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Community College to a Four-Year Institution: Transition for Underrepresented Students

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Community College to a Four-Year Institution:

Transition for Underrepresented Students

(TITLE)

BY

Sarah Adams

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Masters of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2014

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ABSTRACT

Many four-year public institutions are experiencing increasing enrollment of students transferring from community colleges. For this qualitative assessment, six underrepresented students who transferred from a two-year community college to a four-year public institution were interviewed to examine both support and risk factors that underrepresented students experienced during and after the transition process. Findings showed that underrepresented students' common influential factors were finances, location, family/parental support, motivation and preparedness. The data revealed that underrepresented students experienced support from family, friends, TRIO, faculty and counselors while transitioning from community college. Risk factors that were revealed for underrepresented students at community college and their universities were paperwork, course work/credit hours, culture shock and organizational involvement. The study concluded that faculty/staff mentorship programs and providing students with one-on-one personal interactions both at the community college and four-year public institution are needed for underrepresented transfer students to succeed navigating the higher education system.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my mom and dad. My mom and dad have been two of my biggest supporters. Dad, thank you for always pushing me to study hard, work hard and have fun. You are always there whenever I need advice. Mom, thank you for your wonderful caring personality. You go the extra mile to make me feel special. You challenge me to be a better person by supporting me and listening to my every complaint. Thank you mom and dad for your amazing support through all my educational endeavors. I could not have done any of this without you.

I also want to dedicate my thesis to my twin sister, Sally. Sally, thank you for supporting me and understanding the trials and tribulations of writing a thesis. It has been great to share our educational journey together. I appreciate your honesty, passion and work ethic. You push me to strive for perfection so that eventually I can be just as great if not better than you.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my thesis to my husband, Matt. Matt, thank you for sharing in this graduate school journey with me. I appreciate you sacrificing your time and energy for me to attend graduate school. You have inspired me to complete this study on your behalf because of the many struggles you have faced within higher education. Thank you to my family for always loving and supporting me.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Community colleges form an integral part of American higher education. Over half

of all first-year college students in the United States are enrolled in community colleges.

Of these community college students, 80% plan on transferring to a four-year institution.

A large number of students in community colleges are ethnic minority (52%) and low

income (55%) (Bailey, Jenkins & Leinbach, 2005). According to the National Center for

Education Statistics (2003), the average time it takes to complete a bachelor's degree, for

students who begin at a community college, is 71 months. Underrepresented students in

this study were defined as first generation and/or low-income and/or ethnic minority

(National Access Office, 2003). There are many factors that lead these underrepresented

students to failure when transferring from a community college to a four-year institution.

Aries and Seider (2005) conducted a study that asked students to share their stories

about their college experience. Students of lower income spoke about feeling intimidated

by wealthy students who clearly had social privileges, which the lower income students

did not. Some students reported anxiety because of other students' possession of wealth.

Students with lower incomes saw wealthy students possessing linguistic competence,

parental resources, and financial support. In particular, there were feelings of inferiority

and intimidation. Students with low socio-economic status (SES) have factors that play

into their successes and failures as a student. Ethnic minority students (African American,

black, Asian Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American) earned 22.8% of all associate

degrees that were awarded in 1997 (Szelenyi, 2001). This statistic reflects general trends

throughout higher education in which minority students tend to have lower persistence

and graduation rates as well as lower levels of academic preparedness (Szelenyi, 2001).

First-generation college students, defined as students whose parents have never attended

or had minimal college experience but never graduated ("U.S. department of education-

TRIO," 2013), are at a disadvantage when it comes to having a basic knowledge about

higher education. Examples of the disadvantages include costs, application process, level

of family income and support, degree expectations and plans, and academic preparation.

According to the research, most first generation students are classified as low income

and/or ethnic minority students (Terenzini, Rendon, Upcraft, Millar, Allison, Gregg, &

Jalomo, 1994).

The students in this study were all participants in the TRIO Student Support

Services program, which consisted of students that were low income, first generation

and/or disabled. TRIO is federally funded and has eight different programs helping

middle school to graduate school students further their education. One of the programs

traditionally for college students is called Student Support Services (SSS). Student

Support Services helps students who are already enrolled in both two-year or four-year

institutions. The aim with this program is to improve college persistence and graduation

rates as well as increase transfer rates for those attending two-year institutions. Services

include tutoring, academic advising, transfer and graduate school counseling and

mentoring ("U.S. Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

This qualitative study examined the factors that influenced and supported students

in their transition from community college to four-year institutions. The qualitative

approach to this study provided an insight into the experiences and feelings that a

quantitative study could not provide. Qualitative studies aim to provide answers to

humanistic questions like why and how. The researcher asked open-ended questions to evoke responses that were meaningful and rich (Marshall, 1996). There is a need for this underrepresented population to be researched. The end goal was to help the large number of underrepresented students that enter community colleges with aspirations of eventually earning a Bachelor's degree.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine both support and risk factors that influence underrepresented students that have transferred from a community college to a four-year institution and their experiences during the transition process. Students that are classified as first generation, and/or low income, and/or ethnic minority are influenced by outside factors that attribute to academic attrition (Aries & Seider, 2005). The attrition rate for students at community colleges is far greater than the attrition rate of students at four-year institutions. The support services of underrepresented students at a four-year institution are pertinent to the success of the student in attaining their four-year degree. The transition process as well as support services available are important to consider in order for one to be aware of the problems and effectively address them. The students need to feel supported when making the transition from the community college to a four-year institution.

This study was important me, as the researcher, because of previous work with underrepresented community college students. I personally had seen first-hand how peers, parents and finances can affect the college experience of an underrepresented student. If students are not aware of the resources available, and their parents are unfamiliar with the college process, how can these students be successful? The intent of

this research was to shed light on how this population is matriculating and factors they are experiencing during and after their transition from a community college to a four-year institution.

Research Questions

In order to gain a better understanding of the factors which impact underrepresented students' experiences in transition, the researcher has formulated the following research questions:

1. What factors influence/impact underrepresented students' transition from a community college to a four-year institution?

2. What are support factors that underrepresented students receive during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution?

3. What support factors do underrepresented students receive once at a four-year institution?

4. What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution?

5. What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing once at a four-year institution?

Significance of the Study

Of all students at community colleges who intended to pursue bachelor's degrees 39% left school without completing a degree or certificate program compared to only 17% that left a four-year public college without a degree (Bailey, Jenkins & Leinbach, 2005). The factors identifying these student groups as underrepresented have a significant impact on college access. The statistics become increasingly greater for these

underrepresented students. Only 11% of the low-income community college students transferred to four-year institutions as compared to 48% of high-income students (Bailey, Jenkins & Leinbach). Approximately one-fourth of community college students come from families earning 125% or less of the federal poverty level, as compared to one-fifth of four-year college students (Horn & Nevill, 2006).

I, as the researcher, have personally seen the struggles of underrepresented students. My significant other has been to three different universities and still has not obtained his degree. He was a first-generation, low-income student with many struggles. Personally, he struggled with finances and keeping track of a budget. While attending a university, he would attend school during the day and work two jobs in the evening to attempt to pay for his food and rent. He did not have time to do his homework. With the struggles of being a first-generation student, homework did not come easy to him either. He would struggle to make the grades in his courses and lacked a mentor/professor relationship that would help him outside the classroom. The hardship of going through higher education with no support from family, professors or friends eventually took a toll and led to him dropping out.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation was that the participants may not have been representative of the entire population. The group of participants were chosen because of accessibility which can cause sampling bias. There were only a limited number of students in the TRIO program that had transferred from a community college. Students that qualified as first generation, and/or low income, and/or ethnic minority and transferred from a community college in the TRIO program were subjected by the primary researcher, which eliminated

the other population of students at the university who might otherwise have qualified for the study.

The second was the nature of self-reporting. On the day of interviews the participants were asked to self-report their demographic information. For example, participants stated their age, class standing, GPA and how many credit hours they had received from their community college. The participants self-reported their demographics and did not use the online database. The information was not verified with the university. The information based on the participants' self-report could increase room for information error.

The third limitation was the language used by participants. The participants while being interviewed spoke fast and used abbreviations. The participants did not speak in full sentences or use proper grammar. To eliminate and decrease the transcription error participants were asked to verify after transcriptions if what they communicated during the interview was recorded accurately. This helped maintain accuracy for the findings conveyed in chapter 4.

Definitions of Terms

At-risk students. Those who are not succeeding in school such as not meeting the requirements necessary for promotion to the next grade level or graduation from high school; potential dropouts (National Inventory of Academic Pathways, 2006).

Diversity. "The term must encompass the range of student backgrounds, talents, skills and experiences needed to ensure full access or advance the benefits of student diversity on campus. This array of characteristics may be (and frequently is) wide ranging, including, for instance, first-generation status (or, similarly those whose

backgrounds reflect a significant "distance traveled" in reaching the doors of higher

education), socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic background, artistic talents (for

instance, piano virtuosos), athletic skills and accomplishment, fluency in certain

languages, unique life experiences (ranging from notable volunteer activities to having

lived in areas that tend to be underrepresented on campus) (*diversitycollegeboard.org*)."

Dropout students. Those who left school or fail to graduate or complete

secondary education (National Inventory of Academic Pathways, 2006).

First generation student. An individual both of whose parents did not complete

a baccalaureate degree or any individual who regularly resided with and received support

from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a

baccalaureate degree ("U.S. Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

Low-achieving students. Those whose education attainment is below other

students of their age or grade level (National Inventory of Academic Pathways, 2006).

Low-income students. An individual from a family whose taxable income for the

preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level

determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census ("U.S.

Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

Racial and ethnic minorities. Those who are classified under a traditionally

underrepresented racial or ethnic group such as: African American students, Black

students, Asian Pacific Islander students, Latino(a) students, Native American students

(National Inventory of Academic Pathways, 2006).

Socio-economic status. Woolfolk (2007) refers to SES as "the relative standing

in society based on income, power, background and prestige" (p. 165). Santrock (2004),

adds that an important qualification is "the ability to control resources and participate in society's rewards" (p. 583).

TRIO Programs. Federal outreach and student services program in the United States designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students (McElroy & Armesto, 1999).

Underrepresented student. Students that have participation rates significantly below the national average for the cohort under consideration. Examples of such groups may be people from low-income backgrounds, lower socio-economic groups, low participation neighborhoods, certain minority ethnic groups or disabled people (National Access Office, 2003).

Upward Bound. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families or from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree, as well as low-income, first-generation military veterans preparing to enter postsecondary education (National Inventory of Academic Pathways, 2006).

Summary

This study focused on first generation and/or low income, and/or ethnic minority students that transferred from a community college to a four-year institution and their support and risk factors they experienced during the transition process. Chapter one provides a summary of the study as well as an explanation of the study's purpose, research questions and limitations. Chapter two presents a review of the literature and a synopsis of the theoretical frameworks. Chapter three is an exploration of the methods used to conduct the study, the demographic information of participants and explanation

of the data collection/analysis. Chapter four shares the findings of the one-on-one

interviews with the six participants and analyzes the findings to address the five research

questions. Finally, chapter five includes recommendations for future studies and Student

Affairs professionals with an overall conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

For many students, community colleges are the primary means of entry into the higher education system. They tend to enroll students who are more academically, economically, and socially disadvantaged than do other postsecondary institutions because of their convenient locations, open-access admission policies, and relatively low costs (Townsend & Wilson, 2006). This literature review provides an insight into recent research on areas of support for students that are first generation, low income and ethnic minority.

Underrepresented Students

Underrepresented students have a more difficult time matriculating to four-year institutions than students who are high income, ethnic majority and second or third generation. A study by Walpole (2008) found that African American students who reported low SES also reported less interaction with faculty, less time studying, less participation in clubs/organizations and low grades. However, Walpole also found that these minority students were working more hours within a week than their majority counterparts.

Another factor for low SES students is being a first-generation student. Many first generational students have anxiety, social pressures and trouble connecting with others in the realm of higher education. Because these students' parents did not attend college, their culture shock is more extensive than that of their peers that may be second or third generation (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). However, McCarron and Inkelas (2006) found that even first generation students with families who report high

SES possess little drive to complete a degree. Even if parents did attend college, students feel that their educational attainment is less of a necessity if their parents are doing well financially (McCarron & Inkelas).

Minority students are disadvantaged at both community colleges and four-year institutions. Their access to community college is greater than that of a four-year institution. For example, nearly 30% of community college students are Black or Hispanic, as compared to 20% of students enrolled in four-year public and private postsecondary institutions (Horn & Nevill, 2006). While there is a population increase at community colleges, the transfer process for these students can be extremely difficult, especially if other criteria such as first generation and low income is against them as well. There are multiple factors that can help or hinder these students during their educational process. The factors have been split into two categories: support and risk factors.

Support Factors

Peer Influence. Research has shown that students prefer peer support, (formally or informally) to parent support (Giddan, 1988 et. al., Thompson, 2008). The more academic and social connections the student has the more likely they are to succeed. Social interaction among peers lends a great deal of support to student retention rates as well (Tinto, 1997 et. al., Thompson, 2008). Research suggests that peer support is a strong predictor of college grades. Students perceive their peers as more knowledgeable and able to provide more support than their family while at college. (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005).

Parental Support. One of the factors for student achievement in a university setting is parental involvement. Whether or not the parent is involved and how involved a

parent or parents are affects a student's success. Parental support adds a component of the student's reassurance of worth (Bosker, Eggens & Van der Werf, 2008).

There are different types of parental support. Categories are broken down into social, cultural, knowledge or economic. Social support is defined as the networks available to the person. Cultural support entails practices that fall under the dominant culture of the individual's and parental influences through culture (Langhout, Rosselli, Feinstein, 2006). Knowledge and economic support is based on how much the parents have including possessions such as a large house and nice cars or level of education (Ivy-league diploma). Each of these factors plays a role in a student's parental support.

At certain levels in the student's career their social contact and support from family members might decrease. The support from a student's peers begins to take on a more active role. However, the study showed that support from parents enhances well-being and academic performance of an undergraduate student (Bosker et al., 2008). Fass and Tubman (2002) conducted a study that acknowledged students who have low levels of attachment to parents or peers suffer academically.

Family support appears to be extremely influential for first-generation college students. However these groups, by their definition, have a weak family support structure for college because parents and siblings are unable to relate to college life or associated problems (Lumina Foundation, 2008). First-generation students cannot ask their parents or siblings how to complete a lab assignment, rush a fraternity or sorority, or balance social and academic responsibilities; the student is effectively alone.

When looking at parental support as related to financing of the students' higher education, research suggests that only 53% of the student financial aid is parental

contribution. The same study also suggests that parents usually provide support for their child the same way that they themselves were supported. Students who are more motivated academically receive more money from their parents (Flint, 1997). Higher education is built on middle class values. This is expressed through policies, social gatherings on and off campus, as well as tuition. Students have scholarship opportunities that provide assistance financially, however, many students rely on family or government assistance. Reframing the role of the parent could give a student a different perspective on college even if they come from a low socio-economic status (SES) family.

Rowan-Kenyon, Bell and Perna (2008) studied the way parents influence their children in college. They found a theme in which parents shape college opportunity for their children, but a student's involvement varies based on socioeconomic status. Depending on the family income, some parents may push their students toward a degree while others may have a hands off approach. A parent's involvement also depends on whether or not they experienced life as a college student and progressed toward a degree.

Faculty. Another type of social support is through teachers. Teachers understand that a student's background affects their ability to learn certain subjects. "The influence of peers on individuals is not only direct, but likely indirect as well, through the perceptions that teachers, administrators, and other educators may have of the peer groups they associate with and educate"(Caldas &Bankston, 1997 p.270). If the professor's attitude is that a socio-economic group is academically weak, they may dumb down the curriculum, which lowers the student's expectations and is likely to have negative outcomes for the individuals that fall under that group (Caldas & Bankston).

The classroom experiences are the basis for forming supportive relationships and environments at community colleges. At two-year community colleges the students are generally not residential and commute to their classes, hence spending less time in extra-curricular activities. In contrast, at four-year institutions students have more opportunities to spend time out of class. These students develop a commitment to the institution through social integration with other students and faculty. The results, in a study by Strauss and Volkwein (2004) indicate that the classroom experiences are a better predictor of institutional commitment at a two-year institution than at a four-year institution. Strauss and Volkwein (2004) found that students from the community college reported greater satisfaction with faculty interaction, greater intellectual growth and greater institutional commitment.

The potential benefits of more personal, extensive, faculty-student interaction have been noted in studies by Thomas (2002) and the University of Michigan study detailed in the Lumina Foundation report (2008). Student comments have indicated that the increased interaction not only can benefit them academically, but can help them feel more integrated into the campus as well.

TRIO. The TRIO programs are federally funded outreach programs, which help identify individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and provide them with educational services. These programs were created to assist in giving first generation, low income and disabled student populations an opportunity to pursue higher education. There are seven TRIO programs which consist of the Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math and Science, Educational Opportunity Centers, Student Support Services,

Veteran Upward Bound and Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement program ("U.S. department of education-TRIO," 2013).

Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound programs are aimed toward servicing pre-college students to increase their college awareness and preparation. Both of these programs offer counseling, tutoring, mentoring and workshops to provide students with information about admission into college ("U.S. Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

Educational Opportunity Centers help adults get back on track with their education. The program helps students earn their high school equivalency degrees and apply to college. In addition, the Veterans Upward Bound program assists military adults in the same way by helping them navigate the system and transition to higher education ("U.S. Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

Student Support Services helps students who are already enrolled in both two-year and four-year institutions. The aim with this program is to improve college persistence and graduation rates as well as increase transfer rates for those attending two-year institutions. Services include tutoring, academic advising, transfer and graduate school counseling and mentoring ("U.S. Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

Finally, Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program works to increase the number of doctoral degrees earned by students from disadvantaged populations. The program focuses on students that have academic potential and assists them with graduate school applications and entrance into the post-baccalaureate programs. ("U.S. Department of Education-TRIO," 2013).

Risk Factors

Campus Involvement. Students who come from low SES families must learn to adjust to life as a college student because of institutional middle class values. Some institutions provide programs and outlets for student adjustment periods at the beginning of their freshman year. For example, Jamelske (2009) studied a first year program of participants under the age of twenty. This report indicated that students were (15.7 %) low SES and (42.3%) first generation status and after completion of the program, they reported a higher grade point average (GPA) than students who were not involved in the program. Research shows that institutions that are engaged with underserved students during their first year on campus will increase students' GPA.

Financial. Fiscal problems often prevent universities from providing the support necessary for students, regarding academic success (Earwaker, 1992; Peach, 2005 et.al., Thompson, 2008). Research has shown that students who come from low-income families are more likely to drop out of an institution (Titus, 2006). Students with low SES tend to enroll in public and low selectivity institutions rather than their counterparts that attend private, high selectivity four-year institutions. In addition to the choice of institution, low SES students enroll in universities that have fewer financial resources available (Titus, 2006). This hinders students from achieving a more beneficial experience on campus due to the lack of money. Students also become overwhelmed by the thought of financial aid. Many students, especially first-generation female students, reported feeling as though they were not assuming control of their own destiny and were feeling frustrated and helpless (Eitel & Martin, 2009).

A study by Tones, Fraser, Elder and White (2009) looked at the support system given to students with low SES. Students that were studied were of a mature age to realize their needs within a university setting. The students felt that they had a hard time adjusting to university life, dealing with conflicts and did not understand their outlets and support services. Those who used the services provided by the institution did not find them beneficial. Research found that students were not getting the support that they needed from their university (Tones, Fraser, Elder & White). One of the main concerns regarding institutional support is financial aid, whether that is from the government, the institution or through scholarships. Minority students in particular are concerned that not enough of them benefit from institutional aid offered at schools with a high tuition rate (Harper & Griffin, 2011).

Occupation. Students with low SES tend to work more and take part in fewer extracurricular activities than students with high SES. Students are making up for the lack of income or assistance from family or the institution so their time is spent within an occupation (Walpole, 2003). Due to the costs of attending a university such as fees, tuition, housing, books and meals, students with low SES tend to delay entry. A study done by Wells and Lynch (2012) found that if a family's income increases by 10,000 dollars this decreases a student's plan to delay college by (3%). Essentially, students who do not have the means to pay are not likely to attend. Money is an essential factor for students getting ready to make the decision to attend an institution. However, Wells and Lynch (2012) also found that full time workers with a bachelor's degree earned 62% more in 2005 and projected 61% more earnings than full time workers with only high school degrees. While a degree would benefit a student over time, for some students

finding the financial aid for a degree is more of a challenging process than actually obtaining the degree.

In a recent study, Lang (2012) showed that students who are juniors and seniors tend to work more hours than sophomores and freshmen. The more students work off-campus the less time they spend socializing with other students. Upper level students, as well as men, are more likely to work off campus than lower classmen students and women. The research suggests that working did not directly affect the students grades. However, work did affect their social support (Lang, 2012).

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

This research will be guided by four theoretical frameworks to assist with understanding the matriculation process for low income, ethnic minority and first generational students.

Separation Theory. Students enter college with various characteristics including gender, race, academic achievements, family socioeconomic background, and parent educational levels and different levels of commitment to the institution. These characteristics and the level of institutional commitment influence students through the separation stage. Separation occurs prior to institutional experiences in both the academic and social settings. As students enter college, they are required to leave behind their past communities, such as families, friends, high schools, and other areas of their home town. This separation initiates the first stage, which may require some personal transformation and possibly rejection of the norms of past communities. Separation may be particularly difficult for individuals whose past communities, parents and friends question the value of attending college (Tinto, 1987, 1993).

Student Integration/Involvement Theory. Vincent Tinto's student integration model acknowledges that student integration into an institution can occur along two dimensions, the academic and the social. Academic integration occurs when students become ingrained in their classes, grades and assignments, while social integration occurs when students create relationships and connections outside of the classroom. For example, social integration is connection with organizations and groups outside specific academic endeavors. Students must be integrated into the both proportions to increase their likelihood of persistence. Tinto (1993) notes that there are both formal and informal steps within institutions that can encourage integration and persistence. The effectiveness for community college students has been questioned. It is noted that community colleges provide students with fewer opportunities for social integration. The ability for community college students to socially integrate at the level of higher education has been seen as low to those students at the two year. Tinto (1993), himself has questioned whether the systems that encourage social integration, in particular, are relevant to community college and commuter students (p. 78).

Tinto and Engle (2008) used data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Beginning Postsecondary Study (BPS:96/01) to assess low income and first generation students. They found that across all institution types low income, first-generation students were four times more likely to leave their institution after the first year than students who had neither risk factor. Only 11% of low-income, first generation students earned a bachelor's degree compared to 55% of their advantaged peers. Engle and Tinto (2008) noted that once students start at a four-year institution they are more likely to earn their bachelor's degree than when starting at a public two-year or for profit school. Research

also suggested that students that are advantaged who transferred to a four-year institution are five times more likely to attain their bachelor's degree than those disadvantaged students that transfer from a two-year institution (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

Astin's involvement theory (1999) has one basic concept and that is students learn more when they are more involved both academically and socially during their college experience. Astin defines an involved student as one that devotes time to academics, campus life, and student organizations and interacts with faculty. In addition, he mentions that quality and quantity of the student's involvement will influence the amount of student learning and development. The most important resource is a student's time. A student's developmental outcome will be strengthened by how involved they are with family, friends, jobs, and other outside activities. Overall, Astin's model focuses on motivation and behavior of the student.

Transition Theory. Schlossberg's transition theory acknowledges students' transition into a college atmosphere. In particular Schlossberg's 4 S's is what pertains to in this case the transition for underrepresented students from community college to a four-year institution. The four S's consist of situation, self, support and strategies (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Underneath each S is a more structured definition to make sense of an individual's transition. Situation has seven important factors that are considered triggers: timing, control, role change, duration, previous experience with a similar transition, concurrent stress and assessment. While the self is just as important as the situation, there are only two categories, personal and demographic. The next S, support, has three facets: types, functions and measurement. Support refers more to social support; for example, family, friends, institutions and communities. Finally, there is

strategy. In this case, strategy is described as a coping method characterized by information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action and intrapsychic behavior (Evans et. al., 2010). To cope effectively, an individual should use the different types of approaches and be flexible. Students are coming from many different situations, in need of getting support from a number of different people, places and things that require a strategy.

Motivation Theory. Weiner's Motivational Theory is based on psychological principles. Weiner's theory can be related to college students and their motivation to succeed in different ways. The main factors of motivation theory are as follows: causal attributions, self-efficacy, learned helplessness, individual differences, need for achievement, anxiety about failure, environmental determinants, cooperation versus competition, praise and intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards. All of these factors lead an individual to be motivated or not. This relates to a community college student about to make the transition to a four-year institution. There are elements of motivation that lead them to continue on to the four-year institution or not. Students wishing to transfer from community college to four-year institutions will not only need external support, but they will also need to be self-advocates. Community colleges can vary in how supportive they are to students wanting to transfer. Students must be prepared to be diligent, self-motivated and persistent to navigate the transfer process.

Summary

Most of the literature referring to the correlation of low socio-economic status and academic achievement leans toward minority or first-generation students. These students struggle with peer support, parental support and institutional involvement. There are

factors that influence the different support systems that come with trying to reach

academic success in higher education. Factors to be considered are occupations, home

life, on or off campus, meals, jobs, housing and gender. After reviewing the research,

these factors will be examined in this study.

CHAPTER III

Methods

This study examined the support and risk factors of underrepresented students that had transferred from a community college to a four-year institution and their experiences during the transition process. This qualitative study looked at the support services these students were receiving through different avenues internal and external of the university. The research captured through interviews helped provide a better understanding of their educational and personal experiences being first-generation and/or low income and/or ethnic minority.

Research Site

Data was collected at a midsized, four-year institution in the rural Midwest because of the researcher's familiarity with the campus. The student population for fall 2013 was 10,417. The university had a 1:15 faculty-to-student ratio and a current graduation rate of 59%.

Participants

The participants of the study included six undergraduate students enrolled in the TRIO program during the fall 2013 semester. In the TRIO program, there were 121 students and of those, 26 had transferred from a two-year college. All student participants qualified as first-generation and/or low income and/or ethnic minority. These participants included both male and female students that met the specific criteria. The specific criteria included a) participants in the TRIO program that had transferred from a community college to a four-year public institution and b) students that had attained sophomore to

senior student status. Table 1 displays the breakdown of demographic characteristics of the participants of the study.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (n=6)

Characteristics	n (%)
Age	
20-25	5(83)
> 25	1(16)
Gender	
Female	3(50)
Male	3(50)
Ethnicity	
White or Caucasian	1(16)
Black or African American	5(83)
Class	
Junior	2(33)
Senior	4(66)
GPA	
2.0-2.5	1(16)
2.5-3.0	2(33)
3.0-3.5	2(33)
3.5-4.0	1(16)
Credit Hours Completed	
< 50	1(16)
> 50	5(83)

Instrumentation

The researcher used a convenience sample to select the participants. This technique involves the selection of participants that are accessible (Marshall, 1996). The director of the TRIO program provided a list of students who were active in the TRIO program at the time of data collection. From this, a list of students that have transferred from a community college was generated. The reason for choosing the TRIO program participants was accessibility to information and a list of students that already met the

requirements and qualifications. This way the primary researcher did not need to conduct

an extra step in the research to include a demographic survey to find participants. As soon

as the transfer TRIO students were identified all that qualified for the study were sent a

descriptive email (Appendix A).

Data Collection

Individual one-on-one interviews were conducted with all six participants. The

interviews were conducted and recorded in a private setting away from distractions.

Students were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix B) and were informed that their

participation was voluntary in addition to having the opportunity to drop out at any time.

Interviews were conducted starting with demographic questions followed by specific

questions about the transfer process and support services. The interviews took place in an

informal setting. The conversation with the participants was semi-structured and the use

of open-ended questions allowed the researcher the ability to ask additional questions as

they arose. The interviewees' names were not compromised and all information remained

confidential other than the information needed for research. After interviews concluded,

interviewees were notified of their participant incentive and received a five-dollar Jimmy

John's gift card.

Treatment of the Data

The audiotape and videotape of each participant was stored and locked up. The

data was handled appropriately as per IRB protocol to maintain confidentiality.

Transcriptions took place within three weeks of completing all six interviews. The

transcriptions document was stored on a computer with a password. Only the researcher

had direct access to the recorded data. The video recordings were used to check for non-

verbal calibrations across participants. The names and other information linking the student to the interview were removed to protect the identity of the participants. Microsoft Word and Excel were used to categorize data and trends found in the transcription. All data collected will be deleted from storage space after three years.

Data Analysis

After the transcriptions were completed the researcher extracted the data and analyzed for reoccurrences, ideas, themes and categories in participants' responses (Maxwell, 1996). The researcher provided as much legitimation to the captured data as possible while the analysis was taking place. "Legitimation refers to the trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, conformability and/or transferability of inferences made" (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 580). Once the researcher analyzed the data the researcher sent the analysis back to the participants to confirm their transcription and analysis as legitimate. The researcher also had the advisor look over the transcripts to provide a consistency of themes. The transcriptions and researcher's records were characterized by question and constant interviewee responses were sought out as themes. The questions asked of participants were paired with a specific research question. From the participants' responses, themes were formed for each research question. The major themes were common amongst 66% of the participants and examined additionally for findings and discussion.

Summary of Methods

Participants were chosen through the TRIO program and met one or more of the criteria including first generation and/or low income and/or ethnic minority. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted. Answers from interviews with participants

were transcribed and coded for trends and themes. The methods of this study were used

to guide and develop the research.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

This chapter presents the findings from six one-on-one interviews created to answer the following questions: What factors influence/impact underrepresented students' transition from a community college to a four-year institution? What are support factors that underrepresented students receive during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution? What support factors do underrepresented students receive once at a four-year institution? What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution? What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing once at a four-year institution?

Participants were asked open-ended questions regarding support/risk factors during and after their transition from a community college to a four-year institution. All but two participants completed an Associate's Degree at their community college before transferring to a four-year, public institution. Of the participants, 83% were of ethnic minority status, 66% were first generation college students and 83% were of low socio-economic status. After analyzing the data through coding, fifteen themes and five sub-themes emerged relating to support and risk factors. The themes that were found during the one-on-one interviews with each participant are organized under the research questions the themes corresponded to.

Research Question #1: What factors influence/impact underrepresented students' transition from a community college to a four-year institution?

Participants were asked to describe factors that influenced their transition process from their community college to a four-year institution. Participants felt that there were many variables that had both a positive or negative impact during their transfer process. There were five themes that emerged, including finances, location, family or parental support, motivation, and preparedness.

Table 2

Summary of Themes Regarding Participants' factors of Influence of Transition

Transition Factors	# of Respondents
Finances	6
Location	4
Family/Parental Support	4
Motivation	5
Preparedness	5

Finances

The finances theme describes participants' perceptions of the way finances played a role in them attending community college, while they were at the community college, and their transition from the community college to a four-year institution. Participants stated they were impacted financially during their community college transition. One of the reasons money influenced these students while at the community college was because they were forced to find work while going to school, which would allow them to save money to transfer to a four-year institution. Participant 2, a Caucasian female, stated how community college helped her save,

Whenever I went to Kay college, I was able to work at the job that I had through high school so I stayed and worked and was able to save tons of money so that I

could come live here. So, it was work and save and save my mom money and I

got Pell grants and scholarships to Kay too so that helped.

Many of the participants looked at other schools to attend after community college but

found money a major factor when making the leap. Participant 6 stated he could not

afford the school that he wanted desperately to attend,

At a school gala, I saw Factory State and I walked by it several times. And I

looked at Fantasy State … then I saw how much it was and I was like I don't

know. So, from there I always kept Factory State at number one. I always tried to

go to Fantasy State in a big city so I can get that big city surrounding and learn

about all of that stuff. I couldn't really afford it you know so Factory State was

that number one fallback and college for a while.

While money played a significant role and was a factor for each participant, all but one

participant stated that they would attend community college again before attending a

four-year institution due to the lower amount of money spent at the community college.

Location

The location of both community college and four-year institution influenced the

participants' decisions about where they would attend. While at the community college,

all participants reported that they lived with their parents or family members in the home

they grew up in. Four out of the six participants based much of their decision to attend

their chosen four-year institution on location. Some chose their institutions because of the

separation they wanted from their families as well as how close the school was to their

families. So, they wanted to be far away to keep family at bay but close enough to go

home. Participant 4, an African American female, stated, "It is away from home but not

far away from home so I could still get back if I needed to." For many, home was their

security blanket. While the participant's home life was not the best, they were looking for

a place that felt normal and the only normal they knew was close to home. Participant 3,

an African American male, originally stayed at home and went to community college so

he could take care of his little brother. When he told his parents that he wanted to

continue to pursue his education he was put in a difficult situation,

> My parents didn't want me to leave because they wanted me to stay around for
>
> my brother. They don't have to pay for a babysitter when I am around. I mostly
>
> just wanted to get out and see what different education opportunities had to offer,
>
> also what the world is like. I have been around the same area all my life. I've been
>
> on vacations or whatever but nothing too long term. Granted, I know it was only a
>
> three-hour drive but still it was way different than how it is at home. It is nice to
>
> get a new culture and see different people do different things, very exciting
>
> things.

For these underrepresented students, the decision to leave their hometown can be a

difficult one. Some students were pressured by family and friends to stay at home to help

with financial burdens or for other reasons. The decision to leave weighs on these

students more if they do not have the support of their family and friends. These students

understand that while their families struggle at home, they are making the decision to

continue on with their education.

Family/Parental Support

Even though all of the participants come from families with an array of financial

situations, they all have similar stories of support. Five out of six participants explained

that one or more of their family members helped encourag them through the transfer

process. Participant 1, an African American male, described his mother as being the

driving force behind his education,

> My parents are very strong supporters of my academics, especially my mom. She
>
> is very strong on my academics. As long as I was in somebody's school, that's
>
> what she said so it don't matter which way, I had to obtain my education but she's
>
> very supportive.

The participants' voices in their interviews spoke true to how grateful they were to have

support regardless of what that support looked like. Participant 2 shared a conversation

that she had with her mother about continuing to pursue her education,

> She only got her Associates and wanted to go farther but she was pregnant with
>
> me so then she had to stop. So she was like "you do it I did not do it but you need
>
> to finish first", so just kind of pushing me.

Family, particularly parents, played a major role in influencing the participants to

continue their education from community college to their four-year institution. Having

one person believe in these potentially at risk students can boost their confidence and in

turn their achievement rates. Participant 5, an African American female, said, "My family

and the fact that my children are young and I wanted them to see the importance of

education and where it would take you."

Motivation

All of the participants were extremely motivated to continue to a four-year

institution after their community college experiences. While talking with each of these

participants there was a strong emotional connection and pride when discussing their

continuation. For most, not continuing on to a bachelor's degree was never a thought in

their minds. Several of the participants stated that they wanted to provide a better lifestyle

for themselves, as well as family members who had never attended an institution of

higher education. What has kept most of these students motivated through their transition

was knowing that one day, soon for some, they would be walking across the stage to

receive their well-earned degree. Participant 5, addressed her philosophy for continuing

on with higher education and what made the process so special to her after many told her

she should not pursue a degree,

> I think many of them wanted or thought that I should just go get a job. You're
>
> struggling too much. My philosophy was that I could do anything temporarily. It's
>
> not like I lost a job to chase a rock band. I lost my job and I committed to doing
>
> something that will empower me and my family so that was my stance.

Participant 2 had seen a financial struggle in her household and no longer wanted that for

her family. She stated, "I wanted to get my Bachelors. It was just something that my mom

said that I should do. I've always seen myself as wanting to be a teacher and in wanting

to be a teacher I also wanted to have a steady income cause I can see that my Mom's isn't

so I'd like to have that." While a number of factors contributed to the motivation felt by

the participants to continue to a community college and then transfer, many of the

participants relied on family for motivation. Participant 3, another highly motivated

student talked about what influenced him to transfer to a university,

> I was and am motivated to graduate. Man I really want that degree. Like that is
>
> the only thing that I see. Looking at grad school and everything like that it wasn't
>
> until last year that I even knew what graduate school was. I had no idea what the

GRE was; I thought that was like a car company. Being out here you just learn

like it is so much more going on than what you think. It's like I just want to learn

everything that I possibly can about it. I don't want to be an expert in every single

category but I want to know at least the top five things to every category that I can

just because it makes for a better person and well-rounded that way.

All of the participants addressed a family struggle that held them back from many

benefits in life, but also propelled them forward. Many have dealt with a single parent

home, homelessness, living in a shelter, a parent with a disability, parents without jobs or

trying to raise children while attending school. These students have encountered trials but

contested the hardship with higher education and continue to motivate themselves to push

through to earn a Bachelor's degree.

Preparedness

The preparedness theme describes the factor of preparedness and perceptions of

participants' ability to feel as though they were ready to make the step from community

college and to a four-year institution. All but one participant stated they would again

choose to attend a community college prior to attending a four-year institution. Other

factors and influences went into this decision, but one main factor the participants felt

was preparedness to attend a four-year institution. Some participants sought out

opportunities to gain a better understanding for the level of academic rigor at a four-year

institution, while others gained the experience from classroom work. Participant 5

reached out to professors as well as administrators at their community college to prepare

for the next level. Participant 5 felt prepared because professors challenged her with the

academic rigor, dense readings, journals, empirical readings and research,

I may not have gone as in depth as I have now because I am at an institution

where there are more people doing research, but they definitely opened my eyes

to the possibility. I knew when I came here that I wanted to do some research and

present at conferences and to get feedback. That was something that had been

cultivated at the community college level. So when I came here those were some

things that I reached out or kind of looked for. That's how I feel they have

prepared me.

Other students knew that attending community college was the middle step between high

school and a four-year institution. Participant 3 thought that if he had taken the same

classes at a university level his grades would have suffered drastically. Participant 3

stated that he took a communication course, both at the community college level and the

four-year institution level and felt, "It was similar, but you can tell that it was way more

serious here than it was at the community college. If it wasn't for having that community

college I would have been throwing out D or C type work."

Research Question #2: What are support factors that underrepresented students

receive during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year

institution?

The support factors that emerged from research question two were

Administrative/Faculty Personnel, TRIO Student Support Services and family. All

themes listed above were broad so sub-themes were added to provide a narrow

perspective based on the participants perceptions.

Table 3

Summary of Themes Regarding Participants' support factors During Transfer Process

Support Factors	# of Respondents
Administrative/Faculty	5
TRIO	4
Family	4

Administrative/Faculty Personnel

This theme emerged during the conversations with participants about either one single staff member helping with this transition or a number of different faculty and staff helping the participant with their transition. While some of the participants reached out to receive help from these individuals, other relationships were built by happenstance.

Professors. Participant 1 stated that he felt comfortable talking with the professors at his community college outside of the classroom. The professors would provide him with advice on what to do and what to be aware of at the four-year institution. Participant 6, an African American male, described an inspiring relationship he had with a professor at his community college,

> I had a math teacher, Jill Doe. She helped me so much and everybody there, you know, they really help. That is the thing that I think teachers get a bad rap about with some students you know. If you meet them half way they are going to meet you the rest. Sometimes depending on the teacher you don't even have to meet them half way you just have to show them that you are trying and they will come full force and help you to get where you need to go. So she knew that this was the last math class that I would ever need from John College. She met me after hours at a grocery store, tutored me. Last semester I would meet with her on breaks and

stuff and she would tutor me on the math I was in last semester. She would help

me go over things and it was just amazing how much this woman helped me.

When I told her that I completed the class and that I was going to graduate she

was so happy and she was actually going to get teacher of the year at the same

time when I was graduating so she was on the stage when I was on the stage. I

have a photo of her and I together after the graduation. It was amazing she helped

a lot.

For Participant 6, when he talked about this relationship that he had with this professor,

he was grateful for her time and effort she provided to help him graduate. He stated that if

she would not have guided him through that math class, he believed he would not have

passed.

Counselors/Transfer Coordinators. Staff members who are hired for the

purpose of helping students at the community college transfer to a university made a

large impact with these participants. Participant 3 stated,

My counselor, I forget her name, but I just called her Mrs. Z. She was the one that

made sure that I had all my classes. If I was interested in psychology she made

sure that I was in the classes that kept me focused. She made sure not to give me

any late classes because she knew that I had practice and whatever. She made sure

that it was in the morning but not too early. She did a great job. She was the best

counselor. She actually made me, that is what started into me liking counseling. I

said I want to be able to help people like that, you know what I'm saying. She

doesn't know how big of an impact she had on me but she had a huge impact on

me.

These participants need a specific one-on-one interaction or relationship to kick off their success and to further them to the next level.

TRIO

The TRIO theme describes the services that were received at the community college, which help underrepresented students have a more successful college transition. TRIO helped the participants feel more comfortable with their transition by introducing and reinforcing resources that were accessible during and after the transition.

TRIO helped Participant 5 in particular with not only academic issues, but also a number of personal issues she faced while preparing to transfer,

When I came back to school I had a math tutor that I met with twice a week. That was something that was provided through TRIO. That was something that I probably couldn't have done on my own you know. I definitely couldn't have handled paying for that on my own. So, I had this one-on-one tutor that helped get me there for school. I had writing and it had been awhile since I had taken some of the core classes so you know I took English but you know still when I started writing papers there was a sophistication that I myself wanted to develop. You know we had writing tutors and English tutors and those were through the TRIO department...A lot of times a first generation college student coming from socioeconomically challenging communities have many issues so I felt that this community college provided something for all of those unique situations that I came with.

Participant 1 said, "The TRIO program helped me out with scholarships, scholarship information, college tours to get first hand insight on university life and any additional

information about like university." Participant 2 stated how specifically the TRIO office

helped her when it was time to transfer,

> They helped me and had actually what you would call a transfer coordinator and
>
> she had like school visits. I didn't go on any of the school visits but she always
>
> advertised them so then I would get the information on different colleges and
>
> otherwise they would kind of check in with me. They would ask have you
>
> applied, have you sent them a transcript and just kind of made sure I went through
>
> all of the steps.

Preparing for the transition and understanding the university lingo was hard for some of

the participants. They had to be sure that all of their information was accurate. Many of

the participants felt comfortable reaching out to the TRIO office for help. Participant 6

explained his interaction with the TRIO office,

> I joined TRIO over there and I was like what is this and found out that they help
>
> people transfer to four-year colleges. So they told me that I had to meet the
>
> requirements to get in and I did then went on to the interview process and I
>
> joined. I think that I was in TRIO from the first semester and all three years I was
>
> in TRIO. That is an excellent program and I feel like all transfer students need to
>
> join that because they really helped with the transitioning process because I heard
>
> so many students that have regular advisors/counselors and their counselors
>
> would put them in classes that they don't need and I've heard horror stories about
>
> counselors and I know I don't have time for that. So, when you join TRIO you get
>
> a whole new set of counselors and they work with you and specifically know what

you want to transfer to. They help you with the application process and colleges

getting people to come here.

The participants that were active in TRIO talked about how helpful the support service

was in their transition. Many of the participants who were active in their TRIO

community college program continued to use the services and resources.

Family

Only one of the participants talked about reaching out to family members to assist

them filling out applications and asking about college visits. The other participants talked

about using family during the transition in a different light. Participant 4 stated that she

reached out to her aunt and her aunt's friend to help navigate the application process to

transfer. She said that her aunt helped her pay for the application fees and took her on

college visits. Participant 3 talked about what his family did to help him stay focused,

Every time I was doubling trying to get the full load with school work and

baseball they really helped me out with my school work. They made sure that I

had money. Because I couldn't work as many hours as I wanted to cause

everything so they made sure that I was financially stable and able to get back and

forth to classes. They made sure to call me at 9am every day and be like alright

wake up you got class in an hour. So, they kept me focused.

Some parents and families did whatever it took to help their student succeed, whether that

was calling them with encouraging words and pushing them forward, going on college

visits, or paying application fees. Participant 6 shared words that encouraged him to

continue, "She was...you can do this you are going to go." He said his mom did not give

him another option; she believed in him so much that he did not have a choice. He said,

"Every time she talks to somebody she tells people that I'm in college. She is always bringing it up and so proud."

Research Question #3: What support factors do underrepresented students receive once at a four-year institution?

Participants were asked what type of support they received once they arrived after transferring. Emerging themes included, Administrative/Staff and Friends.

Table 4

Summary of Themes Regarding Participants' support factors of After Transfer Process

Support Factors	# of Respondents
Administrative/Staff	5
Friends	5

Administrative/Staff Personnel

The Administrative/Staff Personnel theme discusses the outcomes of relationships that participants had with staff at their four-year institution that continue to help support students today through their academic endeavors. Although participants felt that the one-on-one interactions they had with staff at the community college level was more frequent and better quality, the interactions at the university level were still meaningful. Participant 5 referred to the Office of Minority Affairs and their staff that has helped her since arriving on campus. She stated, "I have made some really good relationships with some staff members. It is still very neutral and we don't cross any lines but they are adults and so they are able to relate to some of the challenges that I face." Another participant talked about an impactful meeting that he had with a staff member from TRIO support services, "I met Joe and he got me into TRIO and was telling me about the different workshops and different classes and things of that nature and I was like wow I

didn't even know that any of that existed. I had no clue and he pretty much told me everything. I started loving it and now I actually want to work for TRIO if I could." Participant 2 says TRIO has helped her since she has been on campus, "I'm involved with the TRIO program. They offer a scholarship each year and I've gotten that so that helps then they have some other small workshops and kind of helpful tips like on studying. One of them was studying and that one really helped."

Students were not heavily relying on faculty/classroom interaction while at the four-year institution. Much of the support was coming from institutional resources, support services, and offices on campus that provide more of a one-on-one interaction that students were used to at their community college. One participant stated that the university courses are tougher and the classes consist of more students and the intimidation level of talking with a professor is greater.

Friends

Friends were a large support system for these participants at the institution. The participants are away from home and find comfort in knowing that students are going through the same struggles and may be able to lend a helping hand when needed. Through the one-on-one interviews participants found support from their friends in numerous ways. Participant 4 explained how her friends helped get her through a typical week,

> Yeah, we like help each other out, like if I have worked a lot of hours and they haven't worked or something. We equally help each other like it is gas in the car, I am the only one with a car and everyone helps put in gas or staying at each other's house to get away.

At the four-year institution, students go through a number of developmental stages and have different needs. Participant 1 interacted with friends by holding each other accountable,

> Yes my friends are very supportive especially the organizations that I'm a part of. They support me like if I have a paper and I really don't feel like typing that paper like they will be like just go ahead get the paper out the way or a homework assignment just keep pushing through so they are very supportive the friends that I have made here.

Participant 3 stated, "I got real close to the people that live around my complex. These guys are now like my best friends. I make sure that they go to class and they make sure that I go to class. At the same time we make sure that we have time to hang out with each other. They actually help me a lot."

> For each participant, friendship looks different and some of the participants even communicate with friends back at home while at the university. Participant 5 stated,

> So some of the things that they say is make sure that you do what you got to do because the faster you do what you need to do the faster you can come home. I have made some really good relationships with some staff members. It is still very neutral and we don't cross any lines but they are adults and so they are able to relate to some of the challenges that I face.

Research Question #4: What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution?

Participants were asked to comment on the risk factors that they experienced during the transfer process. After discussing their risks with the researcher, the themes that emerged were paperwork and course work/credit hours.

Table 5

Summary of Themes Regarding Participants' risk factors During Transfer Process

Risk Factors	# of Respondents
Paperwork	5
Relying on Self	
Relying on Staff	
Financial	
Course work/Credit Hours	4

Paperwork

Paperwork included online and paper applications to transfer to a four-year institution as well as financial aid. The paperwork theme emerged based on the perceptions of participant's paperwork and how easy or hard the process was for the participants to complete during the transfer process. Some of the participants chose to file the paperwork themselves, while others relied primarily on someone else to complete the paperwork for them.

Relying on self. Given the resources from personnel on what was needed to successfully transfer, many participants felt they had what it took to fill out the paperwork properly. Participant 1 described how he completed his application for his four-year institution,

> Easy, the steps that Factory State had laid out, step one, step two, step three, on
>
> and on and on. What to do lists and it was very easy for me to obtain all the

> documents and information that I had to do and the application that I did was
>
> online. So the online process lead me straight to the way to paying the application
>
> fee to next getting my transcripts, being accepted into the school, registering for
>
> classes and then coming to the orientation so it was easy. I didn't find nothing
>
> difficult.

Many of the participants accessed the information to transfer online and filled out the

paperwork themselves, which many participants found to be extremely accessible.

Relying on staff. Some students chose to rely more on staff to help them fill out

paperwork rather than do the work themselves. Participant 3, stated that he was involved

in the process but relied mostly on his counselor,

> The counselor did everything. I told her where I wanted to go. She looked up all
>
> the paperwork, and applications. She pretty much did all the work. She made sure
>
> that I was there for all that because she didn't want it to seem like she was doing it
>
> by herself and I was being strung along in the process. She made sure that I was
>
> fully involved in everything. She also made sure that she was the main one doing
>
> it. She had my back and I appreciate that.

This is what the student needed at the time; for someone to walk him through the process

and take control of the student's interest. This was a unique situation among the

participants because many participants reached out to professors and counselors, but

completed the paperwork on their own.

Financial. Finances played a role in the decision to attend a four-year institution

but for many of the participants grants, scholarships, and financial aid paid for most of

their education. Many of these students qualified for Pell Grants and did not have to use

Stafford Loans to pay for their education. While this is a positive route for students to go, filing the paperwork was easy for some and hard for others. Participant 6 said that to file his financial aid, his mom just dropped it in his lap,

> You know I fill out my own FAFSA. I've done it on my own since day one because my mom, she is disabled and my parents are separated, so legally I just go by one parent. So, I talked to her about it… she is basically on a set income so she just gave me all of her financial records and said here you go. I asked what am I supposed to do with this and she said that you are going to be in college soon so you better figure it out. She said I'll help you if you want but you're an adult. You have to figure this stuff out.

Participant 6 was given the records for his financial aid and had to file the information himself. He later went on to say that he had help from his brother who had previously attended a four-year institution. He now controls all of his financial information and is grateful that he was able to learn by completing the task himself and not allowing others to complete his financial records for him.

Course work/Credit hours

The course work/credit hours theme describes participants' perceptions that their previous credits and course work that they have obtained from the community college will not transfer to the four-year institution. Students are completing their Associate's degree with more credit hours as well as needing more credit hours in a number of subjects to help further them along in their major. Participant 2 said, "I just found out that there were a couple of courses that I could have taken at Kaskaskia that I've taken here." She said this worked out in the long run, but wishes that she did not have to waste the

money at the four-year institution when she could have been paying less to take the

courses at community college. Participant 6 explained his story of lost credit hours,

> When you look at my transcript there is a long list of stuff and unmet things and
>
> all these courses that have nowhere to go. I showed my friends this and they
>
> didn't know what it was and I have a friend that got his associates and his is the
>
> exact same list of things that doesn't go anywhere. What I have tried to do is
>
> sneak my way into graduating quicker. I go to departments and I show them a
>
> course that I took at my community college and ask can you waive this, is this the
>
> equivalent and that actually worked for some things.

Students transitioning from a community college had to worry about taking classes over

if the four-year institution did not have an equivalent course for credit. Most community

colleges within a certain radius of a four-year institution try and wrap their curriculum

around the proper courses that will transfer to a specific university because most of the

students are likely to transfer somewhere close. Many of the participants attended their

community college two or more hours away from their four-year institution so the

curriculum and course work from their community college did not directly coincide with

every course needed. Participant 3 described his battle with credit hours to make sure he

knew what credits would transfer,

> I really didn't know what was transferrable and what wasn't and I wanted to make
>
> sure I was taking the right classes because I wanted to transfer. I didn't want to
>
> take any old class just to get credit so I could get my two-year degree if it wasn't
>
> transferrable to a four-year institution. That was the only problem. Once I got here
>
> I had to take a lot of junior/senior classes but I had all the pre-requisites knocked

out so I pretty much set myself up for success. But I know a lot of kids probably

didn't go as hard as I did myself trying to make sure they took classes that were

transferrable and that the schools they were interested in were accepting those

credits.

For some students the process of transferring can be stressful. They worry about paying

for classes they may not need because money can be tight as well as paying for classes

they have already earned credit for at the community college.

Research Question #5: What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing once at a four-year institution?

Students were asked about their experiences after transitioning to a four-year

institution. Specifically, students were asked about their adjustment and involvement

inside and outside the classroom, in addition to their organizations and lifestyle

selections. While asked about their experiences during their interviews, three major

themes were revealed: culture shock, financial awareness and positive organizational

involvement.

Table 6

Summary of Themes Regarding Participants' risk factors After Transfer Process

Risk Factors	# of Respondents
Culture Shock	3
Financial Awareness	3
Organizational Involvement	5

Culture Shock

Culture shock, in the case of these six participants' experiences, referred to the

change of environment and the ability to adapt to a new lifestyle. Many of the students

faced culture shock both in the classroom, as well as outside the classroom. In particular, Participant 3, talked about coming from the Chicago area, where the demographic of students was Black or African American, and then transferring to the four-year institution where he was a part of the minority. When asked to further explain his statement regarding culture shock, Participant 3 stated, "Yeah it was weird I grew up in a place where it was 90 % black in high school. There were 1000's of black kids and I came out here and I saw 3. It was different. I was like I'm used to having radio stations and I didn't turn on the radio station once. It was different." While he noticed the diverse amount of people when he arrived to campus after transferring, he has learned to embrace the change. Participant 3 went on to say that he is a better person and continuously learns how to socialize with other students that are different than him. While for other participants, learning to adapt to a different culture in a short amount of time can be difficult if only exposed to one culture during the adolescent years. Culture shock can lead to depression, not being able to socialize with others and lead to homesickness for students who transfer to unfamiliar surroundings (Lanaan, 1998). Participant 6 explained how the feeling of homesickness affected him when he first arrived on his new campus,

> The hardest part was coming to a four-year school. It was like I'm not going to
>
> know anybody. I won't know a single person. Like when I came I didn't know
>
> anybody. It was scary but funny because I wanted that. I wanted to start fresh and
>
> meet new people. I don't think I ever told my mom or dad this but they came
>
> together to bring me here cause he is from Peoria and so they came together to
>
> bring me so when they left I just stood there in this big empty dorm room by
>
> myself and said I'm by myself. I was like I don't know anyone here why did I do

this to myself...But for like the longest time like weeks and months all I did was like stay on Xbox and talk to my friends back at home. I know like a lot of transfer students when they come here are just like sad about it. They will either bring a friend or come alone and I came alone so to keep my spirits high I would just talk to my friends back at home talk to my parents.

A similar sentiment was felt from Participant 3 when he first transferred to his four-year institution,

It was weird when I first got out here because I didn't know anybody. So, honestly it was just me and my wife for like a good 6 months. I didn't really talk to anybody. It was different, especially moving from the south Chicago area to down here, like it was way different. I didn't think that anyone was going to like me...

The participants had a hard time fitting in with other students right away, because they were not used to attending a school where they were unable to recognize familiar faces.

Culture shock can also occur in the classroom. Participant 5 described an experience that she witnessed in the classroom concerning a professor,

I have noticed sometimes when you come into classrooms the privilege of our professors come out. They say oh you guys should know this and be exposed to this in high school. You know we should have but we weren't and so they are insensitive. They are not conscious that they are doing it but then it sets a tone for how the rest of the semester goes or just puts out that image and now the student thinks oh I'm deficient. They think oh I should have had this, I should be here and I'm not.

Students perceived their learning ability to not be as high as expected from their professors or comparable to their peers. For these underrepresented students, coming from a community college and inner city high schools, the likelihood of these students having an Advanced Placement (AP) course and being in the top percentage of their graduating class is slim to none. For many of the participants, they confessed during their interview that they had either attempted to enroll in a four-year university and did not make the cut or they were self-aware and knew their ability to learn at that level was not right at the time. These students became easy targets in the classroom for professors. These students not being able to keep up lead to low self-confidence and the question "Should I be here?"

Financial Awareness

This describes students who are working or gaining financial support from others to save for the expected or unexpected costs during their years at their four-year institution. While only 50% of the participants held a job at the time of their interview, all of the participants were financially aware or concerned with money. Participant 4 explained that one of her concerns when she first arrived was finances: She stated, "In the beginning it was financial because my mom and I were in a rocky place and I wasn't working and pretty much the money I saved up I used for things that I needed for the dorms." Participant 2 stated how money affects her decisions while at a four-year institution,

> I'm not working right now so I'm kind of just still living off what I saved my first
>
> year at community college or what my mom gives me. So, I go home and she
>
> gives me gas money or that kind of thing or I can pull it out of my account.

> Otherwise, I have to make a car payment and pay my rent and also have food to
>
> live on so it is just really tight. I don't go crazy at the grocery store, I don't go out
>
> all the time, I don't eat out all the time or very often.

Coming from living at home with family financial support, all of the participants had to

learn to live on a budget. Many of these students were paying for rent, cars, groceries and

other bills. While some were more fortunate than others to still receive minimal support

from family members, some were completely on their own. For Participant 5, she not

only supports herself but also her children as well,

> I mean I worked two jobs and I often joked that it takes a month for me to pay a
>
> light bill and it takes me two weeks to buy a beautiful sweater so I have to be
>
> careful. I never do anything for myself. My children are in my living expenses so
>
> that just dictates my next thing so I'm mindful in this safe heaven. I'm mindful of
>
> the economy and what the cost of living will be.

Organizational Involvement

Organizational involvement has taken a front seat for these participants while at

the four-year institution. Fifty percent of the participants reported minimal to high

involvement at the community college level. After transferring to their four-year

institution, 100% of the participants reported minimal to high involvement. Each

participant explained their reasoning for getting involved in an organization at their four-

year institution. The participants involvement ranged from Greek life to Resident

Assistant. All of the participants were involved in clubs, including, journalism, baseball,

Africana Studies Association, Black Student Union and many more. Participant 5

described her experience in her organization and why she chose to get involved outside the classroom,

It is a beyond the classroom experience. It is an academic organization so what it does is continue the conversation of people of African descendants in the diaspora beyond the classroom. So we talk about different events and people of African heritage or African descent who are under the radar and sometimes don't get acknowledged in those events as well as some social movements you know political conditions of African Americans present and you know before so we just kind of look at the entire scope of the African American community and the people.

Participant 4 knew from the beginning she wanted to get involved in an organization on campus, "I knew that I wanted to get involved. I didn't want to be involved at the community college. I didn't want to get stuck there. I was ready to go." When asked about her involvement on campus she described the organizations she was involved in at her four-year institution,

Black student union, Latin American student organization and I am on the service committees for both of those and I learned that I like community service. So, I am going to change my major to FCS so I can do something with community service. I didn't look for anything at the community college. I went to class and went straight back home.

For many of these students, they found their "home" at the university. Joining an organization for these students created a sense of belonging that they had yet to find, in addition to a place where they could share their interests with others.

Summary of Findings

The research conducted in this study focused on support and risk factors that influenced students while at community college and their transition to a four-year institution. This chapter is a summary of the results of six one-on-one participant interviews. After analyzing the data through coding, fifteen themes and five sub-themes emerged relating to support and risk factors. Negative and positive factors were discovered in these themes, which described the participant's perceptions of their transition. Overall, the common influential factors were finances, location, family/parental support, motivation and preparedness. Participants felt that they were supported by family, friends, TRIO, faculty and counselors while in their transition and out of their transition and onto the university stage. Finally, risk factors for underrepresented students at community college and their university were paperwork, course work/credit hours, culture shock and organizational involvement.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the support and risk factors that influenced underrepresented students' transition from community college and those experienced while at a four-year institution. This chapter discusses the findings, provides recommendations for student affairs professionals and future studies, and presents limitations and an overall conclusion of the study.

Discussion

The research questions were developed to provide insight into underrepresented students support and risk factors during and after their transition process from their perspective community college. Through the one-on-one interviews the researcher was able to collect data from six participants. The researcher observed that several findings appeared after thematic analysis.

Research Question #1. What factors influence/impact underrepresented students' transition from a community college to a four-year institution?

The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2002) estimates that four million college-qualified low income and middle-income students will be left behind in the next decade. Finances are a problem in enrollment for all students so then finances become more important to examine differences for diverse racial groups. St. John and Paulsen (2002) argued that students choose colleges because of financial reasons and that these financial reasons and the actual college prices have impacts on their college experiences, which can affect persistence. Students in this study shared that finances played a factor in the accessibility of their four-year institution. Previous analyses of

differences among racial groups with regard to student aid indicated that African Americans were less likely to persist if financial aid levels were not adequate. Participant 6 stated his dream college was an urban private campus but he could not afford schooling there so he had to use his current four-year institution as a back-up plan. Researchers have also stated that the degree to which race and social class affect student access concludes that class, more than race, affects student's opportunities to attend college. However, there are important racial differences in college access.

Students felt motivated to continue their education and transition from community college to a four-year institution. Owens (2007) found that after transferring, students felt an increased sense of self-reliance. The students felt they had to work harder to be successful. The resources were available as long as students took initiative. The students who used the resources were able to have more success than those who did not take advantage. Participants in this study shared the same sentiment and were highly motivated to continue their education and all were self-sufficient since transferring.

Participants in this study said that their community college attendance prepared them for their institutional experience in terms of keeping up with the academic rigor. While many of the participants anticipated that the academic rigor once transferring to a four-year institution would be more difficult than community college, their experiences once transferring mirrored their expectations. In concurrent research, Chrystal, Gansemer-Topf and Laanan (2013) found that students did have a feeling of academic preparation and students were able to articulate what they needed to do differently in order to be more successful academically and felt able to make adjustments if needed at the institution level based on their preparation.

Research Question #2. What are support factors that underrepresented students receive during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution?

Students expressed that the support they were receiving during the transfer process was from administrative/faculty members, TRIO Student Support Services and their family members. Other research such as Laanan (1996), expressed similar results with community college transfer students. Laanan stated that 81% of the students found the information that their academic advisors were giving them to be helpful in the transfer process. Overall, 94% of the transfer students used an academic counselor. The one-on-one interactions and personal connection that underrepresented students in this study had with counselors and faculty members at the community college, provided benefits to the success of their transfer process from community college to their four-year institution.

While many underrepresented students were self-reliant, the support that is given from staff at the community college is different than the support that a family member can lend. Academic advisors provided educational support, tutored students, and offered information about research and topics regarding choice of major. The types of conversations that students had with advisors were in regards to classes and formalized education.

Participants in this study stated they received support from academic staff but also from their family. The conversations that students are having with family are social and more supportive on a personal level. Robbins and Tanck (1995) looked at preferred choices of social support for university students and found similar results that stated students are quick to go to their family. Overall, 70% reported talking with family members to cope with different strategies and stressful situations for students. Also,

while at the community college, students are surrounded by family while living at home. Berger and Malaney (2003) supported these results because in their study the number of family commitments for community college students were reduced when the students transferred to their four-year institution.

TRIO support services were another support system for underrepresented students that provided both formalized and personal support. TRIO provided students with support such as tutoring, advising, and counseling. TRIO support services combined with academic counselors and family was crucial for participants going through their transfer process. Summers (2003) stated that students who were more likely to drop out or be classified as at-risk students needed extra help, and support received from the intervention services needed to further develop at the institution. The TRIO support services program at the community college intervened with the participants to provide adequate support during the transfer process.

Research Question #3. What support factors do underrepresented students receive once at a four-year institution?

Students reported that they had minimal meaningful interaction with university personnel when they arrived at the four-year institution. When students changed to a new environment they were no longer in their comfort zone. Small issues tended to become large, especially for underrepresented students carrying personal baggage such as raising their own family, being from low-income housing, etc. Having counselors and university personnel available to help students with small issues or to just listen is essential to success. Students need to be affirmed in their decisions and an advisor, mentor, counselor or faculty member can help support their needs. Participants suggested that they did not

receive one-on-one interaction with faculty at the four-year institution. The need for individual attention for these students is extremely high. Previous research from Townsend and Wilson (2006) stated that perceptions of faculty at the four-year institution differed for students from the community college. Students felt disconnected and referred to themselves as just a number at the university. Research suggests that students are used to the one-on-one interactions from high school and community college and are unable to seek out professors for a personal connection at the university (Townsend and Wilson, 2006). Transfer students, especially underrepresented students, need the attention and interaction to feel that they are supported.

Research Question #4. What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution?

In this particular study, students stated paperwork and filing information to transfer was a risk factor they experienced. The majority of students were self-navigating through the transfer process. Some were relying on staff but mostly on themselves to maintain all of the proper paperwork to transfer. In the case of this study, participants went online or asked for the application from the counselor's office. Now that technology is advancing more and more transfer forms are strictly online. Online information if clear has become easy for students to file. Inadequate or confusing information can deter students from engaging in the transfer process, while easily accessible and accurate information may encourage them to pursue a four-year degree.

In addition to paperwork, students felt course work/credit hours were a risk factor. Students reported feelings of concern that their previous course work and credit hours at

the community college would not transfer to their four-year institution. Participants wanted to make sure that they would not be forced to take classes at the four-year institution that they had already taken at the community college level or could have taken at the community college level because of the higher rate of tuition cost at the four-year institution. Previous research has also cited students' apprehensions to credits not transferring from community college to their institution. Chrystal, Gansemer-Topf and Laanan (2013) found that students were disappointed when they found out that one of the more difficult classes they took at the community college level did not transfer. Research urges students to have a good connection with academic advisors and faculty so the classes that are paid for at the community college will count toward their degree. Being an undecided major at the community college can either hurt or help the students in some cases depending upon their course of study at the four-year institution.

Research Question #5. What risk factors are underrepresented students experiencing once at a four-year institution?

Students reported having feelings of culture shock. Participants that had the feeling of culture shock shared experiences inside and outside the classroom that left them feeling isolated or alone at times. Laanan (1998) researched the social aspects of transfer adjustment process and he stated that overall levels of student satisfaction were unequal among Whites and non-Whites. Non-Whites reported varied experiences in all aspects of the transfer adjustment process. Non-Whites spent more time in clubs, organization and academic counseling centers while Whites spent a greater amount of time socializing with friends. Non-White students reported feelings of isolation and being overwhelmed by class size in a significantly greater proportion than did Whites. Many of

the underrepresented students in this study reported the same feelings of loneliness, not connecting with friends and feelings of incompetence in class. The participants were not accustomed to the new demographics and mingling with students who were different. Laanan (1998) identified and has previously studied "transfer shock." Students can experience shock transferring from any institution. More recent research from Chrystal, Gansemer-Topf and Laanan (2013) stated that students go through both an academic and social adjustment. The social adjustment has two stages for on-campus and off campus students. On-campus students tend to find a medium before off-campus students. On-campus students have outlets like living learning communities and floor programming that helps get them acclimated faster. (83%) of participants in this study expressed the same concerns for living off campus. However, each of the students that lived off campus had joined an organization when they first arrived which eliminated some of the social adjustment. Involvement at the four-year institution was crucial for the success of these students. Their ability to reach out to advisors in TRIO Student Support Services was the reason the participants felt more comfortable in their transition.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals. Student Affairs professionals at both the community college and university level that work with underrepresented students regarding the transition process can benefit from the recommendations of this study. The recommendations serve as a tool to help increase the positive experiences of underrepresented transfer students.

1. Support System-Personal interactions with campus faculty, staff and students to provide a supportive social and academic adjustment.

a. Provide underrepresented transfer students with a mentor/peer educator transfer student that can assist the students in navigating the four-year institution physical environment (campus directions), social and academic language to avoid culture shock.

b. Arrange for underrepresented students to meet with a transfer advisor that knows the student's course track and major to eliminate academic stress.

c. Create a campus support programs resource guide to direct students to proper classrooms and student services buildings.

2. Financial Literacy Education classes, workshops or seminars geared toward personal economic practices.

a. Teach the significance of budgeting and filing paperwork (scholarships, financial aid or grants) so the students will have a better idea of how to afford higher education.

3. Faculty/Staff Mentorship program to create one-on-one interactions and more opportunities for faculty and staff to connect outside the classroom so that students will see faculty/staff as approachable.

a. Provide faculty and staff training on how to work with transfer students and their slower approach to courses or social interactions (ex. office hours, questions in class)

4. Prepare for Personal Struggles or Past Influences-Provide residence hall staff, faculty and departmental staff training on transfer adjustment.

      a. Provide students the opportunity to meet with counseling staff or have a focus group for transfer students to focus on getting rid of past influences and guilt of attending university to motivate toward future successes.

5. Highly Motivated-Do not count out the students who are underrepresented and have transferred. They are highly motivated individuals. However they may take longer to adjust to some activities.

      a. Provide these students with the opportunity to get involved on campus and allow them to see the importance in taking on leadership roles.

      b. Support them through words of encouragement and constant positive affirmations.

Recommendations for Future Studies. The recommendations below are suggested for researchers interested in further study of the support and risk factors that impact the underrepresented student's transition process from community college to a four-year institution.

1. A qualitative study with a focus group of underrepresented transfer students to see the interpersonal interactions and how participants relate their experiences to one another.

2. Conduct a quantitative study to evaluate the academic success rate of transfer students once the underrepresented students arrive at the four-year institution.

3. Focus a study on a single experience of underrepresented students either during transfer process or after they have reached the four-year institution.

4. Reach beyond the use of TRIO students to provide a more robust study and widen the range of underrepresented students.

5. Conduct a pre/post test to examine transfer student transition starting at the community college and then transitioning to a four-year institution.

Conclusion

This study was developed to explore two main areas: (1) the support and risk factors that underrepresented students experienced and were influenced by during the transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution and (2) support and risk factors while at the four-year institution. The results from this study regarding supportive factors while going through the transfer process indicated that staff and one-on-one interactions with staff and family impact student's process. The study also found that once students arrive at their four-year institution, staff and friends have an impact on their experience. The findings regarding risk factors indicated that students are relying on various forms of support, which include staff, family and self to get through the process. Once students settled in and got acclimated to the four year institution, with the right support, they felt they were independent financially, able to find common interest with others and join an organization.

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Appendix A

Hello EIU Student,

You are invited to participate in a research study that focuses on students that have transferred from a community college to a four-year institution. This questionnaire is being conducted as part of an assignment for the course CSD 5950, Thesis and Research, as a requirement for the Master's of Science program in College Student Affairs here at Eastern Illinois University. Dr. Mona Davenport is the course instructor and I, Sarah Adams, am the Principle Investigator on the project.

This question and answer session should take approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete. Your decision to participate is completely voluntary. You have the right to terminate your participation at any time without penalty.

Your participation in this research will be kept confidential. The answers from these questions will be used to collect data to further the research of the Principle Investigator. Information from this research project will be shared with administrators on campus.

If you have questions about this project, you may contact the course instructor, Dr. Mona Davenport at 217-581-6690, or at mydavenport@eiu.edu.

Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your current status or future relations with Eastern Illinois University.

Thank you, Sarah Adams

Appendix B- Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Community College to Four-Year Institution: Transition for Underrepresented Students: A Qualitative Approach

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sarah Adams, Graduate Student in the Department of Student Affairs from Eastern Illinois University. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a student at Eastern Illinois University who has transferred from a community college to a four-year institution. All data collected will be aggregate, and cannot be linked to any single individual. Any information that is obtained will remain confidential. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not you would like to participate.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine Eastern Illinois University underrepresented students support and risk factors they are experiencing during their transfer process from a community college to a four-year institution.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 45 minutes-1 hour interview in a location of your choice.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is not more than minimal risk expected from participation in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There is no direct benefit to the participants besides the intrinsic feeling of contributing to research knowledge. Participants will be assisting the researcher in accomplishing her goal of obtaining a master's degree, as well as providing the TRIO program and Transfer Relations with the proper feedback to evaluate the transfer process for underrepresented students.

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION (Optional)

If you choose to participate in the interview, you will be given a $5 Jimmy John's gift certificate.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your participation in this study is confidential. This interview will be audiotaped for transcription purposes. All names mentioned during the interview including your own, will be replaced with a pseudonym. After the interview has been transcribed, you will be provided with transcript for your approval review before it utilized in the research. All audiotapes and transcripts will be destroyed in accordance with the law governing research.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Sarah Adams (Primary Investigator)

Email: smadams3@eiu.edu

Phone: 217-581-2579

Dr. Mona Davenport

Director of Minority Affairs

Email: mydavenport@eiu.edu

Phone: 217-581-6690

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board

Eastern Illinois University

600 Lincoln Ave.

Charleston, IL   61920

Telephone: (217) 581-8576

E-mail: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Appendix C-Questions

1. Please identify your sex? Male or Female

2. Please identify your age?

3. What is your current class level?

   First year/freshman (0-29 hours)

   Sophomore (30-59)

   Junior (60-89)

   Senior (90+)

   Graduate Student

   Post-Baccalaureate

4. Please indicate your racial or ethnic background?

   African American/Black

   American Indian/Alaska Native

   Asian American/Asian

   Hispanic/Latino

   White/Caucasian

   Other

5. What is your current GPA?

6. Why did you choose to attend a community college?

7. How many credit hours did you complete at your community college?

8. How many semesters/credit hours have you completed at your current four-year institution?

9. Did your community college provide you with the support you needed to help you succeed in transferring to a four-year institution?

10. What type of support were you given from administrators or professors at your community college when you decided to transfer?

11. Did you always want to attend a community college?

12. What support services did you need to be successful at community college?

13. Were there transfer centers or counselors that helped you at your community college?

14. Where did you receive your proper paperwork information to transfer?

15. How did you file the proper paperwork to transfer from your community college?

16. What support service do you need currently to be successful at a four-year institution?

17. What kind of support did your friends provide for you while attending community college?

18. What type of support do your friends provide for you while at a four-year institution?

19. What made you want to transfer to a four-year institution?

20. Were there influences pushing you toward attending a community college? If so, what?

21. Were there influences pushing you toward transferring to a four-year institution? If so, what?

22. What were some reasons why you attended a community college?

23. Who helped you transfer from your community college to a four-year institution?

24. If you had a chance to do it over again would you choose four-year first or community college?

25. Was the transfer process easy or hard for you and how so?

26. What has helped you be successful in your transfer to Eastern Illinois University?

27. Are you the first in your family to attend college?

a. Did your first generation status have an effect on you choosing to attend a community college?