factor in influencing the completion of YOUR degree. You may click on the linked terms for an explanation.

	0 = None	1	2	3	4 = High
a. Family support (e.g.. encouragement, financial, etc.)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b. School friends and social interaction	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c. Religious beliefs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d. **Assimilating** into the dominant culture	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e. Commitment to personal goals	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f. Helping my community after graduation	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g. Financial aid awards	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h. Encounters or perceptions of racism towards Blacks	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i. Establishment of my cultural identity	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
j. Faculty behavior towards me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
k. My overall satisfaction with the university	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
l. Belief in my ability to succeed	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
m. Feelings of **tokenism**	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
n. My coping skills	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
o. Reduced stress	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
p. My feelings of **belongingness**	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
q. My enjoyment of learning	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
r. Developing an identity as a member of the dominant university culture while maintaining own ethnic group identity (i.e. biculturalism)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Part III - Faculty Influence as it relatess to Student Persistence

Instructions: This section attempts to identify a relationship between faculty behaviors and student persistence. For the purposes of this study, persistence is the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion.

13. Please indicate the level of significance for each faculty behavior on contributing to you completing of YOUR degree. You may click on the linked terms for an explanation.

	0 = None	1	2	3	4 = High
a. Faculty nurturing (e.g. supportive and encouraging students).	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b. Cultural inclusive classroom curriculum & instruction.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c. Faculty's role helping students feel a sense of belonging.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d. **Student-centered teaching**.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e. Faculty being approachable.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f. Multicultural insensitive comments from faculty.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g. Having faculty as **role models**.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h. Having faculty as **mentors**.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i. Taking courses taught by African American faculty.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Additional comments welcome.

_____
_____
_____

Initial email invitation

Dear student,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Learning and Performance Systems at The Pennsylvania State University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to investigate the influence of faculty interaction on psychosocial variables affecting the persistence of undergraduate African American students at The Pennsylvania State University. You may participate if you are currently enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at The Pennsylvania State University AND are at least 18 years of age AND consider yourself as Black or African American.

Participants are asked to complete an online survey. Carefully read and answer each question on the enclosed questionnaire. For each item, you are asked to make a selection that best describes you. The time required to complete participation in this research is approximately 10 minute. Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser) to begin the survey.

https://online.survey.psu.edu/undergraduate/?%User Id%

If you experience difficulties logging onto the website, please send an email to websurvey@survey.psu.edu.

Your decision to be in this research is voluntary and all of your responses will be confidential. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses in any reports of this data.

Respondents with completed questionnaires will automatically enter a raffle to win one of three Student Book Store Gift Cards in values of $300, $200, and $100. The raffles and awards will occur during Black History Month.

I appreciate your time and consideration in completing the questionnaire. Thank you for participating in this study! If you

would like to know more information about this study, please contact me via email at saw305@psu.edu.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-232-1718 or my advisor, Dr. Edgar I. Farmer, at 814-863-3858.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shakoor A. Ward
PhD Candidate, College of Education
Program of Workforce Education and Development
The Pennsylvania State University

Reminder emails

Second reminder

Dear Students,

Over nearly a ten year span, Penn State reported a Black student graduation rate average of 60 percent in 1998 and 68 percent in 2007. Our UP campus performs well overall in comparison to the national Black graduation rate. However, we are tremendously lagging behind the national and UP campus graduation rates of Whites and Asian students. There is something that you can do. Become part of our "community" effort to improve the graduation rates of African American students by participating in a unique study that investigates what supports and impedes African American students' persistence to graduation. This unique study analyzes psychological and social factors that are more culturally relevant to African American students.

Complete survey = social consciousness = making a difference for yourself and your peers.

Furthermore, your participation makes you eligible to win a $300, $200, or $100 Student Bookstore Gift Card.

Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser) to begin the survey.

https://online.survey.psu.edu/undergraduate/?

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Shakoor A. Ward
College of Education
The Pennsylvania State University

Final Reminder

Dear student:

As you can see, Black/African Americans posted the lowest six
year graduation rate out of the racial and ethnic groups from
Penn State's 2003 freshman class:

White - 86.6%
Asian - 81.5%
Hispanic/Latino - 76.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native - 75%
African American/Black - 70.2%

There are many variables that influence the graduation rate of
Black/African Americans. Help us to identify the most significant
by clicking on the following link and completing the survey.

https://online.survey.psu.edu/undergraduate/?%User Id%

This is the final opportunity to complete the survey that
contributes to the future of PSUs African American population.
Thank you for taking the step towards becoming an Agent of
Change.

https://online.survey.psu.edu/undergraduate/?%User Id%

Sincerely,

Shakoor A. Ward
College of Education
The Pennsylvania State University

VITA
Shakoor A. Ward

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Doctoral Candidate of Workforce Education and Development, August 2010
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Emphasis: Leadership

Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, August 2005
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Specialization: Career and Technical Education

Bachelor of Business Administration in Operations Management, June 2000
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH
Minor: Entrepreneurship

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

Ward, S.A. (2010, In press). The road to foreign language competency in the U.S.: A leadership perspective. *Journal of Leadership Studies*.

Ward, S.A., & Clark, R.W. (2010, In press). A case study on collaboration: Sharing the responsibility of economic development in Juniata Valley, Pennsylvania. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*.

Jeon, K.S., Ward, S.A., & Farmer, E.I. (2010, February). Five dimensions of holistic leadership. In T. J. Chermack & J. Storberg-Walker (Eds.), *2010 Conference Proceedings of the Academy of Human Resource Development*. Knoxsville, TN: The Academy of Human Resource Development.

Ward, S.A. (2009, September). Career and technical education in U.S. prisons: What have we learned? *Journal of Correctional Education*, *60*(3), 191 - 200.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

"Educational and Career Choices for African Americans: Framing the Philosophies of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington through the Lens of Social and Cultural Capital" Presentation offered at the Nathan I. Huggins Symposium, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. December 5, 2009.

"The Psychosocial Effects of Faculty Behavior as it relates to the Persistence of African American Students at Predominantly White Universities." Poster session. 1st Annual Great Lakes Alliance for the Social Sciences (GLASS) Research Conference, Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP), Chicago, IL. February 7, 2009.

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Africana Research Center Research Grant, The Penn State University   2009 – 2010
Dissertation Research Initiation Grant, The Penn State University   2009 – 2010
Student Leadership Scholarship, Division of Student Affairs, Office of Student Activities, The Pennsylvania State University, 2010