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Impact Of Retention Initiatives On The Levels Of Self-Efficacy And Hope In African American Students On A Historically Black College And University Campus In Kentucky

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IMPACT OF RETENTION INITIATIVES ON THE LEVELS OF SELF-EFFICACY
AND HOPE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS ON A HISTORICALLY BLACK
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IN KENTUCKY

BY

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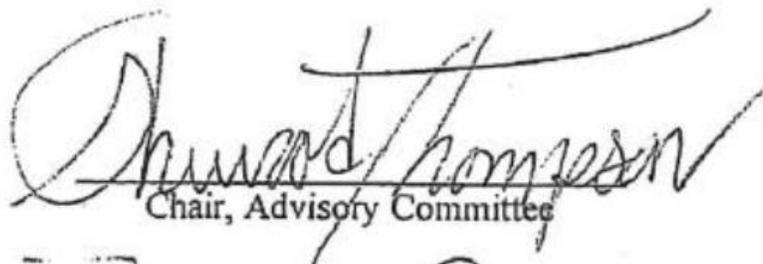
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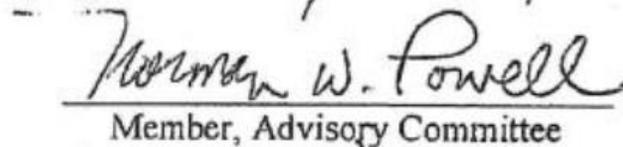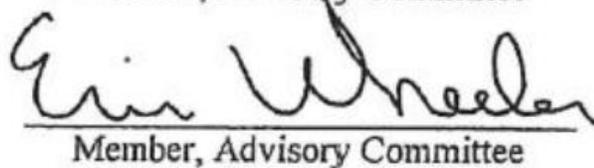
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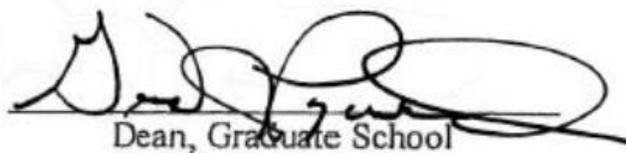
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Ashley White, and my daughter, Morgan

White, for their love, support, and unswerving loyalty.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study examined the levels of self-efficacy and hope of the students at-risk that participated in a college program with multiple retention initiatives. The students selected were identified as students at-risk due to their high school GPAs and standardized test scores. The initiative focused on enhancing their self-efficacy and hope through additional resources that assisted with a student's academic and social life. The development of self-efficacy has been proven important to a student's academic, cognitive, and personal development. Hope has been proven to be important in finding different routes to success and the motivation a person has to take those routes. This study displays the significant role that multiple retention initiatives can play as it relates to self-efficacy and hope. It is hoped that professionals will be able to create methods that will help students to develop high levels of hope and self-efficacy that will lead to better graduation rates for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Due to under preparedness, many African Americans are in need of additional academic assistance in the higher education system. According to Gentry (1972), African Americans are typically subject to under preparedness due to poor educational systems. "In urban, predominantly Black school settings, contemporary problems include: weak college preparatory curriculums, low Advanced Placement exam passing rates, ineffective and insufficient guidance counselor services, unqualified teachers, minimal and archaic school materials, and inadequate school facilities (Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010, p. 504). One potential way to relieve this issue is to encourage attendance at Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which have traditionally had more success in graduating African Americans (Fleming, 1984). In light of the opportunities they offer, HBCUs need to ensure that they know how to serve those with additional academic needs. According to Tinto (1993), HBCUs generally enroll African American students at high rates, but could do more to retain their freshmen.

Multiple scholars have found that "limited resources affect many institutions' abilities to offer adequate support services for the large number of students in need of additional guidance or remediation" (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGBUC), 2014). The 2006 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report found that "when student support programs are available, they greatly improve the outcomes of many students" (AGBUC, 2014). HBCUs that engage in intentional retention initiatives might thus have more success in preventing at-risk African American students from dropping out.

Problem Statement

Although HBCUs as a whole disseminate a high percentage of degrees in America, the retention rates for some HBCUs are below the national average. A report by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2014) found that "despite their outsized role in contributing to the overall number of African-American college graduates, at the institutional level, graduation rates of many HBCUs fall below the national average". In the state of Kentucky, during the 2016-2017 school year the average retention rate percentage for state-funded colleges was 76.9% which is below the national average of 81% (Kentucky First to Second Year Retention, n.d.). At the state's single publicly funded HBCU, however, the retention rate dips to 67.7% during the same year (Kentucky First to Second Year Retention, n.d.). In 2009, the average retention rate was 65% for HBCUs and 74% for non-HBCU institutions (Richards & Awokoya, 2012, p. 11). These retention issues seems to stem from larger systemic problems:

> Many HBCUs admit and serve students who may be under-prepared for college as a result of their K-12 experience, or who are low income, first-generation college students. These populations are quite often the most likely to not complete college, no matter where they enroll (AGBUC, 2014).

Granted, HBCUs are generally more likely to enroll a higher population of underprepared students due to their widespread policy of open enrollment, which allows the schools to service a broader, but more challenging student base. As one former HBCU president, Kevin D. Rome, explained:

> Academic quality is greatly a function of who is admitted and how they succeed once admitted. We are an open enrollment institution that accepts any

student who graduates from high school or its equivalency and then takes the requisite entrance exams. If we are going to improve academic quality, then we will have to enroll better-prepared students. We must do a better job of educating those who choose to attend our institution and find ways to increase their academic success (as cited in ABGUC, 2014).

According to Swail, Redd, and Perna, (2003), a comprehensive student retention program should: (a) rely on proven facts, (b) involve all campus departments and personnel, (c) focus on students, (d) ensure the program is fiscally responsible, (e) monitor students and programs, and (f) be sensitive to students' needs.

` In my experience as a higher education professional, I observed that a high portion of students who are not being retained are most likely those with developmental/remedial needs that are not addressed beyond developmental/remedial courses. A report from the U.S. Department of Education (2017) substantiates this point:

One analysis of first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students who take a developmental education course in the first year after high school graduation finds that they are 74 percent more likely to drop out of college than first-time full-time non-developmental students. And fewer than one out of 10 students who take developmental classes complete their degree on time.

Given the alarming drop-out rates among developmental students, HBCUs may be able to improve their retention by developing new approaches that address the needs of this population. Based on my personal observations and analysis of the literature, I believe there is a need to study the issues of *self-efficacy* and *hope* among African American students attending HBCUs.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the levels of hope and self-efficacy among two student groups at a four-year public HBCU: namely, underprepared students who received multiple retention initiatives, and prepared students. The study measured the level of hope and self-efficacy and evaluated the implementation of a Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) focused on creating effective retention initiatives for students with two or more developmental needs. The study sought to identify the impact of multiple retention initiatives on African American students, as well as examine the practice of QEP initiatives conducted in a public HBCU setting.

The study focused on student retention at HBCUs because these institutions are unique in their mission to provide educational opportunities for all students. According to Wilson (2000), an HBCU's open enrollment policy attracts students with academic deficiencies and low ACT scores, and who thus require some level of remediation to be academically successful. Once the institution accepts these students, their retention becomes an important part of an HBCU's accountability. Many HBCU presidents agree that their institutions must constantly oversee the progress of students they enroll and understand "what areas the institution currently makes investments in that directly impact student success" (ABGUC, 2014).

Significance of Study

The study's primary significance involves communicating information to HBCUs that will provide a better experience for underprepared African American students, and thereby increase retention. To this end, there is a need for more information about the benefits of remedial/developmental programs, which have been

increasingly undercut. "Many four-year colleges and universities had developmental programs cut or eliminated beginning in the 1990s initiating a trend that continues today, and limits the support institutions can provide to developmental students, if they can admit those students" (Damashek, 1999). Nonetheless, a study by Chen (2016) discovered that students who started their postsecondary education at public 4-year institutions in 2003−04 needed an average of 2.1 remedial courses. Furthermore, "40 percent of those who started at public 4-year institutions took at least one remedial course during their postsecondary enrollment between 2003 and 2009" (Chen, 2016, p. 15). Of that 40 percent, 66 percent of the students were African American (Chen, 2016, p. 18). With 76% of the students attending HBCUs being African American, they face a large proportion of remedial students (Palmer, Maramba, Ozuna Allen, & Goings, 2015, p. 67).

According to Cuseo (n.d.), self-efficacy is one of the seven most potent principles of student success. According to Bandura (1997), students are more successful when they believe that their individual effort matters, i.e., when they believe they can exert significant influence or control over their academic and personal success. This sense of control underlies the concept of self-efficacy, which Cuseo (n.d.) identifies as one of the seven most potent principles of student success. Conversely, the likelihood of student success is reduced when students feel hopeless. Using research data involving nearly 213 college freshmen, Snyder et al (2002). discovered that higher Hope Scale scores can reliably predict higher cumulative GPAs, a higher likelihood of graduating from college, and a lower likelihood of being dismissed because of poor grades. In essence, the present study's main contribution is in uncovering a significance difference in hope and self-efficacy among prepared and

underprepared students (the latter of whom are placed in developmental/remedial courses). By focusing on the utility of multiple retention initiatives, this study should have a positive effect on students who are identified as underprepared and receive remedial courses

Definition of Terms and Acronyms

The present study relied on the following definitions and acronyms:

1. Remedial/Developmental Education

   a. Developmental education programs teach academically underprepared students the skills they need to be more successful learners. The term includes, but is not limited to, remedial courses (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1989).

   b. Remedial Education: Remedial education often focuses on specific skill deficits and educational approaches that address these needs (Arendale, 2005).

   c. The term remedial can be used interchangeably with developmental education, which involves below college-level courses that do not contribute toward degree completion, but may be required (Bautsch, n.d.).

2. Self-Efficacy: One's belief in her/his capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce a given attainment (Bandura, 1997)

3. Hope: A conceptualization of goals, along with strategies to achieve them (Snyder et al., 2002).

4. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU): Any college or university that was established prior to 1964 to educate Black Americans and is

nationally recognized as a Historically Black College and/or University

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

5. Learning Community: Students intentionally placed in in the same classes as a

    form of block scheduling that enables students to take courses together (Tinto,

    1997).

6. Living-Learning Community: Living-Learning (L/L) programs intentionally

    focus on combining students' residence hall curricular and co-curricular

    experiences with the purpose of creating a purposeful connection between the

    academic and social spheres of college life, providing an environment that

    supports peer learning (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

7. Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP): The Southern Association of Colleges and

    Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requires institutions to develop

    a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) with each decennial review. A key

    component of the reaffirmation of accreditation process, the QEP provides a

    three- to five-year plan of action to improve student knowledge, skills,

    attitudes, values, or behaviors.

    a. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), submitted four to six weeks in

        advance of the on-site review by the Commission, is a document

        developed by the institution that (1) includes a process identifying key

        issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning

        outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and

        accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates

        institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and

        completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of

institutional constituencies in the development and proposed

implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess

their achievement (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Colleges, 2016, p. 7).

8. Academic with Attitude (AWA) Program: A retention initiative developed by

the institution identified in this research. The program was created as a part of

the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan.

9. Retention Rates: The percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students

who return to the same institution the following fall; graduation rates measure

the percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students who complete

their program at the same institution within a specified period of time (National

Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

10. Retention Initiative: A structured program within an institution designed to

provide services and programs to guide students from admission to graduation.

11. Students at risk: A commonly used phrase describing students with educational

needs below college level, may undermine the success of these students by

implying that they are starting from a deficit point of overcoming obstacles

(Ferris State University, n.d.).

12. Under-prepared students: Students are considered unprepared for college-level

courses because 1) they have learned and forgotten a skill; 2) they never

learned the skill because of a poor educational background or because they

were disinterested in their education (Albert, 2004, p. 19).

Research Questions

The present study will examine the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of hope among students who graduated and/or are still enrolled after participating in a program that provided retention initiatives?

2. What are the levels of self-efficacy among students who graduated and/or are still enrolled after participating in a program that provided retention initiatives?

3. Are levels of hope and self-efficacy significantly different when comparing the participating retention initiative students to non-participating retention initiative students?

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature to provide a comprehensive explanation about HBCUs—specifically, their history, record of student retention, strategies for improving retention, and institutional commitments. The chapter will also examine the theoretical underpinnings of self-efficacy and hope, as well as the relationship between underprepared students and developmental/remedial education.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to measure the levels of self-efficacy and hope among remedial students who were members of a program that provided multiple retention initiatives. In order to set the stage for that discussion, this literature review examines research in several relevant domains. The chapter begins with an overview of the history of developmental/remedial education and the benefits that African American students receive while attending an HBCU. This section will also cover the factors that have hindered and advanced the state of developmental/remedial education. The second section examines the literature on the role of a living-learning community that houses multiple retention initiatives and the impact it has on self-efficacy and hope. The review will highlight the factors that are most beneficial to students. Finally, the role of self-efficacy and hope is examined. The concepts of self-efficacy and hope will be introduced separately, to better delineate their nature and effects, and then discussed jointly to highlight their relationship to motivation and success.

The History of HBCUs

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were started for Africans who were enslaved in America but, once freed, wanted the opportunity to gain more from life (Bracey, 2017; Gay, 2004; Brown, 2013; Clement & Lidsky, 2011). As Paris and Gasman (2006) stated, "from their arrival on the shores of the United States, Black people have thirsted for knowledge and viewed education as the key to their freedom" (p. 40). However, if it was not until the Higher Education Act of

1965 that Black colleges and universities (commonly referred to as HBCUs) were defined as "any accredited institution of higher education founded prior to 1964 whose primary mission was, and continues to be, the education of Black Americans" (Brown, 2013, p. 5). Before the Civil War started enslaved Africans were already making plans to create education systems(Anderson,1988). The process started as a grassroots initiative and freed slave fought to keep it that way. "The foundation of the freedmen's educational movement was their self-reliance and deep-seated desire to control and sustain schools for themselves and their children(Anderson, 1988, p. 5).

After the abolishment of slavery, an influx of colleges developed to assist the recently freed slaves during the reconstruction stage. During that period, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands was established with the purpose of providing resources for freed slaves in their transition to freedom (Hess, 2011). The Bureau worked alongside other religious organizations to provide transitional assistance. General Howard's commitment played an intricate role in developing many of the oldest HBCUs. His commitment proved valuable due to his efforts to provide funds for multiple HBCUs:

> He funneled bureau funds to many schools and was instrumental in founding Howard University in Washington, D.C. Chartered in 1867 as a college for African Americans, Howard initially refused when his cofounders insisted the university be named for him. He served as its president from 1867 to 1873. Many other black schools, including Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Lincoln Institute in Missouri, Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C., and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, received bureau funds. Howard encouraged "men and women who love to do good and repair some of

the ills of our past national and social crimes" to support black institutions

(Hess, 2011, p. 8).

Several organizations and religious groups took on the responsibility to assist

freed slaves with education and trade skills (Paris & Gasman, 2006). All in all, "the

combined efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau, abolitionist organizations, religious

denominations, and local community groups established more than 500 schools across

the country" (Clement & Lidsky, 2011, p. 150). When referring to the new colleges

and institutions that were dedicated to freed slaves, Avery (2009) found that,

> They were started by white northern missionaries and white and black church
>
> groups, aided in the early years by the Freedmen's Bureau, and in the later
>
> years by white philanthropic foundations funded by Nelson Rockefeller,
>
> Andrew Carnegie, Julius Rosenwald, and others (p. 327).

This was the second time that a group of schools were started in the hopes of assisting

freedmen, and the opportunity proved to be one that was needed and demanded:

> The first wave of schools established for freed blacks was started in the North
>
> before the Civil War. Due to relocations and other interruptions, many of these
>
> schools did not survive, and their successor institutions are no longer
>
> connected to their original campuses or historic structures. The next wave of
>
> schools was established for recently emancipated slaves and their children in
>
> the South following the Civil War (Clement & Lidsky, 2011, p. 150).

In 1862, the passage of the Morril Act created new schools for African

Americans to attend. While the act was created primarily for the country's economic

advancement, it had the collateral effect of creating opportunity for African

Americans:

The Morrill Act of 1862 allowed for educational institutions to be established

on public lands. Each state was given 30,000 acres of federal land for each

senator and representative in Congress, and the land was to be sold in order to

finance the creation of a college specializing in the teaching of agriculture and

the mechanic arts (Bracey, 2017, p. 673).

Schools created from the Morril Act were dedicated solely to agriculture and

mechanical engineering. Former slaves were let into these schools with great hopes of

innovation and discovery in the fields of mechanical and agricultural science, but in

the South they were denied access. Bracey (2017), for instance, found that

discrimination still lingered in southern areas when newly freed slaves tried to benefit

from schools funded by the Morrill Act.

To overcome the limited access into schools created by the Morrill Act of

1862, Congress passed the Morrill Act of 1890, "which required that states either

admit black students to existing land grant colleges and universities or finance schools

that would be open to African Americans" (Bracey, 2017, p. 673). As noted by Paris

and Gasman (2006), "this act stipulated that those states practicing segregation in their

public colleges and universities would forfeit federal funding unless they established

agricultural and mechanical institutions for the Black population" (p. 41). According

to Clement and Lidsky (2011), the act "ushered in an era of public education for

Blacks in segregated schools throughout the southern states" (p. 150). Nonetheless, the

schools established for African Americans under the second Morrill Act were

underfunded in comparison to other state schools:

Public HBCUs remained disproportionately underfunded. . . .White land-grant

institutions were still receiving state appropriations at a rate of 26 times more

than Black colleges . . . . The per-pupil state expenditure rate for African

Americans equaled about one-fourth the rate for whites (Bracey, 2017, p. 674).

Faced with inadequate facilities and resources, HBCUs were unable to offer an equal

opportunity to educate their students in comparison to their counterparts. According to

Paris and Gasman, (2006), "despite the wording of the Morrill Act, which called for

the equitable division of federal funds, these newly founded institutions received less

funding than their White counterparts and thus had inferior facilities" (p. 41). Brown

(2013), found that, "although unintentional, the Morrill Act of 1890 cemented the

prevailing doctrine of segregation. It formalized the manifestation of separate but

unequal in higher education. The patterns of underfunding persist even today" (p. 9).

Currently, HBCUs are the linchpin for higher education and culture for African

Americans. Brown (2013) highlighted the six main goals that HBCUs abide by in the

pursuit of African American progression. Through extensive research he identified the

following:

(a) Maintaining the Black historical and cultural tradition (and cultural

influences emanating from the Black community); (b) Providing leadership for

the Black community through the important social role of college

administrators, scholars, and students in community affairs; (c) Providing an

economic center in the Black community (for example, HBCUs often have the

largest institutional budget in the Black community); (d) Providing Black role

models who interpret the way in which social, political, and economic

dynamics impact Black people; (e) Providing college graduates with a unique

competence to address issues and concerns across minority and majority

population; and (f) Producing Black graduates for specialized research,

institutional training, and information dissemination for Black and other

minority communities.

For these reasons, HBCUs have played a very important role in African American

education. Avery (2009) agrees, finding that "due to the South's dual racial education

system before the 1950s, HBCUs were the overwhelming source for an educated

middle class of lawyers, doctors, teachers, and leaders to serve the black community"

(p. 328). Presently this is still true: African Americans are more likely to graduate

from HBCUs than PWIs (Predominately White Institutions). Avery (2009) also found

that the combination of private and public HBCUs create opportunity for advancement

in various career fields: Specifically, private and public HBCUs have "graduated about

70 percent of all blacks who have received a college degree since the nation's

founding. Although today only about 14 percent of black college students attend

HBCUs, 70 percent of all black doctors and dentists, 50 percent of all black engineers

and public school teachers, and 35 percent of all black attorneys received their

bachelor's degrees at an HBCU" (p. 328). Based on those results, HBCUs are

important to the development of African American's socio-economic status.

Benefits of HBCUs for African American Students

In the book *Blacks in College*, Fleming (1985) conducted a comparative study

based on experiences of African American Students in HBCUs and PWIs, highlighting

the benefits that African American students receive when attending the former.

According to Fleming (1985), HBCUs provide a "supportive community" (p. 150) that

allows students to engage with others and develop interpersonal relationships.

According to developmental theorists such as Loevinger (1976), "interpersonal

relationships are not only desirable but necessary for development during college

years" (as cited in Fleming, 1985, p. 151). A supportive community is not a perfect

place where everyone loves and understands each other. Rather, it provides an

opportunity for students to face challenges and conflict with a sense of security.

Fleming (1985) found that a supportive community consists of opportunities for

friendship, campus participation, and "to feel some sense of progress and success in

their academic pursuits" (p. 152). According to Cuyjet (2006), Fleming (1985), and

other scholars, students who engage in a supportive community develop opportunities

to create interpersonal relationships that can help identify people who will assist with

their development as a college student.

Students who have attended HBCUs often mention that they meet mentors who

guide them through their matriculation process (Fleming, 1985). These mentors

become a key advisor when dealing with personal issues and career issues that may

occur after college. In Fleming's (1985) interviews with African American students

from Texas, the students spoke about their experiences and discussed the importance

of interpersonal relationships with faculty and staff members. Fleming (1985)

mentioned that "the interviews in Texas tell us that it's not only important to know

many people but to have enough people to talk to in times of stress" (p. 151). Cuyjet

(2006) also agreed in his book *African American Men in College*, highlighting the

importance of specific roles a mentor plays when working with African Americans in

college. He found that "the four distinctive roles that a mentor should play are: (1)

supervisor as teacher, (2) supervisor as guide, (3), supervisor as gatekeeper, and finally

(4) supervisor as consultant" (Cuyjet, 2006, p. 98). The power to find connectedness creates a catalyst for students to open up and receive assistance. When attending an HBCU, students may feel that they will find connectedness and a sense of being, which contributes to their academic success and social development. Fleming (1985) agreed, stating, "To the extent that an individual can achieve a feeling of progress, gain a sense of recognition, and know that there are people that will provide an attentive ear, the ingredients of social connectedness are present within black college settings" (p. 152). With the feeling of extrinsic support that encourages intrinsic motivation, African American students may have opportunities to eliminate stressors that work against retention.

With the proven benefits that students receive from HBCU's according to Fleming (1985) and other scholars HBCU's continue to fall behind in terms of retaining students due to the amount of students that attend that are underprepared and in need of remedial/developmental needs. Remedial/Developmental needs are most likely unable to be avoided when students are unprepared. Many HBCUs will not exclude students that are in need of academic assistance. The willingness to provide an opportunity for underprepared students may be one of the many reasons underprepared African American students are attracted to HBCUs.

Why African American Students Select HBCUs

As a former graduate of an HBCU, I found their non-academic experiences to be critical to my academic success. The sense of on-campus support was evident the first day and lasted until I graduated. As a professional in higher education, I have seen

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the same experience exist with the HBCU that I was employed with. As a student I always sensed that there was an implied support system built around me while away from my family. In the book *How Black Colleges Empower Black Students*: *Lessons for Higher Education,* Hale (2006) found that "physicians, attorneys, educators, government officials, military officers, etc., who are graduates of HBCUs can attest that, critical junctures in their lives, the extended family provided support that enabled them to persist and graduate" (p. 44). Along with the access to an extended family, Hale (2006) mentions that universal inclusion, cultural immersion, and individual interaction are unique contributions that are offered by HBCUs.

Attending an HBCU provided me with an opportunity to display my academic abilities at a college level. I was accepted into an HBCU with an extremely low high school GPA and no standardized test scores. Like with most HBCUs, I was placed in remedial courses and offered supplemental instruction along with other resources that assisted with my acclimation into college. According to Hale (2006), the experience is the same for most African American students attending an HBCU. He mentions that "cultural immersion" plays a part in the selection of HBCUs for African American students: "since a great percentage of students who matriculated came with academic, social, and financial deficiencies, it has been a prevailing philosophy that programs be provided to meet students where they are" (p. 44).

While attending an HBCU, the critical turning point for my self-esteem and academic success happened when I joined the marching band. Doing that time period, I was able to immediately identify with a community of people. I was able to adopt role models who provided a template for collegiate success. Most importantly, as a member of the marching band I was considered an ambassador for the university. Hale

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(2006) found that "universal inclusion" allows students to feel as if they are valued member of the institution and it gives you the opportunity to find a role model. He goes on to state, "students who feel that they are a part of the institution are able to interact comfortably with others facing similar challenges and coming from similar backgrounds" (p. 44). When referring to role models in an HBCU, Hale (2006) noted:

> An African American who has role models, professionals who are also African American, learn that they can do what others of their race have done. The existence of these role models are imperative for the success of many African American students at HBCUs (p.45).

While working as a Living and Learning Coordinator in a HBCU, I have encountered many young African American men and women who have sought me out as a mentor. Some have mentioned that they would not have stayed enrolled had it not been for the support and commitment to that I exemplified.

Institutional Commitment of an HBCU

The commitment to retention should be considered a high priority for HBCUs due to their invested commitment towards academic achievement. The tendency by HBCUs to ease their admission process, as well as their historical nature of focusing on the disadvantaged students, has led to the disproportionate enrollment of students who have varying achievements during their high school (Lee, 2012). The concept of the HBCU focuses on providing opportunity for African American men and women to be contributors to society and their own people (Bracey, 2017; Gay, 2004; Brown, 2013; Clement & Lidsky, 2011). I have noticed that this is a consistent theme when reading the Mission Statements of an HBCU.

One can see this theme in the mission statements of an HBCU like Howard University. Established in 1867, the university has grown. It is a federally charted, private, doctoral institution that serves over 10,000 students.

Howard's Mission Statement states Howard University, a culturally diverse, comprehensive, research intensive and historically Black private university, provides an educational experience of exceptional quality at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels to students of high academic standing and potential, with particular emphasis upon educational opportunities for Black students (Howard University Undergraduate Bulletin, n.d., p. 3)

Another example is Clark Atlanta in the South established in 1988 by consolidating Atlanta University and Clark College. Very similar to Howard University, Clark Atlanta's mission "is to provide the highest quality of education and training for a student body which is predominantly African American" (http://www.cau.edu/gen_info/opar/opar_fb_miss.pdf). As expressed in both mission statements, HBCUs have an explicit commitment to educating African Americans at the highest level no matter how egregious the challenges may be or how underfunded some schools may be.

The argument has always been that HBCUs are inadequate due to the lack of physical resources, such as updated facilities and financial resources. Fleming (1985) proved that, although HBCUs have limited resources when compared to PWIs, African American HBCU students tend to do better than their peers who attend PWIs. According to Fleming (1985), "Most researchers would expect black colleges to show evidence of gross intellectual disservice to their students" (p.62). To combat that

statement, Fleming (1985) noted "that black colleges promote development in the academic and intellectual domain of experience" (p. 62).

HBCU Retention Strategies

Given their commitment of serving African American students, HBCUs are trying different methods to align their retention initiatives with their primary purpose. As noted by Hinton (2014), "most HBCUs have come up with a number of retention strategies, which are largely implemented through the support that these institutions receive from the federal government in form of grants" (p. 30). Scholars such as Tinto (1987) have identified various retention sources that impact student persistence, including enrollment management, orientation programs, counseling/advisory programs, and financial assistance programs as crucial areas in which institutional action via student affairs can be particularly effective in the longitudinal process of retention (Tinto, 1987). In an interview Tinto stated that, uncertainty, commitment, transition, and match/fit are the factors that cause attrition (Spann & Tinto, 1990). Indeed, "HBCUs like many other higher education institutions, suffer from attrition problems" (Hutto & Fenwick, 2002, p. 3). Looking at HBCU best practices does indicate efforts to retain more students.

Mentoring has grown to be a staple for HBCUs and many other institutions. According to Hale (2006), "with appropriate mentoring, several HBCUs have demonstrated that students with a wide range of preparation can be brought up to par" (p. 85). One notable example is the mentoring program SOAR (Stress on Analytical Reasoning) that has been offered at Xavier of Louisiana since 1977 (Hale, 2006). The program starts by creating a boot camp for high school juniors and seniors. Once the

students graduate and are enrolled, they are immediately paired with a faculty advisor and assigned to a mandatory peer study group in hopes of influencing peer assistance and consultation.

The African American Male Initiative at the University of Louisville also uses mentoring as one of the primary factors of the initiatives focus. Although the University is not an HBCU, it sought to provide mentoring for male African American students. Using mentors to support the program "ensures that faculty, staff, and upper-class students are recruited and integrated into the learning and success of each participant" (Anthony, Skerritt, & Goodman, 2012, p. 6). The program also emphasizes the importance of students having a peer connection. According to Anthony (2011), peer connection is about "recognizing that strong, relevant, and positive peer groups are vital to the long-term integration and success of students on and off campus" (p. 6).

Oakwood college of Alabama uses holistic development as the core of its retention initiative, which is reflected in the university jargon. For instance, Oakwood considers every employee an educator. According to Hale (2006), "staff employees—considered 'no classroom educators' because of the role they are encouraged to take in campus-wide holistic learning" (p. 145). This institutional commitment can be seen by some as a vital component of success that most institutions have experienced. In regards to institutional commitment Tinto agrees, he goes on to state, "Widespread commitment to students results in an identifiable climate of caring that permeates the life of institutions" (Spann & Tinto, 1990, p. 19).

Oakwood College uses multiple retention initiatives that operate out of different departments. When working towards improving retention, they focus on three

different strategies: academic support and enhancement, financial recruitment and incentives, and life skills development. In regard to implementing retention initiatives, it is important to understand that there should be an unwavering commitment to the social and intellectual growth of all students. As Tinto contends, "The question institutions should ask themselves is not how to retain students, but how they and their students should act to ensure that all students, not just some, are able grow and learn while in college" (Spann & Tinto, 1990, p. 19). One way that Oakwood College achieves this goal is by utilizing the College Inventory, which "gives faculty advisors valuable insights into their advisees' academic motivation, general coping skills, and receptivity to support services" (Hale, 2006, p. 147). In addition, Oakwood utilizes a combination of orientation seminars and intensive advisement that contextualize a student's acclimation process while fostering professional development among faculty and staff.

> Oakwood has an intensive advisement program that (1) provides ongoing faculty training in best practices using workshops, seminars, and one-to-one coaching by experienced, effective advisors within the institution, and (2) uses advisors who are specifically trained to meet the needs of freshmen students as they adjust to college life (Hale, 2006, p. 147).

Through intensive advisement, Oakwood College provides an opportunity for students to have critical interaction that may assist with their persistence, which is also consistent with Tinto's (1997) college retention theory. This theory suggests that early and continuous institutional commitment impacts students' integration into the university community (Lee, 2012). To prolong the impact that early commitment has

on retention, Oakwood College offers a list of satellite support services that also assist with academic success. Some examples include:

- The Center for Academic Success (CAS)

- Residential Hall/Living Learning Centers

- Department-based research and academic support programs

The previously mentioned examples are resources that encourage students to learn in a community outside of the classroom. Tinto (1997) notes that "student learning is greatly enhanced when students participate in shared, collaborative learning experiences–when they are active, rather than passive, in the learning process and when their discourse is wide-ranging and interdisciplinary" (p. 53).

Although Oakwood College offer strategies for persistence, it struggles like many HBCUs with a lack of financial resources and, relatedly, high attrition rates. "Even with grants and federal loans, students still struggle financially to achieve their educational goals. Indeed, lack of financial resources is a primary reason for student attrition at Oakwood College" (Hale, 2006, p. 148). Hinton (2014) found that "although it is difficult for Black students to finance their education, those aspiring to join HBCUs have had to find adequate financial sources; otherwise, they eventually drop out of an institution" (p. 27). In order to combat these factors, Oakwood College provides financial assistance that contributes to retention; "To assist students in financing their education, Oakwood sets aside approximately $3.4 million annually for scholarships and underwrites 34 percent of each student's actual annual costs for tuition, room, and board" (Hale, 2006, p. 149). They have also implemented the following:

1. Restructuring the Oakwood College scholarship program so that it supports the college's inclusive admission policy. Students with demonstrated academic achievement (grade point average [GPA]: 3.0–4.0) continue to receive the largest scholarship award amounts. However, with the restructured program, students with average GPAs (2.0–2.9) can also receive scholarship assistance. All scholarship programs are contingent on the student maintaining or improving his or her admission GPA. Students can renew their scholarships for four years as long as they meet the guidelines.

2. Equipping faculty advisors with financial aid information so that they can function as extensions of the Office of Financial Aid. With College Student Inventory information, faculty advisors know how important finances are to their students. While they are not expected to replace the financial aid counselors who work with the individual student, advisors can play a role in alleviating financial stressors by sharing their knowledge about financial aid.

Other than providing financial assistance, Oakwood provides an opportunity to avoid dissatisfaction that can possibly increase attrition rates. In a study that examined the effect that student services have on retention, Hutto and Fenwick (2002) found that students were more likely to leave school due to the lack of finical education they received in regards to their financial aid. They argue that, "With regard to financial assistance, students did not feel confident that their institution was interested in or could meet their financial needs nor did they believe that the college offered meaningful financial assistance to attend the college" (Hutto & Fenwick, 2002, p. 23).

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More students may be in need of assistance due to federal changes with financial assistance. For instance, in 2012, former President of the United States of America, Barack Obama signed into law the Consolidated Appropriation Act in 2012. The provisions of the Act have limited the total number of students who can access the Federal Pell Grant, since they can do so in twelve semesters and not the initial 18 semesters (Federal Student Aid Handbook, n.d.). The limited amount of semesters plays a significant role in regards of retention, especially among HBCU students who are required to take additional remedial/developmental courses—a topic examined in the next section.

The History of Remedial Education

Educators have implemented the tool of remediation since as early as the 1800s, with the main purpose being to provide opportunities to students who need additional assistance to achieve the American dream. Some see the American dream as the ultimate economic accomplishment, which can only be attained through college. As noted in a report by Jobs for the Future (2012, p. 1):

> This role for higher education is more important today than ever before. With evidence suggesting that a ticket to the middle class comes in the form of a postsecondary credential, institutions must take extraordinary measures to ensure that those who seek a postsecondary credential are able to earn it.

 With the budget cuts in education and lack of academic resources for students from lower-socioeconomic status, it will be difficult for educators to get students closer to that dream. Students who have benefited from remedial education often value

it, while it often remains misinterpreted by people who have clouded perceptions due to the negative stigma that comes along with remedial education.

When learning assistance started in the 1800s, educators deemed it acceptable for students to need additional assistance. According to Arendale (2010), "Because most students were involved with learning assistance and from the upper class, little stigma was attached, as it was perceived as a natural part of the education process, a process that was available to so few at the time" (D. R. Arendale, 2010, p. 27). It is important for professionals in higher education to understand why remedial education exists and who presents the initial stakeholders.

The meaning of the title "remedial" has changed many times over the years due to theoretical changes that have occurred in learning assistance, along with the purpose to express non-association with populations who are not accepted by the elite. To rid remedial education of its negative stigma, proponents of developmental education have changed the names of learning assistance over time as the implementation has changed. When discussing the negative and positive use of vocabulary in higher education, Arendale (2005) agreed that vocabulary in higher education has been politicized through assumption:

> Sometimes vocabulary becomes politicized by assuming a different meaning or value because a small group within society has affixed a positive or negative status with the word. This is most powerfully displayed by some policy makers at the local or state level who promote a negative stereotype of remedial education and compensatory education (p. 67).

The Purpose of Remedial Education

Remedial courses offer tools for college students who are not prepared for the rigor of college-level academic course work. Although implemented differently by college institutions, they both provide students an opportunity to show their full potential. The courses usually focus on preparing students in the areas of reading, writing, math, and now soft skills that college students need. Arendale (2005) found that "remedial education often focused on specific skill deficits of students and educational approaches that addressed these identified needs" (p. 68). Students who do not meet a university's academic standards are required to take these courses. Typically, they are offered by community colleges, allowing students to matriculate to 4-year universities. Some community colleges create partnerships with universities to create an effective farming system that allows students to further their education. Just as farmers invest labor and resources into fruits or vegetables to provide the best product for sale, community colleges invest time and resources into students to prepare them for a 4-year institution. Community colleges carry a bulk of the load when it comes to remedial education, but 4-year institutions provide remedial courses as well.

High percentages of American students need at least one remedial course. Complete College America (2012) found that "half of all undergraduates and 70% of community college students take at least one remedial course. Due to the access of more resources, 4-year universities have more opportunities to implement an array of developmental education programs and systems" (p. 3). However, students who start college with multiple remedial education needs have a difficult time completing the courses:

Among participating states only 22% of community college students and 37%

of students attending a 4-year institution who were placed into remedial

education math or English courses completed a gateway class in their

designated subject area within 2 years. Not surprisingly, students placed in a

sequence of three or more remedial courses have the hardest time. Students

who start three levels below college level rarely complete their full sequence

within 3 years — just 16% for math and 22% for reading (p. 3).

Even with community colleges acting as a farming system,

remedial/developmental students still face challenges. The implementation of

remedial/developmental education is not an easy task even for 4-year institutions that

typically have more academic resources than community colleges. For efficiency

purposes, universities offer students remedial/developmental courses independently

within their colleges or universities, allowing faculty and staff to monitor the

education process. These remedial/developmental courses are also a selling point for

students who need them and want to be fully submerged into the college experience, at

the cost of having to enroll in more academic courses than more 'prepared students.

However, "students at the lower end of skill-set levels can be asked to take up to five

or six classes, depending on the school and the subject. This can discourage students

from continuing their education" (Hawley, n.d.). The addition of remedial classes can

increase the risk of a student dropping out when students are not properly advised.

Intrusive advising, learning communities, and supplemental instruction are some of the

systems that are implemented to assist with remedial education. The process varies by

institution and the needs of the students.

Over time, student needs have changed and new breakthroughs in education have occurred, calling for modifications in the implementation of learning assistance. When referring to the constant change of learning assistance titles, Arendale (2005) stated, "History teaches us that new vocabulary will emerge to describe this work, especially if the form and range of services significantly change" (p. 76). Although these changes have occurred, the underlying purpose for providing the remedial courses has never changed. Remedial education still provides an opportunity for students to show that they can compete with the students who are identified as more likely to succeed.

The United States of America has a rich history of people of disenfranchised communities that have become key contributors to the country and even the world. For example, Africans who were enslaved and brought to America were falsely identified as the lowest of all races intellectually and were never given a chance to show the full extent of their intellect. Even with the arduous challenges in front of African Americans, there were more than a few who proved that they were some of the most intellectual and innovative people to ever live. When discussing the importance of education, Fredrick Douglas stated, "Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave" (as cited in Wise, 2013, p. 227). Education can be used to make a difference in single person's life or an entire race of people. Nelson Mandela, for instance, "felt that education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world" (Wise, 2013, p. 227). However, when discussing remedial/developmental education, why do nonbelievers still exist? Why are there schools not fully supporting their remedial/developmental courses? The stigma of remedial education clouds the judgment of people not fully involved in the profession of educating college students.

Oppositions are lost in the fog and unsure of what they are looking for when it comes to determining what a successful remedial program is.

It is important to note the use of remedial education in itself should remain in a state of flux, as a tool to serve the specific needs of individuals. Thus, while remedial education will inevitably continue to change, it is just as essential to the future of this country as it was in the 1800s.

The Current State Remedial/Developmental Education

With every economic change, there tends to be a change to the existing education system. For example, underrepresented people are most likely identified as unprepared. Even now, there is existing data proving the amount of income in a household influences the level of college readiness (Complete College America, 2012). Although there have been attempts with the new developmental education paradigm, a stigma still looms around the idea of students receiving learning assistance.

Developmental education focuses on helping all students reach their full potential. The theoretical concept of developmental education is similar to the concept of developmental theory: "The notion of developmental sequence is the kingpin of developmental theory. . . A goal of education is to stimulate the individual to move to the next stage in the sequence" (Arendale, 2005, p. 44). Remedial courses mainly focus on the course content that is needed for higher levels of course work. They do not address the student's full potential as a learner, nor do they prepare students to think on a higher level. Developmental education, on the other hand, came in to the higher education arena to fill in those missing gaps. In the journal article "Then and

Now: The Early Years of Developmental Education," Arendale (2011) compared

remedial and developmental education by focusing on the following: "Rather than

examining how much information was delivered, the question is how much does the

student understand" (p. 72). According to Boylan and Bonham (2007):

> Developmental education efforts also include a variety of courses that teach
>
> material not typically offered in high school but frequently necessary for
>
> success in college. Some developmental courses integrate study skills and
>
> learning strategies, critical thinking, and other approaches addressing the
>
> cognitive and affective needs of the learners (p. 2).

The National Center of Developmental Education acted as an advocate to

developmental education with hopes of creating information used to support

developmental education. According to Boylan and Bonham (2007), "Thirty years

ago, there was what many educators considered a widespread effort to ignore

developmental education or even eliminate it" (p. 2). The Kellogg Institute's

relationship with The National Center of Developmental Education created a national

platform that assisted with not only taking developmental education further, but also

provide a means to defend developmental education against legislators and other

stakeholders that did not fully understand its importance. In addition, the center

provided data that gained national attention to support the creation of new theories and

methods when Exxon Fuel stepped in and offered additional funding.

The Living-Learning Community

Universities are typically challenged to find the best support systems for

students with additional needs. Prior studies have shown that students who participate

in living-learning (L/L) communities are more likely to matriculate. Living-learning

communities, depending on the design, can acclimate students into the campus

community and also be a catalyst for healthy relationships with professors.

Researchers found that "students in L/L communities are more likely to persist, exhibit

stronger academic achievement, interact with faculty, and engage in a more

intellectual residence hall atmosphere than students in traditional residence halls" (as

cited in Inkelas, Vogt, & Longerbeam, 2006, p. 41). Some L/L programs provide

professors and staff members the opportunity to assist students outside of the

classroom. "L/L participants were more likely to go beyond these basic interactions

with faculty and also have mentoring relationships" (Inkelas et al., 2006, p. 63).

Additional interactions with professors can contribute to academic success and a

student's desire to matriculate. More current research from single-institution studies

report that students in L/L programs are significantly more likely than students in

traditional residence halls to: (a) be more involved with their college environments; (b)

partake in greater numbers and richer types of interactions with peers and faculty; (c)

have stronger academic outcomes; and (d) overall experience a better adjustment to

college (Inkelas et al., 2006, p. 41).

Along with living-learning participation, students are introduced to helpful

educational benefits. Students who are involved with living-learning programs are able

to put their best foot forward unlike students who are put in traditional residence halls

that lack a L/L component. During a study that compared students involved in living-

learning communities to students who live in traditional residences halls (TRH),

Inkelas et al.(2006) found "that L/L programs are effective in facilitating positive

residence hall environments for their participants and that these positive perceptions may spill over to their observations about the broader campus climate" (p. 63).

Grouping students together based on academic need, educational interest, and personal interest can also be helpful to students. When class schedules are synchronized, they are called learning communities (not to be confused with living-learning communities, which have a residential component). According to Tinto (1997), "in their most basic form, learning communities are a kind of block scheduling that enables students to take courses together" (p. 53). Students do not reside in the same living area, but they are anchored to each other through their class schedule.

Most universities use block scheduling for students who have additional needs. Remedial/developmental educational needs are sometimes met in the summer so that students can have a head start on the additional classes needed. Students are placed in similar classes so they are able to develop a peer support system with relationships focused on academic success. According to Tinto (1997), "sometimes this approach link freshmen, by tying together two courses that all freshmen take, typically a course in writing with one in selected literature, biographies, or current social problems" (p. 54). The synchronization of schedules leads to the promotion of shared learning and connected learning. When discussing shared learning, Tinto (1997) found that, "Learning communities enroll the same students in several classes so they get to know each other quickly and fairly intimately, in a way that is part and parcel of their academic experience" (p. 54). When discussing connected learning, he stated: "by organizing the shared courses around a theme or single large subject, learning communities seek to construct a coherent first year educational experience that is not just an unconnected array of courses" (Tinto, 1997, p. 54). Students in block

scheduled classes are provided the opportunity to learn from their peers as well as faculty. The faculty relationships built in block scheduled L/L communities are proven to be productive and can be a deciding factor in graduation rates. However, the peer relationships are just as important. Block scheduled L/L communities are set up for students to create their own system of support outside of faculty. When discussing the peer support benefits learning communities, Tinto (1997) discovered the following:

> First, students become more actively involved in classroom learning—and, as they spend more time learning, they learn more. Second, the new students spend more time learning together. This raises the quality of their learning, and everyone's understanding, and knowledge is enriched by their working together. Third, these students form social groups outside their classrooms, bonding in ways that increase their persistence in college. Fourth, learning communities enable students to bridge the large divide between academic classes and student social conduct that frequently characterizes student life (p. 55).

There is less time focused on personal development and acclimation into the university, but there is a strong focus on academic needs.

Students involved with L/L communities that are focused on special interests may live together in the same residence hall, but they are connected through a special interest such as math or typically the arts. The University of Dayton, for instance, created a learning community focused on students socializing without the need to drink alcohol. Along with socializing, students are required to attend substance abuse seminars. "Club #6 works to host substance-free parties and other social events on the

weekends in the student neighborhood. The club strives to show that you can have fun and make friends without the use of substances" (Club #6, n.d.).

There are a wide range of L/L communities to choose from in most universities. L/L communities designed for special interest provides a sense of belonging for students who want to socialize with students who share commonality. Kuh (1993) defined a subculture as a group that has "beliefs, norms, and practices distinctive enough to distinguish it from other groups within the same institution" (p. 64). The authors go on to list common characteristics of subcultures, including a common living area, frequent interaction, common norms and values, and some degree of social control.

Living-learning communities eliminate the stressors behind adjusting to college life and can help students create a sense of belonging, which makes them more likely to graduate. Students typically want to feel as if they are a part of a campus through sports or university organizations. Special interest groups provide a quasi-community that students can attach to and create the same sense of belonging. Depending on the type of living-learning community, students are also able to connect with not only faculty, but with staff members as well. L/L communities are one way to foster such connections; they are designed to produce environments that promote greater student involvement, improved faculty student interaction, and a more supportive peer climate (Garrett & Zabriskie, 2004). In addition, Astin (1993) and Schroder (1994) found that L/L communities "are designed to assist students in integrating diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences" (as cited in Garrett & Zabriskie, 2004, p. 39).

As a former Living and Learning Coordinator, I discovered that the combination of students living together while on the same block schedule can provide students with the best opportunity possible. Taking the best components of a learning community and the best components of students living together based on special interests will give students the best chance to matriculate. Living-learning communities can provide peer and professional support systems and academic resources that cater to specific needs. Universities usually introduce the combination of the two in the form of bridge programs. When students enter a bridge program with a university, they are introduced to all their resources early. They are given time to create a community and identify resources before the academic year starts. A living-learning community program introduced in the form of a bridge program will provide an abundance of resources and will most likely eliminate factors that hinder the students' academic development and personal development.

Background on Academics with Attitude Program

The Academics with Attitude Program started in 2009 as a Quality Enhancement Plan to meet the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges standards. The program focused on changing the attitudes that students had towards learning. Prior to creating the program, the participating university enrolled a high rate of students with developmental needs. Over 80% of new freshmen required remediation in at least one traditional subject area: reading, writing, or mathematics; nearly half required substantial development in all three" (QEP Report Kentucky State University, 2009, p. 1). The program relied on block scheduling and used the University 101 class (UNV) as the anchor to group of 15-18

students together. The UNV instructor also acted at an advisor for the students. This way, students and instructors had constant interaction.

The program provided classroom support and services. Each group of 15-18 students had their own English, reading, and math teacher. Each teacher was assigned a supplemental instructor and student instructor. The supplemental instructor created hands-on projects that directly related to the instructor curriculum. These projects allowed students to display what they were learning outside of test and written/oral presentations. The student instructors engaged with the students during and outside of class and provided the instructor with assistance during class time. The assistance from the student instructors allowed multiple students to receive assistance at the same time. Student instructors also were required to designate a time in the day that allowed students to receive additional assistance in their residence hall. All student instructors were trained by the participating university's Academic Center of Education.

Outside of the classroom, each group of students were assigned a Living and Learning Assistant (LLA). The LLAs lived on the wings with the students. The LLAs played a pivotal role as the gatekeepers to the collegiate social life. They were liaisons to the campus community and focused on acclimating students into the social life of college in the most effective way. They assisted students with all issues that may take place outside of the classroom. They were trained and supervised by the Living and Learning Coordinator. Training focused on conflict mediations, community building, event/program development, and mental/physical health awareness. The Living and Learning Coordinator focused on all things related to the co-curriculum. The Living and Learning Coordinator also acted as a liaison between the faculty and staff when discussing student issues outside of the classroom.

Creating Self-Efficacy and Hope

The Academics with Attitude program focused on changing the educational beliefs of students at risk of failure may have about education but, more importantly their ability to be successful in college. To create Hope and self-efficacy the program implemented strategies that promoted academic success. When relating self-efficacy and hope to student success, Joe Cuseo found that "student success is more likely to be experienced when students believe that their individual effort matters, i.e., when they believe they can exert significant influence or control over their academic and personal success"("Defining Student Success.pdf, n.d.). This principle is exemplified by practices that balance support with challenge so that students are neither overwhelmed nor under-challenged. Such practices include:

(a) College-entry assessment for initial student placement in skill-building courses, and careful attention to course pre-requisites in the college curriculum. (b) Summer bridge programs for student who are academically under-prepared or at-risk at college entry. (c) First-year seminars that extend support to students beyond new-student orientation, providing timely student support for college-adjustment issues the encounter during their critical first term in college. (d) Supplemental instruction in first-year courses that have disproportionately high failure and withdrawal rates. (e) Honors courses and programs that provide optimal challenge for high-achieving students (Cuseo, n.d.).

Underprepared Students

Students at-risk are typically identified as students in need of developmental/remedial courses due to their under preparedness for the rigors of college level work. Although they have many other characteristics such as low socio-economic status and usually being the first of their family to attend college, Laskey and Hetzel (2011) simply stated, "students who enter college under prepared are often considered at-risk" (p. 31). It has been proven that there are now real ways to identify underprepared students by race, age, or gender. The identification of underpreparedness usually occur due to external factors. Mulvey (2008) noted that "there is no one standard description of the under-prepared or developmental student and the profile changes with the times" (p. 13). But Thayer, Joans, and Becker found that "first generation college students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and minorities are over-represented in developmental education programs" (as cited in Mulvey, 2008, p. 13). Whether they are a first-generation student or come from low socio-economic status as a student with risk, the level of underpreparedness can be an issue when transitioning into college.

An underprepared student's academic deficiency stems from the lack of time invested into academics during his or her high school experience. Grimes (1999) agrees: "In her study of 500 entering community college students, Grimes has found that the college-ready students took more years of high school coursework in math, physical science, biological science, and foreign language"(as cited in Mulvey, 2008, p. 13). Because of the lack of academic readiness, underprepared students are placed in developmental/remedial classes in addition to their required courses, increasing their chances of dropping out of school. Also, they have to deal with the negative stigma

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that developmental/remedial classes create, which can be difficult to eradicate. Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum (2002) found that "even in developmental programs that avoid stigma, there can be negative consequences" (as cited in Mulvey, 2008, p. 13). One of those consequences relates to students' confidence. Underprepared students see education as a quick process and the additional classes added to their requirements contradicts their beliefs, which diminishes their confidence and motivation towards their academic abilities. "Academic achievement motivation affects not only how well a student learns new skills and information, but also how well the student uses existing skills" (as cited in Langley & Bart, 2008, p. 10). In a study focused on the epistemological beliefs of underprepared students, Cole, Goetz, and Wilson found students viewed learning as a quick process (as cited in Mulvey, 2008, p. 13). Previous research conducted found that it is important for students to see immediate progression for their efforts. Some institutions are now creating accelerated curricula instead of lowering the number of needed remedial/developmental classes.

> Instead of requiring underprepared students to languish in multiple semesters of traditional developmental courses, some states have now either revised their placement policies to allow for greater flexibility in terms of who is required to take develop mental courses or changed the way in which developmental courses are taught, often through accelerated course options (Park et al., 2018, p. 319).

At-risk students are often unable to avoid developmental/remedial classes. The classes are needed, but there will be a possibility that students view their work as disadvantageous. Because "these courses are not college-level, they receive no college credit and consequently don't count toward a college degree. Students pay tuition for

these courses and the return on their investment is questionable" (Orange & Murakami Ramalho, 2013, p. 55). To avoid wasting tuition on non-credit-bearing courses,

A number of policy and advocacy organizations have advocated for developmental education instructional approaches that allow students to earn college-level credit while receiving supplemental developmental education support simultaneously or in a compressed format in the same semester as a likewise-compressed gateway course (Park et al., 2018, p. 319).

With the cost of tuition rising, it has become more difficult for students to persist through college. Although at-risk students are faced with academic challenges such as underpreparedness, they also face financial issues related to their economic background. According to a Complete College America report, 42 percent of all students in its study states enrolled in remedial education, and this rate is higher for low-income students and students color (as cited in Jimenez, Sargrad, Morales, & Thompson, n.d.). Underprepared students are faced with having to pay for additional classes and the more classes they are required to take the higher the cost will be. A developmental/remedial student can be required to take up to 3 or more additional classes pending their skill level. In 2008, 40% of a Kentucky based HBCUs students needed developmental course in Reading, Writing, and Math (Track B QEP Summaries, n.d.). Although developmental courses may provide necessary support to some underprepared students, a growing body of evidence suggests that students placed in developmental education are highly unlikely to obtain an associate degree or transfer (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Fong, Melguizo, & Prather, 2015). Other figures show that less than 10 percent of students who are placed in remedial education complete a degree—whether two-year or four-year—on time (Jimenez et al., n.d.).

The previous information provided about the challenges that underprepared students face further poses questions about what can be done to assist these students. The courses are needed, but there should be a process that will assist with students' specific needs, allowing them to persist without diminishing their self-efficacy and hope.

Self-Efficacy

When trying to gain an understanding about self-efficacy, Zajacova, Lynch, and Epenshade (2005) defined self-efficacy "as a self-evaluation of one's competence to successfully execute a course of action necessary to reach desired outcomes" (p. 678). Efficacy can be connected to a student's pursuit of an education, and "academic self-efficacy has been consistently shown to predict grades and persistence in college" (Zajacova et al., 2005, p. 679). The extent to which a person feels confident about his or her competence to handle a given situation affects whether a given task is perceived as stressful or threatening. When goals are accomplished, a person usually becomes more confident, which is a cognitive and affective reaction to performance outcomes "because goals specify the requirements for personal success" (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994, p. 664). Bandura and Zimmerman also found that the opposite occurs when goals are not accomplished. According to Bandura when challenges are faced with low levels of efficacy, the person usually gives up on the challenge which diminishes any hope for success (Orange & Murakami Ramalho, 2013).

Efficacy is a key factor in a person's cognitive development (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 1993; Bandura & Barbaranelli, 1996; Orange & Murakami Ramalho, 2013;Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). Albert Bandura and

other scholars have been very open about the relationship that efficacy has with success. According to Bandura (1995), efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves and act (p. 2). When connecting motivation self-efficacy, there are three styles of motivation to consider.

(a) intrinsic motivation –doing an activity for itself and the pleasure and satisfaction derived from participating: (b) extrinsic motivation – performing an activity as a means to an end, to satisfy an external demand, or reward contingency; and (c) amotivation being neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated to perform an activity (p. 339).

Continues success can provide a person with a better understanding of their abilities in order to have continues success in the face of challenges or failure. In the book *Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Adolescents,* Schunk and Meece (2006) agreed. They found that "success raises and failures lower self-efficacy, although an occasional failure (success) after some after some success (failures) is likely to have much impact" (Urdan & Pajares, 2006, p. 73). Typically, people that are more self-efficacious are more apt to work harder, face challenges and achieve at higher levels (Bandura, 1997).

Success only helps to maintain efficacy and solidify the perception of their abilities. Efficacy is developed by a combination of internal and external factors. Bandura concurred, discovering that self-efficacy develops from four forms of influence: mastery of experience; vicarious experiences; social persuasion; and psychological/emotional states (Bandura, 1997). But during adolescence, capital, schooling, peers, peer networks, and family are the biggest influences on a person's efficacy.

Regarding family, parents with high academic aspirations for their children have a direct and indirect influence on a student's self-efficacy and motivation:

> Parents and caregivers help children build a sense of competence when they provide and environment that offers some challenges, encourages, sets high but realistic aspirations, contains positive role models, provides supports mastery experiences, and teaches how to deal with difficulties (Urdan & Pajares, 2006, p. 84).

Bandura and Barbaranelli, (1996) also discovered that parents with higher levels of efficacy can externally influence their children's efficacy. Parents can possibly impact their children when applying beneficial academic engagement. "Academically efficacious parents are likely to promote not only educational activities interpersonal and self-management skills conducive to learning, especially if they hold high aspiration for their children" (Bandura & Barbaranelli, 1996, p. 1208).

Capital influences the impact that parents can possible have on their children's efficacy. Factor built through social capital can possibly dictate the level of opportunities that can be afforded. Schunk and Meece found that "families with greater success provide richer experiences that raise their children's self-efficacy (p. 74). Families with higher levels of capital have the financial resources to create experiences for their children that more than likely positively influences a child's efficacy. Although there is much correlation between economic hardship and self-efficacy, Urdan and Pajares (2006) found that "not all children from poor families hold low self-efficacy" (p. 84).

Researcher have found that certain parenting styles may combat the effects that a low socioeconomic status may have on the efficacy of children. Urdan and Patjares

(2006) stated that an authoritative parenting style has the right amounts of warmth, control, and responsiveness that an adolescent may need to influence high levels of efficacy amongst an adolescent. Also, considerable evidence show that parents that come with low economic status can influence their child's efficacy through their beliefs and participation. "Among economically disadvantaged parents, those with high academic aspirations and involvement in school activities generally have academically successful children" (Bandura & Barbaranelli, 1996, p. 1208).

Developing the proper level of efficacy has been proven to be beneficial to the academic paths of children (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 1993; Bandura & Barbaranelli, 1996; Orange & Murakami Ramalho, 2013; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). Avoiding stress and anxiety in college can possibly provide an opportunity for students to do well. According to Meece, Wingfield, and Eccles (1990), "past academic successes and failures arouse anxiety through their effects on perceived self-efficacy" (as cited in Bandura & Barbaranelli, 1996, p. 133). Whether parents are preparing their child for higher education through participation or through resources, the firm development of self-efficacy can possibly help students to have a healthy transition into college by avoiding stress and anxiety.

Hope

Snyder et al. (2002) describe hope as a "conceptualization of goals, along with strategies to achieve goals (pathways), and the motivation to pursue those goals (agency)" (p. 820). Hope allows people to think about the negative outcomes, so they can make plans to get around them. It also allows students to assess and classify goals by using two different categories that can "set up an adaptive or maladaptive

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achievement patterns reflecting either a mastery or helpless orientation" (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 802). Goals are separated into two types of goals "learning goals" and "performance goals" (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 802). Learning goals can also be described as follows:

>Learning goals reflect a desire to learn new skills and to master new educational task. Students who choose this type of goal are actively engaged in their own learning, including assessing the demands of various assignments, planning the strategies they will use to meet demands of various assignments, and monitoring their progress at staying on track (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 802).

Performance goals are low effort goals that people achieve just to look good. These goals are also goals chosen that assure success with no hope for mastery. Snyder (2002) and others found that "those who achieve performance goals are more likely to take the easy rather than the more difficult classes in which the potential for success is greater" (p. 803). Unlike learning goals, students that pursue performance goals "exhibit decreased problem solving and readily disengage from goals even if they were performing adequately previously" (p. 803).

The Hope Factor

Intrinsic motivation plays a key factor in self-perception according to Snyder et al. (2002). The intrinsic motivation that Snyder et al. (2002) referred to includes intangible factors that are self-inflicted. During the height of the Civil Rights movement, Atron Gentery analyzed hope and the external tangible factors that influence or diminish levels of hope amongst students of color who attend public schools in the inner-city urban areas. In his book *Urban Education: The Hope Factor,*

Gentry (1972) found that external factors that influence social status and everyday living conditions play a significant role in the development of a person's levels of hope. In addition, throughout his research, he suggested that the level of hope transferred from a teacher can transmute the levels of hope that a student has. "Several cases, as well as a modicum of common sense, indicate that teacher expectations has an enormous effect upon pupil achievement and may be the most crucial in-school variable" (Gentry, 1972, p. 11). He further noted that the lack of hope for certain urban students of color to learn exists as a non-isolated event that affects students by the masses. "Children who the teacher believes cannot learn, do not learn; children from whom teachers expect much, produce. By analogy, low expectations by the large society have allowed and condoned the chronic failure of urban schools" (p. 11). Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson agree. In a study focused on discovering the correlation between a teacher's expectations for a student's achievement, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that "when teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development" (p. 20). Thought and time behind a student's success can determine the outcome of achievement for a student. When teachers have self-fulfilling agendas or biases, students are not able to reach their full potential due to the murky perception teachers have about a student at risk of failure. The reason for helping students at risk of failure is always unclear with teachers who lack empathy and are always guided by sympathy. The projected views of teachers resonate on students and provide an internal motivational system that is limited to the sympathetic external motivation of the teacher.

The ability to see and experience possibilities affects the psyche and the imagination. People cannot thrive off what they cannot see, experience, or relate to. Likewise, people have a hard time identifying what can be beneficial. Gentry (1972) agreed, suggesting that "without a convincing connection between an individual's experience outside the classroom and daily school work, the hope factor in youth education disintegrates" (p. 47). He also explained that people are only driven by what can be seen as beneficial. "Before people could put their energies and thoughts into learning to read or holding a meaningful job, they had to get ahead. Without vision of possible control over their own future, self-help was meaningless" (Gentry, 1972, p. 47). In the book *The Law of Success: In Sixteen Lessons*, Napoleon Hill emphasized the importance of being able to envision goals and accomplishments. He focused on the power of imagination to create new ideas. Like Gentry (1972), he viewed the imagination as the focal point for internal motivation. Hill (1928) stated: "First comes the thought; then, organization of that thought into ideas and plans; then transformation of those plans into reality. The beginning, as you will observe, is in your imagination" (sec. 4762). Without imagination, hope cannot exist. Individuals' thoughts transform into the actions that they take. For students, hope allows them to see themselves as capable students with endless possibilities. In the case of at-risk students, most times they are perceived to be unable to have academic success and always in need of a fixing process. With sympathetic images constantly being delivered, students at risk of academic failure are constantly subjected to limited thinking that does not support their ability to create high levels of hope. Hill discussed the process of telepathy to explain how imaginations can be tainted with negative thoughts of self. He explained:

Telepathy is an important factor to a student who is preparing to make effective

use of imagination, for the reason that this telepathic capacity of the

imagination is constantly picking up thought waves and vibrations of every

description. So-called "snap-judgment" and "hunches," which prompt one to

form an opinion or decide upon a course of action that is not in harmony with

logic and reason, are usually the result of stray thought waves that have

registered in the imagination (p. 4777).

The process of creating high levels of hope as well as efficacy can be determined by

the ideas and images that are deliberately delivered to a student from a teacher or

educator.

Self-Efficacy and Hope

I believe hope and self-efficacy both show that they have similar patterns in

reference to motivation. Pathway and agency are the two factors that allow hope to

stand out from efficacy: "Each model relates differentially to the typical efficacy and

outcomes expectancies that are described in motivational literature" (Snyder et al., p.

821). Self-efficacy can be task oriented and situation specific, allowing studies to be

conducted in specific areas, "such as academic self-efficacy or physical exercise self-

efficacy" (The General Self-Efficacy Scale, 1995). "Whereas hope characterizes a

more general cognitive sense that applies across situations" (Snyder et al., 2002, p.

821). Hope expectancies depend on pathways and agency that are created and reflect a

person's personal beliefs. Efficacy expectancies solely depend on outcome

expectancies created. Students with weaker self-efficacy beliefs have a tendency to

choose goals that undermine their success (DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh, 2009, p. 23),

which can be considered parallel to "performance goals" that are related to hope theory (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 803). Robinson and Snips (2009) found that "students who think they can achieve goals (self-efficacy) have the will to achieve goals (hope agency), can identify alternative routes when obstacles arise during goal pursuit and increase academic wellbeing (pathway)" (p. 18). When discussing hope theory and self-efficacy, it has been argued that they coexist during the process of obtaining a goal. In the *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures and Applications*, Snyder (2000) mentioned that "Hope is a motivational construct that initiates and sustains one's progress in goal pursuit through the combination of pathways and agency perceptions" (as cited in Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015, p. 17). Farran et al. (1995) suggested that "hope can lead to expanded functioning wherein the person feels more positive about what they are doing" (as cited in Duggleby, Cooper, & Penz, 2009, p. 2377). If a person viewed hope as a vehicle on a certain pathway, agency would be the fuel that powers the vehicle, and perception would be the navigational system or steering wheel. Agency, will, and self-efficacy are synonymous to each other when relating to hope. Bandura and others agree that "will [overlaps] with self-efficacy" (as cited in (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 290). Snyder (2002) agreed and stated:

> Hope theory is bi-dimensional in the sense that two forms of expectancies are held to interact: ways, a sense of available pathways to reach goals, and will, a sense of agency. Hope is thus a form of goal-directed thinking in which people attach value to desired goals, see themselves as capable of producing routes (pathways) to reach these goals, and have the agency (will) to move along these routes and persevere in the face of obstacles (as cited in Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 290).

Similar to the National Center of Developmental Education, the current research will be used to show advancements in remedial/developmental education. Due to the racial demographic of HBCUs, they are more likely to have a high population of students with 1-3 remedial/needs. Again, the addition of remedial classes can increase the risk of a student dropping out when they are not properly advised. The data from this research will display the effectiveness of paring a remedial/developmental education with other retention initiatives housed in a L/L community that starts as a summer bridge program.

From among the studies that I examined, there seems to be a lack of evidence about hope and self-efficacy in regards to the effects that multiple retention initiatives have on developmental/remedial students who attend an HBCU. The present study was designed to explore this gap in the existing body of literature by employing quantitative techniques that measured and compared levels of hope and self-efficacy of underprepared students in comparison to students identified as prepared.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the levels of hope and self-efficacy among two groups of students: on one hand, underprepared students who participated in a program with multiple retention initiatives; on the other, students identified as prepared who did not attend said retention program. It is hypothesized that the students who participated in the program will have higher levels of self-efficacy and hope compared to student that did not attend the program. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of self-efficacy and hope among students who graduated or are still enrolled after participating in the program that provided retention initiatives?

2. What are the levels of self-efficacy and hope among students who graduated or are still enrolled that did not participate in the program that provided retention initiatives?

3. Are the levels of hope and self-efficacy different when comparing the participating AWA students to the non-participating prepared students retention initiative students?

Population

The participants were students identified as at risk of failure and required to be a part of the Academics with Attitude (AWA) Program. I received a list of prospective participants from the participating university's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The data collected from students focused on their graduation status,

enrollment status, and college start date. Participants' starting years encompassed the summer and fall semesters of 2011 through 2015.

Instrumentation

Hope and self-efficacy are the two dependent variables. To qualitatively assess self-efficacy, I used the English General Self-Efficacy Scale created by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). In measuring a general sense of perceived self-efficacy, the scale can be useful for predicting how people cope with daily hassles and adapt to stressful life events, or just serve as a quality of life indicator. I modified the original scale so the items would relate specifically to academic self-efficacy. In line with the authors' recommendations, the scale's 10 items were randomly mixed into a larger pool of items featuring the same response format. All items were measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-4 (1=Not At All True, 2=Hardly, True3=Moderately True, 4=Exactly True).

To measure hope, I used the State Hope Scale developed by Snyder et al. (1996). The scale features six questions measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 8 (1 = Definitely False, 2 = Mostly False, 3 = Somewhat False, 4 = Slightly False, 5 = Slightly True, 6 = Somewhat True, 7 = Mostly True, 8 = Definitely True). Three of the questions relate to Agency (goal-directed determination) and three relate to Pathway (planning of ways to meet goals), and the final score is derived by summing all six items (Snyder et al.,1991).

Validity and Reliability

The instrument utilized in this study was designed specifically for this research project, and thus I took steps to establish its validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument adequately measures the concept under consideration (Babbie, 2001). For this study, I was primarily concerned with construct validity and content validity. To control for threats to these forms of validity, the items designed to measure self-efficacy and hope were rephrased so as to compel participants to think about their levels of confidence during a specific time period. Before each section, participants were asked to respond based on how they felt during the specific time period. The sample questions below exemplify this process:

- *After my freshmen year, if I found myself in a jam, I was able to think of many ways to get out of it.*
- *After my freshmen year, I always energetically pursued my goals.*
- *After my freshmen year, I discovered there are lots of ways around any problem that I may face.*

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement, applied repeatedly over time, yields the same results (Babbie, 2001). Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency (i.e., how closely related a set of items are as a group) and, by extension, scale reliability. The six-item hope scale achieved a coefficient of .77, while the 10-item self-efficacy scale achieved a coefficient of .89; these results indicate that both scales are highly reliable.

Data Collection Procedure

To gain access to students who participated in the AWA program, I followed two protocols. First, I sought approval from the institution to conduct my research using their students. After garnering approval, I established cooperation with the school's Living and Learning Community Coordinator, who acted as the primary contact person. Due to a portion of the students graduating, the participating university's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness provided the most recent contact information submitted by students.

A web-based surveys was issued to participants via email by the Living and Learning Coordinator (LLC). Students that participated were asked to share survey via social media and text with a other students that may have qualified to participate in the study. No incentives were involved.

Data Analysis

During this study, I measured the levels of hope and self-efficacy among independent student populations: one attended the AWA program and the other did not. Both populations consisted of approximately (N=26) participants with a total sample size of 52. Utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), I conducted a statistical analysis to answer the study's research questions. To answer the first and second research questions, which focused on self-efficacy and hope among AWA Program participants and non-participants, I calculated simple descriptive statistics—the means, standard deviations, and ranges of scores for both populations. To answer the third question, I used an independent sample t-test, which is designed to compare the mean of two groups (Emerson, 2017) and determine whether said mean

scores are statistically different from one another relative to an estimate of sample variability. T-tests can be calculated with an independent samples where different participants are in each group (Rojewski et al., 2012).

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to measure and compare the levels of hope and self-efficacy among students who have graduated or are still enrolled after completing the Academics with Attitude Program in comparison to students who did not attend the program. The next chapter will discuss the results in full detail, and thereby provide insights into the previously mentioned research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter was to report the findings of the study. The chapter begins by describing the two samples and concludes with the data analyses as they relate to the study's three research questions. The study examined the levels of hope and self-efficacy among two groups of students at a four-year, public HBCU: one group of underprepared students… and another group of prepared students who received no such treatment. By extension, the study evaluated the implementation of a living and learning community focused on creating effective retention initiatives for students with two or more developmental needs. The study broadly sought to examine the practice of retention initiatives conducted in a public HBCU setting, and more specifically identify the impact of such initiatives on the retention of African American students. This was done by examining the following questions:

1. What are the levels of self-efficacy and hope among students who graduated or are still enrolled after participating in the program that provided retention initiatives?

2. What are the levels of self-efficacy and hope among students who graduated or are still enrolled and who did not participate in the retention program?

3. Are the levels of hope and self-efficacy different when comparing the participating AWA students to the non-participating students?

Characteristics of the Sample

In conjunction with the institution's current Living and Learning Coordinator, I distributed the survey to approximately 149 students via email, text or social media only 60 students responded. Participating students were also asked to refer friends who may have qualified as a participant. Qualified participants were student that completed their first year of college from 2011-2015 with the institution selected for this study.

Sixty (60) students complied and completed the surveys. Five student (5) surveys did not qualify for the analysis and were deemed unusable for this study: Four (4) of those non-qualifying participants were non-participating AWA students, while one (1) participating AWA member did not qualify for analysis. The usable sample thus consisted of 55 AWA participants: twenty-nine (29) AWA participants and twenty-six (26) non-AWA participants.

The demographic characteristics of the samples are summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. Approximately 60% of the study participants identified as female. Approximately 45.5% of the participants had graduated; the other 54.5% were currently enrolled.

Table 1: Gender of Students that Participated in this Research Study

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	33	60.0	60.0	60.0
Male	22	40	40	100
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Note: N=55. Participants include male and female students that were members and non-members of the Academics with Attitude Program.

Table 2: Enrollment Status of Participants in this Research Study

Enrollment Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Currently Enrolled	25	45.5	45.5	45.5
Graduated	30	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Note: N=55. Participants include all students that were enrolled in college or a graduate of college. Students were enrolled during the process of collecting data for this study.

Table 3 displays the number of students who enrolled in each considered year (both summer and fall semesters included:

- Summer and Fall 2011

- Summer and Fall 2012

- Summer and Fall 2013

- Summer and Fall 2014

- Fall 2015

Table 3: College Start Date Research Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2011	10	18.2	18.2
2012	15	27.3	45.5
2013	10	18.2	63.6
2014	13	23.6	87.3
2015	7	12.7	100.0
Total	55	100.0	

Of the 55 valid students who participated, 52.7% of the students participated and completed the AWA program, and 47.3% of the students that participated did not

qualify for the AWA program (see Table 4 for details). To properly run an equal variance t-test, I used fifty-two (52) of the qualifying participants for the analysis: (N=26) for both the AWA and non-AWA participants.

Table 4: Number of Research Participants who were Members and Non-Members of the Academics with Attitude Program

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Members	29	52.7	52.7
Non-Non Members	26	47.3	100.00
Total	55	100.0	

Summary

The AWA participants' Hope scale mean score proved to be higher in comparison to the non-AWA participants: 45.07 (standard deviation of 3.0) compared 41.03 (standard deviation of 4.8), respectively. Table 5 will show that both groups became more hopeful after their first semester of college, but the participating AWA students proved to initially have higher levels of hope.

Table 5: Hope Scale Mean Score

AWA Members	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	26	45.0796	3.01891
No	26	41.0385	4.87016

Note: "Yes" (vs. "No") represents whether participants were (vs. were not) members of the AWA program.

The AWA participants' General Self-Efficacy Scale mean score also proved to be higher than the non-AWA participants: 36.1 (standard deviation of 4.0) compared to 32.7 (standard deviation of 4.1). Table 6 will provide additional information.

Table 6: Self-Efficacy Mean Score

AWA Members	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	26	36.1923	4.01018
No	26	32.7308	4.13335

Note: **"Yes" (vs. "No") represents whether participants were (vs. were not) members of the AWA program.**

A significant difference occurred when comparing the levels of hope and self-efficacy between the two groups of participants. According to the t-test, hope displayed a significant difference of .001. Self-efficacy, meanwhile, displayed a significant difference of .004. Review Table 7 for more details.

Table 7: Independent Sample Test

		F	Valid Percent	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
SE Total	Equal Variance Assumed	.221	.640	3.065	50	.004	18.2	1.12943
Hope Total	Equal Variance Assumed	4.174	.046	3.594	50	.001	45.5	1.12374

Note: **Significant at the *p<0.05 level. (SE) Represents Self-Efficacy Scores.**

In summary, the results of this study revealed a significant difference when examining levels of self-efficacy and hope between students who attended the AWA program in comparison to students who did not. Although AWA students scored higher in both categories, both groups proved to be hopeful with high levels of self-

efficacy. The implications of these results for future practice and research are discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Purpose

This study focused on measuring the levels of self-efficacy and hope among

students who participated in a retention program and comparing those scores to

students who did not participate in said program. This chapter summarizes the results

of the study and discusses the findings as they relate to the research questions and the

prior literature. The finding's limitations and implications for future research will also

be identified. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion about hope, self-efficacy

and African American students in the AWA program, along with recommendations for

enhancing the experiences of these and similar students.

Discussion of Results

The present study uncovered a statistically significant difference in the levels

of hope and self-efficacy between students who did and did not participate in the

AWA program. The students who were involved in the AWA program displayed

higher levels of hope and self-efficacy. This may have been due to the hybrid retention

initiatives that they were exposed to as participants in the AWA program. It was

hypothesized that the AWA students who participated in the program would have

higher levels of self-efficacy and hope compared to student that did not attend the

program. The hypothesis was supported since the results demonstrated that the

initiatives implemented in the AWA were a successful model in helping

developmental/remedial students have higher levels of hope and self-efficacy in comparison to Non-AWA participants.

The study was guided by three research questions. The first question related to the level of hope for students who participated in the AWA program in comparison to students who did not. To answer this question, I calculated the mean and standard deviation for each participant's responses to the hope scale. Although the participants in the AWA program expressed higher levels of hope than the non-AWA participants, the latter group's overall hopefulness was still reasonably high. The non-AWA participants were not identified as at-risk students and they may have come from high schools that prepared them to face academic challenges. Meanwhile, the AWA participating students may have benefited from having direct access to university resources, including exclusive access to peer and staff support systems that possibly nurtured their ability to identify strategies.

I followed the same procedure to assess the second question, which focused on the students' levels of self-efficacy. Like with hope, the AWA participants expressed an overall higher mean score, but both groups had relatively high scores, suggesting that the different students were able to view stressful situations as challenges and felt reasonably confident in their academic abilities as students. Student who were in the AWA program used the summer semester as a small stepping stone to boost their confidence as students, which may have given them a higher level of intrinsic motivation in the following semester. Coupled with the living learning community's peer and staff support systems, this added confidence may have compelled them to move forward in their academic careers.

The third question focused on whether the two groups of students displayed a significant difference in their levels of self-efficacy and hope. Students were referred to the AWA program based on their past academic performance and ACT/SAT scores, which designated them as at-risk. However, the relatively high levels of hope and self-efficacy among both groups suggests that those test scores are not accurate predictors of a student's academic success in college. Further, it appears that at-risk students can develop comparable levels of self-efficacy and hope as their prepared counterparts if they have multiple retention initiatives geared towards their success.

Relationship of Findings to Prior Research

The institution built the AWA program around the following initiatives, which target the four main influencers of self-efficacy described by Bandura (1995), in order to provide at-risk students with the best opportunity to develop hope and self-efficacy.

- College Entry Assessment

- Summer Bridge Program

- First Year Seminar

- Supplemental Instruction

- Accelerated Course

The above retention initiatives identified by Cuseo (n.d.), initially identified these initiatives as being potentially able to increase students' levels of self-efficacy and hope of students that participate. According to (Bandura, 1997), student success is more likely to occur when students believe that their individual efforts matter, i.e., when they believe they can exert significant influence or control over their academic and personal success. The results of this study suggest that the AWA program can help

to enhance or maintain the self-efficacy and hope of participating students. Efficacy can be enhanced through developing a skill or becoming well informed about a specific topic. According to Bandura (1995), "the most effective way of creating a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experience" (p. 3). The AWA program helps students develop alternate ways to perform collegiate-level work through supplemental instruction, thus providing an opportunity to develop high levels of efficacy in their academic efforts.

The students' efficacy may have also benefited from the accelerated courses, which allowed students to spend less time in remedial/developmental courses. The accelerated course assisted with creating an achievement process that coincides with the way underprepared student view education, combating the development of stress due to slow progression. As previously mentioned, underprepared students see education as a quick process (Langley & Bart, 2008; Mulvey, 2008). The work of the authors supports accelerated courses will be more than likely to beneficial to developmental student in comparison to existing models. In this way, students could maintain a mindset of progression and advancement.

Further, the indicated levels of hope among AWA participants suggests (although does not prove) that students benefited from the university's orientation instructors. To further create acceleration and mastery experiences, students were required to attend the University Orientation course during the summer semester. During the University Orientation course, students learned more about study skills and uncovered connections to university resources. After the completion of the summer course, the respective instructor acted as their academic advisor, which allowed the instructor to assess the individual needs of each student and construct an academic

plan. All in all, the class helped students to develop and accomplish goals, as well as identify their existing strength that may contribute to their achievement.

In addition, it is speculated that the utilization of a L/L community housing retention initiatives identified by Cuseo added to the possibility of increasing, maintaining, and/or creating levels of self-efficacy and hope that helped students in this study graduate. As noted by D'Lima, Winsler, & Kitsantas (2014), "Bandura (2006) emphasized self-efficacy as an influential trait in individuals' adjustment to change, which indicates the importance of self-efficacy during the first-year of college" (p. 342). The present study also suggests that students were able to find multiple pathways to success due to having access to peer support systems. Being exposed to their peers' experiences and persistence may further activate students' of self-efficacy. As Bandura (1995) discovered, "Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs they too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities" (p. 3).

To further create a sense of vicarious experiences, the AWA L/L community housed all the participating AWA students. They were assigned to a specific wing of the residence hall based on their school schedule. Students with a specific schedule lived in a specific wing. This provided students the opportunity to support an individual as a group and the ability to independently problem-solve. They were also assigned a trained peer mentor who lived with them. The peer mentor created programming and events specifically catered to their needs. This person also contributed to any problem-solving that may take place outside of the classroom. This process facilitated "pathways" that are important to hope: "The pathways component

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refs to a sense of being able to generate successful plans to meet goals" (Snyder et al., 1991, p.570).

Furthermore, the Living and Learning Coordinator may have acted as an important professional resource for students, further bolstering their hope and self-efficacy. The AWA Living and Learning Coordinator had numerous responsibilities that required Living and Leaning Coordinator to have the most contact of any professional working with AWA students. Due to the amount of time spent with students, the Living and Learning Coordinator became something of a surrogate parent for students while in college. According to Cuyjet (2006), African American students seem to especially benefit from having a professional like the Living and Learning Coordinator who can play the role of "(1) supervisor as teacher, (2) supervisor as guide, (3), supervisor as gatekeeper, and finally (4) supervisor as consultant" (p. 98). The Living and Learning Coordinator engaged with students outside of the classroom in their living area in order to assess any challenges they may have faced outside of the academic arena and enhance their motivation. Social persuasion can externally influence how people views their capabilities (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). As Bandura (1995) noted, "people who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities mobilize greater efforts and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise" (p. 4). The Living and Learning Coordinator further facilitated students' sense of hope by promoting agentic thinking, which "reflects the cognitive momentum that translates into a 'can do' attitude relating to people's confidence in their abilities to attain valued goals" (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 820).

Recommendations for Practice

The findings of this study have implications for future professional practices. Multiple scholars agree that high levels of hope and self-efficacy are indicators of student success (Bandura,1997; Snyder,1991; Cuseo, n.d.; Cuseo, 2005). The present study suggests that self-efficacy can be maintained or enhanced through exposure to multiple retention initiatives. Many campuses desire to achieve higher retention rates among students. By implementing programs that help to increase and maintain self-efficacy and hope, campuses may be able to better enhance success among developmental/remedial students. Based on the findings, instituting the following actions may prove worthwhile for student affairs practitioners, administrators, and policymakers:

- Federal and state policymakers in higher education can support a variety of programs that target underprepared students by providing increased program funding to support these programs at HBCUs. Federal policymakers can establish a statewide consortium that focuses on underprepared students attending HBCUs. This consortium could address the educational achievement levels and academic success of underprepared students, and these policymakers can create change to assist underprepared students achieve academic success.

- Institutions should consider replicating the Academics with Attitude program. During my experience as the former Living and Learning Coordinator for the program, the key factors below were seen as the program's most beneficial components. If an institution does not have the resources to replicate the entire program, combining the following components will assist with the success exhibited below.

o Establish a 6-8 week bridge program: This will help students to create a peer support community where they can identify professional resources and assistance without distraction from the larger surrounding student body. The bridge program may influence self-efficacy the most. It should provide mastery opportunities and vicarious experiences through supplemental instruction for each course (Bandura, 1997). The experience should allow students to develop a relationship with peer mentors and a Living and Learning Coordinator, who will together act as students' primary external motivators.

o Create an accelerated model that allows students to see their progression move in line with their peers.

o Financial Assistance: Although the norm for financial assistance typically comes in the form of an award for academic achievement, paying for a portion of the developmental courses required will assist with eliminating the stress of having to pay for additional required classes. I suggest paying for the courses that students will have to take during the summer bridge program. Paying for the summer courses will serve as an incentive for sacrificing their summer vacation. In 2010, the AWA program conducted a comparison between students who attended the AWA program in comparison to students who were eligible but decided not to attend. The data show that students who participated were more likely to persist and had higher GPA scores. See *Appendix D* for more details.

Institutions should implement intentional plans built around multiple initiatives in order to properly assist underprepared students. Administrators should be mindful of tailoring resources to students' specific academic needs.

Limitations

This study features multiple limitations. The first limitation relates to the cooperation of the University's staff. As the researcher, I had very limited communication with the one staff member assigned to assist me.". The staff member was not regularly available to answer questions or receive suggestions about collecting data.

The second limitation relates to students responding after they had graduated. Due to accomplishing their main academic goals, students who have graduated are more likely to have higher levels of self-efficacy and hope. Completing that goal may have influenced their responses about their perceived ability to accomplish their goal and their ability to strategize.

The final limitation relates to the lack of pre- and post-data. The AWA program underwent cuts during the fall of 2015, and as such, there were limited staff members who could locate any records of past surveys that would have helped to assess growth levels of hope and self-efficacy. It was reported by the former Living and Learning Coordinator that students that participated in the AWA program were required to take the "College Inventory Survey". The results of this survey would have played a major role for the present study. "The College Student Inventory identifies at-risk students in the incoming class using the leading non-cognitive indicators of college student success. You and your colleagues receive detailed information about

each student's academic motivations, areas of risk, and receptivity to specific student services" (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, n.d.). The College Inventory Survey could have been used in this present study to detect changes in the levels of self-efficacy and hope.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research is needed to explore the levels of self-efficacy and hope of former AWA students and the effects of the program over time. This type of research can help to determine if the effects of the AWA program can last throughout the graduate careers of participants. Measuring the growth of the levels of self-efficacy and hope of AWA students may be beneficial to future research. Also, a pre and post assessment of hope and self-efficacy will prove if the program has a direct impact on AWA students by measuring the growth of self-efficacy and hope after attending the program.

The present study employed quantitative techniques. Other researchers may want to engage in qualitative methods to further explore how the AWA program enhances academic self-efficacy. Such data might provide richer information about which components of the program help to increase self-efficacy among participants.

Conclusion

The current study investigated the levels of hope and self-efficacy among students with remedial and developmental needs after attending a program that housed multiple retention initiatives in an HBCU setting. The program Academics with Attitude (AWA) focused on assisting students who entered into college with developmental needs in the areas of reading, writing, and math. As the researcher, I

analyzed the results of 52 participants who were grouped into either AWA members or non-members (i.e., prepared students), comparing their mean scores to discover a significant difference in the levels of hope and self-efficacy.

The t-test analyses revealed a significant difference in this regard: Students who were members of the AWA program displayed higher levels of self-efficacy and hope in comparison to non-members. The scores indicated that AWA members were hopeful and confident in their academic abilities after attending the AWA program and completing their first year of college. Although AWA members displayed higher levels of self-efficacy and hope, non-AWA members proved to be hopeful and confident in their academic abilities after completing their first year of college. Although I hypothesized that the AWA students would have higher levels of self-efficacy and hope in comparison to students who did not attend the program, I did not expect the non-AWA members to be as hopeful and confident in their academic abilities.

In conclusion, it is important that the literature on hope and self-efficacy examine different types of programs that offer multiple retention initiatives and how these programs affect the hope and self-efficacy among African American students with developmental needs. It would seem that programs like Academics with Attitude can work to these ends, especially among African American students for whom the need for developmental/remedial courses is relatively high.

Unfortunately, remedial/developmental education has not been seen as a major priority for most institutions. However, HBCUs should make the delivery of proper retention initiatives for at-risk students a high priority. Such programs provide a powerful way of transforming students' beliefs about their ability to learn at a college

level. Broadly speaking, it is imperative that HBCU administrators, policymakers and other stakeholders work to constantly review the delivery of services for at-risk students. Programs such as Academics with Attitude can act as template for HBCUs that want to improve the lives of large numbers of students at-risk failure.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A.

Email to Institutional Research, General Counsel, and Living and

Learning Community Coordinator

Email to Institutional Research, General Counsel, and Living and Learning

Community Coordinator

Greetings,

I am sending this email in regards to information that I need to complete my research for my Doctoral Program. I was informed by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to contact you to complete my request. I am graduate student at Eastern Kentucky University. My major is Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies. In order to complete my IRB application I will need a letter of support from Kentucky State University and additional information.

I will need the current Living and Learning Coordinator to request the most recent contact information of all the students that have (graduated or still currently enrolled) who attended the Academics with Attitude Program during the following semesters:

*Summer 2011

*Summer 2012

*Summer 2013

*Summer 2014

This study will examine the graduation rates of a bridge program that has a built in developmental education component and living/learning community component in a Historically Black College setting and question how self-efficacy and hope of the students were changed. The students selected were identified as at-risk students due to their high school GPA's and standardized test scores. The program focused on creating

self-efficacy and hope through additional resources that assisted with a student's academic and social life. The development of self-efficacy has been proven important to a student's academic, cognitive, and personal development. Hope has been proven to be important in the area of finding different routes to success and the motivation a person has to take those routes. As I mentioned before this study will display the significant role a remedial education bridge program can play as it relates self-efficacy and hope. Using the data found, professionals will be able to create methods that will help students to develop hope and self-efficacy that will lead to better graduation rates for HBCUs.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding my request or you can also contact my committee chairperson using the information below. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

APPENDIX B.

Recruitment Email

Greetings,

My name is G. Maurice White. I am a student at Eastern Kentucky University. I am

conducting a research study about students that graduated after attending the

Academics with Attitude Program. I am emailing to ask if you would like to take

about 15 minutes to complete a survey for this research project. Participation is

completely voluntary and your answers will be anonymous. If you are interested,

please click on the link below for the survey and additional information. If you have

any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or by phone at 937-723-

1157.

Thank you for your time.

**"By clicking on the START SURVEY link you are indicating your willingness
to participate in this survey. Your email address and any identifying
information will not be linked to survey responses; thus your
confidentiality will be protected."**

APPENDIX C.

Self-Efficacy/Hope Survey

Self-Efficacy/Hope Survey

Before starting the survey, circle or respond to the following information that applies to you.

When did you start College?

Are you currently enrolled or did you graduate? Enrolled/Graduated

If you graduated, what year did you graduate?

Did you attend the Academics with Attitude Program? Yes/No

Gender: Male/Female

Part 1
Directions: Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes how you thought about yourself after completing your first year as a freshman in college and put that number in the blank before each sentence. Please take a few moments to focus on yourself and what went on in your life at that moment. Once you have established your thoughts, answer each item according to the following scale:

<div align="center">

1 = Definitely False
2 = Mostly False
3 = Somewhat False
4 = Slightly False
5 = Slightly True
6 = Somewhat True
7 = Mostly True
8 = Definitely True

</div>

_____ 1.   After my freshmen year, if I found myself in a jam, I was able to think of many ways to get out of it.

_____ 2.   After my freshmen year, I always energetically pursued my goals.

_____ 3.   After my freshmen year I discovered there are lots of ways around any problem that I may face.

_____ 4.   After my freshmen year, I saw myself as being successful.

_____ 5.   After my freshmen year, I began to think of many ways to reach my goals.

_____ 6.   After my freshmen year, I was able to meet the goals that I set for myself.

Part 2

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes how you felt after completing your freshman year in college. Put that number in the blank before each sentence.

1=Not At All True
2=Hardly True
3=Moderately True
4=Exactly True

_____ 1.   After completing my freshmen year, I could manage and solve difficult problems.

_____ 2.   After completing my freshmen year, if things did not go as planned I could find the means and ways to get what I want.

_____ 3.   After completing my freshmen year, it became easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

_____ 4.   After completing my freshmen year, I became confident that I could handle unexpected events.

_____ 5.   After completing my freshmen year, I used resourcefulness to handle unforeseen situations.

_____ 6.   After completing my freshmen year, I could solve most problems if I invested the necessary efforts.

_____ 7.   After completing my freshmen year, I could remain calm when faced with difficulties because I could rely on my coping abilities.

_____ 8.   After completing my freshmen year, whenever I was confronted with a problem, I could usually find several solutions.

_____ 9.   After completing my freshmen year, whenever I was in trouble, I could usually think of a solution.

_____ 10.   After completing my freshmen year, I could handle whatever came my way.

APPENDIX D.

Comparison of Summer 2010 AWA Students to Fall 2010 AWA-Eligible

Comparison of Summer 2010 AWA Students to Fall 2010 AWA-Eligible

Legend: ■ AWA—summer 2010 ■ Fall 2010

- Reg. for fall with 2.0 or better: 73% (AWA—summer 2010), 40% (Fall 2010)
- GPA=2.0 or better after sp. Sem 2011: 71% (AWA—summer 2010), 39% (Fall 2010)
- On Probation: 15% (AWA—summer 2010), 33% (Fall 2010)
- Suspended: 7% (AWA—summer 2010), 12% (Fall 2010)