

2015

Comparing Persistence of Upward Transfer and Native Students Pursuing a Bachelor's Degree

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Eastern Illinois University

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Comparing Persistence of Upward Transfer and Native

Students Pursuing a Bachelor's Degree

(TITLE)

BY

Jacob W. Deters

THESIS

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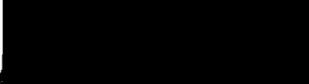
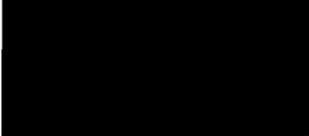
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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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2015

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Abstract

This study, which was conducted at a rural, Midwestern, four-year, public institution, compared the predicted persistence and factors of persistence of successful upward transfer students, transfer students who started at a community college and then transferred to the four-year institution, and native students, students who start at a four-year institution. To be considered for participation in the study, subjects had to have at least one successful semester at the research site. A quantitative study was designed using Davidson, Beck, and Milligan's (2009) questionnaire which measures predicted persistence as well as ten factors of persistence, such as social integration and academic integration. Results of the study indicated that overall, successful upward transfer students were equally as likely to persist when compared to native students; however when looking at the factors of persistence, upward transfer students were more likely to be academically integrated into the institution than native students and native students were more likely to be socially integrated into the institution when compared to upward transfer students. Further investigation of the impact of associate's degrees revealed that there was no difference in the overall persistence of upward transfer students with and without associate's degrees. Recommendations were given to student affairs professionals to rethink ways to socially integrate upward transfer students.

Key words: *upward transfer students, persistence, transfer, associate's degree, native students, academic integration, social integration*

Dedication

This research is dedicated to all college students, especially those who start their collegiate journey at a community college before transferring to a four-year institution. I, as a former transfer student, faced many of the struggles and frustrations you too have encountered in your own transition. Seeing the barriers you overcome inspired and guided this research. I hope that others, both at two and four-year institutions, will also devote their time to improving the transfer experience.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis committee for dedicating the past year to helping me refine and polish this research project. Under the advisement of Dr. Kniess as my thesis chair, I felt the support and encouragement to complete the thesis and make it the most meaningful experience. I want to thank Dr. Kniess for the weekly meetings and taking the time to not only talk about my thesis but about how things were going in my life. She made this daunting process seem a little less intimidating. I also want to thank Dr. Eric Davidson and Rita Pearson for volunteering their time on my committee during this process. Their expertise helped to reveal new perspectives on the findings of the study.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The community college population has had a continual growth of baccalaureate degree-seeking students. Enrollment at community college institutions have increased from 5.9 to 7.0 million students from 2000 to 2008 and two-year institutions are expected to reach to a staggering 8.2 million students enrolled by the year 2019 (Aud, Hussar, Planty, Snyder, Bianco, Fox, Frohlich, Kemp, & Drake, 2010). There are many reasons that an individual attends a community college. One of these reasons is for students who have just completed high school and are looking to attain a bachelor's degree at a community college prior to transferring to a four-year institution to receive their baccalaureate degree. But does attending a community college affect a student's chance of attaining a four-year degree?

For years, one of the main outcomes for students attending a four-year institution was to transfer to a four-year degree program. Lee and Frank (1990) noted that around two-thirds of community college students, at that time, had a desire to transfer to a four-year institution. However, students who begin post-secondary education at a community college have not attained a bachelor's degree. Frank and Lee indicated that upward transfer students, students that transfer from a community college to a four-year institution, are 10 to 20% less likely to receive a baccalaureate degree compared to native students.

Recently, those trends have continued for students who desire to transfer from a community college to a four-year institution. Roughly half of all students seeking post-secondary education start at a community college (Melguizo, Kienzl, & Alfonso, 2011). Even further, students that attain an associate's degree at their community college are less

likely than students that start at a four year institution that do not have an associate's degree to earn a baccalaureate degree over a six-year period (Nutting, 2011). Even with achieving a milestone such as attaining an associate's degree, upward transfer students are having a difficult time completing the bachelor's degree.

Specifically, students that attend a community college have different goals for degree attainment. Along with transferring to a four-year institution, reasons for attending a community college include vocational and technical enrichment, personal development, and career growth (Harbin, 1997). The institutional goals for students at a community college are to make progress through their educational goals and to effectively present curriculum to students where students finish the courses they begin (Morest, 2013).

With such a diverse group of students wanting access to higher education, the growth of community colleges has continued throughout the last several years. In fall 2011, half of all undergraduate students that were enrolled at public institutions were at two-year institutions and 40% of all undergraduates were enrolled at community college (NCES, 2011). The community college population tends to have higher percentages of minority students as well. Black and Hispanic students make up about 30% of two-year public institutions compared to only about 23% of the same population at public four-year institutions. The community college population also has a higher population of adult learners. Students over 24-years-old make up 39% of the community college population compared to 26% of four-year public institutions. Community colleges also have a slightly higher number of students that are below poverty level compared to four-year public institutions, 30.6% and 24.2% respectively.

When students finally make the transfer to a four-year institution, they are introduced to a whole new environment. This transition leads to lower social involvement

and academic achievement for students when they transition (Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010). After a student graduates from high school, they now are free to decide where they attend college, if they choose to attend college. Morest (2013) discusses the importance of institutional fit for students. Students that begin their post-secondary education start at a two-year institution may find it difficult to start the preparation to attend a four-year institution as community colleges do not have all the resources to prepare college students to succeed.

Purpose of the Study

Recently, studies have shown that student transfer rates at community colleges are between 25 and 40% (Melguizo, Kienzl, & Alfonso, 2011). The students that are transferring from the community college to a four-year institution are called upward transfers. This group has been the focus of many studies (Dougherty, 1992; Ellis, 2013; Hagedorn, Moon, Cypers, Maxwell, & Lester, 2006; Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010; Ishitani, 2008; Lee & Frank, 1990; Lee, Mackie-Lewis, Marks, 1993; Melguizo & Dowd, 2009; Melguizo, Kienzl, & Alfonso, 2011; Nora, 1990; Nutting, 2011; Roksa & Calcagno, 2010; Wang, 2009; Wang, 2012). However, there are discrepancies at how successful this growing population is at the four-year institution. Retention rates for this population have been declining. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), between 2004 and 2008, only 5.9% of students who started at a two-year institution completed their four-year degree compared to 7.3% between 1990 and 1994 (2011). The result can be attributed to downfalls by the student, academically and socially, and by the four and two-year institutions for not preparing students for the transfer (Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010).

Looking at the transfer student, researchers have discovered shortcomings seen in their social and academic involvement upon their transfer (Dougherty, 1992; Friedl, 2012; Hagedorn et al, 2006; Ishitani & McKitrick, 2010; Ishitani, 2008). Friedl (2012) noted the academic disconnect with students and academic services provided are causing them to leave post-secondary education.

Other studies have placed the failure of many transfer students on the lack of collaboration and individual efforts between the community college and four-year institutions. For example, Ellis (2013) claimed that there seemed to be a disconnect between the community college and place of transfer for the student, which is greatly affecting how successful students can be at the four-year institution. Friedl (2012) noted the academic disconnect between students and the academic services provided are causing them to leave post-secondary education. It is important for the faculty and staff at both community colleges and four-year institutions to continue to build programs to foster persistence in upward transfer students.

The topic of upward transfer is not relatively new (Hagedon et. al., 2006; Ishitani, 2008; Ishitani & McKitrick, 2010; Lee & Frank, 1990; Lee & Mackie-Lewis, 1993; Nora & Rendón, 1990), yet disconnect of students and the institutions of enrollment continues to be an issue today. By surveying transfer students deemed successful, the researcher intends to determine what areas upward transfer students continue to struggle with as they make the transition into their four-year institution. This data will help student affairs professionals better assess this ever growing population and the programs that assist upward transfer students as they attempt to achieve their baccalaureate degree.

Research Questions

To gain a better understanding of persistence at a four-year institution for upward transfer students, this research analyzed students that attended a community college and now are pursuing a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. Upward transfer students included those that received a degree or certificate at a community college and those that did not. This research also analyzed the differences in predicted persistence of successful transfer students and native rising juniors, juniors that started their freshman year at the same university where they are currently enrolled. Tinto (1993) stated that in order for a student to persist in higher education they must become integrated social and academically. Tinto's findings can be applied to students as they are transferring to a new environment. Dougherty (1992) states that transfer students may find themselves not socially integrated into the four-year college, and they appear to be less academically prepared. By using these ideas, the following research questions are proposed:

1. Is there a difference in the Predicted Persistence Score (PPS) between upward transfer students that have an associate's degree and upward transfers that do not and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?
2. Is there a difference in the PPS between native students and upward transfer students and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?
3. Is there a difference in the PPS between native students and students that have an associate's degree and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

Hypothesis

In order to answer all of the above questions, analysis of a quantitative survey will be performed. The following is the researcher's hypothesis of the proposed research questions:

RQ #1. Upward transfer students that have an associate's degree and those that do not have an associate's degree will have different PPS.

RQ #2. Native students and upward transfer students will have different PPS.

RQ #3. Native students and upward transfers with an associate's degree will have different PPS.

Significance of the Study

The importance of higher education is articulated by upward transfer students in Ellis's (2013) study. Ellis states that higher education helps students succeed in life and affects their own families and communities. Student affairs professionals should be aware of this population of students because of the negative social and academic impacts of upward transfer. Community college is a new environment for upward transfer students and four-year colleges need to continue to provide challenges to these students while providing an easy transition from small engaging classes to the larger lecture classes that have less accessibility of faculty (Fee & Thomas, 2009). The goal of this research is to provide information for faculty and college student affairs professionals on how to best support this population. In this time of increased influx of upward transfers, it is significant in the realms of higher education to assess what inhibits transfer students from persisting through college to attain a baccalaureate degree.

Limitations of the Study

This research used an electronic survey that was sent via email to participants. One limitation with all survey instruments that was anticipated was the chance of participants, either accidentally or purposefully, submitting data twice or inaccurately representing themselves. Also, participants may not have answered questions to the best of their ability leading to mortality of participants (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

Another limitation was allowing participants to answer “not applicable” on questions. This left holes in the data and the researcher had to remove participants that did not have enough data to analyze.

Finally, Roksa and Calcagno (2010) stated that their sample may not have been representative of the upward transfer population. An example given was that the transfer student may change their transfer aspirations when they never intended to transfer which may lead to an unrepresentative sample if the majority of respondents were a part of this group. Aspiration to attain a baccalaureate degree was a substantial element in persistence (Lee & Frank, 1990). At this Midwestern university, this may have been an issue as the ambitions of the potential participants are not known.

Definition of Terms

The following terms or phrases are important to understanding the language presented in this study:

Native student. A native student is a student who has continued studies at the same institution that they started their first semester at, a non-transfer student (Ishitani, 2008).

Persistence. In regards to this study, persistence is the ability to make the transition to college and become assimilated to the institution's academic and social life; if there is no persistence, departure from the institution occurs (Tinto, 1993).

Transfer shock. Transfer shock is a phenomenon that transfer students might encounter where students see their grade point average (GPA) drop during the first several semesters when they transfer (Townsend, 1995).

Upward transfer student. An upward transfer student is an individual who is transferring from a community college (two-year institution) to a four-year institution (Bahr, 2009).

Summary

Success of upward transfer students begins with the persistence of this population and the support faculty and staff provide to the students. Melguizo, Kienzl, and Alfonso (2011) determine that although upward transfer students are not as prepared as native students, community colleges can prepare these students for the four-year college. This finding is crucial in understanding the importance of this study. It is possible for institutions to help students persist and be prepared at a four-year institution.

Upward transfer is becoming more popular and it is the purpose of student affairs professionals to ensure that as many of upward transfers earn their baccalaureate degree or help students who cannot persist find the path in life that best suits them. Research on this population has been extensive; however, clarification of what factors leads to persistence needs to be further investigated. The researcher hopes to attain this information and make suggestions for future research with this unique population.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the importance of researching this population, instilled the basic concepts and terms, and started the framework moving forward with

research on this topic. In Chapter 2, a more intensive look at previous research and theoretical framework will give the reader a better understanding of what has already been studied on the upward transfer population as well as college persistence models.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

In order to gain a better understanding of upward transfer, this review of the literature will explore further the topics of academic success, the role of community college, factors that affect transfer for upward transfer students, persistence at the four-year college, and extra-curricular involvement of students who transfer from a two-year institution. A common step for many students who study at a community college is to transfer to a four-year institution to continue their studies. Cohen and Brawer (2003) estimated that 25 percent of college students nationwide make the transfer. Furthermore, they stated the average rate of transfer is between 11 and 40 percent. This section will look extensively at research previously done focusing on the upward transfer population as well as a theory of retention to explain what keeps students enrolled in college. First, this review will give the reader a more in-depth look at the institutions upward transfers matriculate from, community colleges.

Role of Community Colleges

Two-year higher education institutions began in the early 1900's with the founding of Joliet Junior College in 1901 (Morest, 2013). Community college institutions have played many roles throughout their over 100 year history, which remain today. The original goal of early community college institution was to provide an opportunity for higher education for individuals who may not want a four-year degree right after high school graduation (Smith Morest, 2013). Over the years, a more formal statement by the Commission on Higher Education was given about the purpose of community colleges. The report stated that community colleges not only provide general education to a diverse student population, but also prepare students for possible transfer to a four-year

institution (Zook, 1947). The report also described the community college purpose as one that provided occupational education, altogether giving a wide variety of post-secondary education options to the local community. Dougherty (1994) noted that one of the historical missions of the community college was to support students in their transfer education.

Although many of the goals of community colleges are the same today as they were in the past, the role of two-year institutions has expanded to provide education to this ever growing, diverse population. Smith Morest (2013) listed some of the current goals for these institutions. Remediation for community college students has come to the forefront of administrators. Developmental education gives pre-college students courses that guide them to being academically prepared for collegiate level courses. Morest noted that students, more than ever, need remediation in English and mathematics courses. Cohen and Brawer (2003) presented the critical responses to community colleges. Some of the highlights of this study included, community college graduates earned less than those with a baccalaureate, and community college students were more likely to drop out or take longer to attain a degree than those who attended a four-year institutions. Cohen and Brawer did not deny the research, but instead stated that any higher education experience is career oriented and advances the development of the individual. They continued by stating that all colleges, including community colleges, “help individuals learn what they need to know to be effective, responsible members of their society (p. 393).” While students that attended community colleges tended to be from the minority populations and of minority status, access to education at the community college does not necessarily mean that the institutions have abandoned their dedication to educate all student populations.

Factors of Upward Transfer on Community College Students

Nora and Rendón's (1990) model of student predispositions to transfer provided several major findings that add to this review of literature. First, students who received high levels of encouragement from family, peers, and teachers had higher levels of commitments to their educational goals and to their educational institutions. Second, students who stated higher levels of initial commitment to goals and their educational institution had higher levels of academic and social integration, which discussed later, is a factor of persistence at the four-year institution. Themes of social and academic factors at the community college continue to be shifted over to the four-year institution with upward transfer.

Today, Roksa and Calcagno (2010) stated that the gap between academically unprepared and prepared students is decreasing; however, unprepared students are still 41% less likely than the prepared students to make a transition to a four-year institution. They also found that completion of an associate's degree was significantly more important for students that were classified as academically unprepared. Overall, completion of an associate's degree for any upward transfer student was an increasingly popular behavior community college students were attempting in order to have a better chance of transferring to a four-year institution. Townsend and Wilson (2006) described steps students were taking, starting in high school. Their study stated that there has been an increase in high school students taking dual credit courses so students were gaining college credit before even attending a college.

Student climates at institutions of higher education have also impacted the outcomes for upward transfer students. In Oseguera and Rhee's (2009) study, the researchers found that attitudes and expectations of students were altered by the peer

climate. Applying this to transfer students, the researchers stated that transfer students that can see an institution with a high transfer rate influenced these students to make the transfer. Attitudes and diversity of the student population of an institution had an effect on upward transfer students.

Factors of Persistence of Upward Transfers at the Four-Year Institution

When students make the transition to the four-year institution, transfer shock can occur. Ishitani (2008) looked at the phenomenon by using an institutional data set. This data suggested that native students are more likely to be retained than first year transfer students, but transfer students in their second and third years had lower rates of dropping out. The trend can further be explained by looking at the changes in involvement from the two-year institution to the four-year institution. In Berger and Malaney's (2003) study, upward transfer students reported spending more time working off-campus and more time with family. After they transferred they were more likely to spend time socializing with other students and more time engaged in their academics. These differing patterns were examples of the changes that occur to students as they transfer. However, Flaga (2006) stated that understanding the transfer shock phenomenon was just one part of understanding the upward transfer process.

Currently, studies have explained upward transfer student outcomes at the four-year institution (Berger & Malaney, 2003; Nutting, 2009; Urso & Sygielski, 2007; Wang, 2009). Wang attributed retention to the collective aspects of personal, sociological, psychological, and student experience in higher education. Also, in Wang's study, students were more likely to persist if their goal upon high school graduation was to attain a bachelor's degree because students have an intrinsic value to completing their baccalaureate. One surprising finding Wang discovered was that remediation in reading

does not have an impact of attainment of the four-year degree among the upward transfers; however, math remediation negatively impacts attainment of a baccalaureate degree.

The environment of the community college has had positive effects and motivated students to continue to be successful at the four-year institution. One example included helping them overcome obstacles that students enrolling in a community college might encounter (Urso & Sygielski, 2007). Along with the social integration and academic support, these factors have impacted the persistence of upward transfer students.

Nutting's study (2011) found that upward transfer students that transfer to a non-technical four-year institution have a higher rate of attaining a baccalaureate within eight years as compared to those who do not attend such institutions. In another study, Flaga (2006) described five different dimensions of transfer that affected upward transfer students who were making the transition. The five dimensions Flaga found were: learning, resources, familiarity, negotiation, and integrating. In her research, Flaga addressed the different dimensions in three environments: academic, social, and physical. Flaga stated that successful students move through the five dimensions. By understanding how students integrated into a new environment, Flaga suggested strategies to help students persist at the four-year institution. These suggestions focused on students, four-year institutions, and two-year institutions working together to create the best environment for students to persist to degree completion. The following section will look more in-depth at the social and academic implications of college on the upward transfer student.

Social Involvement and Academic Success

Urso and Sygielski (2007) stated that successful upward transfer students have gained leadership skills and learned to work in a very diverse group due to the wide

variety of people that pursue education at a two-year institution. However, when transferring to the four-year institution, it seemed to be “unrealistic to expect community college transfer students... to have the same levels of student engagement as native students’ (Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010, p. 589). Transfer students seemed to have some division socially upon transferring. Struggles that this population may have encountered include adjusting to a larger campus, identifying new on-campus resources to help them to continue to be successful, and adapting to a brand new social scene, (Urso & Sygielski, 2007).

Students who entered a community college may not be as academically prepared as those who go straight into a four-year institution (Grimes, Rezek, & Campbell, 2013). However in Grimes, Rezek, and Campbell’s (2013) study, the researchers found that the community college may be a great transition academically for the upward transfer student. Students that may be in need of more individualized attention to increase their self-confidence received that attention at the community college before transferring to a bigger institution (Urso & Sygielski, 2007). However, each student uniquely brought a unique set of challenges when transferring to a four-year institution. Laanan (2007) noted that “academic and social experiences of a student uniquely depend what a student brings to the college environment” (p. 38).

When looking at academic adjustment, Laanan (2007) found that transfer students with higher GPAs and higher intellectual self-confidence were less likely to have a difficult adjustment to their academics at the four-year institution. Furthermore, in this study, participants strongly associated “competition and survival culture” of the institution affected their environment, specifically having a feeling of “fitting in” and feeling like just a number instead of a student at the institution (p. 50). Students that had

competitive attitudes were more likely to experience difficulty with their academics. Furthermore, approachability of faculty played a large role in whether a student would use faculty office hours to get out-of-class assistance. Faculty validation helped to explain this concept and was researched in Barnett's (2011) study. At a community college, students were most likely to persist if their faculty knew who the students were and the students felt their faculty members were mentoring them in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, having a faculty member that was caring and had strong instructional skills was the strongest predictor of faculty validation when predicting academic integration at the institution.

Socially, Laanan (2007) observed students' adjustment to the institution. Students that had high social adjustment at the institution were more likely to have a positive experience with their adjustment process. The factors that had the highest positive correlation with social adjustment to the institution were clubs/institution ($r = .53$), number of hours per week involved with clubs and organizations ($r = .47$), and attending a cultural event ($r = .40$).

Theoretical Framework

Vincent Tinto's Student Integration Model (1975, 1993) has been used by many researchers when analyzing student persistence in upward transfer (Dougherty, 1992; Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010; Ishitani, 2008; Krotseng, 1992; Lee & Mackie-Lewis, 1993; Wang, 2012; Wang, 2009). Tinto's model fits very well in discussing persistence with any college student, and can be related to the transfer student population, as they too are in a new environment. Tinto's model (1975, 1993) described the persistence for students as a longitudinal process involving the individual's social and academic interactions with the college environment. His model outlined a continuing process where the student's

experiences modify the goal and commitments to the institution and ultimately the persistence or dropout of an individual.

As stated earlier, the importance of academic and social integration for transfer students was crucial. Ishitani and McKittrick (2010) found that transfer students were not as likely to be engaged as opposed to their native counterparts. Tinto (1975, 1993) suggested that these students would have a higher rate of not persisting and therefore dropout of the institution. Furthermore, Dougherty (1992) stated that community colleges and four-year institutions were not integrating their students and this hindrance to social and academic advancement led to students withdrawing from the institution. Using Tinto's model will help faculty and student affairs professionals better understand and help students that matriculate in higher education.

Wang (2008) used Tinto's model in the research by explaining the persistence of community college students. Wang found that students that had high academic performance, specifically when looking at their GPA, showed a much higher likelihood to persist and attain their academic goals. Wang described this as the student being more academically integrated and having higher motivation levels to persist. These examples show how Tinto's model of integration can be applied to students who are at the community college or upward transfers students.

Another piece of literature that added to Tinto's (1975, 1993) theory of student departure included Barnett's study (2011). In the study, Barnett used data to support two parts to Tinto's theory. First, academic integration was influenced by interactions between students and faculty, and second, students were more likely to persist if they were academically integrated. Barnett further explained that although both faculty-

student interactions and academic integration had positive effects on persistence, only academic integration had a direct effect.

Summary

By understanding the background literature to upward transfer students and what causes them to dropout at the four-year level, the researcher has a better understanding on how to move forward with the study. Academic and social involvements are the factors that affect persistence. The path to attain a baccalaureate for upward transfer students starts at the community college. Community colleges are crucial in the foundation of higher education for upward transfer students. The journey continues with the connection between the community college and the transfer institution. Disconnect is seen between the institutions and students may be at risk for dropout. Making the transition to the four-year institution is crucial to this group, and that includes both social integration and academic support. Finally, by applying Tinto's (1975, 1993) Student Integration Model, this research can provide a better understanding of the factors that make a student persist. Chapter 3 outlines the methods used to complete this study.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The following chapter outlines the methods in which the study was conducted. Overall, the methodological framework helped the researcher collect data on the upward transfer students as it pertained to their predicted persistence at the four-year institution and the factors that affected the predicted persistence compared to native students.

Design of the Study

To measure persistence in upward transfer students, this study utilized a quantitative approach using a valid questionnaire created by Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) to test ten different components that have been determined to affect predicted persistence. Upward transfer students and native students were asked to take this survey within the fourth and sixth weeks of the fall 2014 semester. By using Davidson et al.'s (2009) survey, the researcher analyzed predicted persistence in upward transfer students and discovered the difference in means between current native students.

Research Site

This midsized, Midwestern university had high rates of transfer students, especially upward transfer students; community college transfers make up 35% of this institution's student body. The institution has transfer agreements with many community colleges which makes it a top choice for many upward transfer students in the region.

In the semester that the research was conducted, total undergraduate enrollment at the institution was 7,574 students. The total number of community college transfer students during this semester was 2,685. The total native population was higher at 4,603 students.

Participants

The sample for this study was taken from undergraduate students from a medium-sized, Midwestern, four-year institution with a population of about 8,266 undergraduate students. Specifically, this study surveyed students who transferred from a community college to the institution; however, native students were also surveyed to compare the results of the two subpopulations. The criteria for potential participants were set by the following guidelines:

1. To be considered as an upward transfer, a student had to have transferred credit from a community college to the four-year institution and be a continuing student, a student who has completed one successful semester at the four-year institution;
2. To be eligible for the native student population, a student cannot have transferred any credit in from another institution and be a continuing student, a student who has completed one successful semester at the four-year institution.

With the following criteria established, the target population of students that were sent the survey was 3,564 students. Of those numbers, 2,044 were transfer students and 1,520 were native students.

A total of 515 students completed the survey with useable information. However, the researcher decided to remove participants who had fewer than two responses for each of the ten factors listed in the “Instrument” section of this chapter. After eliminating participants that did not meet the criteria for every factor, there were 439 participants that were used in the analysis of this study. The student participant characteristics (N=439) are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Breakdown

	Native Student Participants		Transfer Student Participants	
	<i>N</i>	<i>% of Native</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% of Transfers</i>
Total Completion	170	100%	269	100%
Gender				
Male	47	27.6%	73	27.1%
Female	123	72.4%	196	72.9%
Academic Classification				
Freshman	33	19.4%	0	0%
Sophomore	55	32.3%	14	5.2%
Junior	43	25.2%	65	24.2%
Senior	39	22.9%	190	70.6%
Traditional/Nontraditional Academic Program				
Traditional	169	99.4%	238	88.5%
Nontraditional	1	0.1%	31	11.5%
Ethnic Background				
White	117	68.8%	216	80.3%
Hispanic/Latino	10	5.8%	11	4.1%
Black/African American	35	10.6%	29	10.8%
Native American/American Indian	3	1.8%	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	2.9%	4	1.5%
Other	0	0%	9	3.3%
Current Place of Residence				
Residence Hall	62	36.5%	41	15.2%
Parent's House	5	2.9%	29	10.8%
Fraternity/Sorority House	15	8.8%	9	3.3%
Relative's House	1	.5%	4	1.5%
Off-Campus House or Apartment	83	48.8%	171	63.6%
Other	4	2.4%	15	5.6%
Goal at this Institution				
Complete a number of courses	5	2.9%	2	0.1%
Complete a number of courses, then transfer	4	2.6%	3	1.1%
Earn a bachelor's degree	156	91.8%	258	95.9%
Other	4	2.4%	5	1.9%
GPA (4.0 scale) at Previous College/ High School				
1.50-1.99	2	1.1%	1	<0.01%
2.00-2.49	6	3.5%	14	5.2%
2.50-2.99	35	20.6%	43	16.0%
3.00-3.49	58	34.1%	86	32.0%
3.50-4.00	60	35.3%	97	36.1%
4.00+	7	4.1%	23	8.6%

Participant's emails were retrieved through the institution's campus reporting system, ARGOS. The report with the population's emails also included academic classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) determined by the institution. The researcher sorted the emails not only by transfer status (transfer or native student), but also by academic classification. Participants in each academic classification received a different link for the same survey in order to more reliably track the academic classification of participants. To increase participation in the survey, an incentive of one twenty-five dollar gift card was awarded to a random participant who completed the survey.

Instrument

Davidson et al.'s (2009) survey was administered to participants to predict persistence at the institution. The online survey gave the researcher information about the upward transfer population in relation to native students. A variety of demographic information was collected as well. See Appendix A for the full list of demographic questions and the College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ).

Demographics. Demographic information on gender, age, race, class standing, residency, parental education, financial aid information, GPA at previous institutions, and transfer information was collected. In addition, participants that were classified as upward transfer students were asked if they had received an associate's degree and how many credit hours they transferred to the four-year institution.

College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ). In order to measure predicted persistence, Davidson et al.'s College Persistence Questionnaire, version two (CPQ-V2) (2009) was used. The researcher had written permission from the creator of the CPQ to use the questionnaire (see Appendix C). The CPQ is comprised of 32 questions that

elicited responses about the participant's social and academic integration and integration with the institution. CPQ-V2 is a questionnaire that features 32 items that make up ten factors: academic integration, financial strain, social integration, degree commitment, college stress, advising, scholastic conscientiousness, institutional commitment, academic motivation, and academic efficacy. Items are measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, with a sixth option, "not applicable" included for participants who feel the item does not pertain to them. On the 5 point scale, "1" refers to the item not really pertaining to the participant up to "5", which refers to the item really pertaining to the participant. An example question is, as follows: "How likely is it that you will earn a degree from here?" The participant can answer from 5, very likely, to 1, very unlikely. Each factor has between three and four items. After reverse scoring certain items and determining point values for each item, as described in Appendix B, the researcher then sorted items into the ten factors and create a score for each of the ten factors by taking the mean of the applicable items. The overall Predicted Persistence Score (PPS) of the individual was determined by taking the means of the 10 factor means.

Data Collection

A survey was sent out electronically to the population described in the participant section. The survey was distributed using Qualtrics™, an online survey program, and was emailed through an electronic distribution list provided by the institution. The email was sent to the target population at the same time. The participants had approximately two weeks to complete the survey which began the fourth week and ended the sixth week of the Fall 2014 semester. The researcher sent a reminder halfway through the two week period and two days before the close of the survey. Participants were able to complete the survey at their own pace and could choose to take the survey in the environment that was

most convenient and comfortable for them. After all data was collected, it was exported into an Excel list and organized before it was exported it in to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS™) for analysis.

Data Analysis

All items were separated into the ten factors which are listed in the instrument section, and a mean score for each factor was calculated for each participant. Also, the overall PPS for each participant was calculated by taking the mean of all of the factors. The scores were used to conduct a reliability test for each factor. First, a content reliability test was performed on each of the 10 factors. This was tested using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Table 2 lists the items that relate to each factor and the Cronbach's Alpha score. Although the survey started with 32 questions, five were dropped. Due to technical difficulties with the survey, results from questions 12, 19, 20, and 21 were discarded. The fifth question, Question 14, was dropped due to it negatively affecting the Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha with question 14 was a .217, and by removing the question, the internal reliability increased ($\alpha=.513$).

The decision to alter the survey by removing the five questions with unusable data was made in conjunction with the research advisors. Davidson et. al. (2009) also stated that when there is missing data, to remove it and take the mean of all the valid items for the factor. In this case, since data was not present or invalid for several of the items, the researcher could remove the item fully from the analysis. The implications of moving forward with data analysis are fully discussed in the Limitations section of Chapter 5.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability for Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Academic Integration Q2: How would you rate the quality of the instruction you are receiving here? Q22: In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of instruction you are receiving here? (Q12 omitted)	.403
Motivation to Learn Q9: Students vary widely in their view of what constitutes a good course, including the notion that the best course is one that asks students to do very little. In your own view, how much work would be asked of students in a really good course? Q29: Some courses seem to take a lot more time than others. How much extra time are you willing to devote to your studies in those courses? (Q19 omitted)	.405
Academic Efficacy Q7: How confident are you that you can get the grades you want? Q17: When you are waiting for a submitted assignment to be graded, how assured do you feel that the work you have done is acceptable? Q27: How much doubt do you have about being able to make the grades you want?	.668
Financial Strain Q3: How often do you worry about having enough money to meet your needs? Q13: How difficult is it for you or your family to be able to handle college costs? Q23: When considering the financial costs of being in college, how often do you feel unable to do things that other students here can afford to do? Q31: How much of a financial strain is it for you to purchase the essential resources you need for courses such as books and supplies?	.813
Social Integration Q1: How much do you think you have in common with other students here? Q11: How much have your interactions with other students had an impact on your personal growth, attitudes, and values? (Q21 omitted)	.590

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability for Independent Variables (Continued)

Independent Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Collegiate Stress Q5: How much pressure do you feel when trying to meet deadlines for course assignments? Q15: Students differ quite a lot in how distressed they get over various aspect of college life. Overall, how much stress would you say that you experience while attending this institution? Q25: How often do you feel overwhelmed by the academic workload here?	.744
Advising Effectiveness Q6: How satisfied are you with the academic advising you receive here? Q16: How easy is it to get answers to your questions about things related to your education here? Q26: How would you rate the academic advisement you receive here?	.757
Degree Commitment Q10: There are so many things that can interfere with students making progress toward a degree, feelings of uncertainty about finishing are likely to occur along the way. At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will earn a college degree? Q30: At this moment in time, how strong would you say your commitment is to earning a college degree, here or elsewhere? (Q20 omitted)	.545
Institution Commitment Q4: How confident are you that this is the right college or university for you? Q24: How much thought have you given to stopping your education here (perhaps transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons)? Q32: How likely is it that you will reenroll here next semester? (Q14 omitted)	.513
Scholastic Conscientiousness Q8: How often do you miss class for reasons other than illness or participation in school-related activities? Q18: How often do you arrive late for classes, meetings, and other college events? Q28: How often do you turn in assignments past the due date?	.645

All of the research questions were analyzed in a similar manner. The researcher conducted a *t*-test to determine if a significant difference existed between two different groups within the sample. The subgroups, upward transfer students, upward transfer students with associate's degrees, upward transfer students without associate's degrees, and native students were the groups that were tested. Research question one used the mean PPS of upward transfer students with an associate's degree and upward transfer students without associate's degrees as the subgroups within the sample. Research question two used native students and all upward transfer students mean PPSs to answer the question. Finally, native students and upward transfers that have an associate's degree mean PPS was used when answering research question three.

Summary

By using a quantitative survey, the researcher was able to answer the research questions determining the factors that influenced transfer students persistence at the institution. The use of the CPQ-V3 was appropriate in this study as it gave the researcher a PPS since the time frame for this study does not allow for the researcher to conduct observed persistence. The overall goal of discovering the PPS and mean comparison of the factors and the PPS was to determine how likely upward transfer students persisted and what factors have the most impact on their persistence. After analysis, the researcher was able to explain the areas student affairs professionals should be focusing on with upward transfer students which is explained more in Chapter 5. Chapter 4 will address the results of the study.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This chapter presents the results of the study outlined in Chapter 3. After removing unusable data, 439 participants were used in the data analysis of this study. With the results collected, the data were analyzed and used to answer the three research questions.

RQ #1: Is there a difference in the Predicted Persistence Score (PPS) between upward transfer students that have an associate's degree and upward transfers that do not and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

The researcher hypothesized that upward transfer students and those that do not have an associate's degree will have different PPS. Results of the *t*-test indicated that there was not a significant difference between upward transfer students with associate's degrees and upward transfer students without associate's degrees, $t(266) = -0.10, p = 0.92$. On average, the PPS of students with associate's degrees ($M = 0.68, SD = 0.38$) and students without associate's degrees ($M = 0.68, SD = 0.42$) were the same. The hypothesis for RQ1 was not confirmed; therefore, upward transfer students with associate's degrees and without associate's degrees had the same mean PPS, and it cannot be confirmed that having an associate's degree greatly impacts predicted persistence at the four-year institution for upward transfer students.

Although the overall PPS test failed to provide evidence to support that there was a difference in means between the two subpopulations, two individual factors proved to have some significant differences. Table 3 lists the entire results of the means comparison by conducting a *t*-test. Out of the ten factors of predicted persistence, Academic

Integration and Social Integration, have significant differences between the two subpopulations.

Upward transfer students without associate's degree have a different Academic Integration mean when comparing to upward transfer students with associate's degrees ($t(266) = 2.57, p = 0.01$). It was concluded that the Academic Integration factor mean scores of upward transfer students with associate's degrees ($M = 0.97, SD = 0.64$) and upward transfer students without an associate's degree ($M = 0.76, SD = 0.69$) have a significant difference. Students with associate's degrees have a higher mean score than those transfer students that do not have an associate's degree, and it was concluded that transfer students that had an associate's degree were more likely to be academic integrated at the four-year institution.

When examining the Social Integration factor, there was a significant difference in means of associate's degrees completers and upward transfer students who have not completed their associate's degrees, $t(266) = -3.00, p < 0.01$. Upward transfer students without associate's degrees ($M = 0.57, SD = 0.91$) have a higher average mean than upward transfer students with associate's degrees ($M = 0.22, SD = 0.95$), and it was concluded that completing an associate's degree before transferring negatively impacts social integration when compared to upward transfer students who did not complete an associate's degrees.

Overall, the findings indicated that although there was not a significant difference in the overall predicted persistence of upward transfer students, two individual factors did have significant differences. Upward transfer students with associate's degrees were more academically integrated, but they are less likely to be socially integrated compared to upward transfer students that did not complete their associate's degrees.

Table 3

Means Comparison of Upward Transfer Students with Associate's Degrees and Upward Transfer Students Without Associate's Degrees

	Associate's		No Associate's		95% Confidence					
	Degree (169)		Degree (99)		Interval					
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Academic Integration	0.97	0.64	0.76	0.69	2.59	266	0.05	0.38	*0.01	0.31
Motivation to Learn	0.51	0.60	0.60	0.66	-1.20	266	-0.25	0.06	0.23	-0.15
Academic Efficacy	1.04	0.65	0.94	0.82	1.06	170	-0.09	0.29	0.30	0.16
Financial Strain	-0.51	0.90	-0.38	1.06	-1.00	181	-0.38	0.12	0.32	-0.15
Social Integration	0.21	0.95	0.57	0.91	-3.00	266	-0.59	-0.12	*<0.01	-0.37
Collegiate Stress	-0.41	0.74	-0.40	0.87	-0.05	266	-0.20	0.19	0.96	-0.01
Advising Effectiveness	0.99	0.86	0.97	0.86	0.17	266	-0.20	0.23	0.87	0.02
Degree Commitment	1.77	0.44	1.72	0.60	0.69	266	-0.08	0.17	0.49	0.08
Institutional Commitment	1.27	0.80	1.21	0.88	0.54	266	-0.15	0.26	0.59	0.07
Scholastic Conscientiousness	1.58	0.56	1.49	0.67	1.01	178	-0.08	0.24	0.31	0.15
Total Persistence Score	0.68	0.38	0.68	0.42	-0.10	266	-0.10	0.09	0.92	0.92

*Significant at < .05

RQ #2: Is there a difference in the PPS between native students and upward transfer students and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a difference in PPS between native students and upward transfer students. A *t*-test was used to test the effect of transfer status on the PPS, revealing an insignificant difference between transfers and

native students at the four-year institution, $t(437) = -0.27, p = 0.79$. On average, the PPS of transfer students ($M = 0.68, SD = 0.39$) and native students ($M = 0.67, SD = 0.36$) were the same and the hypothesis that native students were more likely to persist compared to transfer students could not be supported.

Although the overall PPS test failed to provide evidence to support that there was a difference in means between transfer and native students, three individual factors proved to have some significant differences. Table 5 lists the entire results of the means comparison by conducting a t -test. Out of the ten factors of predicted persistence, Academic Integration, Social Integration, and Scholastic Consciousness had significant differences between transfers and native students.

A t -test was performed revealing a significant difference between the Academic Integration means of native and transfer students, $t(437) = -3.41, p < 0.01$. On average, native students were less academically integrated compared to transfer students (native students: $M = 0.66, SD = 0.70$; transfer students: $M = 0.89, SD = 0.66$). Therefore, with a small effect size ($d = -0.33$), transfer students were more likely to be academically integrated at the four-year institution when compared to native students.

When examining the Social Integration factor, the t -test revealed a significant difference in the means between natives and transfers, $t(415) = 5.89, p < 0.01$. Native students mean for the Social Integration factor ($M = 0.83, SD = 0.75$) was higher when compared to transfer students ($M = 0.35, SD = 0.95$). It was concluded that with a medium effect size ($d = 0.58$), native students were more likely to be socially integrated at the four-year institution when compared to transfer students.

A t -test was performed revealing a significant difference was found between the Scholastic Conscientiousness means of native and transfer students, $t(437) = -2.36, p =$

0.02. On average, native students were less scholastically conscious compared to transfer students (native students: $M = 1.40$, $SD = 0.68$; transfer students: $M = 1.55$, $SD = 0.60$). Therefore, with a small effect size ($d = -0.23$), transfer students were more likely to be scholastically conscious at the four-year institution.

The hypothesis for RQ2 could not be supported after conducting a t -test, and it was concluded there was not a difference in means between native and transfer students. However, when analyzing the factors, three factors proved to have a difference in means. Transfer students were more likely to be more academically integrated and more scholastically conscious, but less likely to be socially integrated when compared to native students.

Table 4

Means Comparison of Upward Transfer Students and Native Students

	<u>Native (170)</u>		<u>Transfer (269)</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	95% Confidence		<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			Interval			
							<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Academic Integration	0.66	0.70	0.89	0.66	-3.41	437	-0.36	-0.10	*<0.01	-0.33
Motivation to Learn	0.56	0.61	0.54	0.62	0.39	437	-0.09	0.14	0.69	0.04
Academic Efficacy	0.94	0.66	1.00	0.71	-1.01	437	-0.20	0.07	0.31	-0.10
Financial Strain	-0.37	0.97	-0.46	0.96	1.02	437	-0.09	0.28	0.31	0.10
Social Integration	0.83	0.75	0.35	0.95	5.89	415	0.32	0.64	*<0.01	0.58
Collegiate Stress	-0.43	0.74	-0.41	-0.79	-0.29	437	-0.17	0.13	0.77	-0.03
Advising Effectiveness	0.85	0.78	0.98	0.86	-1.58	437	-0.29	0.03	0.11	-0.15
Degree Commitment	1.67	0.58	1.75	0.51	-1.49	326	-0.19	0.03	0.14	-0.07
Institutional Commitment	1.13	0.83	1.25	0.83	-1.48	437	-0.28	0.04	0.14	-0.14
Scholastic Conscientiousness	1.40	0.68	1.55	0.60	-2.36	437	-0.27	-0.02	*0.02	-0.23
Predicted Persistence Score	0.67	0.36	0.68	0.39	-0.27	437	-0.08	0.06	0.79	-0.03

*Significant at < .05

RQ #3: Is there a difference in the PPS between native students and students that have an associate's degree and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a difference in PPS between native students and upward transfer students with associate's degrees. A *t*-test was used to test the difference in means for the PPS, and a significant difference was not found between transfers with associate's degrees and native students at the four-year institution,

$t(337) = -0.20, p = 0.84$. On average, the PPS of transfer students with associate's degrees ($M = 0.68, SD = 0.38$) and native students ($M = 0.67, SD = 0.36$) were the same and the hypothesis that native students were more likely to persist compared to transfer students with associate's degrees could not be supported.

Although the overall PPS test failed to provide evidence to support that there was a difference in means between transfer students with associate's degrees and native students, three individual factors proved to have some significant differences. Table 5 lists the entire results of the means comparison by conducting a *t*-test. Out of the ten factors of predicted persistence, Academic Integration, Social Integration, and Scholastic Consciousness had significant differences between transfer students with associate's degrees and native students.

A *t*-test was conducted, and a significant difference was found between the Academic Integration means of native and transfer student with associate's degree, $t(334) = -4.22, p < 0.01$. On average, native students were less academically integrated compared to transfer students (native students: $M = 1.40, SD = 0.68$; transfer students with associate's degrees: $M = 1.55, SD = 0.60$). Therefore, with a small effect size ($d = -0.46$), transfer students with associate's degrees were more likely to be academically integrated when compared to native students at the four-year institution.

For the Social Integration factor, the *t*-test revealed a significant difference in the means between natives and transfers with associate's degrees, $t(320) = 6.57, p < 0.01$. Native students mean for the Social Integration factor ($M = 0.83, SD = 0.75$) was higher when compared to transfer students with associate's degrees ($M = 0.22, SD = 0.95$). It was concluded that with a medium effect size ($d = 0.73$), native students were more likely

to be socially integrated at the four-year institution when compared to transfer students with associate's degrees.

A *t*-test was performed, and a significant difference was found between the Scholastic Conscientiousness means of native and transfer students with associate's degrees, $t(337) = -2.58, p = 0.01$. On average, native students were less scholastically conscious compared to transfer students with associate's degrees (native students: $M = 1.40, SD = 0.68$; transfer students with associate's degrees: $M = 1.58, SD = 0.56$). Therefore, with a small effect size ($d = -0.28$), transfer students with associate's degrees were more likely to be scholastically conscious at the four-year institution.

The hypothesis for RQ3 could not be supported after conducting a *t*-test, and it was concluded there was not a difference in means between native and transfer students with associate's degrees. However, when analyzing the factors, three factors proved to have difference in means. Transfer students with associate's degrees were more likely to be more academically integrated and more scholastically conscious, but less likely to be socially integrated when compared to native students.

Table 5

Means Comparison of Upward Transfer Students with Associate's Degrees and Native Students

	Native (170)		Transfer with Associate's (169)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	95% Confidence Interval		<i>P</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Academic Integration	0.66	0.70	0.97	0.64	-4.22	334	-0.45	-0.16	*<0.01	-0.46
Motivation to Learn	0.56	0.61	0.51	0.60	0.90	337	-0.07	0.19	0.37	0.10
Academic Efficacy	0.94	0.66	1.04	0.65	-1.49	337	-0.25	0.03	0.14	-0.16
Financial Strain	-0.37	0.97	-0.51	0.91	1.38	337	-0.06	0.34	0.17	0.15
Social Integration	0.83	0.75	0.22	0.95	6.57	320	0.43	0.79	*<0.01	0.73
Collegiate Stress	-0.43	0.74	-0.41	0.74	-0.27	337	-0.18	0.14	0.78	-0.03
Advising Effectiveness	0.85	0.78	0.99	0.86	-1.49	337	-0.31	0.04	0.14	-0.14
Degree Commitment	1.67	0.58	1.77	0.44	-1.71	317	-0.21	0.01	0.09	-0.19
Institutional Commitment	1.13	0.83	1.27	0.81	-1.56	337	-0.31	0.04	0.12	-0.17
Scholastic Conscientiousness	1.40	0.68	1.58	0.56	-2.58	337	-0.31	-0.04	*0.01	-0.28
Predicted Persistence Score	0.67	0.36	0.68	0.38	-0.20	337	-0.09	0.07	0.84	-0.02

*Significant at < .05

Summary

RQ1 was answered through a series of *t*-tests examining transfer students with and without associate's degrees. It was found that although there was no difference in the overall persistence of these two populations, transfer students with associate's degrees were more academically integrated and less socially integrated at the four-year institution when compared to transfer students that did not complete an associate's degree at the

community college. Research Question 2 examined the difference in means between transfer and native students by using *t*-tests. When examining the data, it was noticed that there was not a difference in overall persistence between transfers and natives; however, transfer students were more likely to be academically integrated and more scholastically conscious than native students at the four-year institution. Native students were more likely to be socially integrated at the four-year institution. The final research question, RQ3, was also answered by conducting *t*-tests on the factors and overall PPS of transfer students with associate's degrees and native students. Once again, there appeared to be no difference in the overall persistence of the two subpopulations, however, it was discovered that transfer students with associate's degrees were more likely to be academically integrated and more scholastically conscious than native students at the four-year institution. Native students were more likely to be socially integrated at the four-year institution when compared to transfer students with associate's degrees.

Chapter 4 answered the three research questions presented in Chapter 1 and presented the findings outlined in Chapter 3. Next, Chapter 5 will make conclusions based off of the findings of this study and the literature on this topic discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of the study comparing overall persistence and persistence factors between native and upward transfer students. The ten persistence factors that data was collected on were: academic integration, financial strain, social integration, degree commitment, college stress, advising, scholastic conscientiousness, institutional commitment, academic motivation, and academic efficacy. This chapter will take the findings of this study and relate it to the relevant literature presented earlier, share limitations of the study, and provide recommendations for student affairs professionals as well as future research.

Discussion

The researcher compared the finding of the research questions to the literature presented in Chapter 2. The results supported some of the previous research while other findings contradicting the conclusions of other literature. Overall, this study provided a better understanding of the upward transfer persistence trends.

RQ #1: Is there a difference in the Predicted Persistence Score (PPS) between upward transfer students that have an associate's degree and upward transfers that do not and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

Roksa and Calcagno (2010) stated that it is important for students who were classified as academically unprepared to complete their associate's degree prior to transferring to a four-year institution. The findings of this present study indicated that upward transfer students with associate's degrees were more academically prepared, supporting the importance of completing an associate's degree before transferring. The

present study also found that upward transfer students that did not complete an associate's degree typically had a degree of higher social integration into the four-year institution. The students in this study also transferred in fewer numbers of credit hours than those that completed their associate's degree and therefore started at the four-year institution sooner. This is congruent with Berger and Malaney's (2003) study which stated that once upward transfer students have made the transition to the four-year institution, they spend more time on their social life.

In this present study, the results did not support the hypothesis that upward transfer students with associate's degrees were more likely to persist than those that had not earned their associate's degrees before transferring. Studies comparing upward transfer students with associate's degrees and without associate's degrees are few and the researcher could not find any additional findings to support or reject the findings of the present study. Overall, the results of this study indicated that once both upward transfer students with and without associate's degrees completed one semester at a four-year institution, they were equally as likely to persist at the four-year institution.

RQ #2: Is there a difference in the PPS between native students and upward transfer students and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

Frank and Lee (1990) stated that upward transfer students were significantly less likely to complete a four-year degree compared to native students. This current study did not support Frank and Lee's study. Since Frank and Lee's study was over two decades ago, this might suggest that over the past few decades, the gap between native and upward transfer students is narrowing. The only area upward transfer students appeared

to be lacking in was the social integration factor. In the present study, upward transfer students were less socially integrated than their native counterparts.

Ishitani and McKittrick (2010) stated that it was unrealistic for transfer students to have the same levels of student engagement when compared to native students. This was supported in the current study as it was found that upward transfer students, as a whole, were not as socially integrated when compared to native students. This supports Tinto's (1975, 1993) research, which suggested that college students would not be retained without engaging in the social aspects of college.

In the present study, there was no difference in the overall persistence of upward transfer and native students. This can be interpreted in a number of ways in relation to the existing literature. Grimes, Rezek, and Campbell's study (2013) stated that students who begin their studies at a community college before making the transition to a four-year institution are not as prepared when compared to students that immediately start at the four-year institution after high school. The current study does not support this statement as it currently stands; however, when looking at the academic experiences gained at the community college, successful upward transfer students in this study appeared to be gaining the skills needed to be academically integrated into the four-year institution. Grimes, Rezek, and Campbell's finding that community colleges were a great transition academically for upward transfer students can be supported in the present study as this population was more likely to have a higher academic integration factor mean when compared to native students. The current study also indicated that upward transfer students were more likely to be more scholastically conscious than native students, also providing evidence that community colleges are academically transitioning students prior to their transfer to a four-year institution.

One of the most interesting findings was that there was no difference in predicted persistence in successful native and upward transfer students. This can be interpreted that once an upward transfer student has had one successful semester, they are just as likely to persist as their native counterparts.

RQ #3: Is there a difference in the PPS between native students and students that have an associate's degree and how do the factors of predicted persistence of the subpopulations compare?

Prior to the current study, little literature was found on difference in persistence between native students and associate's degrees holders. The present study determined that there was not a difference between these two populations; however, like the two previous research questions, in general, native students were more likely to be socially integrated than associate's degree completers, and associate's degree completers were likely to be more academically integrated and scholastically conscious than native students. Since both populations were the same when examining the overall persistence, it is critical to note that once associate's degrees completers have completed at least one successful semester at a four-year institution, they generally are just as likely to persist as successful native students.

Limitations

Throughout the research process, there were several limitations that must be addressed. First, questions 12, 14, 19, 20, and 21 from the questionnaire were omitted from the analysis of the research questions. Questions 12, 19, 20, and 21 were omitted due to a technical error in the questionnaire, and it was determined that the data for those questions could not be further used. The researcher decided to remove question 14 from analysis as it lowered the Institutional Commitment factor alpha score by about 0.3 when

including questions 14, ($\alpha = 0.513$ with Q14 removed; $\alpha = 0.217$ with Q14). Removing five questions from analysis may have negative implications for the validity of Davidson et al.'s (2009) questionnaire. A consequence for the removal of the items may have affected the alpha scores for the factors where items were removed. Factors with alpha scores under 0.6 were Academic Integration ($\alpha = 0.403$), Motivation to Learn ($\alpha = 0.405$), Social Integration ($\alpha = 0.590$), Degree Commitment ($\alpha = 0.545$), and Institution Commitment ($\alpha = 0.513$). Alpha scores might have been higher if all of the questions were used in the analysis.

Second, the researcher had a difficult time finding a survey that would measure social and academic integration of transfer students. Davidson et al.'s (2009) questionnaire was used to identify new college students that were predicted to dropout at the institution. It was decided for the present study that Davidson et al.'s questionnaire would be appropriate to use on any college student. No known validity testing could be found on the use of this questionnaire on upward transfer students.

Finally, Tinto's (1975, 1993) integration model does not consider additional factors that may lead to persistence or stop-out at an institution as it relates to students of color. In the present study, 32.2% of native students and 19.7% of transfer students identified themselves as being non-White. By using Tinto, a general understanding of the factors of persistence was discovered; however, other theories with a focus on factors of persistence for students of color should be used to take into account the college and transfer experiences of students of color.

Recommendations to Student Affairs Professionals and Practice

Based off of the findings from the research, the following recommendations have been made for student affairs professionals:

1. **Two-year institutions need to create more social opportunities for students enrolled, especially for students who are considering transfer to a four-year institution.** Although upward transfer students, especially those with associate's degrees were more academically integrated, social integration appears to be an issue that must be addressed. Both two and four-year institutions need to be more proactive in assisting upward transfer students socially through their academic career. Tinto (1975, 1993) established that students need to have social support along with academic achievement in order to persist at the institution. Two-year colleges can provide the additional support to all students, not just those intending to transfer by engaging students with faculty, other students, and social opportunities while attending classes.
2. **Four-year institutions need to continue to evaluate the best ways to quickly socially integrate upward transfer students into a new environment.** With the growing traditional student population enrolling at community colleges, four-year institutions are seeing their own growth of upward transfer students (Melguizo, Kienzl, & Alfonso, 2011). The current study shows that although upward transfer students are succeeding academically, they are not becoming as socially integrated into the four-year institution. To increase overall persistence of upward transfer students, four-year institutions need to increase social integration for upward transfer students. This should begin with the orientation and transition process before they even begin classes at the transfer institution. Student orientation programs for transfer students should be different than the first year native

student orientation process as there is a difference between native and upward transfer students. With native students, focus needs to be on the academic transition; while with upward transfer students, a greater effort needs to be focusing on the social transition. Student affairs professionals need to continue to think creatively about how to engage students with opportunities and people on campus. Programs specifically designed for transfer students need to occur frequently within the first several weeks of each semester. Connecting transfer students to each other and to the native student population is crucial to increasing the social integration of upward transfer students.

3. **There needs to be more outreach with students who have or are planning to attain an associate's degree and intentionally providing resources to more fully integrate them into two and four-year institutions.** Since transfer students with associate's degrees are spending more time at the community college, they are spending more time in an environment that has historically negatively impacted social integration. Academic advisors at community colleges should be talking with students with intentions to transfer to a four-year institution, especially those who will be earning their associate's degrees, and provide them with opportunities to engage with faculty and other students. Since there are typically two groups of students at community colleges, traditional students, who will be transferring, and non-traditional students, student affairs professionals need to identify potential transfer students and give them opportunities to experience social activities that are similarly offered at four-year institutions. Orientation, student life, athletic events, and other opportunities are critical to providing these experiences for

transfer students. For example, at a local two-year public institution near the research site, a few hours a week during the lunch hour no classes were scheduled so all students were free to participate in the social opportunities provided by the Student Activities Board. Four-year institutions should be providing opportunities as mentioned in the previous recommendation.

Another unique opportunity institutions could provide is social networks of transfer students from the same institution. Transfer students from the same community college would have another way to connect and engage with each other as they make the transition to the four-year institution.

4. **Community college faculty and administrators need to revise curriculum in transfer track courses to provide out-of-classroom opportunities for students prior to transferring to their four-year institution.** The findings of this study supported the need for further involvement at the community college for potential upward transfer students. Two-year institutions are building their student engagement opportunities; however, if commuter students do not have time to engage with those opportunities, more innovative ways need to be considered to increase social integration. One way is to provide experiences in the classroom that will benefit students through degree completion. Out-of-classroom experiences, such as service learning and career exploration, should be integrated into the course curriculum. These experiences would be effective in courses such as a freshman seminar or first-year experience course. These courses would be required for first year students at the two-year college, specifically those in transfer track programs. By adding this experiential component into the coursework for students on a

transfer track program, there would be a greater likelihood that social integration would be higher both at the two and four-year colleges.

Recommendations for Further Research

- 1. Investigate persistence of new upward transfer students at the four-year institution.** The present study provided insight on students completing a semester at a four-year institution. Transfer students, both with and without associate's degrees are equally as likely to continue to persist. Future research would further clarify initial struggles preventing persistence at the four-year institution. Since the data collected were from students that were successful as they had completed one semester at the four-year institution, conclusions can be made about the transfer population that is not succeeding after making the transfer to the four-year institution.
- 2. Replicate this study and focus on students of color.** As mentioned in the limitations section of this chapter, Tinto's (1975, 1993) integration model does not take into account factors of persistence for students of color. An in depth review of literature will need to be done in order to determine what factors have been found to aid in the persistence of students of color. By using or creating a new questionnaire measuring the factors of persistence for students of color, a means comparison can be executed to see what differences upward transfer students and native students of color have between the factors of persistence.
- 3. Examine students prior to transferring to a four-year institution to determine the factors of persistence.** The current study provided the researcher with a better understanding of factors of persistence for community

college transfer students at a four-year institution. Future studies should investigate persistence and the factors of persistence for potential upward transfer students while they are attending their community college. This can be used to compare the potential upward transfer students to the students that have already made the transition to a four-year institution. Even further, a longitudinal study can be conducted to observe persistence prior to starting at the community college through graduation at the four-year institution. This study would take at least six years to collect the data necessary to observe factors of persistence and how they change over upward transfer students' collegiate careers as they change institutions types.

4. **Design a qualitative study that will investigate the reasons behind success in academic integration and struggles in social integration of upward transfer students at the four-year institution.** By collecting qualitative data, student affairs professionals will have a deeper understanding of this topic. Transfer students can also give their own suggestions for improvement and areas that they feel would enhance the academic and social experiences at the institution. This study will hopefully support the findings in the current study and give a more detailed description on persistence related to upward transfer students. Laanan (2007) stated that the academic and social experiences of upward transfer students are unique to every individual. Further qualitative investigation is worth the time, cost, and risk to improve the college experience for upward transfer students.

Summary

Chapter 5 presented the discussion of the quantitative results of a research study investigating the factors, such as academic integration and social integration, on the persistence of upward transfer students while comparing them to native students at the four-year institution. Past research indicated that there appeared to be a gap in persistence between these two populations. Even by earning an associate's degree before transferring, retention at the four-year institution did not improve (Nutting, 2011). Areas of social and academic success are themes that occurred frequently in the literature. By using Davidson, et al's (2009) questionnaire, the researcher was able to collect data on ten factors of persistence as well as an overall predicted persistence score for successful upward transfer and native students. The results of the study answered the three research questions. Overall, findings indicated that there is no difference in overall persistence of successful upward transfer students, with or without associate's degrees, and native students. When examining the factors that predict persistence, only three of the ten had substantial differences between native and upward transfer students.

Between upward transfer students with associate's degrees and upward transfer students without associate's degrees, students with associate's degrees were more likely to be academically integrated while upward transfer students without associate's degrees were more likely to be socially integrated. This finding might be due to the fact that students who earn an associate's degrees are spending more time at the community college where there are fewer opportunities for social engagement. Findings in the current study supported the existing literature.

For RQ2, upward transfer students were more academically integrated and scholastically conscious, and they were less likely to be socially integrated. Previous

research supported the findings of the current study. For successful upward transfer students, it appeared that their community colleges provided them with the strong academic background that places them ahead of native students; however, there was a gap in the social integration factor. This area of concern was noted in previous research and is confirmed in the present study.

Finally, RQ3 provided the foundation for future research as no previous research could be found to support the findings in the current study. Associate's degree completer transfer students, like all transfer students, were more likely to be academically integrated and scholastically conscious than native students, while, native students were more likely to be socially integrated when compared to associate's degree completers.

Based on the results of the study, recommendations were made for community college and four-year institution student affairs professionals. Recommendations focused on creating new pathways to provide social integration with students starting at the community college through their transition to the four-year institution. Also, recommendations for future research were given to guide the continued investigation on this researched topic. Recognizing the importance of their academic success through the transfer process is the key to moving to a culture of fully assimilating this unique population to college campuses.

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Appendix A

Survey

Part 1: *Demographic Information*

Please select the appropriate response to the following questions.

1. *What is your sex:*

Female

Male

Other

2. *What do you regard to be your ethnic background?*

White

Hispanic or Latino

Black or African American

Native American or American Indian

Asian / Pacific Islander

Other

3. *What type of residence are you now living in or will you live in once school begins?*

A dormitory or residence hall

Your parent's home

A fraternity or sorority house

The home of a relative

A house or apartment off-campus

Other

4. *What was your GPA on a 4.0 scale at your community college?*

Type response

5. *Do you have an Associate's degree?*

Yes

No

6. *How many credits have you earned so far?*

Typed response

7. *In terms of credits earned, what is your classification?*

First Year

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

8. *Which of the goals listed below best describes what you want to accomplish at this college or university?*

Complete one or two courses

Complete a number of courses
 Complete a number of courses and then transfer
 Earn a certificate or associate's degree
 Earn a certificate or associate's degree and then transfer
 Earn a bachelor's degree
 Earn a masters or doctoral degree
 Other

9. *If you are receiving financial aid, check the type of aid that applies to you. You may check more than one.*

On-campus work
 Scholarship or grant
 Loan
 State lottery
 Other
 I receive no financial aid

10. *Which of the following were important for you in deciding to attend this institution? You may check more than one.*

It is close by
 Friends attend here
 The school's reputation
 It has the academic program I want
 Family or relatives attended here
 The school's sports program
 The location or area is appealing
 None of the above apply

Part 2: *College Persistence Questionnaire V3*

Instructions: Students differ a great deal from one another in how they feel about their college experiences. This questionnaire asks you about your reactions to many aspects of your life here at this college. Please consider each of the questions carefully, and circle the answer that best represents your thoughts. There are no "right or wrong" answers, so mark your real impressions. There are only 32 questions, and it is very important that you answer all of them. This should take you about 15-20 minutes. Your answers will be treated as confidential information.

Please select your response to the following items. Be sure to answer each question.

1. *How much do you think you have in common with other students here?*

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

2. *How would you rate the quality of the instruction you are receiving here?*

excellent / good / fair / poor / very poor / not applicable

3. *How often do you worry about having enough money to meet your needs?*

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

4. *How confident are you that this is the right college or university for you?*

very confident / somewhat confident / neutral / somewhat unconfident / very unconfident / not applicable

5. *How much pressure do you feel when trying to meet deadlines for course assignments?*

extreme pressure / much pressure / some pressure / a little pressure / hardly any pressure at all / not applicable

6. *How satisfied are you with the academic advising you receive here?*

very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral / somewhat dissatisfied / very dissatisfied / not applicable

7. *How confident are you that you can get the grades you want?*

very confident / somewhat confident / neutral / somewhat unconfident / very unconfident / not applicable

8. *How often do you miss class for reasons other than illness or participation in school-related activities?*

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

9. *Students vary widely in their view of what constitutes a good course, including the notion that the best course is one that asks students to do very little. In your own view, how much work would be asked of students in a really good course?*

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

10. *There are so many things that can interfere with students making progress toward a degree, feelings of uncertainty about finishing are likely to occur along the way. At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will earn a college degree?*

very certain / somewhat certain / neutral / somewhat uncertain / very uncertain / not applicable

11. *How much have your interactions with other students had an impact on your personal growth, attitudes, and values?*

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

12. *How much do the instructors and the courses make you feel like you can do the work successfully?*

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

13. *How difficult is it for you or your family to be able to handle college costs?*

very difficult / somewhat difficult / neutral / somewhat easy / very easy / not applicable

14. *How likely is it you will earn a degree from here?*

very likely / somewhat likely / neutral / somewhat unlikely / very unlikely / not applicable

15. *Students differ quite a lot in how distressed they get over various aspect of college life. Overall, how much stress would you say that you experience while attending this institution?*

very much stress / much stress / some stress / a little stress / very little stress / not applicable

16. *How easy is it to get answers to your questions about things related to your education here?*

very easy / somewhat easy / neutral / somewhat hard / very hard / not applicable

17. *When you are waiting for a submitted assignment to be graded, how assured do you feel that the work you have done is acceptable?*

very assured / somewhat assured / neutral / somewhat unassured / very unassured / not applicable

18. *How often do you arrive late for classes, meetings, and other college events?*

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

19. *S*

very enthusiastic / somewhat enthusiastic / neutral / somewhat unenthusiastic / very unenthusiastic / not applicable

20. *After beginning college, students sometimes discover that a college degree is not quite as important to them as it once was. How strong is your intention to persist in your pursuit of the degree, here or elsewhere?*

very strong / somewhat strong / neutral / somewhat weak / very weak / not applicable

21. *How much have your interactions with other students had an impact on your intellectual growth and interest in ideas?*

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

22. *In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of instruction you are receiving here?*

very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral / somewhat dissatisfied / very dissatisfied / not applicable

23. *When considering the financial costs of being in college, how often do you feel unable to do things that other students here can afford to do?*

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

24. *How much thought have you given to stopping your education here (perhaps transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons)?*

a lot of thought / some thought / neutral / little thought / very little thought / not applicable

25. *How often do you feel overwhelmed by the academic workload here?*

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

26. *How would you rate the academic advisement you receive here?*

excellent / good / fair / poor / very poor / not applicable

27. *How much doubt do you have about being able to make the grades you want?*

very much doubt / much doubt / some doubt / little doubt / very little doubt / not applicable

28. *How often do you turn in assignments past the due date?*

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

29. *Some courses seem to take a lot more time than others. How much extra time are you willing to devote to your studies in those courses?*

very much extra time / much extra time / some extra time / a little extra time / very little extra time / not applicable

30. *At this moment in time, how strong would you say your commitment is to earning a college degree, here or elsewhere?*

very strong / somewhat strong / neutral / somewhat weak / very weak / not applicable

31. *How much of a financial strain is it for you to purchase the essential resources you need for courses such as books and supplies?*

very large strain / somewhat of a strain / neutral / a little strain / hardly any strain at all / not applicable

32. *How likely is it that you will reenroll here next semester?*

very likely / somewhat likely / neutral / somewhat unlikely / very unlikely / not applicable

Appendix B

Scoring Instructions

The Student Experiences Form of the *CPQ* employs a 5-point Likert-type scale. A sixth option, "Not Applicable," is included for students who feel that a particular item does not pertain to them. Verbal labels for the response scales depend on the wording of the question. For example, a question that asks "how satisfied" students are uses a response scale with "Very Satisfied" and "Very Dissatisfied" as end pegs. Another question that asks "how much" students like something is answered with end pegs of "Very Much" and "Very Little." Depending on the content of the question, answers are converted to 5-point "favorability" scores, based on whether the response indicates something positive or negative about the student's college experience (-2 = very unfavorable, -1 = somewhat unfavorable, 0 = neutral, +1 = somewhat favorable, +2 = very favorable). Score each question using the scales below.

Regular Scoring Items: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 29, 30,
32

$((-A)+3=X)$

Score these items this way:

Response 1 = +2

Response 2 = +1

Response 3 = 0

Response 4 = -1

Response 5 = -2

* Do score "Not Applicable" items

Reverse Scoring Items: 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 18, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31

$(A-3=X)$

Score these items this way:

Response 1 = -2

Response 2 = -1

Response 3 = 0

Response 4 = +1

Response 5 = +2

* Do not score “Not Applicable” items

FACTORS:

Academic Integration – 2, 12, 22

Motivation to Learn – 9, 19, 29

Academic Efficacy – 7, 17, 27

Financial Strain – 3, 13, 23, 31

Social Integration – 1, 11, 21

Collegiate Stress – 5, 15, 25

Advising Effectiveness – 6, 16, 26

Degree Commitment – 10, 20, 30

Institutional Commitment – 4, 14, 24, 32

Scholastic Conscientiousness – 8, 18, 28

CALCULATING FACTOR MEANS:

1. Add up responses (from the +2 to -2 conversions) included in each factor
2. Add up total of Applicable Items (if student responded as Not Applicable, do not include this in the total).
3. Divide the Factor Total (Number from step 1) by the Applicable Items (Number from step 2).

Appendix C

Written Permission to use CPQ

From: "Bill Davidson" <bill.davidson@angelo.edu>
 To: "Jacob W Deters" <jwdeters@eiu.edu>
 Sent: Monday, March 3, 2014 2:38:11 PM
 Subject: RE: Use of the College Persistence Questionnaire

Hi Jacob,

Thanks for your interest in the CPQ. Yes, we developed two newer versions of the CPQ after the 2009 publication. The new versions are based on exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and the research report is accepted for publication in the Journal of College Student Retention. One new version has 60 items (based on exploratory FA) and the other has 32 items (based on confirmatory FA). If you let me know which you prefer, I'll send it to you with the scoring key.

Best wishes,
 Bill

Member, Texas Tech University System

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-----Original Message-----

From: Jacob W Deters [mailto:jwdeters@eiu.edu]
 Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 7:04 PM
 To: Bill Davidson
 Cc: Dena R Kniess
 Subject: Use of the College Persistence Questionnaire

Hello William Davidson,

I am a graduate student in the College Student Affairs Program at Eastern Illinois University. I am currently putting together a proposal for my thesis project and could use your help at this time!

I am looking to do my research on upward transfers students (students transferring from a community college to a four-year institution, specifically looking at persistence at a four-year institution, and I came across your team's College Persistence Questionnaire in your article: "The College Persistence

Questionnaire: Development and Validation of an Instrument That Predicts Student Attrition" in the Journal of College Student Development (2009). I intend to use your questionnaire to determine what elements of persistence have the greatest effect on incoming upward transfer students. I will also be comparing these results to that of incoming freshmen students and native students as well to see the differences in these population.

Your questionnaire would be perfect for me and I am asking for your permission to use it to collect data. The use of this instrument would strictly be educational and I can even share the results of my study with you as well. Below are my working research questions:

1. What factors most influence the predicted persistence score of upward transfer students?
2. Are students that have an associate's degree or certificate more likely to have a higher predicted persistence score than upward transfers that do not?
3. Are native students more likely to have a higher predicted persistence score than upward transfer students?
4. Are native students more likely to have a higher predicted persistence score than a student that has an associate's degree or certificate?
5. Are incoming freshmen students more likely to have a higher predicted persistence score than upward transfer students?
6. Are incoming freshmen students more likely to have a higher predicted persistence score than a student that has an associate's degree or certificate?

From doing a little more research on your questionnaire, I noticed that you have revised the questionnaire at least once since the 2009 article. If you do allow me to use your questionnaire, would you be able give me an up to date questionnaire, any results of tests of validity/reliability, and any other documents/resources that would help me administer/interpret the results?

I have CC my thesis chair, Dr. Dena Kniess, Assistant Professor at the Counseling and Student Development Department here at EIU. If you have any questions about my research, please contact myself or Dr. Kniess.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in my graduate studies.

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Jacob Deters

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