

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

# UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



MINORITY STUDENT PERSISTENCE IN COLLEGE:  
A LONGITUDINAL, QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

Debra L. Tucker

---

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION

In partial fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
WITH A MAJOR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

in the Graduate College  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1998

**UMI Number: 9829595**

---

**UMI Microform 9829595**  
**Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized  
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

---

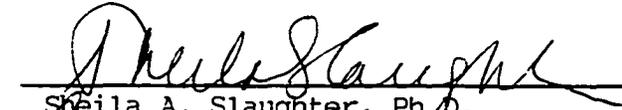
**UMI**  
**300 North Zeeb Road**  
**Ann Arbor, MI 48103**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA &  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

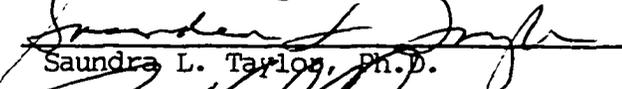
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Debra L. Tucker

entitled Minority Student Persistence in College: A Longitudinal, Qualitative Study

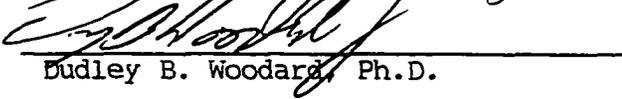
and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheila A. Slaughter, Ph.D.

4/7/98  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra L. Taylor, Ph.D.

4/7/98  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dudley B. Woodard, Ph.D.

4/7/98  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Director  
Sheila A. Slaughter, Ph.D.

4/7/98  
Date

## STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under the rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of the source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Debra L. Tucker

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special acknowledgment to Dr. Sheila Slaughter whose consistent support over the past seven years has made this dissertation possible. Her intelligence and passion for higher education have greatly inspired me. I am grateful for having the opportunity to be mentored by the best. Thank you for guiding me to graduation.

I was very fortunate to have the support of Dr. Saundra Taylor who leads by example. Her caring and commitment to those who make up the university community is unmatched. Dr. Dudley B. Woodard provided remarkable insight. His support and good humor were greatly appreciated.

Dr. Gary Rhoades encouraged me to pursue my Ph.D. and Dr. Larry Leslie taught me that not only teaching, but learning requires emotional involvement. Dr. Martin Ahumada believed in my strength and provided me confidence. Dr. Peggy Douglas was kind and supportive throughout my academic career.

Dr. Theodore G. Tong provided the flexibility in my professional work schedule to complete my Ph.D. Further, he proved a wonderful ally to discuss student and academic issues.

I wish to acknowledge all of my family members who addressed me as "Doctor" long before I was one. To my Tucker family, my Klein family, my Rowe family, my Doody family, my Ruck family, and my grandparents, Harold and Ruth Kautz, from whom I inherited my intelligence.

All of my university colleagues and fellow graduate students, I am grateful for your continuous support. Our e-mails, study groups, meetings, and phone calls were a wonderful source of motivation.

And lastly, I give special thanks to each minority student who gave their thoughts, experiences, and time to further research on minority student persistence. Without each and every one of you, this research project would not have been possible.

### DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Percy, and my daughters, Ashley and Emily.

Percy has been a true source of strength during my life. Without his love, support, and humor I could not be where I am today. I couldn't ask for a better life companion.

To Ashley who has given me many gifts that contribute daily to my life. You inspired, challenged and loved me. For that, I am eternally grateful.

To Emily who has strength, brilliance, and humor beyond her years. Her positive demeanor and enduring patience are truly an inspiration.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	8
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	9
ABSTRACT .....	12
1. INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM, AND SIGNIFICANCE .....	13
Introduction .....	13
Problem .....	15
National Level Problem .....	16
State Level Problem .....	18
Institutional Level Problem .....	19
Purpose .....	22
Significance .....	25
The Study .....	28
Conclusion .....	30
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	32
Introduction .....	32
Interactionist Model.....	33
Interactionist Model & Minority Students .....	36
Theory of Attrition .....	38
Psychosocial Theory .....	40
Psychosocial Theory & Minority Students .....	41
Theory of Student Involvement .....	42
Involvement & Minority Students .....	46
Finances .....	48
Race, Class, & Multiculturalism .....	49
Cultural Background and the College Campus.....	53
3. METHODS .....	61
Introduction .....	61
Pilot Study .....	62
Sampling Process.....	64
Freshman Study .....	65
Follow-up Study .....	66
Contact and Response Rate.....	67
The Sample .....	68
Conduct of the Interview.....	69

## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

Analysis .....	69
Grounded Theory .....	73
Comparative Method of Analysis .....	74
Conceptual Definitions.....	76
Research Questions .....	78
4. FINDINGS .....	80
Introduction.....	80
College Outcomes .....	82
Hispanic Student Outcomes .....	84
African American Student Outcomes .....	85
Native American Student Outcomes .....	86
Asian American Student Outcomes .....	87
Subjects as Freshman .....	94
African American Subjects as Freshman .....	94
Asian American Subjects as Freshman .....	100
Native American Subjects as Freshman .....	106
Hispanic Subjects as Freshman .....	110
Pre-College Characteristics .....	120
Academic Preparation .....	120
Parents Educational Achievement .....	122
College Preparatory Path .....	126
Orientation to College .....	126
Transition .....	129
Motivation/Commitment .....	133
Independence .....	136
College Experience .....	138
Theory of Navigation Model .....	141
Identity .....	145
Campus Participation .....	151
Academics .....	153
Barriers .....	156
Personal Relationships .....	161
Finances & Employment.....	162
Current Employment.....	164
Conclusion.....	165
5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	168
Introduction .....	168
Discussion .....	170
Recommendations for Campus .....	184

## TABLE OF CONTENTS- Continued

Limitations of the Study .....	186
Recommendations for Future Research .....	187
Conclusion .....	188
APPENDICES .....	191
APPENDIX A: Initial Interview Schedule .....	191
APPENDIX B: Initial Interview Analysis Form .....	211
APPENDIX C: Follow-Up Interview Guide .....	216
REFERENCES .....	222

### LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.0, College Enrollment by Ethnic Group .....	16
Table 1.1, Bachelor's Degree Attainment .....	18
Table 1.2, U of A Freshmen Minority Enrollment .....	20
Table 1.3, Percent of Minority Cohort Who Graduated .....	22
Table 1.4, Enrollment by Institutional Type and Control ...	23
Table 2.0, Tinto's and Astin's Model of Persistence.....	45
Table 3.0, Freshman Study Participants .....	65
Table 4.0, Hispanic Student Outcomes .....	84
Table 4.1, African-American Student Outcomes .....	85
Table 4.2, Native American Student Outcomes .....	86
Table 4.3, Asian-American Student Outcomes .....	87
Table 4.4, Follow-up Study Participants.....	89
Table 4.5, Hispanic Student Academic Details .....	90
Table 4.6, African American Student Academic Details .....	91
Table 4.7, Native American Student Academic Details .....	92
Table 4.8, Asian American Student Academic Details .....	93
Table 4.9, Academic Index of College Preparation .....	121
Table 4.10, Parent Degree Attainment by Ethnicity .....	123
Table 4.11, Orientation Program Participation .....	127
Table 4.12, Declared College Majors .....	135
Table 4.13, Residents of Students by Ethnicity & Gender ..	136
Table 4.14, Gender and Persistence .....	161

## LIST OF TABLES-Continued

Table 4.15, Student Employment and Persistence.....	164
Table 4.16, Current Occupations of Graduates.....	165
Table 5.0, Theory of Navigation and Ethnic Identity Salience .....	177

**List of Illustrations**

Figure 2.0, Tinto's Model of Student Persistence .....	34
Figure 2.1, Bean & Hossler's Model of Persistence .....	39
Figure 2.2, Kraemer's Constructs of Integration .....	54
Figure 3.0, Crowson's Analytic Strategies .....	70
Diagram 4.0, Theory of Navigation .....	141
Diagram 4.1, Theory of Navigation Model: Ryan .....	142
Diagram 4.2, Theory of Navigation Model: Nicole .....	143

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine minority student college persistence. The research setting was a public, Research I institution located in the Southwest. A longitudinal, qualitative research approach was used in which twenty-five students were interviewed at the beginning of their freshmen year, and again, approximately seven years later. Through the analysis of the minority students' experience on campus, a theory of minority student persistence was developed called the Theory of Navigation. The results indicate that minority students experience college differently than their white student cohort. Traditional theories of student persistence do not fully explain their experience. The findings of this research could affect how colleges nationwide serve their minority student populations.

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM AND SIGNIFICANCE

#### INTRODUCTION

The college student experience is a central focus of higher education research in the United States. Access to college, persistence in college, and graduation from college are area under much examination. Over the last twenty years, the higher education literature has been flooded with studies that focus on student retention (Tinto, 1975, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978; Astin, 1982, 1984, 1993; Bean, 1985; Stoecker, Pascarella & Wolfe, 1988; Cibik & Chambers, 1991; Kraemer, 1993). Most studies focus on the students' ability to become integrated, involved, motivated, and/or committed to earning a college degree. Further, most of the studies on persistence often focus on white, middle class students.

With the increasingly diverse, multi-cultural student body on today's college campuses, focusing attention on the minority student college experience is important. Minority students from under represented groups, specifically students

of Hispanic, African American, and Native American origin have a much lower rate of persistence through graduation than do the majority population of white students (DeLuca, Kroc, and Woodard, 1996). However, minority students from Asian American backgrounds, as a group, graduate at the same rate or higher than white students on campus. Seeking explanations to these college attendance patterns benefits both the institution and the minority student attempting to achieve college degree attainment.

Researchers of college student retention tend to use theories and research methods that are not conducive to exploring the minority student experience in depth. Because most of the research involving the college experience is quantitative in nature, capturing the meaning behind the decisions students make is difficult. Further, most research designs that examine this phenomenon are of a cross sectional nature, a one time snapshot taken during the life of the student. To better understand the experience of minority students, this research centers on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with twenty-five students who began college full-time at the study institution in the Fall semester of 1990. The students were first interviewed as freshmen, and then seven years later, hopefully, as graduates.

PROBLEM

Minority students on campus have received increased attention, primarily due to their increased enrollment. The focus has shifted from recruitment to retention. There is serious concern with the retention of minority students as a group (Kraemer, 1997; Brown & Kurpius, 1997; Person & Christensen, 1996). Access to higher education has improved for minority students, but graduation from college for many under represented groups remains illusive (Eimers & Pike, 1997). Minority students at the national, state, and institutional levels have made inroads to post secondary education. Table 1.0 illustrates an increase in minority student enrollment in institutions of higher learning to be approximately 30 percent from 1986 to 1993. However, minority student persistence to bachelors' degree attainment has only slightly increased during the same time (see Table 1.1). Persistence of minority college students through college graduation continues to be a challenge.

Table 1.0College Enrollment by Ethnic Group:


---

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1993</u>
African American	996,000	1,039,000	1,147,000	1,288,000
Hispanic	563,000	631,000	725,000	918,000
Asian American	393,000	437,000	501,000	634,000
Native American	83,000	86,000	95,000	113,000
Total Minority	2,035,000	2,193,000	2,468,000	2,953,000

---

Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 1, 1995.

National Level

At the national level, Table 1.0 illustrates an increase in minority student full time enrollment from 1986 to 1993. At the same time, there was a decrease in white, non-Hispanic student enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). It appears that minority students are finding their way into the post secondary educational system in higher numbers; however, there remain hurdles to persisting and

graduating from college for students from under represented groups (see Tables 1.1 and 1.3).

Higher education researchers and university administrators have difficulty with poor rates of retention for students from minority backgrounds. Tinto (1987) conducted a study reporting the national student graduation rate over a five-year period to be approximately 45 percent. A more recent report focusing on national graduation rates (DeLuca, Kroc, and Woodard, 1996) found that Asian students have the highest graduation rates after five years at 57 percent, followed closely by white students at 56 percent. However, for African American, Hispanic, and Native American students, their rate of retention is, on average, 20 percent lower. This coincides with other studies that found students from under represented groups within the academic setting exemplify a much lower rate of retention through graduation, approximately 25 percent. African American, Hispanic, and Native American college students have a much lower probability of degree completion than Asian American or White college students (Astin, 1982; American Council on Education, 1987).

Table 1.1Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Ethnic Group as a Percent of Total Degrees Awarded


---

	<u>1989/1990</u>	<u>1991/1992</u>	<u>1994/1995</u>
African American	5.8%	6.7%	7.5%
Hispanic	3.1%	3.9%	4.6%
Asian American	3.7%	4.4%	5.2%
Native American	.04%	.04%	.05%

---

Source: Digest for Education Statistics, 1997.

State Level

The higher education system in the state of Arizona consists primarily of three state universities, private schools that are mostly technical in nature, and many public community colleges. At the state level, the governing board for the University of Arizona created a special task force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness to investigate the major factors affecting access and persistence of all students within the state university system. Based upon the 1982 cohort of full time freshman students, after five years, an

average of 55 percent of Hispanic students had left the institution. An average of 70 percent of Native American and 68 percent of African American students were no longer enrolled. The highest persisters were Asian American students. Following a five-year period, 38 percent of the Asian American student population had left the institution. For white, non Hispanic students, 46 percent had left without obtaining a degree (Board of Regents' Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness, Final Report, 1988).

Several working papers surfaced as the result of the task force, including a final report to the Arizona Board of Regents. Based upon the final report presented to the Board of Regents, each state institution was instructed to close the graduation gap between minority students and non minorities. Changing the pattern of minority students educational achievement is important not only for stability within the state of Arizona, but also for reasons of equity of all citizens (Wood, 1988).

#### Institutional Level

At the institutional level, access to the university system has gradually increased in the number of minority

students represented on campus (see Table 1.2). With the increase in number, one would expect an increase in the percentage of students graduating within a five or a six-year time frame. However, there is no corresponding, consistent increase in the graduation rate (see Table 1.3). In fact, from 1986 to 1990, two groups decreased in their degree completion following a six year period.

Table 1.2

U of A Freshmen Minority Enrollment

---

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1994</u>
African American	72	89	120	91	106
Hispanic	347	464	468	485	545
Asian	106	148	245	212	255
Native American	52	91	85	91	117
Total Minority Student Population	577	792	918	879	1,023

---

Source: Office of Institutional Research.

The University Strategic Plan has set forth the goal to "implement minority recruitment, retention, and graduation goals, working closely with citizens' advisory committees, and state, regional, and local articulation task forces" (Lo Que Pasa, 1996). According to the Office of Institutional Research at the University of Arizona, minority student enrollments in 1983 were 9.59 percent or 2,922 students out of 30,460. In 1994, the minority student population accounted for 20.77 percent or 7,334 of the 35,306 undergraduates enrolled. The report also showed that following six years, the non minority graduation rate reached 51 percent, meaning that of the 1988 freshman class, 51 percent of the students had graduated. Graduation rates for minority students during the same time period were approximately 25 percent. Due to the problem of minority student persistence, qualitative research, specifically interview research, is important to describe why, despite the increase in the number of minority students reaching college at the study institution (see Table 1.2), they are not retained to graduation (see Table 1.3). Attempting to research American minority persistence in higher education from the students' own perspective is important.

Table 1.3Percent of Cohort who Graduated


---

Entering Year	<u>1986</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>
African American				
Five year	25%	26%	33%	25%
Six year	33%	30%	39%	N/A
Hispanic				
Five year	24%	34%	29%	34%
Six year	32%	43%	38%	N/A
Asian American				
Five year	46%	45%	40%	51%
Six year	53%	58%	51%	N/A
Native American				
Five year	19%	19%	12%	16%
Six year	31%	26%	19%	N/A

---

Source: Office of Institutional Research.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to investigate the answers to the following research questions: From the students' perspective, what describes the reasons for staying in, or withdrawing from college? Are there notable differences by race and/or gender? What changes have the students experienced since their freshmen year that influence those decisions? What are the most important influences on

minority student retention at the study institution for this group of students? Are the influences internal or external to the university? Do the explanations given by the students fit the predominant theories found in the retention literature?

Although it appears that access to college has improved, researchers do not find corresponding improvements in persistence and graduation rates. Because higher education in the United States is predicated upon equal opportunity for all students, exploring the inequity is important. Students have gained greater access to college in recent years; however, most minority students are concentrated in the community college system throughout the country (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4

Proportion of Enrollment Made up of Minority Students by Institutional Type and Control

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1993</u>
Public 4-year	38%	38%	37%
Public 2-year	43%	43%	45%
Private 4-year	16%	16%	16%
Private 2-year	3%	3%	2%

Source: Digest for Education Statistics, 1997.

The type of institution minority students attend strongly effect's bachelor's degree attainment. According to Astin (1982) students beginning at a community college are much less likely to transfer and then graduate from a four-year institution.

Much of the research on student retention focus on lack of ability, failure to integrate properly, failure to become involved within the university system, or lack of motivation exhibited by the student. The research is essentially based on individual talent, or lack thereof, and meritocracy. Within the primary and secondary educational system, children are prepared for a future role in society. Education is regarded as open to all, and educational attainment is not based on ascribed characteristics such as race, class, or gender. Rewards are believed to be accrued based on meritocracy. The assumption continues that through hard work and talent, any individual can earn a place in the higher educational system leading to a better social position in the future. Obtaining a college education facilitates social mobility primarily through the occupational structure. Post secondary education participation is seen as a rational and neutral process. By providing access to a college education, by democratic design, it appears that social mobility is possible. This is the

perspective upon which much of the research on college student access and retention rests.

A critical perspective of college student participation recognizes systems of higher education reproducing existing hierarchies in the United States. Rewards are not merit based, nor are they regarded as neutral. The ethic of individualism is reinforced to serve those with power and privilege in our society. Students are socialized as children regarding their future roles in society. Having been admitted to college, minority students feel great achievement. However, for many, the educational system exists as a sorter, rather than an equalizer. Knowledge transmitted in the college setting shapes the students understanding of society. Often, the knowledge is very different from the cultural norms and values the minority student learned in their home. Higher education serves to stratify individuals who are competing for scarce resources such as power, money, and prestige.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Of special importance is the timing of this research. Anti affirmative action behavior is pervasive on college campuses nationwide. The recent decision by voters in

California to eliminate any special treatment given minorities in admission works further to reduce the diversity of our nation's college system. Currently, the Arizona legislature is considering a similar bill in which programs that target minority students would be eliminated. Anti affirmative action behavior such as this only serves to increase racial tension between white students and those of color. Hurtado (1992) found that white students make assumptions about minority students on college campuses. Many feel minority students do not possess the qualifications required to be on campus, essentially taking a spot that should belong to a white student.

Closing the persistence and graduation gap that currently exists between students from under represented groups and the majority college student population is important. From a functionalist perspective, future demographic shifts as we approach the twenty-first century are imminent. Despite the rash of anti affirmative action behavior, an educated citizenry is necessary if the United States is to remain globally competitive. If more minority students are not college educated, we will not have the human resources necessary to remain competitive. From a critical perspective, the discussion surrounding college student retention moves

away from equality of opportunity to equality of condition in which everything of value, in this case, higher education, must be equally attainable, despite race, class, or gender. In this vein, completing a college education should be a goal that all qualified students can reach, rather than a privilege based on ascribed characteristics.

At the University of Arizona, top administrators are committed to issues surrounding diversity, and to retaining all students through graduation. Minority student enrollment has doubled from 1983 to 1994; however, graduate rates remain behind that of the white college student population. The university has not completed its commitment to the minority student population. The Vice President of Student Affairs defends minority support services stating that "The ultimate goal would be when we do not need to target anyone, but we are not there yet." In the Dean of Students Office, there remains a commitment to enhance the campus climate and community of the minority student population.

Also, of significance in this research is the methodology. Utilizing a multi method, longitudinal approach to gain insight into the minority student experience is powerful. The participants of this study were first interviewed as freshmen students during the 1990-91 academic

year. They were tracked through institutional records until the Spring of 1997. Next, the cohort was re-interviewed during the Spring and Summer of 1997. Because there are so many points of data collection, this study provides great detail to the college experience of the participants in the study.

### THE STUDY

The study setting is a Research I state university in the Southwest. It is the flagship institution of the state of Arizona. The undergraduate population approximates 35,000 students on campus. The minority student population is approximately 25 percent, or 7,500 students. The largest minority student population is of Hispanic origin, most of Mexican decent.

The study originated in the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education under the direction of Dr. Sarah Dinham and Dr. Carlos Rodriguez and was titled "The Minority Retention Project." As a Graduate Research Assistant, I worked closely with Drs. Dinham and Rodriguez, and eventually led the study. In-depth interviews were initially conducted with students who began at the study institution as first-time

freshmen in the Fall semester of 1990. During that academic year, forty-one minority students were interviewed as part of the "Minority Student Retention Project." Minority students who were trained in interviewing techniques conducted most of the freshmen interviews. I interviewed six of the subjects personally. During the spring and summer of 1997, I attempted to reconnect with, and arrange, follow up interviews with each subject. I was able to locate and re-interview twenty-five students from the original sample who agreed to discuss their University of Arizona experience.

The interviews were semi-structured, and included portions of the data collected during the initial interview. I conducted seven phone interviews due to time or distance conflicts. I found the phone interviews to be equally as informing as personal ones. All of the phone interviews were conducted from my home and were audio taped. Most of the personal interviews were conducted on the University of Arizona campus, or the respondents home. One interview was conducted at the subjects place of employment. The interviews were audio taped, and on average, lasted an hour. Students spoke freely about the activities they were involved in, faculty and classes, work experience, and the influences they believed to be responsible for the decisions to persist

through graduation, or to leave the university. Most subjects were eager to discuss their college experience at length.

An attempt was made to examine the social class background of the subjects simply by asking the respondents during the interview sessions about their parents' socioeconomic status when the student began college; however, there is reason to believe the responses are not a reliable measure. All students reported to be from middle class backgrounds; therefore, no distinction can be made based on the students response. Sanders (1997) found the average socioeconomic background of students attending the University of Arizona to consist of few lower class students. As a result, delineation by class background could not be completed.

### Conclusion

Students of color have made inroads within an institution that remains predominantly white. Although the number of minority students attending college has increased, they are concentrated in public community colleges. Those who matriculate to a four-year college or university, nationwide, are completing bachelor's degrees at a much lower rate than

their white student cohort. With the influx in minority student enrollment nationwide, it is important to investigate why, despite the increase in enrollment, persistence rates remain low.

## Chapter Two

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### INTRODUCTION

Although a record number of minority students are enrolled in higher education, retaining the students to graduation remains a serious problem on college campuses nationwide. Research approaches and models throughout the current literature can be found from both functional and critical perspectives; however, they are predominantly from a functionalist perspective. The focus of many theories of student persistence include Vincent Tinto's Interactionist Theory of student departure, psycho-social theories focusing on student motivation and commitment, Bean's Theory of Attrition, and Astin's Theory of Involvement. Within the literature, we find many studies that incorporate portions of the theories or models that rest with notions of academic integration, social integration, involvement, motivation, the campus climate, institutional commitment, or financial problems the student may encounter. Other theoretical

explanations for student departure rest within the critical framework. These explanations involve critical race theory, critical multiculturalism, and class background and culture.

### Interactionist Model

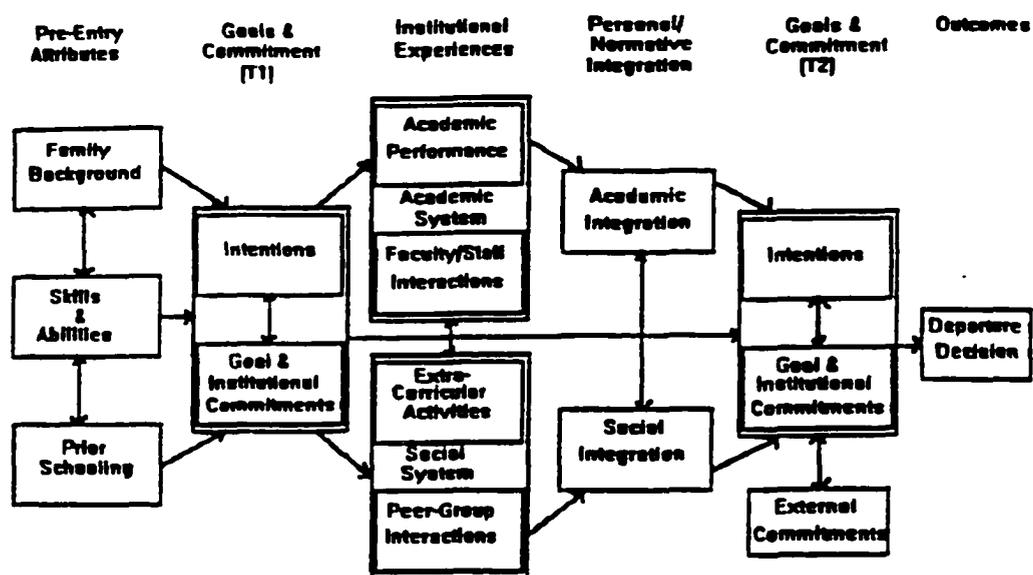
Tinto (1975, 1982, 1987) suggests a combination of social and academic integration as major determinants of college student retention. Academic and social integration will shape the student's commitment to degree attainment and to the institution (Cabrera, Nora, & Castenada; 1993). Further, Tinto claims low levels of academic integration can be compensated by high levels of social integration (Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson, 1997). Tinto asserts most students who leave the university depart voluntary, not because of disqualification, probation, or because of receiving poor grades. Disqualification from college due to a substandard grade point average account for only 20 percent of the students who leave the university (Tinto, 1987).

Academic integration is described by Tinto as the extent to which students have successful interaction with the institution's academic system. Social integration is seen as the students' ability to become competent members within the

social communities of the institution. Successful academic and social integration create a strong commitment to persist in college (See Figure 2.0). As Tinto (1993) describes students who have successfully integrated into the college community they have "moved away from the norms and behavioral patterns of past associations" (p. 98).

Figure 2.0

Tinto's Model of Student Persistence



Source: Christie, 1992

From Tinto's perspective, student departure is attributed to lack of ability and mal-integration into the academic and social structure of the university. According to many theorists, academic and social integration are major contributors to success within the university system (Bean, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1988; Stoecker, Pascarella, & Wolfe, 1988).

The notion of social integration was first developed by Spady (1970) and later more fully by Tinto (1987). It is borrowed from a sociologist E. Durkheim (1951) and an anthropologist A. Van Gannepp (1960). Tinto and Spady draw loosely from these two theories, essentially equating leaving the university as suicide and anomie or integrating within the university as a successful rite of passage.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1978) examined four sets of variables including pre-college traits, level of academic integration, level of social integration, and interactions between sex, major, ethnicity. They found background traits to have no impact on attrition, while academic integration in the form of the number faculty contacts outside the classroom to be the most significant. Terenzini and Pascarella (1977, 1978, 1980) spent many years producing research validating

Tinto's research. Terenzini finds that student interaction with faculty is very important to academic success. He acknowledges background characteristics, such as race, socioeconomic status, prior achievement, aptitude, and educational aspirations as important, but only in the manner in which they interact with the students experiences. Academic and social integration indicators have been found by many researchers of higher education to be strong predictors of traditional students' persistence in universities (Cabrera, Nora, & Castenada, 1992, 1993).

#### Interactionist Model and Minority Students

Academic integration is seen to play an integral role in the success of minority students (Terenzini et al., 1994; Eimers & Pike, 1997). Brown & Kurpius (1997) found that among Native American students, retention was affected by variables of academic integration such as faculty interaction, academic performance, and academic preparation.

Burrell and Trombley (1983) found high levels of academic integration in the form of academic advising to have a strong impact on persistence of minority students at predominantly white colleges. Academic advisors aided minority students in

two ways: first by demonstrating sensitivity to the stresses of adjusting to college and secondly by addressing with the student what they expected from their college experience and their career goals.

While examining the drop out rates among African American students, Allen (1988) found that academic integration positively influenced persistence. Those students who had positive interactions with faculty had higher grades, and persisted longer in college. When comparing measures of social and academic integration as they relate to retention, Fox (1985) found academic integration directly effected attrition decisions more so than social integration.

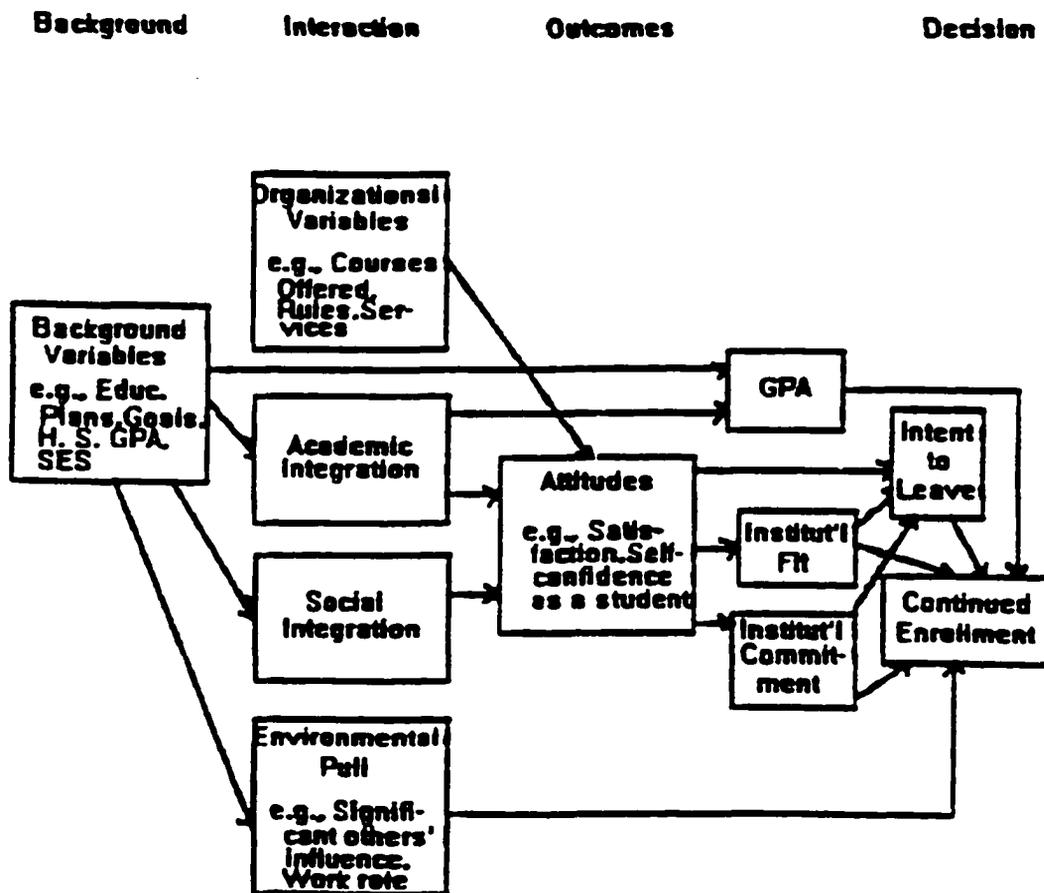
Mayo, Murgia, and Padilla (1995) examined social integration as it relates to academic performance. They found that in the case of under represented minority students on campus, formal social integration (club membership, peer and faculty relationships) had a stronger impact on academic performance than informal social integration (hanging out with friends).

### Bean's Theory of Attrition

Bean (1980, 1982, 1985) regards student retention as successful interaction between the student and the institution; however, he claims that student's actions (whether to stay or leave) are shaped by attitudes and beliefs involving the institution. Bean (1983) posits that students who leave the institution is analogous to organizational employee turnover. Bean found "fitting in" an important component to student persistence, primarily as it relates to social integration. Academic integration also influenced a student's sense of institutional fit. Lastly, Bean found the importance of informal faculty contact at universities to be overrated, although it may be important in smaller colleges.

Bean & Vesper (1992) found that factors external to the university impacted the student's decision to continue or to leave. Metzner and Bean (1987) also focused on external factors such as the influence of significant others on persistence. Below in Figure 2.1 is Bean & Hossler's (1990) model of student persistence. Their theory includes environmental pull factors such as work and significant others.

Figure 2.1

Bean & Hossler's Model of Factors Affecting Retention

Source: Christie, 1992.

Cabrera, et al., (1992) attempt to merge Tinto's theory of student integration with Bean's work on student attrition. The authors found both theoretical frameworks useful, and rather than use a competing explanation of student departure, claim their convergence can better explain the phenomenon of student persistence.

"Results indicated that when these two theories were merged into one integrated model, a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay among individual, environmental, and institutional factors was achieved" (p. 135).

The authors advocate examining environmental factors to be used as variables in measuring college student retention. Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) extensively reviewed Tinto's theory of student departure, and although they recommended revisions, claimed the formulations of the theory contribute to understanding college student departure.

### Psycho-Social Theory

Other theorists link student retention to psycho-social theory such as student motivation and student goal commitment. According to Trent & Medsker (1968), student motivation is the best predictor and is most responsible for student retention.

Cope & Hannah (1975) found that more students leave the institution because of discouragement or lack of motivation than lack of ability. Further, Noel & Levitz (1985) found similar results. They claim the students who are most likely to withdraw from college are those who lack motivation, not academic ability.

Green (1991) attributes student persistence or departure to goal commitment or students' satisfaction with these goals. Green describes commitment as the desire to invest time and resources in order to achieve a specified goal. She tied motivation to commitment and claimed motivation was the driving force to keep the commitment strong. Students who have high motivation to complete a college degree will invariably be more committed to achieve that goal. Typical variables attached to goal commitment and motivation are measured by parental influence, level of expectation for graduation, and level of degree expectation.

### Psycho-Social Theory & Minority Students

While studying the effectiveness of Tinto's model of attrition with Chicano students, Nora (1987) found that neither academic nor social integration explained students

decision of whether or not to remain in college. What was found to have a large direct effect on retention was the initial commitment the students made. McCool (1984) examined commitment variables and retention of Hispanic students at community colleges. She found that the strongest indicators of whether or not students would reach their educational goals were the expressions of students' satisfaction with and commitment to their educational experience.

Both Nettles et al. (1986) and Tracey & Sedlacek (1985) found that African American college students attending predominantly white institutions had higher predicted success rates when college aspirations were strong.

### Theory of Student Involvement

Alexander Astin (1984) postulates what is known in the literature as a Theory of Student Involvement. Astin describes his theory as the amount of energy, both physical and psychological, that the student devotes to the college academic experience. Astin (1984) describes five characteristics of his theory as such:

1. "Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects

may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for a chemistry examination).

2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times.
3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative components. The extent of a student's involvement in academic work, for instance, can be measured quantitatively (how many hours the student spends studying) and qualitatively (whether the student reviews and comprehends reading assignments or simply stares at the textbook and daydreams).
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement" (p. 298).

In describing his theory Astin (1984) further states that

"It is not so much what the individual thinks or feels, but what the individual does, how he or she behaves, that defines and identifies involvement" (p. 298).

Milem & Berger (1997) modified Astin's Theory of Involvement to include Tinto's Interactionist Theory of Student Departure. They found both to be important factors in students' success. Social integration had a higher impact than did academic integration in institutional commitment and early involvement in social activities improved students' perceptions about their college experience. Table 2.0 is a comparison of Tinto's variables of interaction with the college environment compared with Astin's factors of environmental involvement.

Table 2.0

Tinto's Model compared with Astin's Model

Tinto's Variables of Interaction with College Environment	Astin's Factors of Environmental Involvement
<b>Academic Integration</b>	<b>Academic Involvement</b>
Intellectual Development	
Grade Performance	Cognitive Development
<b>Social Integration</b>	
Interactions with Faculty and Staff	Honor's Program Involvement
Faculty Support	
Collective Affiliation	Student/Faculty Interaction
Friendship	
Support Group/Cultures	Place of Residence
Extracurricular Activities	
Informal Peer Group	Athletic/intermural Involvement
Formal Extracurricular Activities	Student Government Involvement

Source: Von Destinon, 1989.

### Involvement and Minority Students

In a review of the literature on minority student involvement on campus, two areas emerged as specifically impacting student involvement. These two areas are the campus climate and the commitment of the institution to the success of the minority student population. The campus climate relates closely with institutional commitment. The level of institutional commitment to the student body, and specifically to the minority student population, is prevalent in the higher education literature. Governing boards, administrators, and faculty must be committed to serve and educate the increasing number of minority students (Dorsey-Gaines & Lewis, 1987).

Students link institutional commitment closely with the campus administration (Richardson and Skinner, 1990). The institutional governing board and top administrators must lead the way in retaining minority students. According to Borkowski (1988) it is the university presidents' responsibility to understand the culture of the institution and seek to increase the participation of the minority student population. To foster diversity in the student population, there must be policies that instill a warm, friendly campus climate (Brown, 1991). Each institution must examine the

programs that already exist, and research new ones that enhance minority student graduation.

According to Loo and Rollison (1986) minority students who feel isolated or alienated on campus were more likely to withdraw. According to Person & Christensen (1996) the campus culture consists as:

"A system of values, social interactions, and rewards and punishments learned within student cultures. To obtain social acceptance, students had a strong need to assimilate into these cultures, and through this, the power of the student culture influenced student behavior" (p. 48).

For minority students to make this adjustment is an additional stress that could result in feelings of isolation if the student is unsuccessful (Loo & Rollison, 1986).

In order to gauge the college climate at the study institution, a Campus Climate Survey was initiated in 1990. (It is important to note the subjects in this study began college as freshmen in 1990, corresponding with the Campus Climate Study). In this empirical gathering of data, minority student leaders reported a sense of isolation and lack of belonging. They discussed the need to find alternative routes for involvement and conflict within the institutional culture. In general, they viewed the campus as reinforcing negative stereotypes and feelings of resentment toward minority students.

## FINANCES

Although many university students are concerned with finances during their college career, minority students are more likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds than white college students (Mow & Nettles, 1990). The cost of a college education is a major concern for minority students and is often cited as a barrier to degree completion (Cibik and Chambers, 1991). Minority students often pay for college through financial aid disbursements. In a study conducted by Stampen & Fenske (1988) between 1981 and 1983, minority students made up less than 20 percent of the college student population, but received nearly one-third of all need based financial aid.

St. John and Noell (1989) found that all types of financial aid had a positive influence on enrollment by minority students. Further, financial aid had the strongest impact on college attendance by African American and Hispanic students than on the majority white population. Bowen and Breneman (1993) address student financial aid as a way to affect the class composition in terms of diversity. In a study of almost 1,300 students, Wolf and Melnick (1990) found that minority students applied for financial aid more so than

white students on campus. The highest financial aid applications came from Native American students, at the rate of 83 percent. The next were African Americans, at 75 percent followed by 71 percent of Hispanic students. Less than half of the white students in the study had applied for financial aid.

#### Race, Class, and Multi-culturalism

The failure of minority students to remain in college through graduation in much of the retention literature focuses largely on the individual student. The reproduction of the deficit model on college campuses is reported time and time again. It is based on a lack of individual talent, lack of commitment to goals, lack of student motivation, and/or mal-integration. According to Tierney (1992) integration is a code word for assimilation, or leaving behind values and beliefs in favor of more Western values. Western values focus on the individual and that individual's achievement. Achieving goals is based on individual motivation. Competition is a key factor to success, and individuals relate cause and effect to their actions. Minority student values emphasize family, cooperation, collective effort, private

expression of feelings, and a more flexible time orientation (Wright, 1987). To students from different backgrounds, assimilation means loss of culture. According to Delgado (1996), minority students often have no choice but to identify with the norms of white culture because it is that group who holds all the power, defines the reward structure, and controls what is seen as beautiful, acceptable, and intelligent.

Moreover Giroux (1993) claims that requiring a common core of knowledge is a strategy used by the dominant culture to silence cultural difference. For under represented groups of students, this works to marginalize their position. Students who have white, middle class knowledge do much better, while those who don't bring "cultural capital or cultural knowledge" do not persist in the institution (Bourdieu, 1986). Minority and working class students are disadvantaged by a system that is not neutral. Using the notion of cultural capital allows one to examine unquestioned values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions of the white, middle class are highly favored over those from different backgrounds.

Working class and minority students enter with different cultural resources and different cultural values that don't

fit in with the larger society (Hansen, 1994). These are not seen as legitimate. Further, Giroux (1992) found that minority and working class students' views were not heard with equal authority as their white, middle class counterparts. A student's background influences the type of cultural knowledge they accumulate and bring with them from kindergarten to college. Knowledge presented by middle class students matches college educators' expectations. Different cultural knowledge, like that of women, minority and working class students, is often seen as deficient and subsequently is discounted.

The process of marginalization is inherent throughout the educational process. According to Weis (1993), students from different backgrounds are institutionally silenced from the center to the margins. The number of minority students who drop out at each grade level is greater each year leading to cumulative disadvantage.

Ogbu (1987) addresses the "caste" status of minority students that fail academically and attributes their failure to discrimination combined with an inferior status forced on them by the dominant group. The process of marginalization places those with different cultural values on the borders. The role of education is an important force in reproducing the status quo by situating student identities as either those

that are valued, or those that are not. London (1978) studied the process of marginalization and found vast differences while studying students attending a community college. He discovered that conflict between the upper/middle class faculty and working class students contributed to student failure. Further, students blamed themselves for failure rather than the system in which they were embedded.

Seymour and Hewitt (1997) found that students of color who left programs in science, math, or engineering blamed themselves for failure rather than institutional forces as contributing factors. When students realized that the college system was not meeting their goals and expectations as a vehicle to upward mobility, their efforts declined (Willis, 1977; London, 1978; Weis, 1985).

According to Nettles (1988) most African American and Hispanic students did not participate in the social campus community because traditional social activities did not cross cultural and racial lines. Students in the study reported being uncomfortable in social activity participation. They did not attend activities such as homecoming, concerts, and other social functions. He found it important for minority students to feel connected to campus, rather than alienated by it. Fleming (1984) reported that when students are

uncomfortable in the predominant college environment, they create their own social environments. This notion is supported by Murgia, Padilla, and Pavel (1991) who found social integration to be successful at a micro level by minority students who formed a subset of the larger student population.

It is important not to homogenize the role of cultural identity to all minority students. There is variation between cultural backgrounds as well as within cultural backgrounds. According to Seymore & Hewitt (1997) the reason many "minority programs" are unsuccessful is because they treat all minority students the same.

"Minority programs based on presumption of needs common to all minorities tend to flounder, quite largely, because they do not address the needs of specific racial and ethnic groups. We have been careful, therefore, to describe the situation of students of color by group, and to avoid global generalizations about all minorities" (p. 322).

It is in this vein that I review the literature, individually, by cultural background as it affects the college experience of Hispanic, African American, Native American and Asian American students.

#### Cultural Background and the College Campus

In Kraemer's (1997) study of the integration of Hispanic

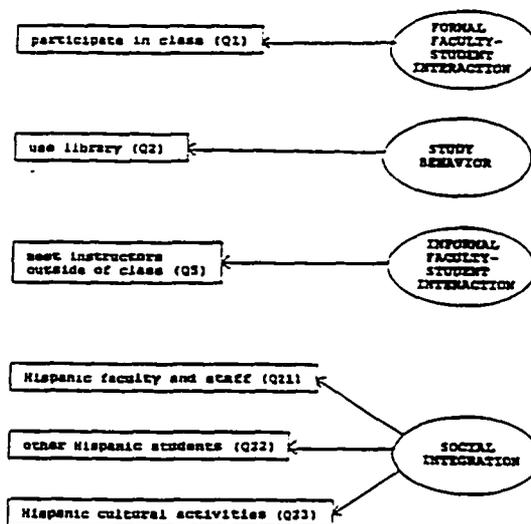
students attending a community college she employed a different definition for social integration:

"I believed that the development of Hispanic students' strong affiliation with the social environment of college was facilitated by interactions with persons from the same background in a compatible cultural environment. Thus, I defined social integration as the extent to which the Hispanic environment and interactions with other Hispanics at the college gave students a sense of being an integral part of the institution and feeling welcomed" (p. 169).

Kraemer (1997) found it important to include cultural identity in the measurement of social integration (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

Kraemer's for Constructs of Academic and Social Integration



Source: Kraemer, 1997.

According to Kenton & Valentine (1997) values and beliefs found within the Hispanic community may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Strong ties and loyalty to nuclear and extended family.
2. Honor nationalism of their country and the community.
3. Exhibit a strong sense of honor.
4. Possess a fatalistic view of the world. This includes a flexible view of time orientation, an uncertain future, and the tendency to live in the moment.

Ramirez & Castenada (1974) identified value clusters as part of Mexican American culture. They included identification with family and community; personalization of interpersonal relationships; and the status and role definition in family and community. Because the Hispanic student is tied so closely with nuclear and extended family members, it is an added stress to conform to the norms of a college setting that doesn't include family.

In a study focusing on African American student culture, Person & Christensen (1996) found that involvement surrounded activities based on their culture. For example, there was high student participation in Black History Month. Further, they found race to be a strong factor in their social

interaction with others. Over half of the respondents said they had experienced racism on campus. African American students reported feeling more comfortable in academic settings than in social ones.

To improve African American student retention, Lomottey (1990) recommends not only examining the campus culture, but examining the symbolic representations of that culture in the form of cultural artifacts.

"Artifacts such as campus climate, sacred norms, historical image, and institutions offer insight into how African American students are treated on a given campus" (p. 11).

Blank & Slipp (1994) attribute the following cultural values to African Americans:

1. "Directness and spontaneity.
2. Expressiveness.
3. Sense of community.
4. A great regard for family and religion" (p. 16).

The appreciation of black culture is very important to African American students and their identity (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa; 1990). Because they do not want to let go of their cultural identity, they experience conflict. Gibbs

(1974) identified four ways African American students respond to the college campus: Withdrawal or moving away from the dominant white culture with feelings of apathy or sadness; separation wherein African American students leave the dominant culture with feelings of anger; assimilation, which involves longing to be accepted by the dominant culture; and affirmation where there is balance with movement in the dominant culture while at the same time accepting oneself and exhibiting a positive cultural identity.

Native American students have the highest drop out rate of all ethnic minorities (Brown & Kurpius, 1997). Within Native American culture, group cooperation takes precedence over individual desires (Dehyle, 1992). Viri (1989) found that Native American students were more comfortable with Native American peers than others. He reported that Native American students were aware of negative stereotypes which fostered a sense of alienation.

According to McIntosh (1987), Native American students attribute reasons relating to culture as determinants of adjustment and persistence. Nora (1993) lists these as the following:

1. A cultural conflict involving harmony and pride in adjusting to a Non-native American institution.
2. Value conflicts.
3. Not trusting the institution, combined with unrealistic expectations of the college education and environment.
4. Lack of personal and career counseling.

Canabal (1995) studied retention strategies for Native American students in higher education and recommended incorporating cultural aspects within the university structure. She recommended integrating Native American family members into the academic setting, recognizing how important cultural identity is to them, and hiring more Native American staff and faculty who could serve as mentors to students. In a study of successful Native American students Wenzlaff & Biewer (1996) found factors that attributed to success were family support, mentoring, and the ability to participate in two different cultures.

In the retention literature, Asian American students are often exempted due to their high graduation rates. Asian American students are left out of the research because they are not thought to be educationally disadvantaged (Nakanishi & Hirano-Nakanishi, 1983). In admission to college and in

financial aid decisions, Asian students are regarded similarly to white students (Kitano & Sue, 1973). Asian students are often referred to as "the model minority." There are many myths surrounding their experience in higher education (Chun, 1980). One widely held myth is that Asian Americans are able to overcome barriers through their strong cultural background, and become accepted into white middle class America (Suzuki, 1977). Suzuki further addressed how cultural values transmitted to children of Asians were to avoid the discrimination they experienced. Parents viewed education as the only option to avoid discrimination and instilled authoritarian values such as obedience, self discipline, unquestioning respect for parental authority, and accommodation.

Asian American values may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. "Strong loyalty to family, community, and work.
2. Modesty and reserve.
3. Reluctance to complain or express emotions directly and dislike confrontation.
4. Sensitivity to the attitudes of others.
5. A strong work ethic" (Blank & Slipp: 1994, p. 37).

The price of success in American has been assimilation to white culture (Chun, 1980).

"The concern for ethnic identity permeates the Asian American experience. Asian Americans view their feeling of lost identity as resulting from the preemptive concern for survival and the pressures for assimilation. The model behavior traits of Asian Americans-unobtrusiveness, diligence, industriousness, and docility take on new meaning and we are at once faced with the ultimate challenge: whether the education of our ethnic minority students should be guided by assimilation or pluralist persuasion" (p. 109).

Due to family pressure to succeed academically, failure often leads to feelings of guilt over disgracing the family. If the student feels the family has made financial sacrifice, this guilt is intensified (Wong, 1990). Leaving college is not seen as an option for children in many Asian families.

In order to serve all students on an ethnically diverse college campus, one must understand and accept cultural difference, and explore how that cultural difference impacts the academic community on campus. Students arrive on campus with different values and resources that are not similar to the majority population. Inside and outside of the classroom, the expectation of student behavior is steeped in western, Eurocentric values.

## Chapter Three

### METHODS

#### INTRODUCTION

There is a need for qualitative, interview research in the area of minority student retention to engage the student perspective (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1980; Attanasi, 1989; Tierney, 1992; Dinham and Romo, 1992). Most qualitative research on student retention is the result of questionnaires. According to Attinasi (1989) the methods primarily used in persistence studies eliminate the context surrounding the student's decision to remain in college or to leave, and also eliminate the student's perception of the college experience. The richness of interview data comes through the voices of those involved. Conducting in depth interviews captures a range of experiences that weren't possible with survey, questionnaire, or quantitative research. Data gathered on student retention is often in the form of a questionnaire or a survey. The limitation of this method is that little elaboration is allowed on behalf of the student.

The typical study on student retention tends to be cross-sectional in nature providing a one or two year snapshot of the student and their college experience. The difficulty in interpreting college persistence through these designs is that the researcher has not given the student the opportunity to graduate from the university. According to Terenzini (1980) the longitudinal design wherein the same students are contacted at two or more points in time, is a desirable way to examine student attrition. In this study, it was decided to follow up with students who were interviewed in 1990 as freshmen. This design provided adequate time for the study participants to graduate from the institution. The follow-up interview data was compared with initial interview data and has been supplemented with institutional student records. The goal was to capture the complete picture of the participants educational experience, from beginning to end.

#### Pilot Study

The initial research project began in 1990 with a pilot study, conducted by the author. I interviewed individuals from minority backgrounds who were working in the field of higher education. The interviews were non-structured, open-

ended questions. I wanted to explore strategies the subjects had employed to succeed through college degree attainment. I spoke with five professionals from minority backgrounds who were working in the field of higher education. Two subjects were male, employed at Colorado State University. I spoke with one female who was employed by the State Higher Education Executive Offices (SHEEO). I also talked with one male and one female who were employed by the study institution. The combined responses helped to gauge the climate of services offered minority students. For example, due to the high proportion of Native American students at Colorado State University, the institution assisted in making the transition to college easier by ensuring the environment surrounding campus was conducive to the Native American student. Restaurants, churches, and activities were nearby that supported their ethnic background.

Following the pilot interviews, and combined with a review of the college student retention literature, a structured interview schedule was created to use with first year, full time minority students who were residents of the state of the institution studied. Following feedback from colleagues and four revisions of the interview schedule, (see Appendix A for the freshman study interview schedule), the

initial study began in the Fall of 1990. The Freshmen Study continued through the Spring of 1991.

### Sampling Process

A modified random sample of 95 subjects was drawn from all minority, full-time freshmen students stratified by four ethnic classifications: Hispanic, Native American, African American and Asian American students. The subjects eligible to participate in the study were 1) first time freshmen students at the University of Arizona during the fall of 1990, 2) full-time students, 3) residents of the state of Arizona, 4) graduates of a high school within the state of Arizona.

The largest population of minority students at the study institution was Hispanic; therefore, more Hispanic students were selected, and later participated in the freshmen study. Compared to the larger freshmen population of minority students (CIRP, 1990), the minority student sample was similar in age and sex distributions, high school grade point average, and commitment to college. The sample students had slightly higher degree aspirations (Dinham and Romo, 1992). Of the 95 students in the sample, 41 students volunteered to participate

in the research project. The freshmen interviews were conducted with first-year, minority students. The study began in the Fall of 1990, and continued through the Spring of 1991 (see Table 3.0).

Table 3.0  
Participants

---

	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN
FEMALE	9	3	4	5
MALE	8	3	5	4
TOTAL	17	6	9	9
n= 41				

---

Freshmen Study

Immediately upon involvement in the study, each student was given a pseudonym to make future discussion and analysis confidential. An analysis tool was created called the Interview Analysis Form (see Appendix B). Three researchers read each interview and analyzed it utilizing the Interview Analysis Form. The results of the study were presented in a paper to the American Educational Research Association in 1992

(Dinham & Romo, 1992). The subjects who participated in the Freshmen Study reported that they felt adequately prepared for college. However, because the students were interviewed so early in their academic career, examination of grades was not possible. Few subjects felt comfortable participating in their classes or visiting faculty outside of class. Although subjects reported doing well academically, most indicated there was room for improving study habits. All subjects reported being committed to and determined to obtain a college degree. The motivation behind the desire seemed to differ. Asian American students reported family expectations as a strong influence. Hispanic, Native American, and African American students reported high commitment to degree attainment as a way to a better job. They viewed completing a college degree directly related to upward mobility.

#### Follow-Up Study

The longitudinal research conducted in the follow-up study provides valuable, rare information that most studies are unable to capture. The purpose of this study was to follow up with the same subjects who were interviewed approximately six or seven years ago. To find out the

decisions made by the subjects, investigation of the reasoning behind the college choices student's made since they began college was crucial. Through an in-depth review of information presented in the initial interview transcript prior to conducting the follow-up interview, background information was gathered in order to prepare for the follow-up interview. This was a positive way to establish rapport with the subject as well as provide a comfortable research setting. By asking questions based on previous answers the subject had given in 1990 or 1991, the students were open in their responses. Because of the wealth of information about the subject prior to the interview, inquiries surrounding the welfare of family members, study habits, (e.g., do you still cram the night before an exam?) and/or favorite hobbies flowed smoothly.

#### CONTACT AND RESPONSE RATE

An attempt was made to locate each subject through institutional records, phone information, and through the Internet. Once contacted, the majority of students agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. Subjects were asked to return a form directly to me with future dates and times they

were available to discuss their college experience. Of the 41 students in the freshman study, 25 agreed to participate in the follow-up interview. Through the follow-up interview, detailed description is provided as to the events that occurred with this sample of minority students.

### THE SAMPLE

It is important to note that the sample of 25 students in the follow-up study was different from the original sample of 41 students. The primary difference rested in the persistence rates. More of the students in the follow-up study had graduated from college than in the overall sample (see Tables 4.5 through 4.9). None of the students who left for non-academic reasons (5) participated in the follow-up study. Of the five students who left in good academic standing, four did so after their freshman year in college. The majority of students (12) who left the university did so due to academic problems (see Chapter Four, Tables 4.0 through 4.3).

### CONDUCT OF THE INTERVIEW

The follow-up interviews were semi-structured and open

ended (see Appendix C). I used the review of the literature to stimulate interview questions and areas of special interest (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The areas I wanted to investigate during the follow-up interview study were academic and social integration, involvement on campus, motivation, perceptions of the campus climate, perceptions of being a minority student on a predominantly white campus, residence hall experience, and family and peer influences during college. Having participated in the initial interview, students were familiar with the research project, and most remembered their experience in the Freshmen Study. They were intrigued that information presented in the first interview was revisited (ie, student goals, study habits, friends). This provided a strong foundation to build rapport and conduct the interview in a friendly, conversational manner.

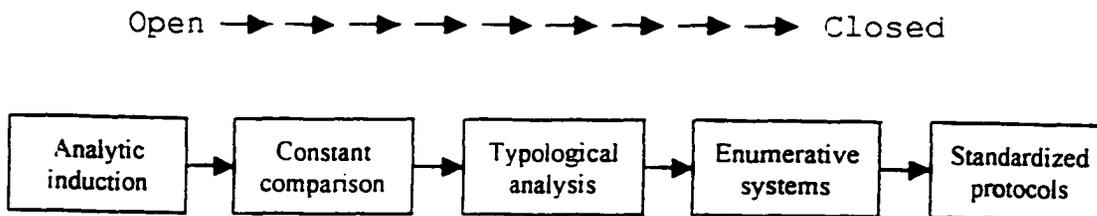
### ANALYSIS

Over the past few decades, researchers have presented cogent, cohesive information on the analytic processes involving qualitative data. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) present a framework for understanding how qualitative data are treated. Recounted by Crowson (1987) are five analytic

strategies, described on a continuum from open, inductive, subjective dimensions to a more closed, deductive, numerative dimension (See Figure 3.0).

Figure 3.0

Crowson's Analytic Strategies



I employed the first two, more open strategies, of analytic induction and constant comparison in this analysis. In the more closed strategies of typological analysis, enumerative systems, and standardized protocols, the data analysis and coding are planned prior to entrance into the research setting. The first strategy, located on the left of the continuum, is the technique of analytic induction. This technique occurs when the researcher scans the data for relationships and categories. This leads to the hypotheses and typologies. The second analytic strategy is constant comparison. "With an eye toward the development of grounded

theory, the art of constant comparison calls for a coding of the incidents applicable to each category of data that emerges, an integration of categories and their properties, and then a formation of a theory" (Crowson, 1988, p 41).

I began the analysis, by examining the interview contents, or the student responses within the follow-up interviews. I transcribed each student interview for this purpose. The transcription process approximated 80 hours over five weeks. I examined the interview contents looking for patterns in the interview data. I kept detailed notes on each interview transcript and examined emerging similarities and differences as they began to unfold. The similarities seemed to focus on the way the student attempted to navigate through the institution. Most students experienced barriers to success that did not involve their academic ability. I continued the analysis through more data reduction and coding by entering all notes into the computer in preparation for further analysis. I again read each full interview transcript and compared the contents with the notes I had taken.

The next analysis phase involved the examination of background data from the original interviews. I looked for ways in which the students may have changed, and ways in which the students remained the same. Other questions I sought

answers for included parents educational background, academic preparation for college, and orientation programs the student may have been involved with. I was interested to know the point in time the student graduated or withdrew from college as well as pre-college traits that may or may not have impacted that decision (see Tables 4.5 through 4.9).

Next, I compared each of the 25 subjects' first interview transcripts conducted in 1990-91 with the contents of the data in the follow-up interview conducted in 1997. I was looking for consistency between the two transcripts. For further consistency checks, I compared the contents of the transcript with institutional records. For example if the subject reported to be doing well academically, did the academic record reflect this. Next, I was looking for commonalities and differences from the first to second interviews. For example, did their college major and/ or career plans change or remain the same. Throughout the analysis, I constantly questioned how the subjects' experience related to minority student persistence.

## Grounded Theory

During much of the analysis, I borrow from the work of Strauss & Corbin (1990) and Miles & Huberman (1994). I use the term borrow, for the following reason:

"While we set these procedures and techniques before you, we do not at all wish to imply rigid adherence to them" (Strauss & Corbin, 1980, p. 59).

They follow with a quotation from Diesing (1971, p. 14):

"The procedures are not mechanical or automatic, nor do they constitute an algorithm guaranteed to give results. They are rather to be applied flexibly according to circumstances; their order may vary, and alternatives are available at every step."

Grounded theory is referred to frequently as the "constant comparative method of analysis" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). When conducting the analysis, two procedures exist. The first is the making or comparison and the second is the asking of questions. The goals of grounded theory are to:

1. "Build rather than only tests a theory.
2. Give the research process the rigor necessary to make theory good science.
3. Help the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions brought to, and that can develop during the

research process.

4. Provide the grounding, build the density, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate a rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that closely approximates the reality it represents" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57).

#### Comparative Method of Analysis

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) the following sequence is "a classic set of analytic moves arranged in sequence:

1. Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations or interviews.
2. Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins (creating your own notes).
3. Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences.
4. Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next

wave of data collection.

5. Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database.
6. Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories." (p. 9.).

I began the analysis by open coding the interviews. Open coding refers to:

"The process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61).

Open coding, or open analysis, begins with the researchers professional and personal knowledge of the subject combined with the literature reviewed.

Next, I began to piece the data back together by axial coding. Axial coding is:

"A set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96).

I used the literature to guide me, but was careful not to be limited by it. The last step in the coding process I used was selective coding, or selective analysis. This is:

"The process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling categories

that need further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116).

By following the above processes of data analysis, I worked diligently to discover the experience of the minority students with whom I talked. I first presented information obtained in the freshman interview in a descriptive manner. Next, the analysis was conducted within each ethnic group. Next, divisions were made by gender. Patterns of similarities and differences were researched of the sample of subjects, between ethnic groups, within ethnic groups, and by gender.

Lastly, I examined academic details of the entire sample of 41 students (see Tables 4.5 through 4.9). This was necessary to discover whether the sample subset of 25 subjects differed greatly from the original sample. Examination of grade point averages, college majors, and departure status informed the comparison.

#### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Conceptual definitions were the foundation from which I examined various theories found in the literature on student retention. Social integration and academic integration were investigated as two separate issues that could impact college

student retention. Social integration was informed by membership in clubs, involvement on campus, participation in activities, and friends on campus.

Academic integration was determined by more than grade point average or satisfactory academic performance. Questions surrounding faculty contact outside of the classroom, participation in the classroom, relationships with faculty, the students' academic advisor, study habits, and involvement in study groups served to inform the level of academic integration.

Motivation was described as the level of commitment the student had to complete a college degree. An examination of level of degree expected, commitment to career goals within the major field, the time the student began thinking about college and degree completion, parental influence, and changing college majors were cues that informed the level of motivation on behalf of the student.

The campus climate is an important component to any study involving the minority student's experience on campus. The level of comfort and feeling welcome on the campus of the study institution were important issues. Student perceptions of administration and faculty willingness to work with minority students were also explored. Availability of support

services provided by the institution, and accessibility by the student were addressed. Further, the perceptions of what it was like to be a minority student on this particular campus was explored.

I examined background variables found to be important throughout most of the literature and determined their importance. Those variables included pre-college academic ability, as measured by high school grade point average and the standardized college admission test score; parents educational attainment level; and whether the student enrolled in a college preparatory path during high school, or a vocational one.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Through the utilization of the analysis plan, I attempted to answer the following research questions regarding college persistence for the study group of American minority students:

1. From the students' perspective, what best describes reasons for staying in, or withdrawing from, college between and within the sample of students?

2. Does the issue of minority status play a role in the students' experience on the campus of the study institution?
3. What are the most important influences on minority student retention at the study institution for this group of students? Are the factors described by the student primarily internal or external to the college campus?
4. Are the explanations different by gender, and/or ethnicity?
5. Do the explanations given by the students fit with the predominant theories found in the retention literature (social integration, academic integration, motivation, campus climate, institutional commitment, finances), or are there other factors that influence the students action?

## Chapter Four

### FINDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to investigate minority student persistence through qualitative, longitudinal interview data from the student perspective. To begin with, college outcomes for all 41 students who participated in the freshmen study are displayed in Tables 4.0 through 4.3, preceded by a brief discussion of the data. Details of the students' academic lives are given semester by semester in Tables 4.5 through 4.8.

Next, descriptive information of the freshmen data is given student by student for all subjects in the follow-up study. This provides an introduction to the students as freshmen while allowing comparisons to be made between the first and second interview.

From this point forward, the responses given in the follow-up study are the focus of the chapter. Following the presentation of the freshman data, findings that focus on the

pre-college characteristics of the subjects prior to college attendance are addressed. This is important to illustrate the students' ability, as a group, to succeed in college level work. Because the transition from the high school environment to the college environment is important, information on the subjects' orientation to the college setting prior to beginning as full-time freshmen are discussed. Comments regarding the students' experiences and the utility of the various programs designed to assist in the transition are reviewed. The events that occurred during the students' lives on campus were the focus of much attention following the discussion on orientation programs. Where the students lived, how they viewed their college experience, and what it felt like to be a minority student on one college campus are important findings that are presented.

Throughout the remaining sections of this chapter, findings are presented that are representative to the sample of 25 students who participated in the freshman and follow-up study. Further, information is discussed regarding experiences that are specific to cultural background and gender. Experiences and feelings surrounding the salience of minority student identity and status are addressed.

COLLEGE OUTCOMES

All of the academic details of the participants are from the Student Information System (SIS) maintained by the study institution. Of the original 41 participants, 21 have graduated from college. Interestingly, two students believed that they had graduated, when in fact, during their last year in college, they discovered they did not. Another student is currently enrolled at the study institution. Twelve students left college due to academic reasons; another failed two music juries and although his grade point average was not below a 2.0, he could not continue in that college. Four students left the university in good academic standing.

Below is what I term the "College Outcomes" of the participants in the freshman study. Students who have completed a four-year (bachelor's) or professional degree (i.e., J.D., Pharm.D., or M.D.) from the study institution are termed "Graduated," students who have left the study institution prior to degree attainment are termed "Withdrew," and the student who is continuing to strive for degree attainment at the study institution is termed "Enrolled" (see Tables 4.0 through 4.3). Students who left the university for academic reasons are listed as "Disqualified" or "Probation."

The following excerpt from the 1989-90 General Catalog defines each policy.

A student may be disqualified from the university only after two consecutive regular semesters of not meeting the standards of normal progress (cumulative grade-point average of 2.0) or academic warning status. A student will be placed on probation who is not meeting the standards of normal academic progress or academic warning status. Students are removed from probation upon earning the minimum grade point average needed to restore a cumulative 2.00 grade-point average. Freshman students who have completed fewer than 14 units at the university with a cumulative grade-point average between 1.75 and 2.00 or who have completed from 14 to 26 units with a grade-point average of 1.84 to 2.00 will be placed on academic warning status. Academic warning status invokes no penalties and will not be indicated on the students permanent record. This status serves as a warning to students beginning their college careers that their performance is below the level required for successful completion of an academic program.

Because there is no record of the student who receives an academic warning, only the status "probation" and "disqualified" are used below. Each table below is broken down by ethnic background. All names listed are pseudonyms. Those students who also participated in the follow-up study have an asterisk (\*) by their pseudonym name.

### Hispanic Student Outcomes

Sixteen subjects are Hispanic; eight are female and eight are male. Of the eight Hispanic females interviewed, five graduated from the study institution. Of the eight Hispanic males who participated in the first interview, five graduated from the study institution. None of the Hispanic students are still attending college at the study institution. Half of the students who left college prior to graduation did so for academic reasons. They were placed on academic probation.

Table 4.0

### Hispanic Student Outcomes

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>College Outcome</u>	<u>Status at Departure</u>
Cody*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Beth*	Female	Withdrew	Probation
Paige*	Female	Graduate	N/A
Bonnie*	Female	Graduate	N/A
Rebecca	Female	Graduate	N/A
Nick	Male	Graduate	N/A
Alice	Female	Graduate	N/A
Jessica	Female	Withdrew	Good Standing
Sally*	Female	Graduate	N/A
Mike	Male	Graduate	N/A
Carl*	Male	Withdrew	Probation
John*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Lynn	Female	Withdrew	Good Standing
Ryan*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Craig	Male	Withdrew	Good Standing
Nathan*	Male	Withdrew	Probation

Nine African American students participated in the

freshman study; five females and four males. Of the five female students who began college in the Fall of 1990, two graduated from college and three left the university. Two of the male students graduated; two did not. Of those who left the institution prior to graduation, all did so because of academic problems.

Table 4.1

African American Student Outcomes

<u>NAME</u>	<u>GENDER</u>	<u>COLLEGE OUTCOME</u>	<u>Status at Departure</u>
Marie*	Female	Withdrew	Disqualified
Tom*	Male	Withdrew	Disqualified
Betty	Female	Graduate	N/A
Luke*	Male	Withdrew	Disqualified
Gary*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Anita	Female	Withdrew	Probation
Frank*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Krista*	Female	Graduate	N/A
Tasha	Female	Withdrew	Disqualified

Of the six Native American participants, three are women, three are men. None of the women have graduated to date; however, one student is currently enrolled at the university and another, Nicole, thought she had graduated, but wasn't sure at the time of the interview. Two of the three men graduated from the study institution. Like the group of African American students, all who left the institution prior

to graduation did so because of academic reasons, being either placed on probation or disqualified from the institution.

Table 4.2

Native American Student Outcomes

<u>NAME</u>	<u>GENDER</u>	<u>COLLEGE OUTCOME</u>	<u>Status at Departure</u>
Nicole*	Female	Withdrew	Probation
Sam*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Tanya*	Female	Attending	N/A
Kim	Female	Withdrew	Probation
Josh	Male	Withdrew	Disqualified
Robert*	Male	Graduate	N/A

Ten students from Asian American backgrounds were involved in the initial stage of the research project. Divided evenly are five men and five women. Of the five women who began at the study institution, four graduated and one female student, Cheryl, thought she was about to graduate, but lacked one requirement. Of the five men who began college in the Fall of 1990, four left the institution prior to graduation. Two male students left in good academic standing prior to graduation after their freshman year, and two other students left due to poor academics.

Table 4.3Asian American Student Outcomes

<u>NAME</u>	<u>GENDER</u>	<u>COLLEGE OUTCOME</u>	<u>Status at Departure</u>
Brian*	Male	Withdrew	Probation
Cheryl*	Female	Withdrew	Good Standing
Maude	Female	Graduate	N/A
Kevin*	Male	Graduate	N/A
Diane*	Female	Graduate	N/A
Tate	Male	Withdrew	Good Standing
Bill	Male	Withdrew	Probation
George	Male	Withdrew	Good Standing
Connie*	Female	Graduate	N/A
Pam*	Female	Graduate	N/A

Overall, of the initial study participants, 51 percent had completed their college degree. Forty-six percent left the campus prior to earning a college degree. Sixty-three percent left college because of problems that were academic in nature. One student is still attempting to complete her college degree. Although no data is available for students who may have transferred to another institution, none of the students interviewed in the follow-up study had transferred to another institution to complete their college degree. Although students did not transfer to another institution for degree completion, 22 students (all but three) supplemented their education with community college work.

Twenty-five students participated in the follow-up study

(see Table 4.4 below). Of the participants in the follow-up study, 60% have completed a bachelor's degree, 36% have left the study institution, and one student (4 percent) is enrolled in college taking courses toward college degree completion. Two students who believed they had graduated are classified as students who left the institution prior to degree attainment; one left on probation, one left in good standing. The student who left after failing music juries is classified as leaving college prior to degree attainment in good standing.

Nine students who participated in the follow-up study are Hispanic, four women and five men. Six of the subjects are Asian American, four women and two men. Four Native American subjects participated in the follow-up study, divided evenly between men and women. Six African American subjects were re-interviewed; all of the males participated in the follow-up study, and two of the subjects are female.

Tables 4.5 through 4.8 provide a detailed account of the students' academic performance. Subjects who participated in the follow-up study are listed at the top of each table. The tables are listed by ethnicity.

Table 4.4Follow-up Study Participants by Gender and Ethnicity


---

	<u>Graduation rate</u>	<u>Drop out rate</u>	<u>Still attending</u>
African American n= 6	50%	50%	0%
Female	50%	50%	0%
Male	50%	50%	0%
Asian American n=6	67%	33%	0%
Female	75%	25%	0%
Male	50%	50%	0%
Hispanic n=9	67%	33%	0%
Female	75%	25%	0%
Male	60%	40%	0%
Native American n=4	50%	25%	25%
Female	0%	50%	50%
Male	100%	0%	0%
Total n= 25			

---

Table 4.5

Hispanic Student Academic Details  
Semester by Semester

	<u>F'90</u>	<u>S'91</u>	<u>F'91</u>	<u>S'92</u>	<u>F'92</u>	<u>S'93</u>	<u>F'93</u>	<u>S'94</u>	<u>F'94</u>	<u>S'95</u>	<u>F'95</u>	<u>S'96</u>	<u>Comments</u>
# 1	2.36	2.58	2.68	2.53	2.45	2.37	2.30	1.98					Left/ probation
# 2	3.40	3.22	2.98	2.91	2.81	2.82	2.93	2.94	2.93	2.95	2.88	2.81	Graduated
# 3	2.46	2.38	left	left	2.64	2.71	2.95	3.13	3.18	3.22	3.22		Graduated
# 4	3.68	3.63	3.53	3.60	3.53	3.59	3.64	3.66					Graduated
# 5	3.07	3.52	3.49	3.48	3.38	3.40	3.27	3.22					Graduated
# 6	1.20	1.78	1.84	1.96	1.73	DQ	DQ	DQ	2.01	2.24	2.32	2.34	Major to BFA
# 7	3.80	3.66	3.52	3.48	3.32	3.38	3.45	3.41	3.43				Graduated
# 8	3.50	3.32	3.20	3.11	2.97	2.84	2.77	2.76	2.69	2.50	2.46	2.50	Graduated
# 9	1.62												Left/ probation
-----													
# 10	1.67	2.00	2.79	2.88	2.81	2.70	2.71	2.61	2.73	2.69	2.72		Graduated
# 11	2.54	2.56	2.54	2.54	2.67	2.79	2.89	2.99	3.07	3.04			Graduated
# 12	3.30	2.68	2.57	2.53	2.56	2.79	2.83	2.87	3.03	3.04			Graduated
# 13	2.71	3.03											Student left
# 14	3.83	3.62	3.46	3.25	3.30	3.15	3.07	3.01	2.98	2.90			Student left
# 15	2.90	2.71											Student left
# 16	3.19	3.35	3.44	3.35	3.39	3.40	3.30	3.25	3.18				Graduated

Subjects #1-9 participated in follow-up study.

Subjects #10-16 participated only in freshman study.

Table 4.6

African American Student Academic Details  
Semester by Semester

	<u>F'90</u>	<u>S'91</u>	<u>F'91</u>	<u>S'92</u>	<u>F'92</u>	<u>S'93</u>	<u>F'93</u>	<u>S'94</u>	<u>F'94</u>	<u>S'95</u>	<u>F'95</u>	<u>S'96</u>	<u>Comments</u>
# 1	1.63	2.11	2.26	2.29	left	2.22	2.64	2.68	2.74	2.74	2.80		Graduated
# 2	2.87	3.23	left	left	left	left	left	3.30	3.25	2.25	3.35	3.34	Graduated
# 3	.750	.375											Disqualified
# 4	3.31	3.23	3.41	3.45	3.48	3.53	3.48	3.50	3.50	3.50			Graduated
# 5	.500	.625											Disqualified
# 6	2.21	2.19	2.13	2.10	2.17	2.11	2.06	1.96	1.84	1.72			Disqualified
-----													
# 7	.750	.857											Probation
# 8	2.40	2.25	2.19	2.38	2.45	2.59	2.74	2.84	2.86				Graduated
# 9	2.53	1.71	1.57	1.26									Disqualified

Subjects #1-6 participated in follow-up study.

Subjects #7-9 participated only in initial study.

Table 4.7

Native American Student Academic Details  
Semester by Semester

---

	<u>F'90</u>	<u>S'91</u>	<u>F'91</u>	<u>S'92</u>	<u>F'92</u>	<u>S'93</u>	<u>F'93</u>	<u>S'94</u>	<u>F'94</u>	<u>S'95</u>	<u>F'95</u>	<u>S'96</u>	<u>Comments</u>
# 1	2.54	2.52	2.51	2.33	2.13	2.30	2.35	2.28	2.36	2.34	2.43	2.45	Grad S'97
# 2	3.20	3.36	3.42	3.47	3.57	3.52	3.43	3.44	3.41	3.43	3.44		Grad Sum'95
# 3	2.89	2.74	2.53	2.37	2.24	2.14	left	left	2.01	1.96	1.82		Probation
# 4	3.00	3.07	3.08	3.17	2.88	2.73	left	left	2.48	2.28	2.24	2.07	Enrolled Now
-----													
# 5	1.67	1.68	1.97	1.59									Disqualified
# 6	2.17	2.14	2.09	2.07	1.89	1.69	DQ	1.70	1.74	1.83	1.85		Probation

---

Subjects #1-4 participated in follow-up study.  
Subjects #5-6 participated only in initial study.

Table 4.8

Asian American Student Academic Details  
Semester by Semester

---

	<u>F'90</u>	<u>S'91</u>	<u>F'91</u>	<u>S'92</u>	<u>F'92</u>	<u>S'93</u>	<u>F'93</u>	<u>S'94</u>	<u>F'94</u>	<u>S'95</u>	<u>F'95</u>	<u>S'96</u>	<u>Comments</u>
# 1	3.10	3.52	3.35	3.39	3.37	3.42	3.34	3.41	3.40				Graduated
# 2	2.92	2.40	1.83										Probation
# 3	3.00	2.90	2.83	2.81	2.96	3.01	3.01	3.10					Graduated
# 4	2.81	2.10	2.02	2.14	2.21	2.13	2.03	2.05					Thought grad
# 5	3.21	2.97	2.78	2.93	3.03	3.09	3.05	3.02	3.10	3.12			Graduated
# 6	3.14	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.27	3.39	3.35	3.23	3.14	3.07	3.08	3.09	Grad S'97
-----													
# 7	2.31	1.83	2.07	2.7	2.07	1.89	1.81	1.82	1.73				Probation
# 8	3.71	3.63											Left
# 9	2.00	2.46											Left Sum'91
# 10	1.40	2.05	2.28	2.31	2.46	2.41	2.58	2.63	2.66				Graduated

---

Subjects #1-6 participated in follow-up study.  
Subjects #7-10 participated only in initial study.

### Subjects as Freshmen

As freshmen, the students were interviewed to provide information on their college experiences to date. What follows is a descriptive account of the contents of the freshman interview by ethnic group. It also provides the reader an introduction to each subject who participated in the study. Immediate comparisons were made between each freshman interview transcript and each interview transcript from the follow-up study. While comparing the initial data with the follow-up data, I found most to be very consistent. The subjects spoke similarly during their freshman and follow-up interviews.

### African American Subjects

I begin this section with an examination of the African American interview transcripts subject by subject. Six African American subjects participated in both the freshman and follow-up interviews. In both interviews Marie discussed the difficulty of college. It was harder than she expected and she didn't feel prepared. She didn't seek academic assistance when she felt she wasn't doing well academically.

At the time of the freshman interview, Marie had not seen an academic advisor to discuss her class schedule. She learned how to schedule her classes through friends. During her freshman year and the follow-up interviews, she reported to be the most comfortable around other African American people. As a freshman, she said her first priority was doing well in school. This goal eliminated participation in clubs on campus because she realized that she should be home studying. She expected to do better in school and changed her major when she earned low grades. Her goal was to go on to medical school; however, she left college after four and a half years with no degree. Her advice to other students trying to succeed in college was very similar between the studies. During the initial study she said, "Stay focused on what you really want and don't get caught up in the social life." And later, "Be responsible and focused. When you need help, don't be afraid to ask for it." Currently, she is attending a community college.

Luke was similar to Marie in that he felt most comfortable around other African Americans on campus. He didn't see an advisor, and received his advice on classes he enrolled in through friends. He initially reported having difficulty with his schedule when he went to the

administration building and someone lost his drop/add form. Subsequently, he didn't register for the classes that he needed. During the freshman interview, Luke said he would quit school if he didn't do well academically. After one year, he was academically disqualified and left the institution.

Another African American male who left college after one year was Tom. He was academically disqualified from the study institution. His responses were consistent between the two interviews; however, he reported to have graduated, but he did not. During the initial interview, he was preoccupied with earning a college degree so that he could make a lot of money. He saw the U of A as an avenue to achieve his desire for money and privilege that he believed accompanied a college degree. During the follow-up interview, he repeated many of the same things as the first, but the money motivation was exempted. He reported that he earned C's as a freshman and later maintained a C average throughout college.

All three of the above students left the institution prior to graduation. Further, each reported initially to be doing better academically than they actually did. None sought out advice on how to solve academic problems or how to deal with bureaucratic issues when they occurred. All participated

in some type of cultural support program. None sought assistance through any academic support program.

The following three African American students had different experiences. Not only did each graduate from the university with a bachelor's degree, but also each subject is currently in a graduate or professional program. One commonality is that their college majors, for the most part, remained the same from the time they were freshmen to the time that they graduated (see Table 4.11). One student changed from Sociology to Inter-Disciplinary Studies in order to graduate sooner, but the difference in academic requirements was minor. Another commonality is that all of these students utilized both academic and cultural support services on campus.

Gary felt adamant as a freshman and later as a graduate that utilizing the campus resources through the Office of Minority Student Affairs was essential to college success. "The OMSA office is committed to retention. They have a lot of programs that they want to get minorities involved in to keep them here." Although he didn't feel comfortable around other African American students, he remained committed to his biracial ethnic identity. "My Black friends tell me I don't act Black at all, that I didn't learn how to act Black and so

that made me uncomfortable; whereas when I'm with other people, they accept me for whom I am. So, I tend to associate with people who weren't my cultural background." He acknowledged that there were not a lot of African American students on campus and saw that as a problem. Further, he felt isolated on campus "because it's obvious when you walk around on campus that nobody else looks like you."

As a freshman, Gary said that "some of my friends attitude is that the White man is holding them back, but I think that if you have the will and you can go ahead and do it, get around those obstacles, and don't let those obstacles get in your way." In looking back he felt one office that assisted in overcoming obstacles was the Office of Minority Student Affairs. "At that time, everything was centrally located. I used OMSA for everything. I felt there was one entity on campus that had all the resources."

Frank's experience on campus was similar to that of Gary's. He is biracial and did not feel very comfortable associating primarily with other African American students. Further, he utilized the services on campus often. His father, who graduated from the study institution, provided a lot of assistance. "When my dad comes home from work, he asks 'Are you studying? What are you doing in school? Where's

your homework? Have you studied?' Then we'll talk about my tests, and he'll go over them." His advice for college success as a freshman remained the same "Make sure you are aware of your resources and don't waste time." In the second interview he acknowledged that "It's such a large institution, there are quirks in the system, like your financial aid getting messed up. But I found a lot of caring individuals that really helped me out."

As a freshman, Krista reported having benefitted greatly from programs that assisted in her navigation of the university. "New Start was very beneficial. They went through everything from how to tell what time the class is offered. They went through everything so you wouldn't be lost." She identified strongly with her ethnic background and felt that "being a member of a minority group, you always feel like you have to work harder because you have to stay up to the standards of the White man. In high school, I had to work much harder so I could get to college. Most people have money so if they have a low grade point average, they can afford college. I have to keep a certain grade point average to keep financial aid to go to school." When she lost her financial aid due to poor grades after one semester, she began working three jobs to pay for her education. When she experienced

problems, she reported being persistent. "I just kept going back and bugging them about it. So much that they (the administration) would just say, here you go." When Krista experienced academic difficulty and lost her scholarships, she joined ROTC and the Army Reserves. The military became, and remains, central in her life.

All of the African American subjects participated in the New Start program and had very positive comments regarding the program initially as freshmen and later during the follow-up study. This point is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

#### Asian American Subjects

Again, there is remarkable consistency between the first interview when the students attended college as a freshman and what the individual students said later in the follow-up interview. The most diversity within a cultural subgroup was found within the group of Asian students. Of the six students, there are five different ancestries represented. One student is from Chinese ancestry, another Korean, two of the students are Filipino (one is biracial), another is from India, and the last is biracial, Asian and Hispanic. There is

one strong commonality in the Asian freshmen interviews. With the exception of the subjects who are bi-cultural, all of the Asian subjects discussed intense family pressure to stay in college and graduate.

Another commonality rests with the fact that the four students who graduated did so in a shorter period of time than other minority groups. On average, Asian subjects graduated in four and a half years. Similar to the African American group of students, they maintained their initial college major choice. One student changed as a freshman from Microbiology to Biochemistry, but the change did not affect her freshman class schedule. Of the four Asian students who graduated, three continued their college education in graduate or professional programs.

When Brian arrived on campus, he didn't feel like a minority student. He had very pale skin and blue eyes and said he doesn't look Asian. He is bi-cultural, Asian and Caucasian. He reported that he didn't know where to go for answers to his questions and received advice from his friends and family. As a freshman, he wasn't aware of the services on campus. He discussed his academic and career goals in the legal profession, but had no clear sense of how to achieve them. In his third semester, he left the university on

probation. He has been at the local community college since he left the university. He hopes to return to the university and complete a bachelor's degree. When he experienced difficulty at the U of A, he did not want his mother to know of his failure because it would reflect negatively on his family.

Kevin also has ancestral links to the Philippines, although he does not consider himself to be a minority student. "I don't think of myself as a minority. I just feel American. I don't identify myself with any minority. My culture doesn't play a part at all. I'm a bad person to talk to when it comes to minority things." Although he didn't claim minority status as a freshman, he discussed his minority status during the follow-up interview. He was very open minded. His parents were prejudiced and of this characteristic he commented, "They are very backward people. They're blaming something on someone's color or religion just because they had a bad experience." When he first arrived on campus he went through freshman orientation, but did not find it helpful. He felt it to be a negative experience. Instead, he recommended the New Start program because he felt he was thrown into college. "I didn't know anything because no one told me. They expected you to know, and you don't." He

didn't have an advisor, but received advice from his sister, who recently graduated from the university.

He addressed familial repercussions of leaving college. "If I withdrew from college, my family would freak out. They'd say you're ruining your life. You know, slap me around, straighten me out. It would reflect negatively on them. Others would look down upon my parents and think my parents weren't good parents." He finished his degree in four and a half years and is currently living and working in New York. During his freshman interview, he said that when he completed college he would move to either coast and begin his career. During the follow-up interview, he reported that he recognized his minority status. However, he considered himself first a gay American, and next, an Asian American.

Cheryl viewed college as a means to an end. She didn't feel the need to become involved socially and was only at the university to obtain a degree, not to become involved in social activities. She viewed the administration as impeding the success of students. "Since I've been here, things I've experienced with registration, financial aid, or just about anything- it's all bureaucratic, the run-around and red tape. It's more frustration and confusion. I don't think they care about the individual student, whether they make it or not."

She recounted her advising experience during freshman orientation as poor. "At orientation, an advisor said you can take this, you can't take this, you can take this. Here's my signature, go ahead and register. That's not advising, and that's what there was available." Since orientation, she hadn't seen an advisor. As a freshman, she took full responsibility for her persistence in college. "If I don't succeed, if I don't get what I want, it's more my own fault than anybody else. I can't blame it on the teachers or the grading system. It's all up to me." Ironically, after four years, she thought she was graduating, and found out she lacked one foreign language requirement necessary for graduation. She still hasn't completed it.

The remaining three Asian subjects who were interviewed all had aspirations in the medical field. Connie is of Chinese decent and reported that her parents sacrificed a lot to bring her and her brother to this country for their education. She did not want to let them down. Her ethnicity was an added pressure because she felt that others expected Asian students to do well and study a lot. "There's the pressure to do well or better than average." She also felt a lot of pressure to get accepted to medical school. "The whole medical school thing, that was major stress. I wish I had

taken more humanities and arts, maybe even majored in a social science. I was so wrapped up in trying to get into medical school. I lost sight of the big picture." She graduated in four years and was not accepted into medical school. She finished a Master's program in Public Health in California.

Diane also had aspirations of becoming a doctor. Although her parents are from Korea, she didn't think of herself as a minority. Later, she regretted ignoring her ethnic background during her college years. As a freshman, she reported that her family would be angry and disappointed if she left college. "They wouldn't understand. There's no reason for me to drop out." Further, she enjoyed learning and didn't want to leave college. Diane graduated in four years and wasn't accepted to medical school. She currently is enrolled in a graduate program out of state studying Medical Anthropology.

The last female Asian student was successful in her pursuit of a degree in pharmacy. As a freshman, she felt overwhelmed by taking too many units. Her advisor was helpful, and she visited her three times her freshman year. As a freshman, she reported that if she left college, her dad would be angry and upset. "I remember when I got C's in high school. He'd be upset. If I withdrew from college, he'd be

very upset. He's not gonna kill me or anything, but he'd be upset and angry. I don't know what he'd do, I mean physically, or anything like that." She graduated in seven years with her professional degree, and is now practicing in her profession.

All Asian subjects attended the regular orientation program. The comments regarding the orientation, overall, were mediocre and are discussed later in this chapter. Of the minority subgroup, Asian students reported, as freshmen, the existence of strong parental pressure to remain in college.

#### Native American Subjects

The smallest subject group is Native American. For this group, there was more difference between the freshman and the follow-up interview. Of the four students, two males had graduated and two females had not. One of the females believed she had graduated, but wasn't sure during the follow-up interview. The other subject is currently enrolled in the study institution. Only one Native American subject spoke candidly about her cultural background, while the others didn't address their cultural background as freshmen. All of the students were aware of the services offered by the Office

of Minority Student Affairs and commented that they would use the services if they felt they needed them.

Nicole spoke candidly about her Native American background, although she didn't feel comfortable at the Native American Resource Center. She felt out of place there and recounted that she felt she had too much worldly knowledge. An example she gave was that some of the Native American students in the Resource Center didn't even know how to use a phone book, because they grew up on the reservation. "We're supposedly of the same background, but those people are weird. I have no idea how to relate to them. Yeah, we're all Native Americans. It's strange. It's like they all have an inside joke that I don't get." She discussed that she felt she had to accept the dominant culture in order to succeed in college. "I'll accept this scientific view for now, but deep down, I know what is right. On campus, I feel different, because I'm never really totally immersed in a culture to begin with. I've been living in two really." She felt pressure when she married a Caucasian man. They had two wedding ceremonies, one Anglo and one Navajo.

During the freshman interview, she discussed the option of leaving college because of her family. It was a different kind of pressure than the Asian students reported. "I didn't

feel it was fair for my family to have me here while they're all back home pulling their own weight." However, her family would be disappointed if she left college, and she didn't want to disappoint them. She felt that freshmen students needed more assistance in order to succeed. "Not necessarily hold the hand of every freshman that comes in, but a lot of them have questions and they don't know where to go." Nicole stayed in college for six years. During the follow-up interview, she reported that she thought she had graduated in the major in which she began, Biology. However, she hadn't. She's currently on probation and hoped to return to graduate.

The other female Native American student didn't address her cultural background during her freshman interview, but did during the follow-up. When she began college, she was undecided on her major. During her freshman year, she chose psychology, hoping to go to medical school. During the freshman interview she felt lost in terms of knowing how to get the advising assistance she needed. "I've been trying to get with the Pre-med advisor, but I haven't been able to get an appointment, it's really difficult. I talked with a couple psychology professors, but they told me since I am pre-med, I have to talk with my own advisor. It's been really difficult because I've had a lot of problems trying to figure out what

classes to take. I don't know if I'm taking the right ones." She left college temporarily due to family problems, but returned to the study institution after one and a half years. Currently, she is majoring in psychology with medical school aspirations.

During the freshman interview, Robert didn't mention his Native American background either. He graduated in engineering after six and a half years, although his major area of focus changed from aerospace to optics. He saw his advisor regularly and had his classes laid out for him. As a freshman, he reported to be the main motivating force in college persistence. His parents wouldn't disown him or kick him out if he quit school. "They'd stick with me." During the follow-up interview he had changed dramatically in that he professed strong anti affirmative action beliefs. He never participated in any programs through the Office of Minority Student Affairs, and he felt that minority programs contribute to reverse discrimination.

Sam completed his business degree in five years. Of his minority status, he reported that he didn't look Native American at all. He didn't participate in programs through the Native American Resource Center, but he knew where the programs and services were located. During his freshman year,

he saw an advisor who helped him plan his semester, and he planned to see her again next semester. He reported that he didn't get advice from anybody else. "I talk to my friends about what they're taking, but you can't base what your friends take on what you're gonna take. That would be a bad move." He lived at home and if he dropped out of college, his parents would be upset. "They would flip out. They wouldn't accept it; they'd go crazy and kick me out. They would feel betrayed." He advised other freshmen to ask for help when they were unsure of anything, because there were a lot of programs to assist students.

### Hispanic Students

Similar to African American and Native American subjects, Hispanic students were also aware of the academic support services available to minority students; however, they utilized these services more often. The primary services the subjects used were provided through the Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA). They were the Student Encouragement Program (SEP) and the Merits Program. Through each program, the student was assigned a peer mentor and met weekly or biweekly for counseling. Hispanic students who utilized these

academic mentoring programs were more likely to graduate than those who did not.

Nathan did not use any support programs, and left after one semester. He came from a small high school and as a freshman, he was overwhelmed by the large size of the study institution. He went through New Start and found that to be helpful. Further, he was aware of the services available through the Office of Minority Student Affairs, but hadn't the time to participate because of his work schedule. "I've got them all written down, but I don't have the time to be going to that. That's the type of thing where work interferes." He hadn't received any academic advising on campus.

Nathan didn't discuss his cultural background during the freshman interview. After one semester, he left on probation. A defining moment seemed to be when he failed a psychology course. He went to a local community college for two years, but left the community college without an Associate's degree. Currently, he is working and doesn't plan to return to college.

Another Hispanic student who left college prior to degree attainment is Carl. He began his freshman year as an engineering student. His father and older brother are

engineers. After two and a half years, he was disqualified from the university. He went to the local community college for one year and returned to the university as a music major. His grades had improved dramatically, but he still faced barriers to success when he failed music juries. He cannot continue in the program until he passes the jury process.

As a freshman, he discussed reasons he would have for leaving the university. His reasons for leaving concerned academics. They focused primarily on difficult courses in engineering. He continued struggling in this area for two years, until he was disqualified from the university. He never sought academic assistance when he was struggling with his courses.

Although Carl received an Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) fee waiver, he didn't consider himself a minority student and did not utilize any available services in association with his minority status. He attended regular orientation and met with an advisor as a freshman only to be taken off probation. As a freshman, he felt comfortable going to his father and/or older brother for advice, but later reported that each was very controlling over his life. Academically, he said he was doing okay; in reality, he was not. "Be prepared, it's a lot harder that you think." Of his

future career goals, he was unclear. There was inconsistency in his follow-up interview when he discussed future career options and how college fit with those options. He described a desire to return to the university and complete his music degree, but later talked about his desire to create video games or repair pianos. He is currently working, not attending classes.

The remaining three Hispanic male students graduated from college. John graduated in four and a half years and stayed in the same major (civil engineering). He thought about quitting as a freshman when he didn't do well on some tests. As a freshman, he received academic support through a program on campus wherein he met with a mentor to discuss his academic progress biweekly. He participated regularly with the Office of Minority Student Affairs and utilized their tutoring services. He reported to have received a lot of support from his older brother who graduated from the study institution. "He's been really supportive of me. He basically showed me what not to do. He said to study, don't watch t.v. or party a lot." John learned from his brother's mistakes and it helped him to find a good path to follow.

Culturally, he reported that he didn't fit in, yet he participated in academic support services hosted by the Office

of Minority Student Affairs. "I was raised in an all white school and so I don't fit here; it's hard. I feel like an outcast with my own race and then I feel like an outcast with this (white) race." Later, he spoke of the pride he felt being Mexican American.

Cody took a little longer to graduate, five and a half years. Following his freshman year, he left the university and attended the local community college for one year. He didn't see quitting college altogether as an option when he earned poor grades at the university; however, he did see attending a community college as one. His grades were not what he had expected, but he did not leave on probation or disqualification. He left the university with a 2.4 grade point average. During his freshman year, he changed his major from Management Information Systems to Marketing, remaining in the College of Business. He found the New Start program to be helpful. "I felt like I was lost when I got here. I didn't know where anything was. New Start helped out a lot." He also participated in the Student Encouragement Program (SEP). During his freshman year, every other week he met with a peer advisor and they discussed academic issues, like the ramifications of dropping a class. As a freshman, he had tutoring for all of his classes through the Office of Minority

Student Affairs.

Culturally, he felt most comfortable around Hispanic people. "It just seems like we have more stuff in common. We have the same problems, like what's going on with us." When he left the university after his freshman year, he reported that his family and friends supported his decision, as well as his decision to later return to the U of A.

Another student who took longer to graduate was Ryan. He graduated in six years and changed his major as a freshman from English to Engineering. He participated in New Start and later in MERITS. "I've found there is more help out there than I really thought there would be, because there's tutoring and other services like that available." He also found a lot of support on campus through individuals who were Hispanic and through programs that were geared to minority students. Further support was derived from one of his older brothers who graduated from the U of A and served as his role model. "My two older brothers who didn't graduate from high school and got married are working construction work. Comparing what they did with what my other brother (who graduated) did, I decided that I wanted to be like my oldest brother who graduated from high school and went on to college, a more professional career. He's there for support. It's really

encouraging." If he did quit school, his family would be concerned, but wouldn't turn their backs on him.

He talked with advisors several times and knew that if he experienced academic problems, there were advisors available in the Office of Minority Student Affairs. His Hispanic math professor had taken a special interest in Hispanic students and provided pizza and tutoring for himself and other Hispanic students. His math professor and another academic advisor told him that as a freshman, he was on the right academic path.

Like Cody, Ryan felt most comfortable around other minority students. "Most of my friends are minorities because I feel more comfortable with them. I can tell them anything because they are in the same position I am. I tend to hang out with my own ethnicity. I just feel more comfortable around my own ethnicity." Ryan derived academic support from several programs and individuals within the campus community, and outside of it.

Bonnie began as an Anthropology major and finished four years later with that degree. Currently, she is in graduate school. Bonnie participated in the New Start program and later in the Merits program. Participation in Merits made her feel that someone cared about her academic well-being. "The university wouldn't care if I dropped out, but the Office of

Minority Student Affairs would." As a freshman, she discussed feeling that if she dropped out of school, she would hurt her Merits peer advisor. Bonnie also met with a faculty advisor in Anthropology and another advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Culturally, she never interacted with minority students before the New Start program. "I've always been with whites, so I never really had to relate with Mexican Americans. When I got here, they were flabbergasted by the fact that I couldn't speak Spanish and that I didn't do things, that I'm not culturally oriented." She had never thought of herself as a minority; however, during college, she became very involved in minority student issues and learning about her culture and history. She said that as a freshman, she didn't embrace her cultural background, but in retrospect, says she was a "Chicano in denial."

As a freshman, Paige had aspirations of becoming a doctor. She majored in Nutrition and graduated in six years. When she wasn't admitted into the College of Medicine, she worked for one year, then went out of state to a college of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) program. As a freshman, she felt pressure to achieve high grades in order to become accepted to medical school. Later, as a graduate, she was angry that she

had worked so hard, and that the university had not recognized her hard work, when she was rejected for admission to medical school.

She claimed that participating in the New Start program was very helpful to her. "I think it was the best thing I ever did. It helped me get familiar with the university. It helped me become less intimidated." Other minority support programs provided assistance as well. She participated in academic support programs and had tutoring for every class.

Paige had been to the pre-medical advisor but didn't appreciate the advising system. She felt like she was being herded like cattle through the process. It felt impersonal, as if she were another number. As a freshman, if she needed advice, she could turn to her parents. Because they were educated, she felt they could help her with academic issues. "I always know that if I need help on something, that my parents will help me. I'm lucky in that because they have a good education, they can help me." Paige reported feeling comfortable on campus. "Because I was raised in both cultures, I'm comfortable in any situation whether it is with my Mexican friends or with my Anglo friends."

Sally graduated in four years. Her major in math remained constant. She was involved in the New Start program

and received tutoring through programs within the Office of Minority Student Affairs. The same Hispanic Math professor who supported Ryan helped her and served as her mentor. "He does it a lot for minority groups. He tutors in calculus. He's also pushing for scholarships and internships." As a freshman, she felt most comfortable in the Office of Minority Student Affairs, specifically the tutoring room.

Culturally, race was not an issue for her prior to attending the university. "It seems like race is a bigger part of college life than it was in high school. It wasn't that big a deal in high school and it's a very big deal here." She appreciated the programs that served minority students, but regretted that they weren't open to everyone. Sally felt that her minority status was a benefit because she received free tutoring that would otherwise be expensive.

The only female Hispanic student in this study who left the institution prior to degree attainment was Beth. She left after four years of college on academic probation. She went through the New Start program, but reported similar feelings about minority programs as Sally did above. Beth enjoyed the benefits of participating in programs that were designed to serve minority students, but wished everyone had the opportunity to participate. She participated in the Merits

program for one semester, then quit. She hadn't seen any other advisor to date. Beth changed her major from Media Arts to English. She reported later that she didn't regret leaving the university because she currently has a good job and didn't know what she would have done with an English degree anyway.

Beth felt more attention should have been paid to culture rather than race. "Here, people are very aware of their race, very aware that they're a different color. I think it's the culture they should be aware of. I'm aware of my culture."

As freshmen, most minority students discussed a faculty member whom they admired but didn't feel comfortable approaching. This changed throughout the subjects' college careers in that they felt more comfortable talking with their professor(s) as their academic careers progressed. They also felt more comfortable participating in their classes later in their academic lives.

### Pre-College Characteristics

#### **Academic Preparation**

Compared with all incoming freshmen students who began college in the Fall of 1990, the minority student sample had a slightly higher grade point average, but slightly lower

standardized test scores (see Table 4.9). Compared with all other entering minority students, the sample had a slightly higher standardized SAT score and slightly higher grade point average. Minority students beginning college in the Fall of 1990 were slightly less prepared than their freshmen cohort.

Table 4.9

Academic Index of Preparation for College Work for Students Entering Fall 1990

	<u>Sample Scores</u>	<u>All Minority</u>	<u>All Students' Scores</u>
ACT	21	21	23
SAT	920	923	1000
High School GPA	3.22	3.17	3.20

N for sample= 41

The minority students in this study may have been superior academic performers in their high school, therefore earning higher grades during their pre-college experience. The high school of attendance could be inadequately preparing the minority students for college. It is also possible that the standardized tests are culturally biased, thereby lowering test results. Regardless of the explanation, the minority

students in this study experienced an academic shock in their transition to college, and were surprised at the level of academic rigor required during college. This contributed to feelings of academic inferiority.

"A lot of the time I felt intimidated because I felt my classmates knew a lot more than I did. They had a different experience prior to college that I couldn't compete with" (Gary, African American Graduate).

"At first I thought maybe they'll think I'm stupid and I shouldn't go talk to them (professors)" (Pam, Asian American graduate).

"I wasn't very smart" (Luke, African American non-graduate).

Students reiterated feelings of not being prepared for college work, regardless of persistence in college or not.

#### **Parents Educational Achievement**

Another facet considered in the pre-college characteristics of student persistence is the educational achievement of the students' parents. Most of the subjects who participated in this study were first generation college students (See Table 4.10). For the purpose of this research, "first generation college student" means that neither parent had graduated from a four-year institution, nor earned a bachelor's degree. Students from Asian backgrounds in this

study were more likely to have parents that graduated from college.

Table 4.10

Parents' Degree Attainment by Ethnicity

---

	<u>First Generation Student</u>	<u>Not First Generation</u>
African American	4	2
Native American	3	1
Asian	2	4
American Hispanic	5	2
n= 23		

---

This finding impacted the college student experience in that first generation students felt disconnected from their parents in academic endeavors.

"I didn't have a lot of guidance because on both sides of my family, they're not stupid or uneducated, but I was the first to finish school within the last couple of generations. My parents told me I was going to get a college education, but it doesn't matter what in" (Sam, Native American Graduate, First Generation).

"I guess I would have to say my parents (influenced me) in the sense that my mother never graduated from high school and my father didn't have much college. They never said anything like you have to graduate, they didn't

push me, but I consider them to be an influence because I think they wanted me to do and be something better. Academically, I would say the campus services supported me most. They were influential in helping me to set my goals and pursuing my interests, and exposing me to different opportunities" (Gary, African American Graduate, First Generation).

To be academically disconnected is not to say that the students didn't feel strong parental support, but that in areas surrounding academics, students couldn't relate their issues with their parents. When first generation college students experienced barriers, they were unable to seek navigational assistance from their parents. The students' parents, in general, served as a strong source of support; however, on academic matters, subjects advised other students to seek academic support within the university community through campus services.

"My parents always said to have a degree was important and that you can't get anywhere without one. You know, parents always want their children to do better than they did, and that was the way we could, by getting a degree. Basically, if all you have is a high school diploma, you are going to get the lowest paying jobs and be at the bottom of the totem pole. My parents encouraged me to go even though they couldn't afford to send me. They were really encouraging, and saying, just stick in there, things will work out" (Krista, African American Graduate, First Generation).

The expectations parents' had of their children attending

college did not differ due to parents' educational attainment. Regardless of the parents educational background, all desired a college education for their children. The desire for college degree attainment cut across racial lines. Parents of subjects in this study desired a better life for their children and viewed college degree attainment as the way for their children to improve their quality of life.

"Both my parents went to college. I spent most of my childhood thinking that you have to go to college just like you have to go to high school" (Cheryl, Asian non-graduate).

"I don't think there was an influence for me to stay in school. There wasn't any reason not to. It never crossed my mind to NOT continue or to take time off. Me and my family, all of us have gone to college and finished. I think that has to do not with being a minority, but with our economic status. We are very middle class. My parent's mentality was, it's not a question. It's the way we were raised, our parents' values. It would not have crossed our minds to even go against them; it was a given. You don't talk about it, you're going to college" (Kevin, Asian graduate).

Students whose parents did not graduate from college had very similar comments regarding expectations of their children attending college.

"It was a given; I was not going to not graduate. If your parents put it in your head enough that you are going to school and graduate, you will. It wasn't an option" (Sam, Native American graduate).

"They always expected it. It wasn't anything said while we were in college because it was so ingrained. It was how we were brought up. I don't think me staying in college had anything to do with the UA, and I don't mean that in a bad way. If I went to another college, I would have stayed simply because that's what was ingrained in me. Even during difficult times, I never thought about leaving, that wasn't an option" (Connie, Asian graduate).

### **College Preparatory Path**

All of the students in this study reported to take the majority of their high school curricula as preparation for college versus a future vocation. When a student did take vocational types of courses, the course would be an asset in their future as a college student. An example cited often by the students was office related courses such as typing or computer training.

### Orientation

The subjects in this study became oriented to the university through one of three different programs: Freshmen Orientation, New Start/Summer Bridge (now known only as New Start), or Med-Start (See Table 4.11). Freshmen Orientation is designed for all freshmen students entering the university. The goal of this program is to provide a two-day orientation

to campus and register the students for their first semester in college. The New Start program is tailored to minority, first generation, or low income students. The goal of this program is to provide an in-depth six-week college experience for the student the summer prior to their beginning college full-time. Med-Start is designed to assist students who are planning a future career in one of the health professions. Med-Start is available to high school students who are Juniors and lasts six weeks.

Table 4.11

Orientation Program Participation & Subsequent Graduation

---

	<u>Freshmen Orientation</u>	<u>New-Start</u>	<u>Med-Start</u>
Hispanic	3	6	0
Native American	1	2	1
African American	0	5	1
Asian American	6	0	0
Total	10	13	2
Graduated	7	8	0

N=25

---

The students who participated in the New Start program had very positive comments about the program. However, in the long run, participation in an Orientation program alone was not an indicator of persistence. Participation in the New Start Program may have led to participation in academic support services hosted by the Office of Minority Student Affairs.

"I know people who didn't make it because they had no support system and their parents had no idea of how to deal with college because they never even graduated from high school. So it's really scary. New Start helped. It's one of the most beneficial things that I ever did in my whole life" (Paige, Hispanic graduate).

"I want to commend that program (New Start/Summer Bridge). That's the one that gets you to say, hey, this is what it's all about" (Luke, African American non-graduate).

"I thought New Start and Merits were great. Coming down to the university and getting oriented to what's going on, getting to know where things are and being with a lot of other people who are minority: it was great because you get in there and get that foot in the door, so when school starts, I already knew what was going on" (Krista, African American graduate).

An interesting finding in relation to which orientation program the students participated tied into how the students viewed their minority status or identity (an area detailed

later in this chapter). Five minority students who did not identify with their cultural background, whose minority status was not salient to them, selected the regular Freshmen Orientation program in which all students are eligible to participate, rather than selecting a "minority program."

"My friends would always joke with me about it and pick on me, because I am MILDLY Native American. I just happen to be part of a tribe, but I don't look it or anything like that" (Sam, Native American graduate, attended regular orientation).

### Transition

Students who were not sure what to expect of college had a difficult time making the adjustment. The expectation's students had of college life impacted the ease of the transitional process. Expectations that inhibited minority students' transition to the university were their feelings of academic inferiority, the size of the institution, and the sense that there was a lack of caring by the academic community.

When students arrived on campus, many expected to use the same academic skills (study habits, test taking, writing skills) as they used in high school. They had excelled in the high school setting and expected the same at the college

level. Because many didn't have parents who had gone through college, this was not an unusual expectation. It left them with a sense of being academically unprepared or with feelings of academic inferiority. Several consequences emerge in concert with the level of difficulty experienced.

"College isn't what I expected. It was a shock! You can't use the same study habits you did in high school. When I graduated as a senior in high school, you think that you're doing well in school and that you're going to pass on the same ... your study habits are equally as good, you're in for a shock. I thought I would be able to use my same study habits and be able to do other things but you have to do twice as much work in your studies" (Cody, Hispanic graduate).

This student failed one course and decided he wasn't prepared to succeed in college. He was shocked when he didn't succeed academically.

"In high school, I was Salutatorian; everything came easy. I never really learned how to study. I was overwhelmed. I left because it was a big shock when I failed. I used to get A's and B's from start to finish and then I failed this class. I basically disappeared" (Nathan, Hispanic non-graduate).

Institution and class size were other factors that impacted the transition of minority students. Many students didn't expect to arrive at such a large campus or to be enrolled in large classes. They felt there was little guidance

in their attempt to navigate a large institution.

"Make students aware that this is a huge campus. That's a shocker. There's definitely no hand holding at any time during your college years. There's little help solving problems. I had to take on these things and fight my way through" (Paige, Hispanic graduate).

"College is a big transition and freshmen need a support structure. It was a large adjustment coming to college from a small high school. I knew it would be difficult, but I didn't expect it to be so big. It's definitely an adjustment and some people are ready, but with me, I had been with my family my whole life" (Pam, Asian graduate).

Students thought that if the classes were smaller, they would receive individual attention from their faculty members. They felt that they would be noticed and that they would feel part of a group of students completing the course, rather than just another number to the professor.

"I didn't feel part of a group, especially in large courses. When you're in a class of 100 or 200 people, how can you feel part of a group? I wish the classes weren't so big, and if it is so big, I wish they would hold more sessions to accommodate those that don't like big classes. Any class over 100 people, you're gonna feel like a number. How often is the teacher going to know you're not there? Compared to smaller groups, where the teacher says, you didn't come today, where were you? Everybody doesn't need that kind of, like a person over them, but there's some of us that do need that overseer that will make you want to go, make you come to class" (Tom, African American non-graduate).

Many minority students expected an ethic of caring from

the academic community. They expected to find advisors, mentors and professors that would help them navigate through their college career.

"College is not what I expected. I expected more camaraderie, more support. More in the sense of a mentor in a lot of advisors and professors that I never got. There should be more, not coddling for students of color, but rather more understanding of what our backgrounds are" (Nicole, Native American non-graduate).

"I expected more. A better education, not using teaching assistants and my advisor couldn't tell me what I needed to graduate. I don't feel that I got that much joy out of it. I don't say anything good about it, but I don't say anything bad either" (Cheryl, Asian non-graduate).

Several students experienced academic difficulty during their freshman year and spent the remainder of their college career attempting to improve their grades. One student left the university, attended a community college, then returned to graduate.

"I was disappointed my first semester, but I didn't see quitting as an option. I did see Pima as an option, so I went there for a year. The fault was on my part mostly of why I didn't graduate when I wanted to. I think once I started going to school, I realized graduating in four years wasn't reasonable or realistic" (Cody, Hispanic graduate).

The ease or difficulty of the transition to college did

impact persistence when the difficulty the student experienced was academic in nature. Students with very different expectations of college in terms of assistance with navigation through the academic climate left the institution following their freshman year. Students who left at this point did so due to academics. Four of the 25 students in this study left college after one year; all left on probation or were disqualified from the university. They were all male and varied by ethnic background (see Tables 4.5 through 4.8).

#### Motivation/ Commitment

All subjects report to be very motivated and committed to earning a college degree when they began college as freshmen. In fact, few students changed their future degree and/or career plans drastically while in college. Students reiterated the need to be motivated, but not in the sense of being motivated to study, to attend class, and to complete assignments. Students addressed motivation in the sense that you had to take the initiative to attain the necessary academic resources to graduate and that you had to work hard to overcome the barriers of the institutional structure.

Commitment to achieving the goals they had set for themselves in college was illustrated by the high number of students who declared a major or career interest as freshmen, and later graduated in that specific, or a very similar college major (see Table 4.12). Of the 15 students in the study who graduated, all but one completed a degree in the same, or very similar major that the subject began in college as freshman. Further, of the 15 students who graduated with a bachelor's degree, eight went on to a graduate or professional school. All of the African American graduates continued their education following college graduation. Remaining in the same major could ease college navigation.

Table 4.12Beginning and Ending Declared Major


---

	<u>Initial College Major</u>	<u>Ending College Major</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Hispanic</b>			
Beth	Media Arts	English	Probation
Paige	Marketing	Nutrition	Graduate
Cody	MIS	Marketing	Graduate
Bonnie	Anthropology	Anthropology	Graduate
Sally	Math	Math	Graduate
Carl	English	Music	Left
John	Civil Eng.	Civil Eng.	Graduate
Ryan	Chem Eng.	Chem. Eng.	Graduate
Nathan	Pre-educ.	Pre-educ.	Probation
<b>African American</b>			
Krista	Sociology	Inter-disciplinary	Graduate
Gary	LAS/ PolSci	LAS/ PolSci	Graduate
Luke	Business	Agriculture	Disqualified
Frank	Health Ed.	Health Ed.	Graduate
Tom	MedTech	MedTech	Disqualified
Marie	Biology	Nutrition	Probation
<b>Asian</b>			
Diane	Anthro	Anthro	Graduate
Brian	English	Anthro	Probation
Connie	Micro	Biology	Graduate
Cheryl	Business	Comm	Left
Kevin	Media Arts	Media Arts	Graduate
Pam	Pharmacy	Pharmacy	Graduate
<b>Native American</b>			
Robert	Business	Accounting	Graduate
Sam	Civil Eng.	Opt. Eng.	Graduate
Nicole	Biology	Engineering	Probation
Tanya	Psych	Psych	Enrolled

---

Independence

Students in this study were residents of the state of Arizona, which meant their parents were, at most, four hours away. Some students continued to reside with their parents, but most lived in a residence hall on campus and were experiencing their first sense of freedom and independence. Generally, students remained in the residence hall for one to two years before moving off campus (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13Residence of Students by Ethnicity and Gender

	<u>Residence Hall</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Off-campus</u>
African Amer.			
Male	3	1	0
Female	2	0	0
Hispanic			
Male	3	1	1
Female	2	2	0
Asian			
Male	1	1	0
Female	4	0	0
Native Amer.			
Male	1	1	0
Female	2	0	0
Total	18	6	1

Students who lived away from their parents expressed a strong sense of freedom; however, they still desired navigational assistance with academics, primarily from institutional resources.

"The minute I went to college, I was set free. Then I knew I could do whatever I wanted. At the same time, I wanted guidance academically. My advisor was cold. I felt so on my own. Arts and Sciences is so big; it felt cold and you feel detached. I didn't have any connections with these people" (Kevin, Asian graduate.)

I found there to be gender and ethnicity differences in the students' attempts at independence from parents. I found with the two Hispanic females who lived at home, their parents struggled against their daughters' desire for independence. With African American males, they felt they needed their mothers to be closer. Asian parents treated the situation as if they had been preparing for it all of their child's lives.

"My parents gave me the initial push and the encouragement to stay, but I learned to want to stay. It was for my benefit. My parents specifically moved here from Korea for my brother and I, for education purposes. So education was always stressed very highly in our household, it's been embedded into me for so long that going to college was a step to something else" (Diane, Asian graduate).

Native American students expressed assimilation within the campus culture as necessary to succeed.

"When I first started school, I was a bit more naive. I think that's one of the things. You come into college with these old ideas from your parents and your schooling. You come into this kind of environment and you get your own ideas and sometimes it's not in agreement with what your parents think. It's a big difference. Now, I don't follow tradition too much. I have had to go through a few obstacles with them because they see me as someone who is very independent, yet they think they have some control over my life. They did ask me to have a traditional (Navajo) wedding and I said that's not really what I want" (Tanya, Native American student still enrolled).

### College Experience

During the follow-up interviews, the students spoke freely about their college experience. They discussed academics, problems they experienced, their independence from parents, campus participation, their comfort on campus, and social relationships. Several important, interesting findings are presented in this section. Most center around what I define as the Theory of Navigation. The Theory of Navigation is the unique way minority students navigate through the university. Upon arrival, students had different expectations and their social world has, for the most part, changed dramatically. Most had little desire to conform to the norms of this new setting. Minority students wanted to earn their college degree in order to stake a better position in the

social structure of our society. Therefore, the Theory of Navigation rests with the notion that minority students primarily desired an academic focus, an academic path to graduation, with little interest in traditional social activities (fraternities, sororities, clubs), besides that of social relationships. Many students discussed, in detail, concrete barriers they experienced during the navigational process. Barriers they experienced were inside and outside of the classroom. For the most part, students expressed a strong desire to obtain cultural and academic navigational assistance that would contribute to college success. Below is the Theory of Navigation model, followed by two examples of how students in this study fit the model (see Diagrams 4.0 to 4.2).

As Diagram 4.0 illustrates, the Theory of Navigation combines student ability, parental support, college degree commitment, and cultural identity with academic and cultural navigational resources which lead to college persistence or college withdrawal. The level of the pre-college indicators will inform the necessary level of navigational assistance required on behalf of the student.

Diagram 4.1 is an example of one subject who completed his college degree at the study institution. This student required navigational assistance, and received that assistance

through academic and cultural support. Diagram 4.2 is an example of one subject who did not graduate. She left the study institution on probation. This student also required navigational assistance, but did not receive the assistance she needed to graduate.

Diagram 4.0

### Theory of Navigation

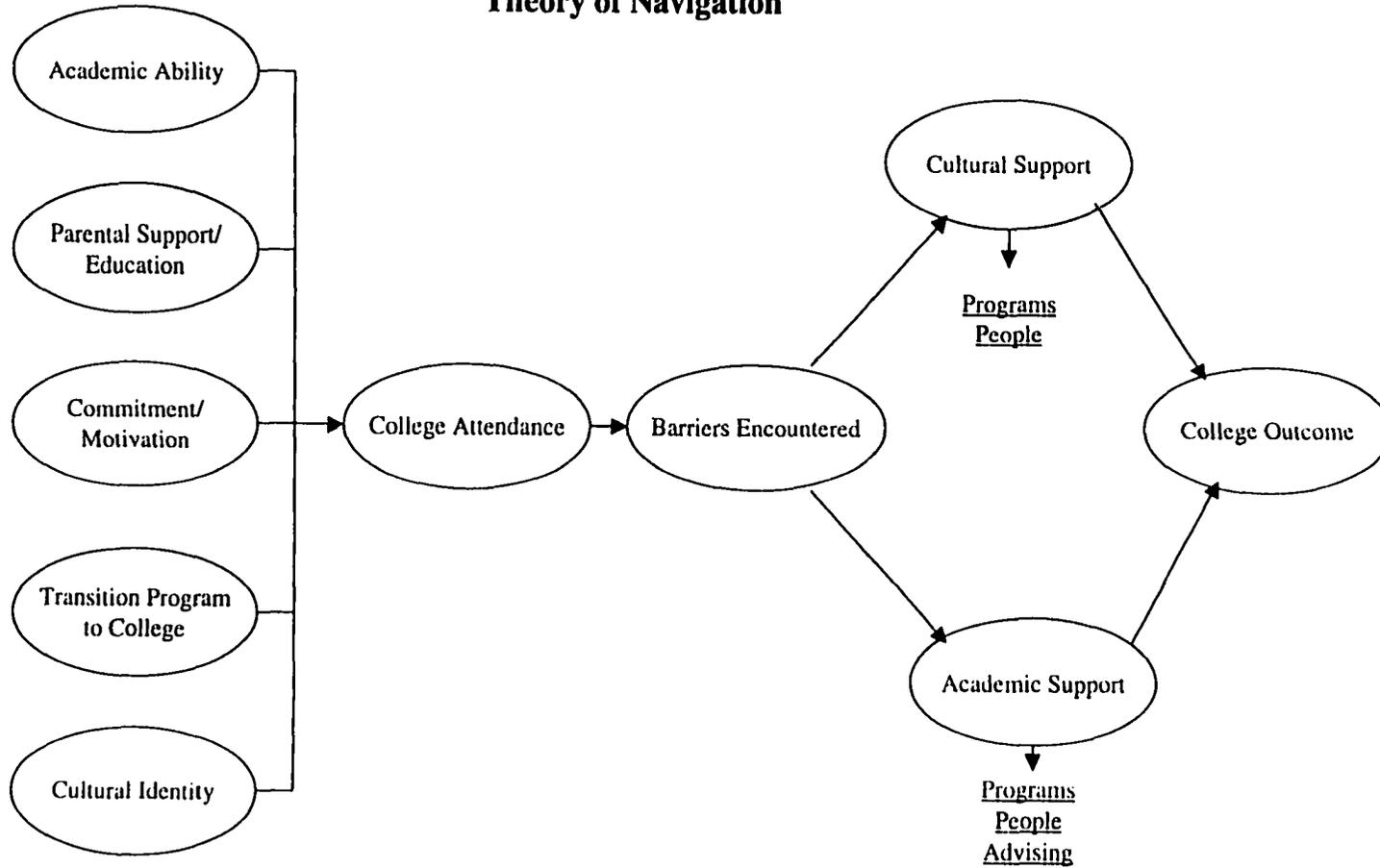


Diagram 4.1

**Theory of Navigation Model: Ryan**

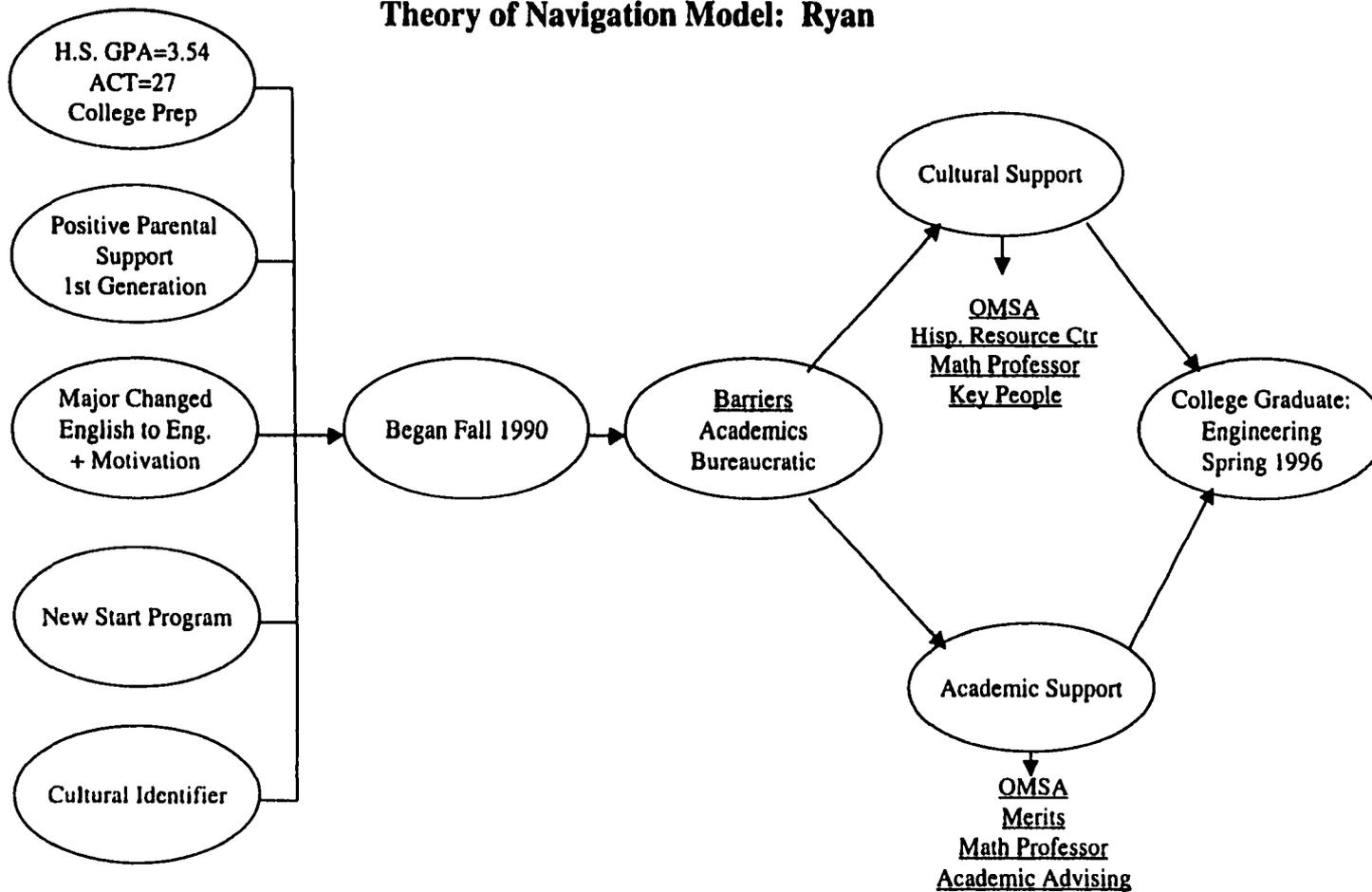
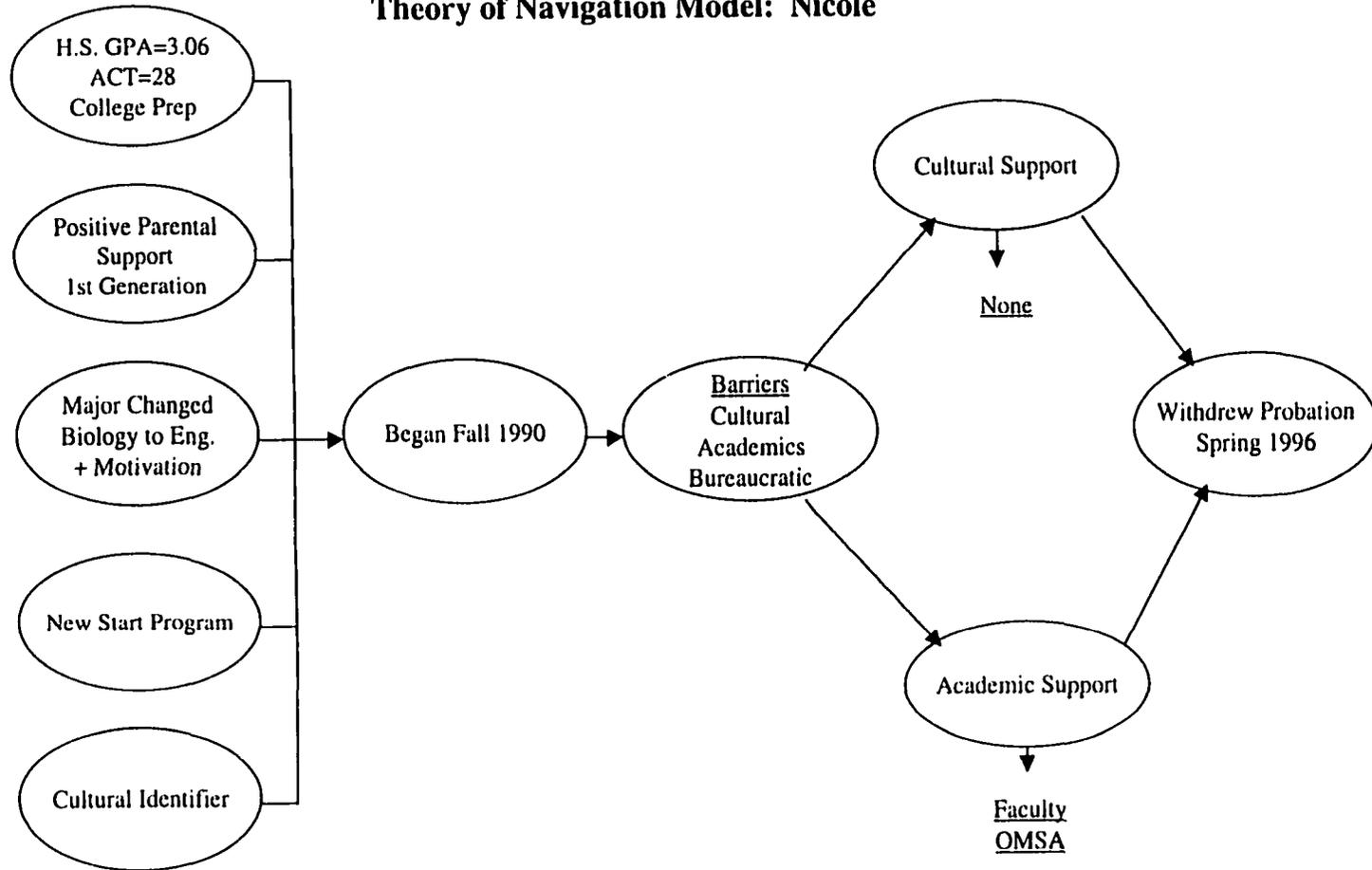


Diagram 4.2

Theory of Navigation Model: Nicole



Once on campus, navigational assistance was derived from institutional resources. The academic and cultural assistance needed was dependent upon pre-college characteristics and minority identity salience. Students clearly expressed the desire for navigational assistance through academic resources, in terms of obtaining clear road maps and other academic assistance. Below are examples of the desire for both academic and cultural navigational support. The first section addresses advice to other students to seek navigational assistance based on academics. The next section focuses on identity and addressed the need for cultural navigational assistance.

Advice to other students primarily involved navigational assistance. In order to succeed at the university, students have to seek academic assistance in terms of academic major requirements and academic resources.

"Have a definite road map as far as where you need to go and what classes you need to take" (Cheryl, Asian non-graduate).

"Don't be indecisive. I switched my major my sophomore year and had a hard time because I didn't get it laid out for me. That's what you need for your degree. I wanted every class laid out for me" (Brian, Asian non-graduate).

As soon as an academic road map is established, students advised others to find the academic resources necessary to succeed.

"Students have to learn how to adjust and find all of the resources out there. UA has a lot to offer, I just didn't learn or know about it until further down the line" (Pam, Asian graduate).

"I would tell them to get help when they need it, not to allow themselves to sink. The minute they need help, to go talk with their instructor, and if they're not any help, go find someone to tutor them, to go see their advisor and even find a student mentor" (Sally, Hispanic graduate).

The likelihood of minority student success was the highest when all components of the Theory of Navigation were positive. This means strong background characteristics, positive parental support, strong commitment to earning a college degree, and cultural and navigational support when students experience roadblocks. The level of identity salience will determine the level of cultural and academic navigational support necessary.

### Identity

Being on a college campus required cultural identity negotiation for the study subjects. The level of negotiation was different depending on how the individuals perceived their minority status, whether they accepted or rejected it. There

were three different attitudes discussed: students who identified with their cultural background and who embraced their minority status while on campus; students who considered themselves to be white and denied their ethnic identity background; and students between their own respective cultural background and that of the majority student population.

### Cultural Identifiers

Eight students came to the college campus with a clear commitment to their respective minority cultural background. Others came to identify during college and had the opportunity to embrace their feelings about being a minority individual for the first time.

"In my earlier years, I didn't feel welcome in the cultural center. It was a lot of where I was when I came in, where my identity stood when I came in, I was afraid I wasn't going to be accepted. I went through New Start and made a lot of friends, but they weren't Chicano. I think the whole identity thing scared me and I steered clear of it initially. When I began college, I was a Chicano in denial" (Bonnie, Hispanic graduate).

For some students, college was a time for growing and learning about their respective cultural heritage.

"My high school never taught us anything about Black history, because it was predominantly white, so I was

upset because I never learned the history behind my heritage. When I was in college, I started learning more, and am still doing self improvement. I keep reading and getting more involved in things. I know some people have a hard time working with other races because they are so used to being raised in a black community, doing all their education from kindergarten through college in the black community and then they get out in the real world that's not just all blacks. It's a melting pot and they don't know how to deal or work with people of other races" (Krista, African American graduate).

### Cultural Deniers

Students who identified themselves as white were more cognizant to address white, middle class values that they saw similarly in themselves. Some of these values were the ethic of individualism, meritocracy, prestige, and claiming others who didn't graduate were just lazy. There are five students who were in this category.

"I had friends who didn't graduate, and that was due to the fact that they screwed around a lot. I would do everything on my own. I could only get upset about doing poorly for so long and I would turn it around because I didn't want to lose. I never went to tutoring, I always did everything on my own, very independent, that was my attitude, so I've always tried to tackle everything on my own." And later, "Optical engineering is a prestigious program, I like prestige, so I fit right in there" (Robert, Native American graduate).

"One thing that my father always harped on is that whatever you do, you should be accepted based on your abilities, not your ethnic background, or who you were

raised by or where you came from. Therefore, as far as cultural groups, I don't feel I fit in with that. It just wasn't my thing" (Carl, Hispanic non-graduate).

### Students Between Two Worlds

Students in this classification acknowledged their cultural backgrounds; however, they didn't feel comfortable expressing it on campus. This was the largest group of cultural identifiers, with twelve students expressing this notion. Often times, the feeling of not being immersed in one culture was due to skin color, language, and/or being biracial. This was discovered when I asked about cultural resource center participation.

"I didn't go to the Hispanic Student Resource Center because I am not a Spanish speaker. I am full-blooded Hispanic, but I couldn't speak Spanish, and they kind of developed their own clique. I was in between. I went to an all white high school so I felt comfortable with them, but at the same time it was hard. I didn't fit within with white people because I am tan, but I couldn't hang out with Hispanics because I didn't speak Spanish. So, I hung out with about six friends; we created our own fraternity" (John, Hispanic graduate).

### Cultural Representativeness

Another area that emerged during this area of discussion

was the feeling of representativeness. This varied by ethnicity and ethnic identity salience. Asian students didn't feel the pressure of their minority status as much as they had in high school. Of the overall student population, Asian students represent a small number. However, this number was larger than that in their high school. They felt there were other Asian students on campus, and they no longer had to be the "Asian representative." When Asian students came to campus, all came from areas in Arizona where there weren't many other Asian Americans. When they arrived on campus, there were more students like them in numbers, compared to where they grew up.

"I grew up in Scottsdale where there aren't many Asians there. So being Korean didn't phase me until someone would say something and then I would think, maybe I look different. I didn't become involved with the cultural center, it had to do with growing up in a very traditional household and not I was in college, being independent and everything. I know it sounds terrible to say, I wanted to forget about my heritage, I wanted to be with my friends and not try to be Korean. That has definitely changed, I have realized the error of my ways. I realize how important my cultural heritage is" (Diane, Asian graduate).

"I felt more free in college because there were so many other Asians. I didn't feel the responsibility to live up to others' expectations of Asians. When I was outside of college or the UA campus, I felt that pressure" (Connie, Asian graduate).

I found that to be different for African American students. They felt scrutinized both in and out of the classroom. They felt as if others would look to them as representatives of the entire African American population, and they didn't like that.

"In class, if I am an African American student, and the professor and other students are talking about economic issues, and they say something about the Black community, and you're the only Black student in the class, it's as if you are representing the entire Black community. You have to have an explanation for it. Even when I was walking on campus, I felt that everything I did represented an African American person. Every single thing you do is an example" (Marie, African American non-graduate).

"In classes, sometimes you are the only minority in there and they expect you to speak for everyone, and you don't" (Frank, African American graduate).

"I felt more alienated if I was in a class where I was the only Black, but when I was in a class with one or two others, it wasn't that bad, I had a shoulder to cry on. When you go into a class, the first thing you do is say, are there any females in here, and next, are there any Blacks. You feel you have to do much better because you are going to be looked at a little bit harder, or they might look at you as being stupid" (Krista, African American graduate).

Hispanic students represented the largest percentage of minority students on campus. Further, their persistence rates are higher than that of Native American and African American subjects. Their comfort level on campus was higher than either African American or Native American students. Rarely

were they the only Hispanic student in class. Further, there was a large Mexican community concerned with issues that affected Hispanic students. This strong community linked with campus. In fact, many Hispanic administrators and faculty members were powerful members within the cultural community and provided navigational assistance for Hispanic students.

### Campus Participation

Retention theorists promote concepts of social integration as becoming integrated within the social fabric of the institution. However, the minority students in this group didn't join clubs to be integrated. They joined programs and organizations to assist in their successful navigation within the university infrastructure.

When the Office of Minority Student Affairs was disbanded, it became harder for minority students to navigate the institution. The services remained for the most part; however, they are now dispersed throughout the university campus rather than located in one centralized area in the Old Main building.

"The Office of Minority Student Affairs was where everything was, and it was essential. It was an office dedicated to our needs. When I got back (from his mission), I felt pushed aside" (Gary, African American

graduate).

"Theresa Brett signed me up for Merits. That was a good thing because I didn't hang out at the cultural centers, because I am biracial. It wasn't comfortable. It just wasn't my group. I felt most comfortable at the Office of Minority Student Affairs, because it was really a diverse, multi-cultural crowd and their program were geared toward retention" (Frank, African American graduate).

Those who made it through the institution learned to overcome bureaucratic adversity by eventually learning to navigate the structure of the institution. When they faced barriers, they learned to question authority and remained persistent in their attempt at problem solving. They didn't accept the first negative response given by the administration.

"My dad really helped me to find different ways of accomplishing the same goals. It's like a maze. My dad helped me to see those alternate routes. I've learned not to accept no as the final word at UA" (Paige, Hispanic graduate).

When students arrived on campus, they believed in the authority structure and didn't question it most of the time.

"That's why I think a lot of students don't always make it through. They don't know how things work; they don't know that "no" is not the last answer. I talked with these people (from the Cultural Resource Center), asked for help when I needed it" (Ryan, Hispanic graduate).

The students also expressed barriers to being accepted into the social system.

"It's hard to get involved if you're not in the Greek system. That tends to be the big social circle" (Sally, Hispanic graduate).

In reflection, students didn't feel the necessity of participating in organized, social activities for the sake of becoming socially accepted within the university structure.

"I had different priorities of what to do with my time, than to worry that I wasn't involved in a sorority or that I wasn't doing more activities on campus. That wasn't a problem" (Cheryl, Asian non-graduate).

"I think that if I didn't enjoy school socially, I still would have stayed and graduated, probably wouldn't have been happy, but...." (Diane, Asian graduate).

I didn't do clubs. My focus was school and graduating" (Frank, African American graduate).

### Academics

Persistence within the university through graduation rested largely on navigation through the university structure. Successful students utilized both academic and cultural resources to accomplish success. Most students who left the institution did so because of academic reasons. Minority

students who succeeded were less likely to accept barriers within the institution. They sought out academic and cultural support services.

Students who identified with their cultural background and used the academic and cultural support services were more likely to successfully navigate through the university system and persist through graduation. Support programs that the students were involved occurred primarily during their freshman year. The programs involved both mentoring and tutoring. Those who didn't participate in both the academic and cultural support systems were more likely to leave the institution. This was different for Asian students, who, overall, did not use the minority support programs, but still graduated.

"I think the services on campus are what kept me here, because I knew that I could go somewhere and get support. I couldn't go home, nobody at home knew, or could relate to what I was going through. In my circumstance, I didn't take offense to the assumptions made about me, because in my case they were true. First generation, struggling, did poorly on the SAT, (he scored 19) I was open to services. I accepted that I needed assistance because of the background I came from. This was an essential service for me to succeed in college" (Gary, African American graduate).

"At the UA, there was no support group and when things got difficult, I dropped out. If I had been more involved with my major, I think I would have pulled

through. I didn't discuss my college with my parents. I was ashamed, humiliated that the UA had gone badly for me" (Brian, Asian non-graduate).

"I was there (at UA) by myself, I didn't talk with anybody, I didn't tell anyone. I was there by myself and I didn't ask anyone for help. I didn't participate in class because I was too busy trying to catch up" (Marie, African American non-graduate).

"I wish someone had been there to explain things to me a little easier, better. When I was floundering, trying to keep myself academically awake, there was really no one I could talk to" (Nicole, Native American non-graduate).

Another influence on student persistence was faculty members. Throughout the students' academic careers, students named specific faculty members who had impacted their lives, both positively and negatively. Positive influences were those wherein the student felt the faculty member cared about his or her well being.

"One thing I found really helpful is when they (professors) would try to get to know you. The more personal touch is very important as a teacher, that they try to get to know you (Cody, Hispanic graduate).

Negative influences were when students felt they were being "weeded out" of a department or program, and when professors were impatient with questions, or too busy to answer them.

"Supportive faculty? Not in my college. A lot of them were trying to weed you out. We'd start with 80 students, and 25-32 graduated, From the first day you're in that college, they make it rough, they really didn't try to help, but it's like that in every college (Ryan, Hispanic graduate).

The minority students in this study talked about faculty more in the freshmen study than in the follow-up. The reason for this could be twofold. The first is that subjects have been away from college at the time of the follow-up interview. The second reason is that as freshmen, they felt it important to receive validation of their intellectual ability from their professors.

The sources in which students received navigational assistance were many. For some students, it was the positive influence of faculty, for others it was through the Office of Minority Student Affairs.

### Barriers

Many minority students experienced barriers, both academic and social, in their experience at the university. This related directly to the campus climate and the commitment on behalf of the institution to the minority student

population.

Minority students experienced concrete, navigational barriers to persistence. Some students were told by advisors and/or professors to change majors or career plans. This finding was particularly disturbing because it equated to an abuse of power.

"The Director of the Minority Engineering Program told me I should drop out of Engineering, change my major. That burned me. He didn't even sit down and talk with me, or look at my resume. I had one semester to go! I never went to talk with him again. I believed in myself more than to let someone else tell me what I could or could not do. I graduated and got a job as a process engineer with a good company" (Ryan, Hispanic graduate).

Two engineering students addressed the manner in which they were treated by faculty in their college. The male students went on to graduate. The female student did not.

"Engineering 101 with ---- hurt my self esteem and confidence. It hurt some of my friends in that they just changed to Business. The guy was a total jerk, treated everyone like crap. Granted, it's good to have tough courses, but you still treat students with respect. You're already scared your first semester in college, the last thing you need is someone to rain on your parade" (John, Hispanic graduate).

The female Native American non-graduate reiterated a similar experience.

"In Engineering 102 I had difficulty. I had instructors that would go at Mock II and I would ask a simple, stupid question, and they would go ugh, we only have 15 minutes, I would say, fine, talk fast. When I would go to professors' office hours, well it depended on how much time they had, because if they had a lot of students waiting outside, and here I was with a couple of little questions, they would say, read it again, read this chapter again, it will all make sense. It didn't" (Nicole, Native American non-graduate).

A female, Hispanic student who was in the pre-medical program was instructed not to "use" her minority status as an advantage for admission to medical school. She was rejected admission to the medical school at the study institution, yet went on to graduate and is now in a D.O. program out of state.

"I had one professor who took one look at my grades and said I would never be a doctor, that I would never make it; that if I did get into medical school, it was because I was Hispanic. I walked out in tears. He really hurt me to the core" (Paige, Hispanic graduate).

Another Hispanic student left college after failing several music juries.

"Most (music) students are confident and competent, and I was neither, so it was hard for him (my professor) to explain things. He's been a member of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra for years and he went to very good music schools, so he's probably never experienced this, never experienced failure" (Carl, Hispanic non-graduate).

### Barriers Outside the Classroom

Barriers that existed outside of the classroom were dependent on how students' cultural background was displayed to students of non-minority status. Often times, there was a large lack of cultural acceptance or understanding exemplified by other students that impacted the level of comfort students from minority backgrounds experienced.

The unique way minority students overcame barriers was an important point of focus. Minority students experienced barriers due to their ethnic backgrounds and often times, they didn't have navigational resources to overcome those barriers similar to their white student counterparts.

"I wanted to make an offering at dawn. I can't just go outside my hall and do it. Or, we have what is called mountain smoke, it's kind of like potpourri, but some people think it smells like pot. It's just a lot of people saying, well if you do this sacred chant here, what happens? I'd say get over it, I'm not going to curse anybody here, I just want to make an offering, I want to feel better spiritually. Nobody understood that. I told them (hall mates) my ideas of religion, which is not mainstream to anything else. After that there were asking me if I believed that the earth could cry and stupid things like that" (Nicole, Native American non-graduate).

Native American students displayed the most difference with regard to cultural actions when compared to white, middle

class values. Bothered by the fact that other students, especially student leaders, didn't address issues related to minority students, some Native American students felt that other students of non-minority status made little effort to understand diversity.

"I remember asking some people who were running for student government what they had thought about minorities in general, or if they had ever visited the Native American Resource Center. They said, umm, I am planning on getting over there and visiting, but never did. I think involvement should go beyond just doing your annual pow-wow, or Celebrate Diversity Week. There's a lot more stuff Native Americans can do besides just dance, and do all that kind of stuff" (Tanya, Native American student still attending college).

The barriers the students experienced within the classroom and outside of it was a source of discomfort for the minority students, depending on the salience of minority status. Compounded by this was the issue of gender. Women discussed instances of sexism that, at times, created a very uncomfortable climate.

"One teacher, in particular, when I would go in for help, he would just give me the answer instead of trying to help me to understand. I was talking to another student in class, who was male, and he told me that the teacher would never do anything like that for him. He always made him think harder and come up with the answer on his own. I was disappointed. I felt like the professor did it because I was female and he didn't want to bother trying to help me to understand" (Sally, Hispanic graduate).

"A lot of my classes made me realize what a man's world we live in. The issue of women and how they pertain to particular subjects wasn't discussed, and if you can't even deal with the issue of women, how are you going to deal with the issue of women of color?" (Bonnie, Hispanic graduate).

Although females experienced an added discomfort in male-dominated fields of study, that did not affect persistence (see Table 4.14). Further, most females in the study did not report experiencing sexism on campus.

Table 4.14

Graduation Rates by Gender

	<u>Percent Who Graduated</u>	<u>Percent Who Left</u>
Women	70	30
Men	57	43
Total	63	37
N= 24		

Personal Relationships

Students expressed the need to stay focused and find help. One thing that most students expressed as an impediment

to maintaining this focus was personal relationships.

"Utilize your resources. There are a lot of resources and that's what helped me get through and achieve what I've accomplished. You have to take a proactive approach, not waiting for things to come to you. Make sure you are aware of your resources and don't waste time. Don't get distracted by personal relationships; remember why you are here" (Frank, African American graduate).

Over half of the students expressed feelings of stress over personal relationships during their college career. This finding suggested that there should be assistance for students in navigating their personal lives.

#### Finances and Employment

The subjects discussed the issue of finances in terms of the fact that money is needed to go to college. Rarely did the students discuss their own personal financial situation. This could be due to the fact that most of the students who participated in this study are now working full-time and were self supportive, as opposed to being dependent on other sources (family and/or financial aid) for their financial stability. As freshmen college students, money was a big issue for the students, but as employed individuals, it was

rarely mentioned.

Throughout the subjects' college careers, most of the students were employed at one time or another. Employment was not an indicator of persistence regardless of whether the student worked on-campus, off-campus, or only when school was not in session (see Table 4.15). According to the student's, there was no clear delineation of whether working positively or negatively impacted their collegiate experience.

"Working positively and negatively impacted school. It positively impacted school because I had hands on experience in what I was learning in school, because it was career related. It negatively impacted school because it took time away from studying" (Paige, Hispanic Graduate).

"Working positively impacted school because it didn't allow me the time and the structure to mess around too much. I had to be focused. I worked until 3:00 a.m. and had classes at 8:00 a.m. You don't have time to mess around" (Bonnie, Hispanic Graduate).

Of the 25 students in this study, five worked on campus, seven worked off campus, six worked both on campus and off campus during their academic career, and seven were not employed during the school term. Six of the students who held employment left the study institution, while 11 of the students working graduated from college. Four of the students who graduated were not employed; three students who left

college prior to degree attainment were not employed.

Table 4.15

Student Employment & Persistence

	<u>Graduated</u>	<u>Withdrew</u>	<u>Attending</u>
Worked on campus	4	1	0
Worked off campus	2	4	1
Worked on & off campus	5	1	0
Not employed during school	4	3	0
Total	15	9	1

Current Employment

Of the 15 students who graduated from the study institution, most are currently employed in their major field of study or enrolled in post baccalaureate education (see Table 4.16). Three of the graduates are engineers, two are in business fields, two are in the healthcare field, and one student is working in media arts. Three students are continuing their education, and are not employed. One student is not working due to the recent birth of her baby. Three

students are continuing their education while working in their field.

Table 4.16

Current Occupations of Graduates by Gender

---

	<u>Employed in Field</u>	<u>Attending College</u>	<u>Employed/School</u>	<u>Not employed</u>
Men	6	1	2	0
Women	2	2	1	1
n=15				

---

CONCLUSION

The major findings of this research are summarized as follows:

1. The primary focus of college attendance for this group of minority students is academic in nature. Successful minority students seek academic and cultural navigational assistance with this process.

2. There are varying levels of identity salience regarding respective cultural background and heritage for minority students. This impacts the need for navigational assistance, comfort on campus, the use of minority support services, and their need for cultural support.
3. Pre-college characteristics such as college preparation and parents' educational backgrounds is important in determining the navigational needs of minority students. The level of parental support for college degree attainment on behalf of the subjects was strong for all subjects in this study.
4. The transition process to college only impacted persistence in terms of academics. The students who left did so due to academic probation or disqualification following approximately one year at the study institution.
5. Navigation through the university was the single most reported attributable factor in the students' persistence. Overcoming barriers through the

utilization of institutional academic and cultural resources was an important component to becoming a college graduate.

6. Campus clubs, sororities, fraternities, and organizations played a minimal role in the retention of minority students unless the club or organization assisted in the navigational process.
7. The college campus is an uncomfortable place for most minority students who identified with their cultural background.
8. Traditional theories of student retention do not fully explain the reasons behind minority student persistence.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

Traditional assumptions of the college student experience are entrenched in white, middle class values. Most minority students arrive at college with different values and beliefs than do the majority student population. Although some minority students deny their cultural background and embrace white, middle class values, most minority students in this study highly valued their cultural background and heritage. Due to cultural difference, minority students have different navigational needs than the larger white student population. Through this research there are several important discoveries regarding the minority student experience on the college campus. This research was conducted to discover the experience of the minority student on the college campus and how that experience impacts persistence. The six research questions that guided this study were the following:

1. From the students' perspective, what best describes reasons for staying in, or withdrawing from, college between and within the sample of students?
2. Does the issue of minority status play a role in the students experiences at the University of Arizona?
3. What are the most important influences on minority student retention at the study institution for this group of students? Are the factors described by the student primarily internal or external to the college campus?
4. Are there explanations different by gender and/or ethnicity?
5. Do the explanations given by the students fit with the predominant theories found in the retention literature (social integration, academic integration, motivation, campus climate, institutional commitment, finances), or are there other factors that influence the students action?

## Discussion

An important aspect that impacts minority student college persistence is successful navigation through the institution. Minority students experience several barriers within the structure of the university that impede their progress. The ability to navigate the college campus rests largely with minority status and what I term navigational capital. Minority students arrive on the college campus with different cultural capital. They are thrust into a setting that marginalizes their background through a lack of understanding, respect, and compassion. "Valuing diversity and embracing multi-culturalism" are catch phrases spoken by many, but practiced by few. Being relegated to accept their discomfort on campus, the primary focus of the minority student is not becoming socially accepted or integrated within the traditional social fabric of the institution. It is to focus on academic achievement and college graduation. Students do not accomplish success by becoming integrated within the academic community; they accomplish success by acquiring skills and knowledge that will enable them to overcome the many barriers they experience due to their minority status; thus, the Theory of Navigation.

The Theory of Navigation rests with the notion that the students' arrive on campus with the ability, commitment and familial support to succeed. Their primary purpose of continued college attendance, and ultimate success, is to navigate the structure of the college institution. This involves overcoming academic, social, and bureaucratic barriers. Students accomplish this by refusing to accept the negative authority of people in positions of power. It is important to note that those who hold power in an academic institution in relation to the student are multifaceted. The person in an academic setting who holds power may be the staff member at the financial aid desk, the faculty member teaching their course, or the advisor of their academic program. An important aspect to successful navigation is the ability of the minority student to seek out individuals, groups, and resources that will assist in their successful navigation through the university.

The Theory of Navigation assists in eliminating many preconceived notions, assumptions, and theoretical explanations surrounding minority students' experience in college and their persistence. The first issue addressed here is ethnic identity. Not all minority students identify with their respective cultural background. The salience of minority

student identity is different for minority students on campus. In this research, there emerged three categories that served to describe the participants. Minority students were cultural identifiers, cultural deniers, or students between two worlds.

Cultural identifiers arrived on campus with a clear commitment to their respective minority cultural background. Unique to this group of minority students was the desire to merge their cultural values and belief system within the university structure. Persistence for this group of students involved the navigational assistance of individuals and programs on campus of similar ethnic background. They sought experience wherein they didn't need to leave their culture and heritage at the institutions' door. When this group of students experienced barriers, they sought navigational assistance from individuals on campus who they saw similarly to themselves. Some commonalities included growing up in the same neighborhood, speaking the same language (other than English) in each others company, or participation in similar community events.

The cultural deniers didn't consider themselves as minority students. She or he identified with the majority, white student population on campus. This group of students knew relatively little or nothing about their cultural

background. For example, one student who reported on his application for admission to be Native American did not once mention any tribal affiliation. When this group of students sought assistance in their navigation, it was through mainstream techniques, if at all. The ethic of individualism was apparent in their demeanor. They sought out persons they saw similarly to themselves, or individuals with white, middle class values. The institution rewards this behavior and exemplifies this group of students as the "model minority." They fiercely denied minority programs and sometimes affirmative action. They embraced the functional perspective of meritocracy and were vocal in their beliefs.

The third group that emerged in regard to ethnic identity was students between two worlds. This group of students clearly identified with their cultural background, but had difficulty merging their cultural identity within the college community. Often times this was due to light skin color, language barriers (not being able to speak Spanish), or because they were biracial and identified with more than one cultural group. Successful navigation for this group of students was similar to that of cultural embraces; however, rather than being limited to their own cultural background for assistance, they sought assistance from a diverse group of

individuals on campus.

The target group of students and academic minority services on campus should be cultural identifiers and students between two worlds. These two groups of students participated in programs and services that assisted in their academic and cultural navigational efforts. Students who denied their cultural background identified with the white, majority student population. The level of identity salience informed the level of cultural navigation necessary.

Seymour and Hewitt (1997) identify three characteristics common to many minority students due to differences in cultural background. These are cultural restraint on self assertiveness, wherein the students will be less likely to take action when experiencing difficulty; self blame, versus holding accountable the university structure that is responsible for the barriers; and being self reliant rather than asking for help when experiencing difficult situations, whether they are academic, social, and/or bureaucratic. Minority students who are cultural deniers will, more than likely, address problems similarly to the majority population. They were not subject to cultural restraint, self blame, and won't request assistance from programs designed to help the minority student population. Further, they might view their

minority student college cohort in a very negative light. The following is an example of a statement made by a cultural denier in this study:

"One thing in general that I can't stand, and this is why I never took advantage of that Native American stuff, I am not a fan at all of this affirmative action business and the university really plays that up hard core, and I do not agree with that viewpoint at all. If you were white and middle class, you got the worst of it!"  
(Robert, Native American graduate)

Minority students who were between two worlds and those students who were cultural identifiers had the added responsibility of cultural representativeness. This responsibility went beyond the campus boundaries, extending into their respective cultural community. Having realized the importance of early academic navigation, this cultural identifier expressed the following sentiment:

"After my second year, I felt I had this big responsibility to the Hispanic community in helping others to have the opportunity that I had. There's a lot of kids out there, if they just knew there are people there that want to help you get there, then it wouldn't seem so impossible. So I spent a lot of time doing things with my community that I thought had a greater impact on the world than my grade point average" (Ryan, Hispanic graduate).

The additional responsibility takes time and energy that is not directed toward academics. Some students found it

difficult to balance their campus life with their life back home.

Most of the minority students in this study who identified with their cultural background utilized both academic and cultural resources to navigate through the university. Those who did not identify with their cultural background did not to use available academic support services on campus. Examples of cultural resources wherein students obtained navigational assistance were the Office of Minority Affairs (OMSA), the various cultural resource centers on campus, and faculty and administrators on campus, who, for the most part were of ethnic minority backgrounds. Examples of academic resources wherein students obtained roadmaps or navigational assistance were through minority tutoring services on campus, the Merits Program, the Student Encouragement Program (SEP), and through academic advising on campus. Programs that served as a source of both cultural and academic navigational assistance were the Minority Business Student Association (MBSA), the Minority Pre-Law Association, the Minority Engineering Program (MEP), the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and OMSA.

Table 5.0

---

 Theory of Navigation & Ethnic Identity Salience
 

---

## Sources of Navigational Assistance Acquired

<u>Identifiers</u>	<u>Cultural</u>	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Mainstream</u>	<u>None</u>
<b>Graduate</b>				
Cody	X	X		
Paige	X	X		
Bonnie	X	X		
Ryan	X	X		
Krista	X	X		
<b>Non-Graduate</b>				
Marie	X			
Luke	X			
Nicole		X		
<u>Between two Worlds</u>				
<b>Graduate</b>				
Sally	X	X		
John	X	X		
Frank	X	X		
Gary	X	X		
Connie				X
Pam			X	
Kevin				X
<b>Non-graduate</b>				
Beth		X		
Nathan				X
Tom				X
Tanya				X
Brian				X
<u>Deniers</u>				
<b>Graduate</b>				
Sam				X
Robert				X
Diane			X	
<b>Non-graduate</b>				
Carl				X
Cheryl				X

---

Identity salience was not a determinant of persistence. Sixty-three percent of cultural identifiers graduated, 58 percent of students between two worlds graduated, and 60 percent of non-identifiers graduated from the study institution. Of importance is identity salience and institutional interaction involving academic and cultural support once a minority student arrives on campus.

A real contribution of this research is pointing out the stratification within minority populations. The initial descriptors of the three identity classifications is the beginning of examining the minority student experience in a non dichotomous way.

#### Background Characteristics

Background characteristics of students entering college have been strongly associated with college persistence by many researchers. One characteristic is high school preparation for college work, primarily in terms of enrolling in college preparation or vocational courses during their high school career. Another is the students' high school grade point average. Standardized college entrance examinations are another background characteristic associated with college

success. The last is parents' educational achievement.

Lack of preparation for college is deemed an appropriate response to explaining why minority college students do not graduate at the same rate as their white student counterparts. This is the deficit model approach. Claims are made that there is something deficient surrounding the student's pre-collegiate experience that explains failure.

In this research, I found the assumptions addressing the deficit model with deficient background characteristics of minority students to be unfounded. Although lack of ability is certainly an explanation for some cases of college drop out, on average, the minority students in this study who entered the institution were slightly less prepared in standardized test scores, but not in other pre-college characteristics. As a group, they were similar in high school grade point average, with slightly lower scores on standardized examinations (see Table 3.9). Further, all of the minority students in this study reportedly completed a college preparatory path in high school. Parental attitudes and support of college attendance on behalf of their children were equally as strong whether or not the parent completed a college degree. The difference in parents educational background was only noticeable when students felt they

couldn't discuss academic issues with their parents.

### Motivation and Commitment

Minority students in this study were motivated and committed to earning a college degree. A contributing factor to persistence in the literature is a students' commitment to their goals and the motivation to achieve those goals; however, an important factor regarding minority students combines the ability to overcome barriers they experience due to their minority status. Without navigational assistance, regardless of how determined a student may be, the level of commitment becomes a mute point.

One finding in this study was that fourteen of the fifteen college graduates completed college with the same major area in which they began. When a student knew their future major and career path, it was easier to access academic and cultural resources necessary to succeed. Students who were undecided or changed their major could have had a more difficult time in their campus navigation.

For Asian students in this study, there is an exception. When parental pressure was placed on the student, she or he conformed to the dominant culture of higher education with

unquestioning rigor. What may appear to be stronger motivation to succeed was seen to be due to parental pressure that placed success at all costs. Further, Asian students in this study were more likely to have educated parents that could have assisted in navigation. In effect, the Asian students in this study arrived at college with more navigational capital than those from under-represented groups.

#### Integration and the Campus Climate

Becoming integrated within the social fabric of the college community is reportedly an important component to college student persistence. Interactionist theory claims that students who have successfully integrated into the campus community have moved away from norms and behaviors of past associations (Tinto, 1993). However, in this research, the minority students did not have any desire to give up past cultural associations in order to be successful in college. Further, Tinto claims that the majority of students who leave the institution prior to degree attainment do so because of non-academic reasons. This is not the case for this group of minority students. Most who left college did so due to academic problems.

Students did desire a caring and comfortable atmosphere. In fact, they expected it. However, most students did not feel comfortable due to the barriers they faced inside of the classroom. Often times this was directly due to their minority status.

A contributing factor to the lack of comfort experienced on campus by African American and Native American students in this study was the large class size. They felt alienated in large classes because there was little or no sense of community. Because the local Hispanic community is large, it seemed Hispanic students had more sources of cultural support. This contributed to their higher level of persistence.

The minority students in this study desired a more personal atmosphere. Native American, African American and Hispanic groups of students reportedly expected far more from professors in terms of a mentoring experience. In some cases, visits with the professor during office hours were the finishing point of alienation. Some students seek academic assistance from faculty during office hours. They would leave having been told the answer to their question without explanation or told reread the chapter in the text. This experience was recounted many times with students whose major was engineering. Much of the time, students who made an

academic connection with faculty did so with a professor of similar ethnic background.

Outside of the classroom, minority students, for the most part, did not feel comfortable. They felt as if they were not welcome and that traditional clubs and organizations existed for white students on campus. Students attempted to become involved in clubs and activities at the beginning of their college career, but felt misplaced due to ethnicity. When students did attend club meetings, they were the only minority student in attendance. In traditional student activities, such as homecoming and basketball games, students felt the activities didn't cater to them. Sometimes the creation of discomfort was more concrete when white students made racist comments directly to a minority student or about "other" minority students. In retrospect, the minority students in this study desired more social involvement, but it wasn't as important as their desire for academic success.

A barrier that was very difficult to overcome was the bureaucracy. When students encountered administrative difficulty, it was extremely stressful because the problems directly impacted their academics. There were many examples wherein navigating through this area was unfamiliar. It required questioning those in positions of power. Minority

students in this study were not used to questioning authority. With cultural and academic support, they did not accept the door being closed to them.

### Recommendations for Campus

Because this data set is small, further studies need to be conducted with a larger sample of students. Should the findings move in the direction of support of the proposed Theory of Navigation, several improvements could be made to increase the likelihood for success for the minority student population on campus.

1. Minority students who identify with their cultural background benefit greatly from mentoring relationships. Assigning a mentor of similar ethnic background is important for future navigational success. Minority students who attend the New Start program should be assigned a mentor prior to their first day as freshman.
2. In an effort to provide an adequate number of mentors, hiring more minority staff and faculty is recommended.
3. A clear understanding that both academic and student

affairs are responsible for increasing the quality of life of minority students. Minority students experience barriers inside and outside the classroom. A combined effort inside and outside the classroom to resolve the problem is required.

4. Enhance the academic learning services so that every entering freshman student has the opportunity to participate in the Merits Program or the Student Encouragement Program.
5. Make support services available in the evenings and in the residence halls. Most minority freshmen in this study began their college experience on campus living in a residence hall. By providing tutoring programs and college success programs in a convenient, safe place, more minority students will benefit from the services.
6. Embrace cultural difference through understanding and learning about the differences by a reunification of the various cultural centers in a move to be truly multi-cultural. By centralizing the various cultural centers on campus, those students who are in between two worlds will be more comfortable in participation.
7. Provide cultural awareness training for all new employees and annual diversity training for all current employees.

8. Utilize alumni from minority backgrounds to hold workshops on how they successfully navigated the university system.
9. Centralize most minority student services that provide both academic and cultural support to students.
10. Name a top administrator as an advocate for minority students. The administrator's primary responsibility should be to assist with minority students' academic and cultural navigation.

#### Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study is the size of the sample. Due to the small number of students in the subgroup, it is difficult to generalize to the larger minority student population.

Another limitation of this study was the inability to measure the socioeconomic background of the students in this study. The issue of student persistence on campus is certainly compounded by the economic resources of the student and her/his family.

Lastly, students who had completed their college degree were more likely to respond and participate in the follow-up

study. The percentage of those who graduated from the study institution is much larger than the general population of minority students on campus, and is higher than the students in the freshman sample.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The Theory of Navigation needs further investigation in order to realize its utility on college campuses nationwide. I recommend focus groups with minority students following their freshman, junior, and last year in college. Further, minority students who leave the institution prior to graduation should be interviewed to further test the Theory of Navigation.

An examination should be made of institutional records to determine the students' academic status at the time of departure. In this study, most students who left college did so due to academic reasons. In-depth examination should take place to see if this is representative of the larger minority student population.

A larger sample of students should be included in future research. This will enable the researcher to make clearer delineations by race, class, and gender. In this sample, for

example, it is impossible to generalize to the Native American student population when the sub-sample of Native American students is a total of four students. The difficulty in making delineations based on race also applies in the case of gender. Some females reported experiences wherein difficulty due to race was compounded by gender. However, with such a small sample of women, the findings are tenuous at best.

Since most minority students are concentrated in the community college system, studies should be conducted to test the utility of the Theory of Navigation by institutional type and control. Future assistance in the success and transfer of minority students to the university is important.

### Conclusion

The issue of minority student persistence is an important one in academia. All college students deserve similar chances for success. Because of the difference in cultural capital that minority students bring to campus, navigational assistance to success must be provided and reinforced to increase minority student persistence.

When minority students arrive on campus, not only do they have different navigational capital, but they also face

barriers due to their minority student status. Possessing different cultural and navigational capital places them at a distinct disadvantage to college degree attainment. It is the responsibility of the institution, not the student, to create ways for minority students to clear hurdles that are a direct result of different cultural and navigational capital.

Clearly, traditional theories of student retention do not fully explain minority student persistence. Students arrive on campus academically prepared for college, with parental support. They are highly motivated and committed to earning a college degree. Further, they go through a transition program, either the New Start Program or the Orientation Program to prepare for the transition from high school to college. However, their experience within the college setting is very different from what they expected. They require navigational assistance in the form of cultural and academic support. The level of cultural support required will differ based on the subjects cultural identity salience. The level of academic support will differ based on pre-college characteristics and the level of bureaucratic barriers the student experiences.

The amount of cultural navigational support required by each student varies dependent on minority identity status.

Next, one needs to examine ability and preparation for college work. Because most institutions of higher learning are entrenched in white, middle class values, minority status competes with, rather than complements, a minority students' successful collegiate experience. Minority identity salience interacts with the level of cultural support a student will need. In turn, the level of cultural identity determines the level of navigational assistance required for the sample of students in this study (see Table 5.0).

Academic navigational support in terms of administrators, faculty, advisors, and mentors is necessary to achieve higher persistence rates for minority college students. Society must move beyond the deficit model in explaining minority student withdrawal, and toward an atmosphere of equality of condition in which all students are given a similar opportunity to succeed in college.

**Appendix A**Minority Student Retention Project Initial Interview Schedule

Instructions to interviewer: Informally greet your student first. Hi (student's name). I really appreciate your participation in this research. After getting settled comfortably (eliminating all possible distractions) in the conference room, ask your student permission to tape the interview.

Read the next three paragraphs to subject:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an interviewer for a center at the University, where we study things like undergraduate education. The results are passed on to the University administration to be used for planning at the U of A. We really appreciate your help with this study. The information you give us will be useful for improving undergraduate education here.

Let me tell you a little about the interview. We would like your ideas and feelings about the school and your studies

here. We want to know about your plans, your friends and family, your studies, and your teachers. We also want to know about the things that make you feel welcome at the University as well as anything that makes you uncomfortable here.

Your name will never be used in any reports. Your remarks will be kept strictly confidential. After we finish, you will have the opportunity to make corrections or change anything you have said in the interview. We appreciate your candid and honest replies to the questions.

Are you ready?

[Turn the tape recorder on now.]

### General Questions

Let's start with some general questions about your first impressions of the University.

In general, what did you expect college would be like before you came here? Is college what you thought it would be, or is it different?

Probe: If YES, it's what I expected, how so?

If NO, it's different than I expected: How is it different than you expected?

What advice would you give to someone who was planning to come here as a freshman?

Probe: Anything else?

[You know, you show a lot of insight, thanks a lot!]

#### Goal Commitment

Let's talk about your goals, you know, your future plans a little bit.

When did you know that you were going to college?

Probe: Try to remember. Was it in high school, junior high, or elementary?

What made you think about going to college?

Probe: How's that?

Do you plan on getting a degree?

Probe: Can you tell me more about those plans?

What do you think you a degree will give you that you couldn't get without one?

Probe: I mean, what are you going to do with your college degree when you finish?

Since being here, have your original goals/ plans changed?

Probe: Could you describe how they are changing?  
Why do you think they are changing? That is, what's causing the change in your goals?

If you couldn't go to school full time, what would you do about getting your degree?

Probe: How would you feel about that?

What are some of the things that would make you want to quit school?

Probe: Could you tell me more about that?  
How does that make you feel?

Any other things that could make you quit?

Have you thought about quitting school since being here?

Probe: If YES, could you tell me more about that?

If NO, go to the next question.

What do you think has made you stay in school?

Probe: Think about it for a minute.

From what you know so far, what's it going to take for you to stay until you get a degree?

Probe: You know, like what kinds of things keep you going?  
(Be careful not to lead the respondent.)

Let's talk about your family. [pause] Tell me about your family.

Probe: Who is in your family?  
Where do they live?

If you withdrew from college right now, how would your family react?

Probe: What would your (parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles aunts, etc) do?  
What would they think?  
How would they feel?

How about your friends, how would they react if you quit

school?

Probe: What would they do?

What would they think?

How would your quitting make them feel?

Thinking about all of this, what keeps you in school?

Probe: I mean, what keeps you going?

Who encourages you the most?

Anything else?

#### Institutional Commitment

How committed do you feel the U OF A is to your success?

Probe: What makes you think this?

Can you give me an example of the U of A's  
commitment?

Are there any person who you admire at the U of A? Tell me  
about that person.

Probe: Someone who sets an example that you would like to  
follow.

What is it about them that you like?

What similarities do you share with that person?

How are the two of you different?

Why did you choose the U of A?

Probe: Did anyone influence you?

Who? When? Where?

Could you tell me more about that?

Do you think you will finish your degree?

Probe: At the U of A?

Have you considered transferring?

How's that?

[You doing okay? You're doing a great job so far!]

### Finances

How are you paying for your college education?

How confident do you feel about your college finances?

Did money enter into your decision to come to the U of A?

Is college costing you about what you thought it would?

Probe: If YES, what information did you have that enabled you to estimate the cost so closely?  
If NO, how much difference?

Are you working?

Probe: If YES, could you tell me more about your job?  
(Hours per week, on/ off campus kind of work, interferes with or enhances education).  
If NO, go to next question.

### Advising

Let's talk a little about advising now.

Do you have an advisor?

Probe: If YES, who is your advisor?  
How many times have you met with \_\_\_\_\_?  
Could you tell me about the meeting(s)?  
If NO, go to the last question of this section.

Tell me about your advisor. Is he/she a student, faculty, or counselor? Do you feel your advisor is interested in you?

When will you see your advisor again? Concerning what?

What are you overall impressions of advising at U OF A?

Probe: Would you explain that a little more?

Could you give me some examples?

Who else gives you advice? Where else do you receive advice?

Probe: On campus, off campus, other sources?

### Freshman Orientation

Did you attend Freshman orientation at the U OF A?

Probe: If NO, Why not? (Then go to first question on "Student Services").

If YES, Did you meet with an advisor at that time?

Is that the same advisor you have now?

What was helpful about Freshman orientation?

Probe: Could it be improved? How?

Could you give me some examples?

What did you hear during Freshman orientation about minority students?

Probe: Could you tell me more about that?

How do you feel about that?

What do you feel minority students need to know that wasn't presented?

### Student Services

So far we've talked about your plans, your family, your finances, and advising. I'd like you to take a moment to think about anything that we may or may not have touched on to answer the next question:

Have you had any problems so far at the U of A?

Probe: Some students have said that they have problems with the "bureaucracy."

Have you? Could you tell me more about that?

How do you generally deal with problems?

Are you aware of any services on campus like in Old Main that help students?

Probe: If YES, which ones?

How did you find out about it?

Did you use it, was it helpful?

Could the service be improved? How?

If NO, go to next question.

Are you familiar with the \_\_\_\_\_?

(Name of one of the four

cultural associations):

Asian American Cultural Association

African American Cultural Association

Chicano Student Center

Native American Cultural Center

Probe: If YES, what was your experience with the center?

If NO, go to next question.

Do you seek out other students and faculty who are similar to you culturally?

Probe: Could you tell me more about that?

How does that make you feel?

How's that important?

### Rites of Passage

Let's talk a little about the changes that you may be going

through since entering the U of A.

Are you different now from when you were a senior in high school?

Probe: If YES, could you describe to me how you are different?

If NO, do you think your friends or family see you differently?

If NO again, how do you think college generally changes people?

Could you give me examples of that?

How is college different than high school?

[You doing okay? You're really helping us out a lot!]

Lets' talk about your free time. What do you do in your free time? Is this different than what you used to do in your free time? How?

Describe the people you hang out with in your free time.

Probe: What do you do together?

Are they the same cultural group as you are?

Are they the same gender as you?

When you are together, what language(s) do you speak?

When do you feel the most comfortable on campus?

Probe: By comfortable, I mean accepted? When do you feel accepted?

Do you feel welcome in all groups, or do you feel more comfortable within your cultural group?

Probe: If YES, how's that? Could you tell me more about that?

Why do you tend to feel more comfortable?

If NO, why not?

What would it take to make you feel more comfortable here?

Where do you feel the most comfortable and welcome on campus?

Why?

Where do you feel the least comfortable on campus? Why? What

makes you feel that way?

Student Involvement

Let's talk about the activities your involved in.

What activities have you gotten involved with on campus?

Probe: How often do you participate in this?

How much time would you say you spend on \_\_\_\_\_?

Would you like to get more involved? Become less?

Why?

Who makes up this/ these groups? Culture, race,  
gender, etc.

What are the benefits to you of being a part of these activities?

(What do you get out of them?)

How did you find out about it/ them?

Are there other people in (name the activity) similar to you?

Probe: If NO, go to next question.

If YES, how are they similar? Culture, race,  
gender?

[You're doing great, thanks.]

What do you feel are real similarities and differences between yourself and other students around the campus?

Probe: How are you "like" other students?

How are you different?

### Academic Integration

Describe your academic skills.

Probe: Academically, what are you really good at?

What are you not so good at?

How will you improve these skills?

Talk about your study habits. How much time do you spend studying?

Let's talk about how you study. How much time do you spend studying? How do you study?

Probe: With others, alone, the night before the test, daily, cramming?

Are you satisfied with that?

Probe: If YES, how's that? How does that work for you?

If NO, how could you improve? Who do you think could help you?

What about your grades so far. Are they higher or lower than what you expected? How Come? Are you happy with your performance in your classes so far?

The U OF A has initiated a course requirement for many students that focuses on class, race, gender, or ethnicity. What do you think about that?

Let's talk about your best instructor so far.

[We don't need names here, just characteristics.]

What is he/she like? Gender/ ethnicity? Why is this your best instructor? What makes him or her so good?

Let's talk about your worst instructor so far.

What is he/ she like? Gender/ ethnicity? Why is this your worst instructor? What do they do that you really dislike?

How often have you talked to your instructors outside of class? What did you talk about?

Probe: in his/ her office? Where? After class?

Extracurricular?

Have you ever heard an instructor make a sexist or racist remark?

Probe: Was it in or out of class?

How did that make you feel?

What did you do about it?

How did other students react?

How about from other students? Have you heard them make a racist or sexist remark? (Use same probes as above.)

How about from friends or family? (Use similar probes.)

What makes a class work for you? Why?

How do you participate in your classes?

Probe: Interactions during class? Wait to be called on?

Volunteer information?

Never say anything?

How does participation in class make you feel?

How committed do you think the U of A is to your academic success?

Probe: How do you know this? What kinds of things have/have not happened to you that support your answer?

### Background Questions

We need a little background information, okay, then we're done.

What do your mom and dad do now?

How much schooling did your mom and dad get?

Probe: High school, college?

How about your brother(s)/ sister(s)?

Are you the first in your family to go to college? How do your brothers and sisters feel about that? Are you younger or older than them? Are your parents treating you differently than them? How? If other family members did or did not attend college, how did they influence you?

What is the highest academic degree you expect to get?

What job do you think you'll get?

Did you attend public o private high school?

In high school, did you take more college prep or vocational classes?

Did anyone, or any program in your community help you prepare for college other than your family? Who/What?

Do you remember anyone from U OF A (or another four year school) coming to your elementary or high school to encourage you to go to college?

Was there a program or class in high school to encourage you to go to college?

Was there a program or class in high school to ease the transition from high school to the U OF A?

What, if any programs, did you participate in (at UA or

sponsored by UA) prior to starting this year?

#### Final Questions

Any other advice you would give an incoming freshman?

What other thoughts, feelings, or concerns do you have about your experience so far at the U of A that were not covered in this interview?

What kind of difference does it make socially, academically, and/or personally that you are a member of an underrepresented group here at UA? Does it matter, do people treat you like it matters? Positive or negative?

Talk about any concerns and feelings you have about being from an underrepresented group. Do you/your family or friends have any concerns about it? Talk about those concerns.

Do you have anything else to add about anything that has to do with your being a freshman here?

[Your responses have really been great. I thank you!]

End of Interview.

**Appendix B**Interview Analysis Form

Instructions to reader: This interview analysis form is to be used as a segment of the data analysis for the Student Retention Project. In Part I, the questions are general. You are to answer in an impressionistic manner. Read the interviews thoroughly one time, then answer these questions. Part II is more specific. You may refer back to the interview to complete these questions. In answering the questions, specify how the student has responded.

Name of the interviewee:

Date of analysis:

Cultural group of interviewee:

While reading through the interview, did you find the responses consistent or did they seem fragmented? Did the interview flow smoothly?

PART I General Questions

What evidence is there that being a minority seems to matter to this student? Is "minority" an issue?

Does the student report to fit in here at Arizona?

What are the first, second, and third most important themes in this interview? Why did these stand out?

1.

2.

3.

## PART II Specific Questions

How does the student report to be socially adjusting?

How does the student report to be academically adjusting?

What examples of commitment does the student report?

Has the student considered leaving school? Why?

What encouragement does the student report regarding being in school?

What has the student said about UA as an institution?

What problems does the student have with finances relating to their decision to stay here? How is tuition being paid? Is the student working? What about money for this student?

Describe the students' experience with advising at UA?

Describe the students' experience with Orientation?

Does this student utilize any programs/ services at UA?  
Specifically list these programs.

How did the student evaluate or talk about these programs?

How did they find out about them?

Report the students' involvement in any other activities  
unrelated to the campus? (work, church, etc.)

What changes does the student report having gone through since  
arriving at UA?

How does the student report to be doing academically? How  
does the student seem to measure this?

What is said about teaching, instruction, class interactions, participation?

Has the student heard anyone remark in a sexist or racist tone? Describe the situation.

What does the student report are the strongest influences on retention at UA?

**Appendix C**

## Follow-Up Interview Guide

This schedule was used as a guide.

Student Name:

Academic History at UA:

Other Institutions attended :

Approximate grade point average:

Interview Schedule:

General

In general, was your college experience at the UA what you expected? Why/ why not?

What advice would you give to someone planning their college education? Would you recommend the UA?

What did you think about the UA? Commitment?

Goal Commitment

What major did you begin college with? Did that change?

Did you think about quitting college since you began in 1990?

What made you feel like that?

Were you on course with your graduation plans? Did anything impede or interfere with your plans?

Did you take any courses at another college?

Participation (social integration)

You talked about wanting to participate in activities on campus. What kinds of activities did you participate in during college?

What about club participation?

What were your experiences at the \_\_\_\_\_ Cultural Center?

Where did you live throughout your undergraduate years? Can you tell me about that experience?

You mentioned in the first interview that your family encouraged you to stay in college. Did they continue to influence you to stay in school?

#### Culture/ Identity

What were the strongest influences in your life during college? (Family, friends).

More specifically...can you name a friend, a faculty member, an administrator, a group, etc.

How did the influence impact you?

What about culture, how did it feel being a minority on campus?

#### Academic Integration

What academic subjects do you excel in?

Are they the same ones that you enjoy, that you like?

What subjects do you experience difficulty in?

Did you speak with professors outside of class? How often?

Did you feel comfortable participating in your classes? Did that change as you progressed through college?

What kind of academic support did you receive? Was it from academic or faculty advisors?

Did you use the tutoring services on campus?

What about participation in study groups? Who comprised those groups?

What did it take for you to succeed academically at the UA?

### Work

Did you work while going to college? Where?

Was it academically oriented? Do you think working positively

or negatively impacted school?

Can you tell me more about that?

What are you doing now? Where are you employed? Are you happy there, I mean, do you enjoy your career?

Could you have the position you are now in without a college degree?

### Conclusion

What other thoughts, feelings, or concerns do you have about your UA experience that were not covered in this interview?

### Parents Background

How would you describe your parents socioeconomic status when you began college?

Father:

Mother:

What kinds of courses did you take in high school? Were they college preparation, or vocational types of courses?

Do you have anything to add about the UA?

Do you have any other general comments?

Thank you very much for your time and support of this research!

[End of Interview].

## REFERENCES

- Allen, W. (1988). Improving Black student access and achievement in higher education. The Review of Higher Education, 11 (4), 403-416.
- American Council on Education (1987). Minorities in Higher Education. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.
- Apple, M. & Weiss, L. (1986). Seeing education relationally: the stratification of culture and people in the sociology school of knowledge. Journal of Education, 168(1), 7-34.
- Arizona Board of Regents. (1989). Our Common Commitment: A Report and Recommendations of the Regents' Ad Hoc Committee on University Access and Retention. Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix, Az.
- Arizona Board of Regents. (1988). Final report: Education, efficiency and competitiveness, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix, Az.
- Astin, A. (1975). Preventing Students from Dropping Out. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. (1977). Four Critical Years: Effects of College on Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. (1982). Minorities in American Higher Education. San Francisco Jossey Bass.
- Astin, A. (1984). Student Involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. Journal of College Student Personnel, July, 297-308.
- Astin, A. (1990). Educational assessment and educational equity. American Journal of Education, 98 (4), 389-425.
- Astin, A. (1993). What Matters in College? San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. (1996). Involvement in learning revisited: Lessons

- we have learned. Journal of College Student Development, 37 (2), 123-134.
- Attanasi, L. (1989). Getting in: Mexican Americans' perceptions of university attendance and the implications for freshman year persistence. Journal of Higher Education, 60 (3), 247-277.
- Attanasi, L. (1992). Rethinking the study outcomes of college attendance. Journal of College Student Development, 33, 61-70.
- Bean, J. (1980). Dropouts and turnover: The synthesis and test of a causal model of student attrition. Research in Higher Education, 12, 155-187.
- Bean, J. (1982). Conceptual models of student attrition: How theory can help the institutional researcher. In E. Pascarella (ed), Studying Student Attrition p. 17-33, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bean, J. (1983). The application of turnover in work organizations to the student attrition process. Review of Higher Education, 6, 129-148.
- Bean, J. (1985) Interaction effects based on class level in an exploratory model of college student dropout syndrome. American Educational Research Journal, 22 (1), 35-64.
- Bean J. & Hossler, D. (1990). The Strategic Management of College Enrollments. San Francisco, Jossey Bass.
- Bean, J. & Metzner, B. (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. Review of Educational Research, 55 (4), 485-540.
- Bean, J. & Vesper, N. (1992). Student dependency theory: An explanation of student retention in college. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Minneapolis, MN.
- Blank, R. & Slipp, S. (1994). Voices of Diversity. AMACOM, American Management Association.
- Borowski, F. (1988). The university president's role in establishing an institutional climate to encourage

- minority participation in higher education. Peabody Journal of Education, 66, 32-45.
- Bowen, W. & Breneman, D. (1993). Student Aid: Price Discount or Educational Investment? The College Board Review, 167, 2-6, 35-36.
- Boudieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (ed.), Handbook of Theory and Research in the Sociology of Education. New York: Greenwood Press, 241-258.
- Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976). Schooling in Capitalist America. New York: Basic Books.
- Braxton, J., Vesper, N. & Hossler, D. (1995). Expectations for college and student persistence. Research in Higher Education, 36, 595-612.
- Braxton, J., Sullivan, A., Johnson, R. (1997). Appraising Tinto's theory of college student departure. In J. Smart (ed), Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, 9, New York: Agathon Press, 107-163.
- Brint, S. (1989). American education, meritocratic ideology, and the legitimation of inequality: the community college and the problem of American exceptionalism. Journal of Higher Education, 18 (6), 725-735.
- Brint, S. & Karabel, J. (1989). The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America: 1900-1985. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brint S. & Karabel, J. (1989). The community college and democratic ideals. Community College Review, 17 (2), 9-19.
- Brown, C. (1991). Increasing minority access to college: Seven efforts for success. NASPA Journal, 28 (3), 224-230.
- Brown, L. & Kurpius, S. (1997). Psychosocial factors influencing academic persistence of American Indian students. Journal of College Student Development, 38, (1) 3-12.
- Burrell, L. & Trombley, T. (1983). Academic advising with

minority students on predominantly white campuses. Journal of College Student Development, 24, 121-126.

Cabrera, A., Castenada, M., Nora, A., & Hengstler, D. (1992). The convergence between two theories of college persistence. Journal of Higher Education, 63 (2), 143-164.

Cabrera, A., Nora, A. & Castenada, M. (1992). The role of finances in the persistence process: a structural model. Research in Higher Education, 33, 571-594.

Cabrera, A., Nora, A., & Castenada, M. (1993). College persistence: structural equations modeling test of an integrated model of student retention. Journal of Higher Education, 64, 123-139.

Cabrera, A., Stampen, J., & Hansen, W. (1988). Exploring the effects of ability to pay on persistence in college. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, St. Louis, MO.

Campus Climate Committee (1990). Survey on campus climate. University of Arizona, Division of Student Affairs.

Canabal, M. (1995). Native Americans in higher education. College Student Journal, 29, 455-457.

Christie, N. (1992). Withdrawing from Public Urban High School: Explanations based on theories of student departure. University of Arizona, 1992.

Christie, N. and Dinham, S. (1991). Institutional and external influences on social integration in the freshman year. Journal of Higher Education, 62, 412-436.

Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac Issue. Facts about higher education in the U.S., each of the 50 states. September 1, 1995.

Chun, K. (1980). The Myth of Asian American Success and Its Educational Ramifications. In D. Nakanishi (ed), The Asian American Educational Experience: A Sourcebook for Teachers and Students. New York: Routledge.

Cibik, M. & Chambers, S. (1991). Similarities and

- differences among Native Americans, Hispanics, Blacks, and Anglos. NASPA Journal (2), 129-139.
- CIRP. Cooperative Institutional Research Program, 1990. Los Angeles Graduate School of Education, University of California.
- Clark, B. (1960). The cooling out function in higher education. American Journal of Sociology, 65 (6), 569-576.
- Cope, R. & Hannah, W. (1975). Revolving College Doors. New York: Wiley & Sons.
- Cross, K. (1971). Beyond the Open Door. London: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Crowson, R. (1987). Qualitative research methods in higher education. In J. Smart (ed), Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research. New York: Agathon Press.
- Cuch, F. (1987). Cultural perspectives on Indian education. Equity and Excellence, 23, 65-76.
- Dehyle, D. (1992). Constructing failure and maintaining cultural identity: Navajo and Ute school leavers. Journal of American Indian Education, 31, 24-47.
- Delgado, R. (1996). The Coming Race War? And Other Apocalyptic Tales of America after Affirmative Action and Welfare. New York University Press: New York and London.
- DeLuca, A., Kroc, R., & Woodard, D. (May, 1996). National Graduation Rate Study Special Report: Institutional Culture and Minority Student Retention. University of Arizona, Department of Higher Education.
- Diesing, P. (1971). Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences. Chicago: Aldine.
- Digest for Education Statistics (1997). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- Dinham S. and Romo M. (1992). In Their Own Words: Qualitative Research in Minority Student Assessment. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational

Research Association, San Francisco.

- Dorsey-Gaines, C. & Lewis, B. (1987). How to start a minority recruitment program: A case study. Journal of College Admissions, 116, 3-6.
- Dougherty, K. (1987). The effects of community colleges: aid or hindrance to socioeconomic attainment? Sociology of Education, 60, 86-103.
- Durkheim, E. (1951). Suicide. Translated by J. Spaulding and G. Simpson. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Eimers, M. & Pike, G. 1997. Minority and nonminority adjustment to college: Differences or similarities? Research in Higher Education, 38 (1), 77-97.
- Feldman, K. & Newcomb, T. (1969). The Impact of College on Students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fleming, J. (1984). Blacks in College: A Comparative Study of Students Success in Black and White Institutions. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fox, R. (1986). Application of a conceptual model of college withdrawal to disadvantaged students. American Educational Research Journal, 23 (3), 414-424.
- Gibbs, J. (1974). Patterns of adaption among Black students at a predominantly white university: selected case studies. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 44, 728-740.
- Giroux, H. (1992). Border Crossings. London: Routledge Press.
- Giroux, H. (1993). Living Dangerously: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference. New York: Peter Lang.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goetz, J. & LeCompte, M. (1984). Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. Orlando, Fl.: Academic Press.
- Green, B. (1991). A Longitudinal/ Panel Study of Persisting and Non-Persisting Rural Minority College Students.

Research Bulletin: South Carolina State College.

- Grubb, W. (1991). The decline of community college transfer rates: evidence from national longitudinal surveys. Journal of Higher Education, 62, 194-217.
- Hagedorn, L., Nora, A., & Pascarella, E. (1996). Pre-occupational segregation among first year college students. Journal of College Student Development, 37 (4), 425-437.
- Hanson, S. (1994). Lost talent: Unrealized aspirations and expectations among U.S. youths." Sociology of Education, 67 (3), 159-183.
- Hayes, E. Environmental Press and Psychological Need as Related to Academic Success of Minority Group Students." Journal of Counseling Psychology, 21 (4), 299-304.
- Hurtado, S. (1992). The campus racial climate: Contexts of conflict. Journal of Higher Education, 63 (5), 539-569.
- Karabel, J. (1972). Community colleges and social stratification. Harvard Educational Review, 42(4), 521-562.
- Kenton, S. & Valentine, D. (1997). Crosstalk: Communicating in a Multicultural Workplace. Prentice Hall.
- Kerlinger, F. (1986). Foundations of Behavioral Research (3rd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Kitano, H. & Sue, S. (1973). The Model Minorities. Journal of Social Issues, 29, 1-9.
- Kraemer, B. (1993). "The Dimensionality of Academic and Social Integration in Persistence Studies of Hispanic Students." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Pittsburgh, November, 1993.
- Kraemer, B. (1997). The integration of Hispanic students into college. The Review of Higher Education, 20 (2), 163-179.
- Lang, M. & Ford, C. (1992). Strategies for Retaining Minority Student in Higher Education Charles C. Thomas Publisher.

- Lomotey, K. "The Retention of African American Students: The effects of Institutional Arrangements in Higher Education." Paper presentation at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April, 1990.
- London, H. (1978). The Culture of a Community College. New York: Praeger.
- Loo, C. And Rolison, G. Alienation of ethnic minority students at a predominantly White university." Journal of Higher Education, 57, 59-77.
- McCool, A. (1984). Factors influencing Hispanic student retention within the community college. Community/Junior College Quarterly, 8 (4), 19-37.
- McEwen, M., Roper, L., Bryant, D., & Langa, M. (1990). Incorporating the development of African-American students into psychosocial theories of student development. Journal of College Student Development, 31, 429-436.
- Mayo, J., Murgia, E., & Padilla, R. Social integration and academic performance among minority university students. Journal of College Student Development, 36, 542-552.
- McIntosh, B. (1987). Special needs of American Indian students. Mesa Community College, Office of Research and Development, Mesa, Arizona.
- Metzner, B. & Bean, J. (1987). The estimation of a conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. Research in Higher Education, 57, 58-77.
- Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1984). Qualitative Data Analysis: A Source book of New Methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Millem, J. & Berger, J. (1997). A modified model of college student persistence: Exploring the relationship between Astin's theory of involvement and Tinto's theory of student departure. Journal of College Student Development, 38 (4), 387-399.
- Mow, S. & Nettles, M. (1990). Minority student access to and persistence and performance in college: a review of the

trends and research literature. Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, 6, New York : Agathon Press. 35-105.

Munoz, D. (1986). Identifying areas of stress for Chicano undergraduates. In M. Olivas (ed), Latino College Students. New York: Teachers College Press.

Murgia, E. Padilla, R., & Pavel, D. (1991). Ethnicity and the concept of social integration in Tinto's model. Journal of College Student Development, 32, 433-439.

Nakanishi, D. & Hirano-Nakanishi, M. (1983). The Education of Asian and Pacific Americans: Historical Perspectives and Prescriptions for the Future. Phoenix, Az: Oryx Press.

National Center for Education Statistics (1995) "Enrollment in Higher Education: Fall 1984 through Fall 1993." Eric document # ED381110.

National Commission on Testing and Public Policy (1990). From Gatekeeper to Gateway: Transforming Testing in America. National Commission on Testing and Public Policy. Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA.

Nettles, M. (1988). Toward Black Undergraduate Student Equality in American Higher Education. New York: Greenwood Press.

Nettles, M., Thoeny, A., Gosman, E. (1986) Comparative and predictive analyses of Black and White students' college achievement and experiences." Journal of Higher education, 57 (3), 289-318.

Noel, L. & Levits, R., eds. (1985). Increasing Student Retention. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Nora, A. (1987). Determinants of retention among Chicano college students: A structural model. Research in Higher Education, 26, 31-51.

Nora, A. (1993). Two year colleges and minority students' aspirations: Help or hindrance? In J. Smart (ed). Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, 9, New York: Agathon Press. 212-247.

- Nora A. & Cabrera, A. (1996). The role of perceptions of prejudice and discrimination on the adjustment of minority students to college. Journal of Higher Education, 67 (2), 119-148.
- Ogbu, J. (1987). Variability in minority school performance: A problem in search of an explanation. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 18 (4), 312-334.
- Olivas, M. (1979). The Dilemma of Access: Minorities in Two-year Colleges. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press.
- Olivas, M. (ed.). (1986). Latino College Students. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Pascarella, E. (1985). College environmental influence on learning and cognitive development: A critical review and synthesis. In J. Smart (ed), Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, 1. New York: Agathon Press.
- Pascarella, E., Edison, M., Nora, A., Hagedorn, L., & Terenzini, P. (1996). Influences of students' openness to diversity and challenge in the first year of college. Journal of Higher Education, 67 (2), 174-195.
- Pascarella, E. & Terenzini, P. (1978). The role of students' background and levels of academic and social integration in college attrition: A test of a model. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Canada, March 1978.
- Pascarella, E. & Terenzini, P. (1980). Predicting freshman persistence and voluntary dropout decisions from a theoretical model. Journal of Higher Education, 51, 60-75.
- Pascarella, E. & Terenzini P. (1992). How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights from Twenty Years of Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Person, D. & Christensen, M. (1996) Understanding Black student culture and Black student retention. NASPA Journal, 34 (1), 47-56.
- Ramirez, M. & Castenada, A. (1974). Cultural Democracy,

- Bicognitive Development, and Education. New York: Academic Press.
- Rhoads, R. & Valadez, J. (1996). Democracy, Multiculturalism, and the Community College. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Richardson, R. (1992). Helping First Generation Minority Students Achieve Degrees. New Directions for Community Colleges, 20 (4), 29-43.
- Richardson, R. And Skinner, E. (1990). Adapting to diversity: Organizational influences on student achievement. Journal of Higher Education, 61, 485-511.
- Rhoades, G. (1990). Calling on the past: The quest for the collegiate model." Journal of Higher Education, 61, 512-34.
- Rodriguez, C. (1993). Minorities in science and engineering: patterns for success. University of Arizona.
- St. John, E. & Noell, J. (1989). The Effects of Student Financial Aid on Access to Higher Education: An Analysis of Progress with Special Consideration of Minority Enrollment. Research in Higher Education, 30 (6), 563-581.
- St. John, E. (1991). What really influences minority attendance? Sequential analysis of the high school and beyond sophomore cohort. Research in Higher Education, 32, 141-158.
- Sanders, S. (1997). Social class reproduction: a case study at a large public university. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona.
- Sedlacek, W. (1987). Black students in White campuses: 20 years of research. Journal of College Student Personnel, 28 (6), 484-495.
- Seymour, E. & Hewitt, N. (1997). Talking About Leaving: Why Undergraduates Leave the Sciences. Westview Press.
- Skinner, E. (1988). Making it in a Majority University: The Minority Graduate's Perspective. Change, 20 (3), 34-42.

- Slaughter, S. (1991). The Official Ideology of Higher Education: Ironies and Inconsistencies. In W. Tierney (ed.), Culture and Ideology in Higher Education: Advancing a Critical Agenda, 59-86. New York: Praeger.
- Slaughter, S. (1993). Retrenchment in the 1980's: the politics of prestige and gender. Journal of Higher Education, 64 (3), 250-282.
- Smedley, B., Myers, H. & Harrell, S. (1993). Minority-status stresses and the college adjustment of ethnic minority freshmen. Journal of Higher Education, 64, 435-452.
- Spady, W. (1970). Dropouts from higher education: An interdisciplinary review and synthesis. Interchange, 1, 64-85.
- Stage, F. & Rushin, P. (1993). A combined model of student predisposition to college and persistence in college. Journal of College Student Development, 34, 276-281.
- Stampen, J. & Cabrera, A. (1988). Exploring the effects of student aid on attrition. Journal of Student Financial Aid, 16, 28-40.
- Stampen, J. & Fenske, R. (1988). The impact of financial aid on ethnic minorities. The Review of Higher Education, 11 (4), 337-353.
- Stoecker, J., Pascarella, E., & Wolfle, L. (1988). Persistence in higher education: A 9-year test of a theoretical model. Journal of College Student Development, May 29, 196-210.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Suzuki, B. (1977). Education and the socialization of Asian Americans: A revisionist analysis of the model minority thesis. In D. Nakanishi (ed.), The Asian American Education Educational Experience: A Sourcebook for Teachers and Students. New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, C. (1985). Effective Ways to Recruit and Retain Minority Students. Published by NMCC Publications.

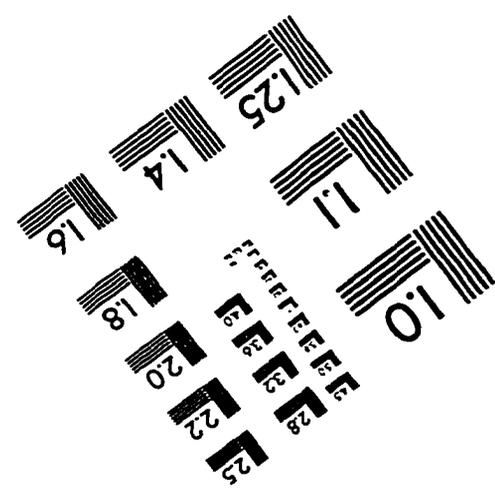
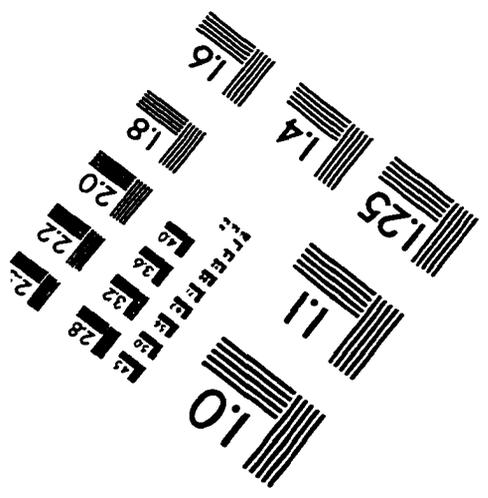
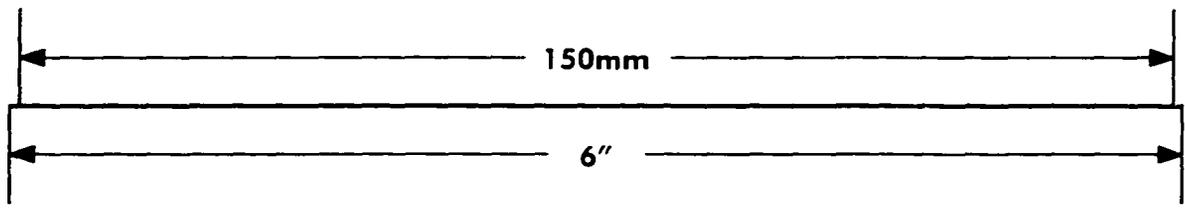
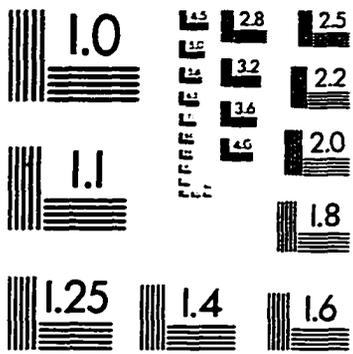
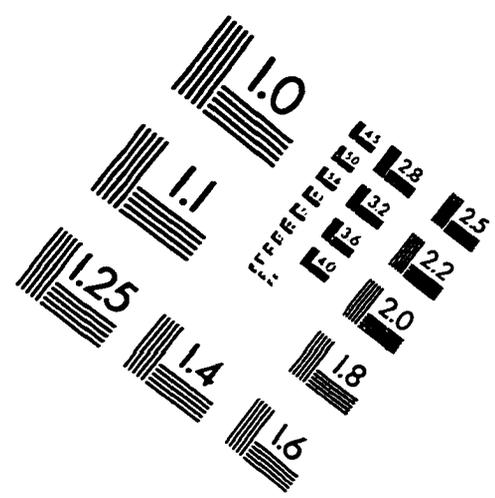
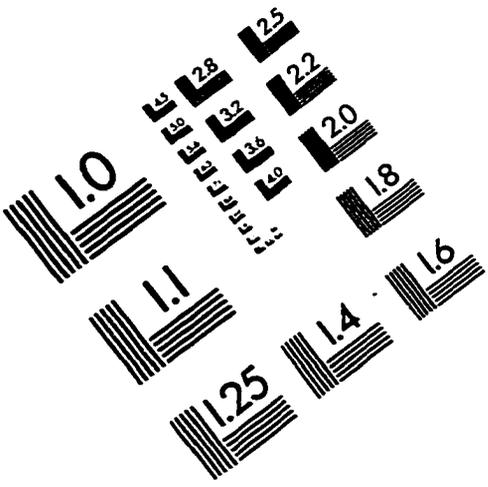
- Terenzini, P. (1980). An evaluation of three basic designs for studying attrition. Journal of College Student Personnel, 21 (3), 257-263.
- Terenzini, P. & Pascarella, E. (1977). Voluntary freshman attrition patterns of social and academic integration: A test of a conceptual model. Research in Higher Education, 6, 25-43.
- Terenzini, P. & Pascarella, E. (1978). The role of student's backgrounds and levels of academic and social integration in college attrition. ERIC ED 152 186.
- Terenzini, P. & Pascarella, E. (1980). Toward a validation of Tinto's model of college attrition: A recent review of studies. Research in Higher Education, 12, 271-282.
- Terenzini, P., Rendon, L., Upcraft, L., Millar, S. Allison, K., Gregg, P., & Jalomo, R. (1994). The transition to college: Diverse students, diverse stories. Research in Higher Education, 35, 57-73.
- Terenzini, P. & Wright, T. (1987). Influences on students academic growth during four years of college. Research in Higher Education, 26, 161-179.
- Terrell, M. & Watson, L. (1996). Collaborative partnerships for a diverse community. Journal of College Student Development, 37, 249-252.
- Tierney, W. (1991). Culture and Ideology in Higher Education: Advancing a Critical Agenda. New York: Praeger.
- Tierney, W. (1992) An anthropological analysis of student participation in college. Journal of Higher Education, 63, 584-618.
- Tierney, W. (1993). The college experience of Native Americans: A critical analysis. In L. Weiss & M. Fine (eds.). Beyond Silenced Voices: Class, Race, and Gender in United States Schools. Inthaca, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A Theoretical synthesis of recent research. Review of Educational Research, 45, 89-125.

- Tinto, V. (1982). Limits of theory and practice in student attrition. Journal of Higher Education, 53 (6), 687-700.
- Tinto, V. (1987). Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Tinto V. The principles of effective retention. Paper presented at the Maryland College Personnel Association, Largo, MD, November 1987.
- Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. Journal of Higher Education, 59, 438-455.
- Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition (2nd ed.). Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Tracey, T. & Sedlacek, W. (1985). The relationship of noncognitive variables to academic success: A longitudinal comparison by race. Journal of College Student Personnel, 26, 405-410.
- Trent, J. & Medsker, L. (1968). Beyond High School. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- University of Arizona (1995). Transformation Beyond the Year 2000: The University of Arizona Strategic Plan. Draft 21, the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.
- University of Arizona Strategic Plan. (1995). Transformation Beyond the Year 2000. Draft 21. Reprinted in Lo Que Pasa, 1996.
- University of Arizona General Catalog. (1995-1997). The University of Arizona. Tucson, Az.
- Upcraft, M. & Gardner, J. (1989). Freshmen year experience: helping students survive and succeed in college. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Valadez, J. (1995). Educational access and social mobility in a rural community college. The Review of Higher Education, 19 (4), 391-409.

- Van Gennep, A. (1960). The Rites of Passage. Translated by M. Vizedon and G. Caffee. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Viri, D. (1989). Subjective realities of American Indian students in an urban community college setting: a Tohono O'odham case study. University of Arizona.
- Webb, E. (1987). Retention and excellence through student involvement: A leadership role for student affairs. NASPA Journal, 24 (4), 6-11.
- Weiss, L. (1982). Minorities in the two year college sector: a case study. Community College Review, 9, 28-35.
- Weiss, L. (1985). Working Class Without Work: High School Student in a Deindustrialized Economy. New York: Routledge.
- Weiss, L. & Fine, M. (Eds.). (1993). Beyond Silent Voices: Class, Race, and Gender in United States Schools. Albany: State University of New York.
- Wenzlaff T. & Biewer, A. (1996). Native American students define factors for success. Tribal College, 7, 40-44.
- Willis, P. (1977). Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs. Aldershot: Gowen.
- Wolf, W. & Melnick, R. (Eds.). (1990). The status of minority students at Arizona State University. Tempe, AZ: Survey Research Laboratory.
- Wong, M. (1980). Model students?: Teachers' perceptions and expectations of their Asian and White students. Sociology of Education, 53, 236-246.
- Wood, J. (1988). Minority Education in Arizona's Universities. Working paper included in the final report to the Arizona Board of Regents' Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness. ED306797.
- Wright, D. (1987). Minority students: developmental beginnings. In D. Wright (ed.). Responding to the Needs of Today's Minority Students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 5-22.

Zeller, W., Kantz, K. & Scheiter, K. (1990). Creating partnerships with academic affairs to enhance the freshman year experience. Journal of College and University Housing, 20, 14-17.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc  
 1653 East Main Street  
 Rochester, NY 14609 USA  
 Phone: 716/482-0300  
 Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved