

**THE ACADEMIC STARS RETENTION MODEL: AN EMPIRICAL  
INVESTIGATION OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

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THE ACADEMIC STARS RETENTION MODEL: AN EMPIRICAL  
INVESTIGATION OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS

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Dissertation

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## ABSTRACT

This study tested the effectiveness of the Academic STARS (Students Achieving and Reaching Success) retention model used at a selected Research I state university in the Midwest United States. The model is based on an African Centered Rites of Passage process. This study examined the relationship between participation in Academic STARS and final accumulative GPA, retention, and graduation of African American students at the selected institution.

Literature was reviewed regarding: (a) socio-cultural context, (b) identity development, (c) resiliency, (d) college retention of African American students, and (e) African-Centered rites of passage.

This study compared the GPA, retention rates, and graduation rates of the Academic STARS' students from 1995-2001 to those African American students who did not participate in Academic STARS at the selected institution. This study found that the Academic STARS African-Centered rites of passage experience was effective in improving the college experience of African American students.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Lathardus Goggins III, Lauren Lynette Goggins,  
and Richard Moses Goggins.

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CHAPTER I  
OVERVIEW OF STUDY

*“In my village, a person who is not initiated is considered a child, no matter how old that person is. To not be initiated is to be a nonperson”  
(Somé, 1994, p. 67).*

*Introduction*

Higher education in America, like other American institutions, has struggled to create a place for African Americans. In many higher education institutions in the United States, the primary focus in accommodating African Americans has been to simply provide access to the campus. While many American colleges and universities, particularly predominately white institutions (PWI), have made various concessions over the past 30 years, not much has been done beyond granting physical access to African American students.

The report by the Task Force to Address the Decline of Enrollment and Graduation of the Black Male from Institutions of Higher Education (1990) pointed out the need for colleges and universities to not only recruit African American students but also, to employ strategies to: (a) reach their parents early to emphasize the importance of and potential of higher education for their children, (b) to develop bridge programs to help transition students into the college environment, and (c) to develop social networks between the African American community and the college campus.

One strategy to meet these expectations is the rites of passage process. It has long been recognized as the fundamental process through which human development

and social integration takes place (Brookins, 1996; Delaney, 1995; Elkind, 1989; Freemon, 1999; Gavazzi, Alford, & McKenry, 1996; Graham, 2002; Grimes, 2000; Harvey & Rauch, 1997; Mahdi, Christopher, & Meade, 1996; Van Gennep, 1908/1960; Warfield-Coppock, 1992; 1994; Willson, 1995). The rites of passage process is the foundation in which the basic tenets of formal educational processes are rooted (Goggins, 1996; 1998; Kenyatta, 1962; Van Gennep, 1908/1960; Warfield-Coppock, 1992; 1994). Yet, few in higher education have purposefully organized student development efforts into a rites of passage process, or used a rites of passage model as a scaffolding to deliver educational services and programs.

One exception is the Kupita/Transiciones model for pre-transition and retention support for African American, Latino, and Native American students used by the Student Multicultural Center at the selected institution. Recognizing that African American, Latino, and Native American students were not being retained and graduating from the selected institution at desirable rates, the Kupita/Transiciones Model was created to support their academic and social needs. The guiding principles, based on Kwanzaa's Nguzo Saba (see Appendix A), were used to ensure a holistic approach to the students' needs.

The basic assumptions of the Kupita/Transiciones Model are: (a) to increase the retention and graduation rates of minority students, a process is needed to equip minority students with skills and experiences that are consistent with academic success and retention factors; (b) those factors include developing authentic sense of self, committing to a purpose, building meaningful relationships with peers, faculty and staff, and the ability to identify and utilize academic resources; (c) the development of healthy

social networks and sense of self are rooted in positive identity development; and (d) healthy identity development takes place within an “authentic” socio-cultural context.

The Kupita component, which focuses on the needs of African American students, is organized around an African-Centered rites of passage process. The Kupita services are delivered in four phases. Each phase corresponds to one of the stages of the rites of passage process.

Phase I, the preparation stage, is a 7-week on-campus summer college transition experience. Students are introduced to an African-Centered rites of passage model, and are enrolled in College English I, Black Experience I, then College English II, and Black Experience II.

Phase II, the separation stage, is the freshmen year transition experience. Students attend workshops and meetings to discuss prevailing concerns and issues.

Phase III, the transition stage, is the mentoring program available to students throughout their enrollment at the University.

Phase IV, the reincorporation stage, is the Karamu Ya Wahitimu, a graduation celebration of the African American and African graduate and undergraduate students. Held twice a year, each graduating student receives a kente cloth and/or certificate presented by one’s mentor or influential faculty. Along with these symbols of transition, the students are given a challenge by a faculty significant to their achievement. Peers, faculty, and family are invited to witness the ceremony.

The Academic STARS (Students Achieving and Reaching Success) is the initiative to bridging African American students into the university. The Academic STARS program is the central component of Kupita model. Although any student at the

selected institution may participate and utilize the programs and services offered through the Student Multicultural Center, only the students in Academic STARS participate in the African-Centered rites of passage summer bridge experience, Phase I.

The Academic STARS is a program for first-time full-time freshmen designed to:

1. Recruit, retain and graduate African American students
2. Help African American students make the transition from high school to the university; and
3. Provide each student with the necessary academic and life skills, such as self-discipline and determination, for a successful undergraduate.

Academic STARS is a support program meant to enhance the acquisition of college and life management skills of African American students. From 1990 to 1994, the methods used were derived from various theories and strategies associated with the learning styles, self-esteem, community education, community building, and culture related to African American heritage and traditions.

In 1995, the "new" Academic STARS students entered the selected institution through an African-Centered Rites of Passage process. Although much of the material was the same, students were introduced to the rites of passage concept and African-centered principles to better assist them in the mastery of appropriate social skills and to develop an authentic sense of self. Additionally, corresponding support programs and services were organized into an African-Centered rites of passage process.

In an interview conducted in 1995 with the Director and Assistant Director of the Office of Cultural Diversity (now the Student Multicultural Center), both stated that there was something "unique" about the new Academic STARS (Goggins, 1996). They

indicated that the sense of community, respect for self and others (peers and elders), development of purpose, confidence and maturity, and understanding one's responsibilities to the African American community had increased among the Academic STARS students.

The Assistant Director remarked, "It was like they [Academic STARS] went into a cocoon and emerged a different group of people; they're not the same group of kids we started out with... This group of students is not like any other that we've had." The Director added, "It's easy to tell which students are apart of the STARS program when they are among other freshmen groups..." She reiterated the need for culturally specific rites in order to develop "true" self. Although it was too early to draw "sound" conclusions in 1995 about the effectiveness of the African-Centered rites of passage model, the antidotal evidence suggests that "rites" made a positive difference in the college experience of African American students (Goggins, 1996).

### *Purpose of the Study*

Numerous universities recognize the obstacles that many African American students are often confronted with poor secondary preparation, lack of cultural synchronization, and social isolation. Subsequently, many universities provide various programs and services to help African American students transition into college. The importance of social integration and cultural development to the success of the African American college student is clearly emphasized in the literature. However, the majority of African American students attending predominantly white institutions continue to express isolation and dissatisfaction with their college experience. Subsequently, many

African American college students remain at risk of attrition and academic failure (Neville, Heppner, & Wang, 1997; Schwitzer, Ancis, & Griffin, 1999; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Vodanovich, Watt, & Piotrowski, 1997).

Although there is ample and relevant literature that supports various aspects of the rites of passage model, the literature specifically examining the use of rites of passage model and process as a tool for college student development and retention is sparse. A query of ERIC, Education Abstracts, and the OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center databases, which includes more than 3,000 journals titles from 1966 to the present, produced five references regarding rites of passage and retaining college students. Therefore, additional research needs to be conducted to explore the utility and effectiveness of the African-Centered rites of passage to retain and graduate African American college students.

#### *Statement of Problem*

This study will examine the relationship between participation in the selected institution Academic STARS African Centered Rites of Passage process and the college success of the Academic STARS students as measured by their final accumulative GPA, retention and graduation status.

#### *Research Question*

Are students who have experienced the selected institution Academic STARS African Centered Rites of Passage process performing better academically than their African American peers who have not participated in Academic STARS as measured by:

- a. Final Accumulative GPA
  1. Covarying of gender
  2. Covarying of SAT score
  3. Covarying of High School GPA
- b. Retention



1. Covarying of gender
2. Covarying of SAT score
3. Covarying of High School GPA

c. Graduation Rate

1. Covarying of gender
2. Covarying of SAT score
3. Covarying of High School GPA

*Significance of Research*

This study has the potential of providing a significant contribution to the knowledge base regarding the retention and social integration of African American college students at PWIs. This study contributed to establishing a body of literature that seeks to establish a relationship between the use of a Rites of Passage Model and the retention of African American college students. The researcher aimed to:

1. Test the effectiveness of the Academic STARS African Centered Rites of Passage process on the college experience of Academic STARS students at the selected institution.
2. Inform the academic community about the Rites of Passage Model and its potential as an effective tool for retention of African American students.
3. Generate new thoughts and strategies in terms of how to positively affect the college experience of African American students at predominantly white institutions.
4. Add to the knowledge base regarding the retention and social integration of African American college students attending predominantly white institutions.
5. Impact the research and practice regarding the retention and social integration of African American college students (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003).

In addition, to date there has not been a formal evaluation of the Academic STARS program. The program's assumptions about the retention of African American students at the selected institution are primarily anecdotal and remain untested. This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the selected institution Academic STARS African-Centered Rites of Passage process on the retention and graduation rates of African American college students who experienced it.

### *Assumptions*

This study began with the presumption that there is a need to identify and adopt better methods of fostering social integration of African American college students, particularly at PWI. Additionally, that the problem of social integration of African American college students are exacerbated by the lack of cultural synchronicity experienced by African American students at predominantly white institutions of higher education. Furthermore, that the academic issues regarding African American college students are a subset and explicitly tied to the issues that African Americans face with the American education system and the historical racist and discriminatory treatment of people of African descent.

This study assumed the existence of cultural context and its influence on how individuals interact with and conceptualize their world. Another assumption made is the existence of an essence of the African-Centered Rites of Passage experience. Additionally, it is assumed that the affect of the essence of the African Centered Rites of Passage on the college success of those Academic STARS students can be measured and

tested. Furthermore, that these differences will be distinguishable quantifiably, and be detectable in the data sets collected for the STARS and Non-STARS groups.

### *Explanation of Terms*

1. African, African American, African-American, Afro-American, Black, black, Black American, negro, Negro, Coloured, and Colored are often synonymous. The term used is a function of the time the work originated or the philosophy of an author. Transition from Coloured to Black to African American is reflective of the redefining of people of African descent in the United States. For this study, the term of choice was African American. However, Africans will be used when referring to people of African descent before the 14th Amendment and to those persons who presently identify their citizenship with a country in Africa. “Black” (capitalized) refers to a “state of mind,” which reflects an understanding and acceptance of the African experience within the “local” historical context. Additionally, it implies an appreciation of African expressions and contributions as manifested through the arts, historical events, philosophy, folklore, science, and various human endeavors. In contrast, black, “lower case,” denotes racial group.

2. African-Centered, Afrocentricity, Africentricity - generally defined as the placing of traditional African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior (Asante, 1987). Maulana Karenga (1994) stated,

Afrocentricity can be defined as a quality of thought and practice rooted in the cultural image and human interest of African people [and their descendants]. To be rooted in the cultural image of African people is to be anchored in the views and values of African people as well as in the practice, which emanates from and gives rise to these views and values. (p. 36)

To be African centered is to construct and use frames of reference, cultural filters and behaviors that are consistent with the philosophies and heritage of African cultures in order to advance the interest of people of African descent (Keto, 1991). The principles of Spirituality, Harmony, Rhythm, Energy, Affect, Communalism, Expressive Individualism, Oral Tradition, and Social Time Perspective characterized African centered thought and practice (Biko, 1978; Boykin, 1986; Goggins, 1998).

3. Cultural Synchronization, according to Irvine (1991), refers to the interaction between the values of the institution and those of the student.

4. Graduation Rate - the percentage of completing students, who entered the institution as full-time, first-time, degree or certificate-seeking in a particular year (cohort), within 150% of normal program completion time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Therefore, a graduation rate for a cohort of students seeking a bachelor degree (a four year degree) is calculated upon completion of the sixth year.

5. R-Score - a variable created for this study. The value of the r-score is equivalent to the number of years a student is retained over a 6-year period, starting with the fall semester of the year that a student first enters the university as a full-time, first-time freshmen. The r-score has a minimum value of 0 and maximum value of 5. Those students who graduate within 6 years of entering as a full-time, first-time freshmen receives a maximum r-score of 5 regardless of the time within a 6-year period they actually graduate.

6. Resiliency - generally defined in the literature as the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles

(Miller, 1999; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). According to Pulley and Wakefield (2001), resiliency is characterized by elasticity, buoyancy, adaptability, optimism, and an openness to learning.

7. Retention - refers to the way students enroll, stay enrolled, or complete their degrees. It describes the flow of students through college over a specific period of time. Retention rate refers to the percentage of students from a cohort that returns to enroll in the next academic period. Typically, retention rate is calculated from fall semester to fall semester of the next year.

8. Rites of Passage – Anthony Mensah (1991) defined rites of passage as,

Those structures, rituals, and ceremonies by which age-class members or individuals in a group successfully come to know who they are and what they are about, the purpose and meaning for their existence, as they proceed from one clearly defined state of existence to the next state of passage in their lives. (p. 62)

The rites of passage process is a pattern of preparation, separation, transition, and reincorporation to move an individual through the various states of knowing, meaning and purpose of one's existence (Campbell, 1949/1973; Cohen, 1991; Goggins, 1998; Hill, 1992; Somè, 1994; Van Gennep, 1908/1960). The significance of the pattern is to foster relationship between an individual and his/her community; the past, present and future experiences; and between ethos and practice.

9. Social Integration - refers to those experiences and the process that serves to connect and to incorporate a student into the social and intellectual life of the institution (Tinto, 1993). Tinto asserted:

Generally, the more satisfying those experiences are felt to be, the more likely are individuals to persist until degree completion. Conversely, the less integrative they are, the more likely are individuals to withdraw voluntarily prior to degree completion. (p. 50)

### *Delimitation of Study*

This study was delimited to investigating the African American students who were first-time, full-time freshmen during the fall semester between 1995 and 2001. This study was delimited geographically to students who are predominantly from Ohio in the midwestern United States and attending the selected institution.

Strengths and weaknesses are associated with any data collection method. This study used an ex post facto design, which does not allow for inferential analysis and generalizability. According to Kerlinger (1986), the three major weaknesses in conducting a study using ex post facto research are: (a) the inability to manipulate independent variables, (b) the lack of power to randomize, and (c) the risk of improper interpretation, which is due to lack of control. The weaknesses of an ex post facto design relate to the internal validity of the research—the extent to which one can say that the independent variables cause the changes in the dependent variables. The way to increase internal validity is to control for other possible influences, thereby, increasing the likelihood that the changes to the dependent variable are due to the independent variable (Aiken & West, 1991; Bobko, 1995; Glass, 1973; McNeil, Newman, & Kelly, 1996; Newman & Newman, 1994). Though the ex post facto research findings cannot infer causation, the test to establish relationships can be very useful to researchers.

The success of this study was highly dependent upon the ability of the researcher to be resourceful, systematic, and honest to control bias. In addition, the researcher must clearly state that the data analyzed and the findings of this study are only discussed in contextual terms of this situation, and inferences should only be made to situations with similar contexts. Although there are limitations to this study, an

empirical examination of the STARS program's effectiveness will be helpful to test the conceptual framework for using an African Centered Rites of Passage process as a tool for college retention for African American students.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

*“I Am Because We Are and Since We Are; Therefore, I Am”  
(Mbiti, 1970, p. 141).*

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the research question. Addressed are the factors influencing identity development, retention, social integration, and developing resiliency among African American college students. Additionally, literature on the African-Centered rites of passage process is examined.

*Socio-cultural Context*

Generally, culture has been defined as a system of techniques acquired and shared by members of a recognizable group, in order to generate acceptable solutions to problems (Ullman, 1965). The Academic Senate of San Francisco State University (SFSU) asserted in the *Position Statement and Plan of Action: Multicultural Perspectives in the Curriculum* that, “Culture is to humans as water is to fish” (1992). The statement, often associated with San Francisco State University professor Wade Nobles, is recognition that culture is the median through which all human activity is transmitted and interpreted.

K. A. Akoto (1992), in *Nation Building*, posited that the function of culture:

1. Provides a lens of perception or cognitive framework in which to view the world.



2. Delineates standards of evaluations by which to measure worth or legitimacy, beauty and truth.
3. Defines the conditions and/or means that motivate or stimulate a member (institutional and individual) of society and prescribe sanction for disruptive digression.
4. Defines collective and individual identity, roles, and responsibilities.
5. Provides a common language or means of communication.
6. Provides the basis for social organization.
7. Conditions the mode of production, and
8. Delineates a process for perpetuation of the culture. (pp. 31-32)

Additionally, Akoto asserted that cultural functions provide the parameters, in which identity is developed and affirmed. Therefore, according to Akoto, individuals are best nurtured when participating in social institutions (family, education, etc.) that reflect the values consistent with the historical experiences of that individual.

Likewise, much of the literature regarding education reform and the various problems African American students continue to have with the American education system addresses the need to create a more authentic socio-cultural context (Shujaa, 1994; Warfield-Coppock, 1992; 1994). Over the past 30 years, African Centered approaches to education have been viewed as one strategy to have gained notability for creating an authentic socio-cultural context for African American students (Afrik, 1993; Parham, White, and Ajamu, 1999; Shujaa, 1994; Tedla, 1996; Warfield-Coppock, 1992; 1994). However, the African-Centered approach to education is a strategy grounded in a body of literature that spans the last 180 years and practices that are rooted in traditions, since humans first lived in Africa.

One of the first literary texts to articulate the need for people of African descent to re-examine their understanding of life based upon the accomplishment and teachings of African people, is *David Walker's Appeal* (Hinks, 2000; Turner, 1993). According to Turner (1993), *David Walker's Appeal* is the philosophical roots for Marcus Garvey,

Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, and many current African-Centered scholars. In *David Walker's Appeal*, Walker (1829/2000) discusses the consequences of people of African descent not being grounded in an authentic cultural meaning, as a result of meanings being imposed from “outside” the African experience.

Walker (1829/2000) stated:

The consequences of ignorance; arguing that a groveling servile and object submission to the lash of tyrants, we see plainly, why brethren, are not the natural elements of the blacks, as the Americans try to make us believe... that, ignorance, the mother of treachery and deceit, gnaws into our very vitals. Ignorance, as it now exists among us, produces a state of things. (p. 23) ... It is a notorious fact, that major part of the white Americans have, ever since we have been among them, tried to keep us ignorant, and make us believe that God made us and our children to be slaves to them and theirs. (p. 36)

Walker suggested that blacks must not succumb to the schooling provided by “the majority part of the white Americans,” but they must find a way to educate themselves in light of “the retrospective view of the arts and sciences... by the sons of Africa or ‘Ham’ among whom learning originated” (p. 21). According to Hinks (2000), *David Walker's Appeal* describes the undermining of the Black psyche. Hinks stated, “It was meant to awaken his brethren to the fabric of false and dangerous illusions about their conditions and character woven into their consciousness by centuries of oppression” (p. xiv).

Although, *David Walker's Appeal* initiated the call for a socio-cultural context centered around African heritage, it was Carter G. Woodson in *The Mis-Education of The Negro* (1933) who most clearly articulated the need to reform education for African Americans by including the contributions and philosophies of Africans into the curricula. To not include an African Centered perspectives means those schooled would likely not act in the best interest of the African American community. Woodson stated:

The “educated Negroes” have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin and the Teuton and to despise the African... The thought of the inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he enters and in most every book he studies... The large majority of the Negroes who have put on the finishing touches of our best colleges are all but worthless in the development of their people. (pp. 1-2)

Woodson went on to warn that:

It was well understood that if by teaching of history the white man could be further assured of his superiority and the Negro could be made to feel that he had always been a failure and that the subjection of his will to some other race is necessary the freedman, then, would still be a slave. If you can control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself with what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one. (pp. 84-85)

Woodson’s *Mis-Education of the Negro* is still the most thorough articulation on the damage inflicted on the African American sense of self (i.e., esteem, efficacy, worth, consciousness, image, identity) by the American educational system. Woodson (1933) laid the foundation and provided the rationale for African Centered approaches in education and emphasizes that the curricula must include the components of the African heritage (i.e., philosophy, art, science, folklore, and history).

Research following Woodson’s continued to address the demonstrated effectiveness of African philosophy, language, and behaviorism on the socialization, consciousness, and achievement of African American youth (Wilcox, 1998). In 1987, Molefi Asante’s *The Afrocentric Idea* organizes, bounds, and historically grounds an emerging worldview, centered around African heritage, into a formal theory and methodology. Asante (1987) defined Afrocentrism as, the placing of African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior. Similarly, Karenga

(1994) defined Afrocentricity as a quality of thought and practice rooted in the cultural image and human interest of African people [and their descendants], anchored in the views and values of African people as well as in the practice, which emanates from and gives rise to these views and values. To be African centered is to construct and use frames of reference, cultural filters and behaviors that are consistent with the philosophies and heritage of African cultures in order to advance the interest of people of African descent (Keto, 1991). However, in terms of the characteristics of an African-Centered perspective, Asante (1987) asserted, "...three fundamental Afrocentric themes of transcendent discourse: (1) human relations, (2) humans' relationship to the supernatural, and (3) humans' relationships to their own being" (p. 168). In a similar discussion, A. W. Boykin (1986), discussing the West African worldview, posited that West African ethos is characterized by Spirituality, Harmony, Rhythm, Energy, Affect, Communalism, Expressive Individualism, Oral Tradition, and Social Time Perspective. In 1971, Steve Biko presented a paper in Natal, South Africa, where he described "African Culture":

Obviously the African culture has had to sustain severe blows and many have been battered nearly out of shape by the belligerent cultures it collided with, yet in essence even today one can easily find the fundamental aspects of the pure African culture in the present day African... One of the most fundamental aspects of our culture is the importance we attach to Man .... A man-centered society .... The capacity we have for talking to each other-not for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake... We regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act of God to make us a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life... Any suffering we experience was made much more real by song and rhythm. There is no doubt that the so called 'Negro Spirituals' sung by black slaves in the States as they tilled under oppression were indicative of their African heritage... African society had the village community as its basis... This obviously was a requirement to suite the needs of a community-based and man-centered society. Africans do not recognize any cleavage between the natural and supernatural. They experience a situation rather than face a problem... More as a

response of the total personality to the situation that the result of some mental exercise... We thanked God through our ancestors before we drank beer, married, worked etc. We would obviously find it artificial to create special occasions for worship. God was always in communication with us and therefore merited attention everywhere and anywhere (Biko, 1978, pp. 41-45).

Biko's description of African Culture summarizes what many scholars have asserted to be the characteristics of African-Centered thought and practice.

While there are many who advocate for African-Centered approaches, it also has its critics. In *Afrocentrism*, Stephen Howe (1998) explained his understanding of Afrocentricity:

...a mystical, essentialist, irrationalist and often, in the end, racist set of doctrines has arisen, out of the cultural nationalist milieu, to occupy centre ground of media attention in relation to black American thinking. The self-ascribed or preferred label for these doctrines is Afrocentricity, or Afrocentrism. ... Afrocentrism may, in its looser sense or more moderate forms, mean little more than an emphasis on shared African origins among all "black" people, taking a pride in those origins and an interest in African history and culture - or those aspects of New World cultures seen as representing African 'survivals' - and a belief that Eurocentric bias has blocked or distorted knowledge of Africans and their cultures. (p. 1)

*Afrocentrism*, like *Not Out of Africa* (Lefkowitz, 1997) and *The Disuniting of America* (Schlessinger, 1992), attempted to dismantle African-Centered theory by not recognizing Afrocentricity as a serious form of scholarship, they attempt to weaken its historical foundation by claiming it is mystical and a result of ancestor worship (Carroll, 2003).

The views expressed by Ralph Wiley (1994) and Anne Wortham (1992) represented the opinions of many who oppose the use of African-Centered approaches in education. Wiley (1994) suggested that African Americans are a different kind of people—"we are out of Africa ... children of the new world." Wiley assumed that African values, norms, and heritage were destroyed by the American slave experience, and that

African Americans are products of that slave experience. Subsequently, according to Wiley, African heritage is non-synchronous with African American people, and therefore, have no place in constructing the socio-cultural context for African Americans.

Likewise, Wortham (1995) stated, “Afro-centrism is not the answer for black students in American society.” Wortham asserted that education in a diverse and integrated society should teach in general principles, instead of African cultural specifics. Wortham’s concern was that African-Centered thinking would lead to separatist tendencies and segregation from educational opportunities and that, the academic success of African American student is a function of the extent to which he/she integrates into the American society.

However, according to Carroll (2003) and Goggins (1996; 1998), those who oppose African-Centered approaches, practice, and pedagogy often severely misrepresent African-Centered philosophy and ethos. The opponents concerned with African-Centered approaches leading to separatist outcomes ignore research by Chickering and Reisser (1993), Cross, Parham and Helms (1991), Durgans (1992), Tinto (1993), and Ullman (1965) that suggest development of authentic self-consciousness leads to more humanistic behavior, and a willingness to “integrate.”

Ogbu (2003), in *Black American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Disengagement*, emphasized the importance of equipping African American students with authentic cultural models through which they can interpret the world. Otherwise, Ogbu (2003) argued, black students, even those from affluent backgrounds, tend to adopt cultural models based on the racist stereotypes about blacks prevalent in popular

media, and black students often adopt an oppositional cultural model of Black life (i.e., to be Black is to not be white). One of the major consequences of adopting such a cultural model is academic disengagement (Fordham, 1991; Majors & Billson, 1992; Ogbu, 1974; 1986; 1991; 2003).

The literature revealed that the socio-cultural context is a major factor in all aspects of being human. Humans are influenced by the relationships between themselves and others, and by their understanding of the available solutions to which they have access. To ignore the socio-cultural context of a human being is to ignore what makes that being human. Therefore, any study that seeks to better understand a group of people must consider the socio-cultural context in which they are situated (Ani, 1994; Asante, 1987; Biko, 1978; Campbell & Moyers, 1988; Durgans, 1992; Goggins, 1996; 1998; Graham, 2002; Hale-Benson, 1986; Hilliard, 2001; Karenga, 1995, 1994; Keto, 1991; Macintosh, 1995; Ogbu, 1974; 1986; 1991; 2003; Parham, White, & Ajamu, 1999; Shujaa, 1994; Van Gennep, 1908/1960; Vygotsky, 1987; Woodson, 1933/1990).

### *Identity Development*

Many theories related to identity development exist. However, it is Eric Erikson's theory that has become the basis of many current theories (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Schwartz, 2001). Erikson (1968), in *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, introduced an eight-stage Psychosocial Theory of development. Each stage had a conflict or crisis that must be resolved before passing onto the next stage of life. Erickson posited that a developmental crisis, or turning point, in a person's life is associated with each stage

(Erickson, 1963). It is this dissonance, disequilibrium, and anxiety associated with the crisis that creates a need within the individual to do something to resolve the issue.

Erickson asserted that how people resolve each crisis influences how they view themselves and their place in their environment. Moreover, how they resolve each crisis will have a cumulative effect on how they resolve future developmental tasks (1968). Erickson recognized each crisis or set of crises, the order in which they are experienced, and their relative importance in a person's life are strongly influenced by society, culture, and gender (Erickson, 1980; Evans, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998). However, if these crises are not resolved, then the individual will eventually lose the ability to adapt to society.

Another central theorist in college student identity development is Arthur Chickering (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). In his landmark book, *Education and Identity*, Chickering (1969) proposed that identity develops along seven vectors. Chickering and Reisser (1993) revised the vectors to more comprehensively reflect the psychosocial development during the college years (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). These vectors are:

1. Developing competence – this includes intellectual, physical, and interpersonal skills
2. Managing emotions – students develop the ability to recognize and accept and appropriately express and control them
3. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence – students develop a freedom from continual needs for reassurance, affection or approval from others. Students develop self-direction



4. Developing mature interpersonal relationships – students develop an ability to accept individuals for who they are, to respect differences, and to appreciate commonalities

5. Establishing identity – a sense of one’s social and cultural heritage, a clear self-concept with one’s roles and lifestyle, a secure sense of self in light of feedback from significant other, self-acceptance and self-esteem, and personal stability and integration

6. Developing purpose – developing clear vocational goals, making meaningful commitments to specific personal interests and activities, and establishing strong interpersonal commitments

7. Developing integrity – students move from rigid moralistic thinking to a more balanced approach where the interests of others are balanced with one’s own interests. Eventually, students develop a value system where self-interest is balanced with a sense of social responsibility.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) went on to argue that the campus environments exert powerful influences on student development related to seven key factors:

1. Institutional objectives
2. Institutional size
3. Student-faculty relationships
4. Curriculum
5. Teaching
6. Friendships and students communities
7. Student development programs and services

In their reconsideration of *Education and Identity*, Chickering and Reisser (1993), suggested the following three principles that should undergird the environmental influences to promote identity development:

1. Integration of work and learning
2. Recognition and respect for individual differences
3. Acknowledgement of the cyclical nature of learning and development.

As the cited literature and others suggested, the self is a multidimensional concept. Rogers (1951) defined the configuration of self as being:

... composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of self in relation to others and to the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects; and goals and ideas which are perceived as having positive or negative valence. (pp. 136-137)

Akbar (1985) also discussed the complexity of the self in his work *The Community of Self*. Akbar discussed the interplay of various "members" of the self and the need for harmonious cooperation in order for one to endure (succeed) despite extreme opposition. Akbar pointed out that achieving harmonious cooperation is particularly challenging for African Americans.

As Erikson and Chickering both recognized, in revisits to their respective theories, current psychosocial development theories must consider various populations to include women, minorities and non-heterosexuals, because of the unique crises inherent to being a member of a particular group (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). The unique crises African Americans and other minority groups must negotiate are functions of being, to various extents, marginalized by white American society.

Du Bois (1903/1990) addressed the dilemma that African Americans face, in the influential classic, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

... in this American world,—a world which yields him [African Americans] no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder... —this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon... (pp. 8-9).

Similarly, Prager (1982) referred to the biculturality of African Americans as trying to fuse two cultural traditions or cultural frames of reference that are incompatible:

It is not the mere fact that [African Americans] hold a dual identity, which has constrained achievement; to one degree or another, every ethnic and racial group has faced a similar challenge. The [African American] experience in America is distinguished by the fact that the qualities attributed to [being African American] are in opposition to the qualities rewarded by society. The specific features of [being African American], as cultural imagery, are almost by definition those qualities which the dominant society has attempted to deny in itself, and it is the difference between [being African American] and [being White] that defines, in many respects, American cultural self-understanding. For [African Americans], then, the effort to reconcile into one personality images which are diametrically opposed poses an extraordinarily difficult challenge. To succeed in America raises the risk of being told—either by Whites or by [African Americans]—that one is not "really [African American]." No other group in America has been so acutely confronted with this dilemma, for no other group has been simultaneously so systematically ostracized while remaining so culturally significant. (p. 111)

Prager (1982) made the case that African Americans possess special qualities that are completely in opposition to White cultural frame of reference. He contended that how African Americans perceive their experiences can be juxtaposed to that of White America and in large part determines African American cultural images.

Boykin (1986) extended Du Bois's notion about dual consciousness by arguing that African Americans have a triple quandary that must be resolved. Boykin argued that the coexistence of African Americans and White Americans is framed in a triple

quandary—the mainstream experience, the minority experience, and the African American cultural experience—in which there is constant interplay among the three realms of experiential negotiation. Boykin explained that all members in the society participate in the mainstream realm of negotiation. African Americans participate in this realm through work systems, judicial systems, and bureaucratic systems. However, their participation is "tempered by concomitant negotiation through the minority and [African American] cultural realms" (Boykin, 1986, p. 66).

Boykin argued that this participation is also tempered by the hegemony or social domination of White Americans. "The minority experience is based on exposure to social, economic, and political oppression" (Boykin, 1986, p. 66). Consequently, the minority experience produces adaptive responses for African Americans. These responses impact the way African Americans develop a sense of self (Goggins, 1996). Furthermore, Boykin (1986) explained there exists an inherent conflict between the way African Americans and white Americans interpret and negotiate social reality. Boykin asserted that the African American cultural experience is rooted in traditional West African ethos. Moreover, Boykin contended that the characteristic of West African ethos, spirituality, harmony, movement, verve, affect, communalism, expressive individualism, oral tradition, and social time perspective, are interwoven into the African American cultural experience. Thus, he argued there are several characteristics of the African American and White American experiences that are sharply at odds. These characteristics respectively—African American vs. White American—include: spiritualism vs. materialism; harmony with nature vs. mastery over nature; organic metaphors vs. mechanistic metaphors; expressive movement vs. impulse control;

interconnectedness vs. separateness; person-to-person emphasis, with a personal orientation toward objects vs. person-to-object emphasis, with an impersonal (objective) orientation toward people. Boykin (1986) argued further that, "this incommensurability makes it difficult to put [African American] cultural reality in the service of attainment in [White] American cultural institutions, such as schools" (p. 63). Although Boykin may have over simplified the conflicts between the African and White cultural perspective, he clearly pointed out that there exists a unique frame of reference from which any consideration of identity development of African Americans must take into account.

Research by Cross, Parham, and Helms (1991) on Nigrescence (Black Identity Development) models recognized the unique frame of reference in which Black identity development takes place. Cross et al. maintained that there exist five stages to Black consciousness:

1. Pre-encounter: In this stage a person has not considered what it means to be Black. This person's worldview is centered by the values prevalent in the dominated society.
2. Encounter: This stage is initiated by an event in which a person is confronted with one's Blackness. Cross, Parham, and Helms (1991) describes the encounter as, "having the rug pulled from under you."
3. Immersion-emersion: In this stage a person seek out new meanings and immerges one's self into being Black. This person tends to develop an opposition culture or a militant reference to the dominant culture, as a result of rejecting the "old" self.

4. Internalization: This stage is reached when a person finds resolution to the conflicts between the old and new “selves.” The individual moves towards a pluralistic perspective.

5. Internalization-commitment: The final stage is reached when a Black identity is internalized and moves a person to social activism.

Few move into Internalization and Internalization-Commitment, the fourth and fifth stages of consciousness respectively. The nature of the encounter has a major affect/effect on the development of identity and the resulting coping strategies to American hostility (Boykin, 1986; Goggins, 1996; Majors & Billson, 1992).

### *Coping Strategies*

The coping strategies can be thought of in terms of two categories or varying degrees between frames of reference based on the oppressor (i.e., white European male Protestant supremacy) and African self-consciousness (Boykin, 1986; Goggins, 1996; 1998). According to Boykin (1986), Majors and Billson (1992), and Ogbu (1974; 1996; 2003), the type of coping strategy employed by an African American student will greatly influence a student’s ability to navigate and integrate into the social and academic environ.

Passive coping strategies reflect a frame of reference that identifies with the oppressor. In this mode of thinking, a person does not seriously consider the possibilities other than the existing situation (Boykin, 1986). One’s locus of control is external and perceived to be beyond his or her manipulation (Goggins & Lindbeck, 1986). Even those African Americans who employ an oppositional culture strategy often assume that they are taking control of their situation. However, it is a false perception

(Dewey, 1938/1968; Wilson, 1993). To be in direct opposition to something, the first reference point is that something. In order to be anti-white, a person's first frame of reference is white, and a person will construct sense of self-based on what is perceived to be white. For example, if education is something that white people do then, black people do not do it (Majors & Billson, 1992; Ogbu, 1991; 2003). According to Ogbu (1996; 2003), the irony is that most African American students recognize and express the importance of education to one's future, but do not employ a strategy that connects their stated desires and expectations with their daily practices. Passive strategies tend to lead to values and practices that produce obstacles to authentic knowledge of self and interaction with others (Goggins, 1996; 1998; Ogbu, 1996; 2003).

In contrast, African American students who maintain or develop frames of reference that are based on the definitions and perceptions that are consistent with African-Centered principles are said to have proactive coping skills (Boykin, 1986; Goggins, 1996). A person in this mode of thinking does not deny the existence and the affects/effects of oppression. Rather, one recognizes oppression as an obstacle to his or her fulfillment of self (Durgans, 1992; Goggins, 1996; 1998). Boykin (1986) described one of the proactive coping strategies as dissembling. Here, a person will conceal one's true feelings and provide a pretense to the oppressive society, while committing subversive acts against the oppressor.

Another coping strategy is to develop a vision of self and supporting social structure base on authentic cultural heritage. Durgans (1992), Frankl (1962), Harrell (1979), and Karenga (1994) noted that persons who adopt a distinct value system are best prepared to successfully resist oppression and confront hostile situations. The

ability to successfully endure oppressive and hostile environments increases, when a person's sense of self reflects authentic cultural heritage, philosophies, provides historical continuity, and cultivated social networks (Frankl, 1962; Goggins, 1996; 1998; Harrell, 1979; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000).

The literature on identity development clearly asserts that developing a sense of self is critical to the overall development of a person. One's sense of identity helps to delaminate the possible set of appropriate behaviors, strategies, and solutions. However, when new conditions are not readily solved by old behaviors or strategies, a crisis is generated and new behavior or strategies developed. It is this crisis that facilitates adaptation, and thus, a new identity (Erikson, 1963, 1982). Through acquiring new skills, behaviors, and understanding necessary to solve the new crisis, the individual is transformed. Accordingly, as the literature suggests, there is a significant possibility of identity development during and as a result of college enrollment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Moreover, the literature asserts that women, racial /ethnic minority have unique sets of crises that are generated from their particular experiences with American society. This in turn, greatly affects their identity development. Further, the literature also suggested that identity development, and the resulting sense of self, which directly impacts the quality of relationships with others. Therefore, theories regarding African American identity development are essential for understanding and influencing the African American college experience.



### *Resiliency*

Resiliency is a characteristic that enables students to overcome various “at risk” factors including the irrelevancy and demoralizing nature of public schooling (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). The literature on resiliency indicates the importance of developing goals, social networks, and leadership and problem solving skills. According to Pulley and Wakefield (2001), resiliency is characterized by elasticity, buoyancy, adaptability, optimism, and an openness to learning. The authors asserted that resiliency not only gives tools to handle hardship and hostile situations, but also allows the development of new skills and perspective that lead to continued success. Pulley and Wakefield (2001) concluded that resiliency can be developed by changing thoughts and actions in nine areas: acceptance of change, continuous learning, self-empowerment, sense of purpose, personal identity, personal and professional networking, reflection, skill shifting, and relationship to money.

According to Jew, Green, and Kroger (1999), much of the literature on resiliency assumes that resilient students are more likely to do better academically. However when testing this assumption, Jew, Green and Kroger confirmed that students who scored higher on resiliency scales were more likely to demonstrate better academic skills, higher self-perceived competence and a wider array of coping skills.

Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2002) suggested to best understand resiliency, four dimensions are to be considered:

1. Resiliency as multiple group participation via network-based action (i.e., Successful transitions require simultaneous participation in multiple socio-cultural

worlds and institutional domains, where opportunities exist for the development of social relationships with agents).

2. Resiliency as a developmental process (i.e., A developmental path or history whereby an individual learns to make use of available resources and assets, both internal and network-related, and to effectively cope with adversities and environmental stressors).

3. Resiliency as the development of key psychological attributes and defenses (i.e., A psychological and behavioral orientation geared toward maximizing the supportive potential of protective agents within family and community networks).

4. Resiliency as network orientation (i.e., The individuals' active participation in multiple kinship, community, and institutional settings where supportive relations can be cultivate and exercised).

Stanton-Salazar and Spina concluded that to build resiliency and success programs ought to move “away from assimilationist conformity paradigms and toward a rendition of resiliency and success that translates into learning to effectively ‘participate in power.’” Therefore, resiliency is best facilitated when an individual engages in a process that connects one to a group, identifies available resources, and establishes relationships with key individuals within that group.

Miller (1999) reached similar conclusions in his examination of the body of research on resiliency. However, Miller also noted that much of the literature fails to include the distinctive racial and environmental circumstances confronting African American youth. In “Racial socialization and racial identity: Can they promote resiliency for African American adolescents?” Miller (1999) posited that racial

socialization and racial identity protect urban African American adolescents against some of the harmful effects of a discriminatory environment.

The author argued that racial socialization and racial identity are inextricably bound to one another. Racial identity develops through racial awareness. Racial awareness is facilitated by racial socialization. However, racial socialization is influenced by the racial identity of the family. Because of this cycle and the literature that connects socialization and identity to resiliency, Miller (1999) recommended to develop resiliency urban African American adolescents that service providers inculcate proactive strategies to develop sense of self, explore how to adjust to life in two worlds (i.e. one Black, one White), and design intervention and prevention programs that focus on cultural strengths.

### *Social Integration*

Since the 1960s, African American students have been increasingly enrolling in predominantly white institutions of higher education. In 1964, 49% of black college students attended predominantly white higher institutions. By 1971, it increased to 64% (Lucas, 1994). As a result, many African American students began to address specific policies and practices that they felt isolated them from each other, from their communities, and from full participation in campus life. Frustration erupted from 1968-1971, when many PWI experienced sit-ins, take-overs, or demonstrations by African American students to make demands of the administration to address the needs of African American community on campus (Lucas, 1994; Young, 1991).

Many PWI administrators and Black students perceived the creation of Black cultural centers as providing service and programs to help black students “better” adjust to the college environment. Lawrence Young (1991) states:

The ethnic minority student entering a predominantly White collegiate environment walks into a figurative “wonderland” where new rules, new norms, and new expectations apply. Recent reports have discussed the decline in the enrollment of some ethnic minorities in higher education. It is not unusual to find minority student enrollments of under 5% even though the United States is quickly approaching a day when ethnic minorities will constitute 33% of its population. The environment on campus is influenced by an overwhelmingly white student body, faculty, administration, and curriculum. In this circumstance, the ethnic minority student must struggle to carve out a relevant environment or submerge his or her cultural heritage while attempting assimilation. The ethnic minority cultural center provides an outlet for healthy expression and representation of the identity of members of a specific group. (pp. 46-47)

Young (1991) identified the two general operating philosophies of Black cultural centers as Laager and Oasis. Laager philosophy operates the cultural center as a safe haven for African American students feeling under attack, while the Oasis philosophy views the cultural center as a welcoming environment to all who wish to engage in cultural activities and initiatives. The reality is that most cultural centers operate somewhere on the continuum between Laager and Oasis. Young (1991) stated:

A properly functioning and effective ethnic minority cultural center can provide the dual service of intervening for minority students and of introducing cultural pluralism to majority students. These processes ideally should be part of the function of every agency of the university, but the reality at this time is that those roles are assigned to a minority cultural center.

Another response to the demands made by African American students was the public non-discrimination statements made by the PWI administrators and the non-discrimination policies adopted by predominantly white institutions throughout the 1970s (Lucas, 1994). One result was the increase in the number of African American students enrolling at PWI. According to National Center for Education Statistics (2002)

in 1999, African American students comprise 11% of all college students enrolled in 4-year degree granting institutions in the United States. Approximately 86% of all African American college students are enrolled in PWI, which include public, private, 4-year, and 2-year institutions. While, the creation of Black cultural centers and the adoption of non-discriminatory rhetoric, practices, and policies facilitated the increase in African Americans attending PWI, the changes did little to eliminate the racist attitudes and perceptions that existed. Nor did it prepare African American students to successfully navigate the social and academic environs found on the college campus (Young, 1991). According to Bennett (2002), the prevailing observations in the research on minority students at PWI is a feeling of culture shock and alienation due to the conflicts between the students' home culture and university expectations. Farrell and Jones (1988) found that,

... the behaviors, lifestyles, and values of minority students are likely to be substantially different from those of whites, (making it difficult for those students) to successfully negotiate the university environment. Universities, on the other hand, have made limited adjustments in their organizational and administrative structures and practices to accommodate the diverse and complex needs of their minority student populations, especially Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians. (p. 212)

In *Blacks in College*, Fleming (1991) compared and contrasted African American students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to African American students attending PWI. Fleming found that HBCUs provide an atmosphere that allows for more opportunities for friendship, to participate in the campus life, and to feel some sense of progress and success in their academic pursuits. Fleming found a connection between intellectual and social issues and that academic performance may equal or exceed the sum of intellectual and social adjustment. Furthermore, Fleming asserted that African American students at HBCUs more successfully make a social adjustment to

the college environment, than do African American students at PWIs. Fleming models her description of these conflicts after Erikson's theories of development.

Fleming went on to suggest that students employ four modes of adaptation: (a) withdrawal, (b) separation, (c) assimilation, and (d) affirmation. Affirmation constitutes the most positive coping pattern. However, Fleming concluded that Affirmation the least utilized. However, she notes that students who used the affirmation mode exhibited self-acceptance, positive ethnic identity, high achievement motivation, and autonomous self-actualizing behavior.

Research by Fordham (1991) pointed out that traditional practices of peer-proofing for high achieving African American students have been largely unsuccessful, in part due to the removing of these students from their peers, thus breaking fictive kinship (extended family) bonds. Fordham suggests that fictive kinship bonds play an important role in fitting into the African American community. When these bonds are broken the high achieving students become misfits in the African American community, while at the same time not fitting in with the dominant culture.

In a research study at the University of California, Berkeley, Fodham (1991) found that many of the African American students were failing the prerequisite math and sciences course for the natural sciences careers. Some of the students were high achievers at their former high schools and many had family support and other factors associated with academic success. Fordham's solution was to create the Professional Development Program (PDP), which employed a strategy of peer-proofing based on self-realization through service to the group. The PDP was developed as an honors program that focused on the strengths of the students and their willingness to collaborate with

each other. The PDP has proven to be very successful. PDP students eventually outperformed their fellow classmates. Fordham concluded that a hostile environment at the university; the lack of supportive, academically focused peer group and an unwillingness on the part of the students to seek help contributed to the failure of African American students.

Irvine (1991) identified the tension between the student's values and modalities and those adopted by the institution as cultural synchronization. In her model of black student achievement, Irvine illustrates some of the significant factors for black student achievement. She argues that black students are at greater risk of failure, because of their race, social class, and cultural modes. However, Irvine is careful to note that not all black students are equally at risk. Irvine suggests that a major contributor to underachievement and lack of motivation of African American students is their acceptance of American mainstream society's view that African American are unlikely to succeed. The literature on academic failure and retention of African American students asserts that factors such as social and cultural mismatch have to be addressed effectively in order to deal with the retention and academic success of African American students (Boykin, 1986; Fleming, 1991; Hale-Benson, 1986; Irvine, 1991; Patton, 1993, Tinto, 1993).

Tinto (1993) argued that the majority of colleges are made-up of several communities or "subcultures." Rather than conforming to one dominant culture in order to persist, students would have to locate at least one community in which to find membership and support. Tinto explained that membership into a community helps to create safe havens and enclaves.

Tinto suggested that the creation of these enclaves have three key benefits:

1. Ethnic communities on campus can provide a stabilizing anchor in a large, foreign campus environment.
2. Enable new students to break down the campus into smaller more manageable parts.
3. Members of a smaller community are more likely to interact with members of other communities.

Tinto's (1988) model of student departure (graduation) is based on Van Gennep's work on the rites of passage. Tinto stated:

We begin our development of a theory of student departure by turning to the field of social anthropology and studies of the process of establishing membership in traditional societies. Specifically, we turn to the work of Arnold Van Gennep and his study of the rites of passage in tribal societies. ... He saw life as being comprised of series of passages leading individuals from birth to death and from membership in one group or status to another. (p. 91)

Tinto further asserted,

The point of our referring to the work of Van Gennep is not that the college student career is always clearly marked by ceremonies and symbolic rites of passage. ... Rather our interest in the notion of rites of passage is that it provides us with a way of thinking about the longitudinal process of students in college and, by extension, about the time-dependent process of student departure. (pp. 93-94).

Tinto argued,

College students are, after all, moving from one community or set of communities, most typically those of the family and local high school, to another, that of college. Like other persons in the wider society, they too must separate themselves, to some degree, from the past associations in order to make the transition to eventual incorporation in the life of the college. In seeking to make such transitions, they too are likely to encounter problems of adjustment whose resolution may well spell the difference between continued persistence and early departure. (p. 94)

Although many in Higher Education have come to accept Tinto's model for social integration, Tierney (1992) expressed some serious concerns with its use for minority



students. Tierney suggested that Tinto's use of the rites of passage concepts and ritual extracts them from their cultural foundation. Tierney states:

When Van Gennep developed his functionalist theory, he never anticipated that it would be used to explain one's culture's ritual to initiate a member of another culture. ... One cannot speak of ritual without first considering the cultural contexts in which that ritual is embedded. (p. 608)

For example, both the Maasai and Jews have adulthood initiation rite of passage that follows the basic process of preparation, separation, transition, and reincorporation. However, the rituals and ceremonies respective to each group are not interchangeable. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah only makes sense within the Jewish context and the Maasai rituals and ceremonies only make sense within its own context (Cohen, 1991; Goggins, 1996; 1998). Likewise, any use of the rites of passage process must be specifically situated within the experiential and cultural context of the initiate (Afrik, 1993; Akoto, 1992; Brookins, 1996; Campbell & Moyers, 1988; Cohen, 1991; Goggins, 1998; Hill, 1992; Perkins, 1986). Therefore, a rites of passage process to socially integrate African American students must be African centered (Afrik, 1993; Akoto, 1992; Goggins, 1996). Here in lies the problem for the many PWI.

The goal of many PWI, as it pertains to the diversity of students, is to treat all students the same. Often this translates into some form of "color blind" policy (Plous, 1996; Ware, 2000). This notion is consistent with the Eurocentric paradigm, which forms the ethos of many PWI. A major component of the Eurocentric paradigm is the propensity to rank things that are different thus, assigning a value of superior and inferior to them (Ani, 1994; Nichols, 1985). Therefore, from the Eurocentric point of view, to remedy issues of superiority and the resulting discriminatory practices, one must not perceive difference. Consequently, fairness or non-discriminatory practice is

perceived as treating every student the same and providing the same service to every student, regardless of the specific needs or experiences that students bring to the campus (Plous, 1996).

In a discussion of the recent cases affecting Affirmative Action, Ware (2000) asserted, “The opponents of affirmative action invoke ‘color blindness’ to support their interpretation of the of the Equal Protection Clause.” Ware continued,

However, thirty years of antidiscrimination laws have not eliminated the effects of three centuries of discrimination. Rather than advancing the cause of racial equality, a ‘color blind’ standard in this context will simply prolong the racial hierarchy that persists.

Crenshaw (1988) reached a similar conclusion. She explained that the overt declaration of white supremacy ended with the Jim Crow era, when official acts of discrimination were outlawed, but there continues to be an influence of the “white norm.” She stated,

The white norm, however has not disappeared; it has only been submerged in the popular consciousness. It continues in an unspoken form as a statement of a positive social norm, legitimizing the continued domination of those who do not meet it.

Color-blind policies do little to change the racial milieu (Appiah & Gutman, 1996; Cose, 1997; Dyson, 1996; Plous, 1996). According to Plous (1996), “Unless preexisting inequities are corrected or otherwise taken into account, color-blind policies do not correct racial injustice – they reinforce it.”

In *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson (1982) provided a description of the process of oppression is perpetuated. He points out that the antebellum attitudes about the social status of blacks were carried over into the post-Civil War America. Patterson states:

However, it is not solely on the level of personal relations that we should examine slavery. Like all enduring social processes, the relations became institutionalized. Patterned modes of resolving the inherent contradictions of the relation were developed. (p. 13)

In short, Patterson (1982) argued that slavery was not a function of social relationships that were bounded by legal status, but rather slavery was a legal status bounded by social relationships. So that when the legality of slavery was dismantled, another form of oppression was created to express the relationship of domination of American society over African Americans (Patterson, 1982; Stamp, 1956). Twenty-six years earlier in *Peculiar Institution*, Kenneth Stamp (1956) reached similar conclusions. Both Stamp (1956) and Patterson (1982) asserted that slaves were desocialized from “authentic” social systems and ways of knowing to be incorporated into a system that provides meanings and social structures that ensured the domination of the white European male Protestant supremacy perspective. Moreover, at the end of slavery, no systems were instituted to re-socialize the African Americans into authentic ways of knowing and into authentic social systems. Most succinctly, Stamp (1956) stated, “with emancipation the negro lost nothing, but his chain” (p. 430).

In “Segregation, Desegregation and the Creation of a New System of Racial Inequality,” Baker’s (2000) argument paralleled the assertions made by Patterson (1982) and Stamp (1956). Through examining a case in Charleston, South Carolina, Baker analyzed what he described as the new durable, more legally defensible forms of discrimination, characterized by standardized test and the exclusion of race considerations, that has replaced the caste system of segregation. It is this cycle of white domination social frameworks that the Task Force to Address the Decline of Enrollment and Graduation of the Black Male from Institutions of Higher Educations (1990) and

many scholars, including Fleming (1991), Hilliard (2001), Irvine (1991), Ogbu (1991, 1986), and Phelps, Taylor, and Gerard (2001) have alluded to as an institutional barrier to the social and academic integration of African American students.

When PWIs do develop programs and services, they are often designed to incorporate African American students into a “healthy” society. Such programs and services generally characterize African Americans as “disadvantaged,” “culturally deprived,” “dysfunctional,” “at risk,” and other nomenclature derived from a deficiency analysis (Freire, 1970; Ogbu, 1974; 1986). They assume the so-called disadvantages and dysfunctions are rooted in the pathology of African Americans rejecting a “healthy” society and its values. Subsequently, this further perpetuates the domination of American mainstream ethos and the social isolation of all things associated with African heritage (Ani, 1994; Freire, 1970; Patterson, 1982; Woodson, 1933).

The literature indicated that social integration is facilitated when the values of the institution and the individual are synchronized. Additionally, when the institution is broken into interrelated subcommunities, the individual face a more manageable situation. The literature also suggested that once an individual establishes his or herself within a subcommunity, it is more likely to interact with other subcommunities within the institution. Thus, a student becomes more and more integrated into the social milieu, which results in a more likelihood to persist until graduation (Tinto, 1993). However, for African American students, social integration at PWI has been complicated by a lack of cultural synchronization and mistrust developed over years of misconceptions and racist attitudes and policy. Consequently, African American

students feel less integrated into the PWI's social and academic environment and more likely to not persist until graduation.

### *College Retention of African American Students*

Retention is often described in two different ways: as degree completion versus non-completion, and as dropping out versus not dropping out. Student retention analyses consist of: graduation rate analyses, examination of retention patterns, investigation of student attrition behavior, historical analyses that lead to an understanding of past trends, and insight into the psychosocial dynamics associated with retention (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, 2002). In a discussion of 10 myths prevalent in higher education's impact on students, Pascarella and Terenzini (1995) summarized several relevant literature. The authors maintain the nature of the social networks, with peers, faculty, and administrators—outside the classroom, greatly impacts the quality of a student's college experience and his or her perception of the quality of the education received.

Taylor and Miller (2002) reached similar conclusions in a study of 97 African American students. The authors recommended that retention efforts for African American students should focus on: (a) providing African American students with opportunities to serve as mentors to other African American students; (b) developing leadership opportunities that require students to apply information learned in the classroom to other campus activities; (c) providing students with the opportunity to work and dialog with faculty; and (d) encouraging student leaders in minority organizations to participate in academic activities and organizations associated with their academic major in addition to campus-wide activities.

In an earlier study, Phelps, Taylor, and Gerard (2001) found overcoming cultural mistrust and developing racial identity to be significant in African American students adjusting to the college environment. Their findings are consistent with ideas put forth by Chickering's Identity Development Theory. Chickering and Reisser (1993) asserted that identity development is an essential part of establishing significant and mature relationships with others. In short, "Authentic self allows for authentic interaction with others" (Goggins, 1996).

In their article on the effectiveness of the Adventor Program at Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, Shultz, Colton and Colton (2001) concluded that this program had a significant impact on the retention of students of color, but not on their grade point averages. To promote the academic success of and to retain students of color, the College of Education at Kutztown University designed an intervention initiative fusing academic advising and mentoring into a proactive model.

Shultz, Colton and Colton concluded that retention is more a function of social and cognitive factors (i.e., relationships that developed between students and faculty, and students developing self-efficacy) than of academic performance (i.e., grade point average). The success of the Adventor Program is rooted in the relationships between faculty and students and the belief by students that faculty are concerned about their adjustment to college.

Jackson and Neville (1998) discussed the findings of a study in which 122 African American college students attending a predominantly white university were administered the Racial Identity Attitudes Scale, My Vocational Situation, and Hope Scale to assess their racial identity, vocational identity and sense of hope in terms of goal

achievement. Jackson and Neville (1998) found that African American students with higher degrees of racial identity were more likely to have a greater sense of hope in their goal-directed capabilities. These findings support the importance of the cultural development of African American students (particularly on predominately white higher education campuses) in terms of their retention and level of academic success.

The importance of developing a social and cognitive milieu that encourages students to connect to the people at the University and to develop a sense of self-efficacy is critically important (Kahn & Nauta, 2001). Strategies that engaging students with peers, faculty, administrators, alumni, and community leaders in discussions and activities that promote critical thinking, networking, and life and career skills development are helpful in facilitating African American students to develop meaningful relationships, to self-reflect and experience personal growth, which the literature identifies as essential factors in factors for retaining and graduating African American students.

### *Rites of Passage*

Historically, rites of passage did not exist in name or label before Arnold Van Gennep's 1906 publication of "Les rites de passage" coined the phrase rites of passage. For many indigenous people behavioral practices and beliefs were interwoven into the very fabric of life in the community (Wilcox, 1998). Van Gennep felt that anthropological investigations would do well to examine the rituals and ceremonies of various African peoples, not for the purpose of tribal identification, but rather to determine whether they possessed any inherent value for their practitioners (Wilcox, 1998). Van Gennep suggested the existence of an universal process utilizing rituals and

ceremonies through which individuals gained group membership in order to resolve a life crisis (i.e., birth, adulthood, death). In order to describe the analysis of rituals and ceremonies that accompany an individual's life crisis, Van Gennep (1908/1960) identified three major phases or subcategories that each individual must experience. He categorized these phases that occur in every rites of passage ceremony as Separation (pre-liminal), Transition (liminal), and Incorporation (post-liminal).

Later anthropology would recognize that all cultures/societies have some kind of rites of passage to ensure cultural self-consciousness (Campbell, 1949; Cohen, 1991; Van Gennep, 1908/1960). The rites of passage process appears to be a universal concept, a part of human development (Campbell, 1949; Macintosh, 1995; Shere, 1993; Van Gennep, 1908/1960). Rites of passage rituals and ceremonies, which mark the transition from one stage/category of life to another, represent the collective wisdom of a culture/society (Cohen, 1991; Mensah, 1993; Quinn, Newfield & Protinsky, 1985; Van Gennep, 1908/1960; Warfield–Coppock, 1994). There are rites for biological, philosophical, and/or social passages, such as birth, puberty, death, marriage, adulthood, organizations, and self-consciousness (Van Gennep, 1908/1960). Along with marking various stages of life, there are implied changes in responsibilities and expectations (Somè, 1994; Quinn, Newfield & Protinsky, 1985; Van Gennep, 1908/1960).

In *Ritual*, Somè (1993) described ceremony as the anatomy of ritual. Ceremonies are visual representations of what happens because of the ritual. Thus, the quality of the ritual is embedded in the intent of the ceremony. Therefore, purpose is the factor that contributes to the effectiveness of ritual. By performing rituals, the initiate



demonstrates his/her ability to fulfill one's responsibilities within that culture/society.

This accounts for why the transitions from adolescence to adulthood and marriage tend to be the most elaborate ceremonies (Cohen, 1991).

Based on Van Gennep's original observations, much of the Rites of Passage literature identified separation, transformation, and reincorporation as the three essential stages in the process. However, Van Gennep was concerned about the rituals and ceremonies associated with transition and membership not with a developmental process. Subsequently, Van Gennep presumed the preparation that readies the initiate for the "trip into the bush" (Van Gennep, 1908/1980).

However many scholars and advocates who use the rites of passage process as a developmental model identify a four-stage process starting with preparation. From this perspective, rites of passage refers to the general developmental process of preparation, separation, transition, and reincorporation, which utilizes rituals and ceremonies designed to mark transition from one stage of life to the next and provides the necessary tenets to fulfill purpose and responsibilities within a culture/society (Campbell, 1949; Cohen, 1991; Goggins, 1996; 1998; Hare & Hare, 1985; Hill, 1992; Mensah, 1993; Somè, 1994).

In each stage of the process, an initiate has certain experiences:

1. Preparation is when the initiate learns what is to be member of that culture/society and develops an understanding of necessary skills, responsibilities, and expectations in order to fulfill his or her purpose within culture/society and stage of life. Preparation is the stage where initiates are introduced to new concepts and skills (Goggins, 1996; 1998; Mensah, 1993).

2. In separation, the initiate demonstrates the ability to perform expected skills and responsibilities. Separation is the stage where initiates begin to separate from “old ways” and perfect new skills and concepts with guidance from elders. Initiates are often tested by elders in specific skill sets and concepts (Goggins, 1996; 1998; Mensah, 1993; Van Gennep, 1908/1960).

3. Transition is the phase that an initiate enters as a “non-member” and emerges as a “member.” Transition is the stage where the initiates face a transitional test and seek final approval from the elders. The end of the transition stage is marked with a ceremony, often in the presence of the community (Goggins, 1996, 1998; Mensah, 1993; Van Gennep, 1908/1960).

4. Reincorporation is the phase when a newly transitioned member is accepted back into the culture/society by the community, and expected to carry out his or her purpose within the culture/society, thereby maintaining it. Reincorporation starts with the transitional ceremony and continues afterwards, where the community holds the new members accountable for practicing what was learned in the process (Goggins, 1996, 1998; Mensah, 1993; Van Gennep, 1908/1960).

The cycle repeats for the next passage. What was the reincorporation for the previous passage becomes preparation for the next passage (Goggins, 1996, 1998; Mensah, 1993; Van Gennep, 1908/1960).

In defining the rites of passage, Mensah (1993) spoke to the significance of the process:

Those structures, rituals, and ceremonies by which age-class members or individuals in a group successfully come to know who they are and what they are about, the purpose and meaning for their existence, as they proceed from one clearly defined state of existence to the next state of passage in their lives. (p. 62)

The significance of the pattern is that it fosters continuity between the individual and community; the past, present and future experiences; and between ethos and practice. The rites of passage process creates an experiential continuum, which is educative to those who experience it (Dewey, 1938/1963; Mensah, 1993). The rites of passage process also establishes: (a) collective cohesiveness of action among the members of a group; (b) a framework of expectations for the participants (initiates); and (c) cognitive map for responding to stressors (Quinn, Newfield & Protinsky, 1985).

Conversely, the absence of rites of passage leads to a serious breakdown in the process of maturing as a person (Elkind, 1989). The increase of substance abuse and violent behavior among adolescents in contemporary society have been linked to society's under utilization of rites of passage (Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi, 1993; Campbell & Moyers, 1988; Somè, 1994). The absence of socially prescribed transitional markers, will be filled by adolescents in their use of informal indicators of adult-like behaviors, such as drinking, sexual activity, and so forth (Cohen, 1991; Quinn, Newfield, & Protinsky, 1985). On college campuses, binge drinking and drug abuse, hazing and various forms of sexual assault are, perhaps, the most menacing alternative rites of passage behavior that is cultivated in the current adolescent peer culture (Glider, Midyett, & Mills-Novoa, 2001; Hensley, 2001; Meilman, & Gaylor, 1989).

Culture is an integral part of rites of passage. The rites of passage process is only significant relative to its cultural base (Hill, 1987; Perkins, 1986; Van Gennep, 1908/1963; Warfield-Coppock, 1992, 1994). It is through the rituals and ceremonies that frame of references; cultural lenses and filters are constructed. Thus, culturally based rites of passage helps create a philosophical context (place) in which one can

critically examine and interpret the world (Afrik, 1993; Akoto, 1992; Ani, 1994; Shujaa, 1994; Warfield-Coppock, 1992, 1994; Wilson, 1993). Therefore, the rites of passage process for the African American students should be African-Centered (Afrik, 1993; Akoto, 1992; Ani, 1994; Goggins, 1996, 1998; Shujaa, 1994; Warfield-Coppock, 1992, 1994).

In *Too Much Schooling Too Little Education*, Warfield-Coppock (1994) examined the growth and use of African-Centered rites of passage. She found that, “At every level of the African American community coalitions are being formed to support rites of passage for children” (Warfield-Coppock, 1994, p.377). Warfield-Coppock contended that the use of an African-Centered rites of passage process is a strategy to extend ownership of education into the African American community. Moreover, the motivation behind the African-Centered Rites of Passage movement is a recognition that many aspects of the development and learning potential remain in the hands of the non-school context (home, neighborhood, church, peers, etc.). Warfield-Coppock concludes that the African-Centered rites of passage process can facilitate the institutionalizing of authentic cultural models and strategies for success for African American youth and adults, including elders.

Warfield-Coppock categorized the various trends in the African-Centered rites of passage movement as national organization, school, therapeutic, church, organizational programs, community-wide, family-based, and government agency initiatives. According to Warfield-Coppock, national organizations, such as, Simba, Simba na Malaika, Sojourner Truth Adolescent Rites Society, Inc., and Afrikan National Rites of Passage United Kollektive, seek to establish new programs and standards for curricula

and trainers, and hold national conferences or conventions. School programs incorporate the rites of passage process into a learning model, which often coincide with a major transition that students face as a part of their educative experience. School sponsored rites of passage programs are generally meant to educate the whole student, and not just train the intellect. Therapeutic programs are used to help an individual address a specific conflict or crisis with a consulting professional. Organization rites of passage programs are use to establish membership and responsibility within a social, fraternal, mentoring, and apprenticeship groups. Church rites of passage programs use rites of passage models to foster spiritual development and responsibility. Community-wide rites of passage programs are established when various churches, groups, agencies, and concerned citizens come together to share resources to outreach to local youth. Family-based rites of passage programs are developed within a family or small groups of families. The goal for these programs is to provide their children with authentic cultural socialization based on family traditions. Government agency initiatives receive funding from city, county, state, and/or federal government to address a specific political or social agenda (i.e. juvenile delinquency, foster care transition, substance abuse, etc.).

Warfield-Coppock (1994) concluded that the central themes in all African-Centered Rites of Passages regardless of the type organization are cultural competence, spiritualization, bonding, community integration, and intergenerational balance. Additionally, that African-Centered rites of passage is effective in reintroducing traditional African values, and strengths, as opposed to the materialistic values often present in “popular” culture. Furthermore, African-Centered Rites of Passage model represents one of the best liberation tools “re-created” to progressively educate African

American students within an African-Centered cultural context. Warfield-Coppock (1994) stated,

Thus, one can say that the aim of the rites of passage process is to enable African Americans to transform the influences of Eurocentric schooling and society in a radical African-centered manner. This transformation represents a movement among African people toward freedom and liberation and away from oppression in all its form. (p. 392)

In her dissertation, Wilcox (1998) interviewed eight elders in the African-Centered Rites of Passage movement, including Dr. Nsenga Warfield-Coppock. Her study investigates the elders' perspective on the "rites" movement. Wilcox found that the elders' discussions focused around three major themes: (a) Reclamation, which emphasized how important it was for African Americans to commit to ancestral African values and ideals; (b) Unification, which emphasized that the individual did not exist apart from a community; and (c) Dedicated Leadership, which emphasized the value of giving back to the community.

As it pertains to higher education, much of the literature referring to rites of passage uses the concept to explain a phenomena, such as binge drinking, assuming various administrator positions, student conduct, student teaching, or non-traditional students returning college. A review of educational databases, produce very little regarding the use of the rites of passage process as tool or scaffolding to deliver educative services and programs. However, two papers were found that used the rites of passage model as a central component to the respective study.

In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of College Admission Counselors Shere (1993) discussed a summer transitional program at University of Delaware. She found that students, who progressed through the rites of passage process (on their own), generally felt a high comfort level with the campus, and

felt integrated both academically and socially to the campus. Shere recommended that college administrators become familiar with theory and framework of rites of passage to better understand the transitional process and to better assess developmental programming efforts.

In a paper presented to the Annual Convention of the American Association for Counseling and Development, Butler and Glennen (1991) asserted that colleges and universities should recognize the importance of rites of passage rituals for marking the successful passage from one position in the social structure to another. In addition, colleges and universities should establish sanctioned, rigorous, initiation rituals for new students as rites of passage to increase the students' involvement and sense of belonging and responsibility in their new collegiate community.

#### *Summary*

A review of the relative literature indicated the continued need to identify ways for African American college students to better socially and academically integrate into the college environment, particularly on PWI. Given the low success rates, African American students must be better equipped to navigate the subtle racism and hostility that many believe still permeate PWI.

The literature suggested that African American students who have not developed an authentic sense of self are less likely to develop skills to navigate the social networks often associated with college persistence. Furthermore, the literature suggested that retention programs and services should focus on developing meaningful student-to-student relationship as well as student to faculty/administrator/staff relationships. Additionally, the literature suggested that engaging students in pro-active student

development experiences, lessens the likelihood that they will embrace academically and socially destructive behaviors and attitudes. Moreover, students, who have developed meaningful relationships with faculty, staff and mentors, are more likely to learn to channel any resentment associated with being in a hostile environment in healthy ways.

The literature also revealed that the rites of passage process provides a framework through which individuals can be connected to and gain membership in a social networks needed for success. Furthermore, when the rituals and ceremonies that help forge relationships between the members of the network are grounded in the cultural and historical experiences of the individual, membership will help an insulate students from hostile situations and other at-risk factors. Subsequently, the literature suggested, African-Centered principles must be central themes in an effective rites of passage process for African American students because, the African-Centered rites of passage process facilitates developing a positive racial identity, leadership skills, an authentic sense of self, and facilitates establishing group membership. Such factors have been identified in the literature as significant to developing resiliency in and promoting retention and graduation among African American college students.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

*"I seem to see a way of elucidating the inner meaning of life and significance of that race problem by explaining it in terms of the one human life*

*I know best"*

*W. E. B. Du Bois (Wideman, 1990, p. xiv)*

#### *Participants*

Participants in this study consisted of all students at the selected institution who participated in the Academic STARS program, all of which are African American, and all Non-STARS African American students entering the selected institution as first-time full-time freshman during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 fall semesters and living on campus. A population total of 943 students was included in the study, of which 611 students were females and 332 students were males. There were 328, 329, and 286 students in the fall 1999, fall 2000, and fall 2001 cohorts, respectively. Seventy-nine students of the total population participated in the Academic STARS African-Centered rites of passage. Of the Academic STARS students, 60 were females and 19 were males. There were 26, 28, and 25 students in the fall 1999, 2000, and 2001 cohorts, respectively.

#### *Research Design*

This study utilized an ex post facto design to test the effectiveness of the Academic STARS program. An ex post facto design was used, since the treatment, the Academic STARS African-Centered rites of passage, occurred before the study began

and was implemented without any control by the researcher. According to Kerlinger (1986), the three major weakness in conducting a study using ex post facto research are: (a) the inability to manipulate independent variables, (b) the lack of power to randomize; and (c) the risk of improper interpretation, which is due to lack of control.

The weaknesses of an ex post facto design relate to the internal validity of the research—the extent to which one can say that the independent variables cause the changes in the dependent variables. The way to increase internal validity is to control for other possible influences, thereby, increasing the likelihood that the changes to the dependent variable are due to the independent variable (Aiken & West, 1991; Bobko, 1995; Glass, 1973; McNeil, Newman, & Kelly, 1996; Newman & Newman, 1994).

While an ex post facto design cannot be used to infer causation, it can be used to establish relationships, such as the assumptions about the impact of the Academic STARS model on African American students' academic success as measured by their final accumulative grade point averages, retention, and graduation status at the selected institution.

The researcher compared the final accumulative GPA, retention, and graduation rates of the Academic STARS students from 1995—2001 to their non-participating counterparts. Data sets, GPA's, graduation status, SAT scores, and basic demographics, were collected for Academic STARS students between 1995-2001. An identical data set was also collected for the counterpart group which did not participate in the Academic STARS African-Centered Rites of Passage process between 1999-2001. The variables of gender, high school GPA, and SAT score were controlled as an effort to increase the likelihood that the differences between the Academic STARS and Non-STARS students,

who were first-time full-time freshman during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 fall semesters and living on the selected institution, are related to the Academic STARS African-Centered Rites of Passage experience.

### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

The general research question to be answered by this investigation was:

Are students who have experienced the selected institution Academic STARS African-Centered Rites of Passage process performing better academically than their counterparts as measured by final accumulative GPA, retention, and graduation, when controlling for high school GPA, SAT score, and gender?

To answer the research question the following hypotheses were tested:

1. The final accumulative GPA of the Academic STARS participants is significantly higher than the final accumulative GPA of Non-Academic STARS African American students at the selected institution, when controlling for SAT score, gender, and high school GPA.
2. The retention of the Academic STARS participants is significantly higher than the retention of Non-Academic STARS African American students at the selected institution, when controlling for SAT score, gender, and high school GPA.
3. The graduation rate of the Academic STARS participants is significantly higher than the graduation rate of Non-Academic STARS African American students at the selected institution, when controlling for SAT score, gender, and high school GPA.

To test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, the following specific questions were evaluated:

1. Is there a significant difference between groups (i.e., STARS and Non-STARS) in predicting retention, when considering SAT score, gender, and high school GPA?

2. Is there a significant difference between groups (i.e., STARS and Non-STARS) in predicting final college GPA, when considering SAT score, gender, and high school GPA?
3. Is there a significant difference between groups (i.e., STARS and Non-STARS) in predicting graduation, when considering SAT score, gender, and high school GPA?
4. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and gender in predicting retention?
5. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and gender in predicting final college GPA?
6. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and gender in predicting graduation?
7. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and SAT score in predicting retention?
8. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and SAT score in predicting final college GPA?
9. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and SAT score in predicting graduation?

### *Instruments*

The instruments for this study were the academic records of individual students maintained by the selected institution and the Academic STARS academic records maintained by the Student Multicultural Center. In addition, the 2001, 2002, and 2003 the selected institution's fact books were used as sources of information and data.

### *Data Collection*

The director of the Student Multicultural Center at the selected institution was contacted and was provided a research proposal, detailing the goals and scope of the study, upon approval, committed support and assistance to researcher of the study. Upon confirmation of Human Subject Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix B), Student Multicultural Center director provided a data array on the 1995-2001 Academic STARS students. Information that could identify students was not included in the array in order to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, the director sent student identification numbers to the Office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) at the selected institution.

The Office Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness generated data array on all African American students who entered the university as first-time full-time freshmen and on-campus residents during the 1999-2001 fall semesters, excluding those students who were identified as Academic STARS. According to RPIE, a change in computer systems corrupted data on students before 1999. Therefore, information requested by the researcher on African American students from 1995-1998 could not be generated. RPIE removed student identification data, and provided copy of the array to the researcher.

The researcher combined these arrays and reviewed each record to code for group (i.e. STARS and Non-STARS), cohort, graduation, and retention (See Appendix C). The array was imported into SPSS for analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

The collected data sets underwent various statistical analyses to produce frequency distributions, including means and standard deviations. Additionally, a multiple linear regression was used to test the statistical significance of the proposed relationships in Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. Regression models were written to reflect each of the specific research questions.

An F test was used to determine if the  $R^2$  of the various relationships were significantly different at an alpha of .05. The F test was chosen because it is very robust, since the assumptions of random selection of subjects and normal distribution of the variables can be violated without serious harm to the procedure, especially when N is large (Aiken & West, 1991; Bobko, 1995; Glass, 1973; McNeil, Newman, & Kelly, 1996; Newman & Newman, 1994).

A multiple linear regression was used because of its flexibility, as compared to traditional analysis of variance. In that, one can write models that reflect the specific research question being asked. Moreover, McNeil, Newman, and Kelly (1996) indicated that with multiple linear regression one can test relationships between categorical variables, between categorical and continuous variables, or between continuous variables.

Finally, since the direction of the correlation was uncertain, a two-tailed test of significance were used to test for relationships. The .05 level of significance was used by the researcher, because the likelihood of rejecting a true hypothesis was not so serious as to warrant a more stringent confidence level.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

“If I’m not the person you say I am, then you are not the person you think you are.” (James Baldwin)

The objective of this study was to determine if a predictive relationship exists between students’ participation in the Academic STARS program and increases in their retention, grade point average, and graduation. The retention score, final grade point average, and graduation status of the Academic STARS were compared to the same data for African American students who entered the selected institution as first-time full-time freshmen and lived on-campus during the 1999, 2000 and 2001 semesters, and did not participate in the Academic STARS program. The records of 943 African American students were examined. It was hypothesized that there would be a positive predictive relationship between students’ participation in Academic STARS and their retention, final grade point average, and graduation status.

Multiple linear regressions and frequency counts were used to analyze the data. The confidence level was set at  $p \leq .05$ . GROUP, HSGPA, GRENDER and SAT were the predictor variables in this study. The criterion variables were R-Score, FINALGPA, and GRAD. Students were placed into one of two groups based upon their participation in the STARS program. The two groups, STARS and Non-STARS, were identified by 1 and 0, respectively. One hundred and eighty-one students were identified as STARS, which represented all students entered into the STARS program from 1995-2001. Eight hundred and eighty-six were identified as Non-STARS, which represented all African

American students entering the university as first-time, full-time freshman during the fall semester from 1999 to 2001, who lived on campus. However, data corruption of electronic student record files created prior to 1999, caused by a change in computer systems, limited the number of student records that could be retrieved. Therefore, only STARS records from cohorts 5, 6 and 7 (i.e. Fall 1999, Fall 2000, and Fall 2001, respectively) were statistically compared to Non-STARS group.

Tables 1-3 provide basic demographic data of the sample analyzed in this study. Mean and standard deviation data are displayed in tables in Appendix D.

The following nine general research questions were written to test the multiple linear regression model.

1. Is there a difference between groups (i.e., STARS and Non-STARS) in predicting retention, when considering SAT score, gender, and high school GPA?
2. Is there a difference between groups (i.e., STARS and Non-STARS) in predicting final college GPA, when considering SAT score, gender, and high school GPA?



Table 1

## Frequency Data for Study Sample (N = 943)

	Frequency	Percentage of population	
Gender	Female	611	65%
	Male	332	35%
Group	STARS	79	8%
	Non-STARS	864	92%
Cohort	1999	329	35%
	2000	328	35%
	2001	286	30%

Table 2

## Frequency Data for STARS Sample (N = 79)

	Frequency	Percentage of population	
Gender	Female	60	76%
	Male	19	24%
Cohort	1999	26	33%
	2000	28	35%
	2001	25	32%

Table 3

Frequency Data for Non-STARS Sample (N = 864)

	Frequency	Percentage of population	
Gender			
	Female	551	64%
	Male	313	36%
Cohort			
	1999	302	35%
	2000	301	35%
	2001	261	30%

3. Is there a difference between groups (i.e., STARS and Non-STARS) in predicting graduation, when considering SAT score, gender, and high school GPA?
4. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and gender in predicting retention?
5. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and gender in predicting final college GPA?
6. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and gender in predicting graduation?
7. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and SAT score in predicting retention?
8. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and SAT score in predicting final college GPA?
9. Is there a significant interaction between a student's group and SAT score in predicting graduation?

To test research question 1 the following model was used:

$$R\text{-Score} = a_0U + a_1\text{GROUP} + a_2\text{SAT} + a_3\text{HSGPA} + a_4\text{GENDER} + E$$

The statistical results of testing this model are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Regression Predicting Retention

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	-4.068E-02	.444		-.092	.927
GROUP	.557	.213	.134	2.611	.009*
SAT	1.110E-03	.000	.135	2.522	.012
HSGPA	8.455E-02	.124	.037	.682	.495
GENDER	5.935E-02	.134	.023	.444	.657

Note: GROUP was coded 1 if STARS and 0 if Non-STARS; N = 380

\*p ≤ .05

As illustrated in Table 4 GROUP, independent of SAT, HSGPA and GENDER, is significant in predicting R-Score with a p = .009. Moreover, since “B” is positive, it denotes that the higher value for GROUP (i.e., 1) is associated with higher R-Score values. Thus, STARS received significantly higher R-Scores than Non-STARS when controlled for SAT, HSGPA, and GENDER.

Additionally, SAT, independent of GROUP, HSGPA, and GENDER, was found to be significant in predicting R-Score. Furthermore, the “B” value denotes that the

relationship is positive. Neither GENDER nor HSGPA were found to be significant predictors of R-Score.

To test research question 2 the following model was used:

$$\text{FINALGPA} = a_0U + a_1\text{GROUP} + a_2\text{SAT} + a_3\text{HSGPA} + a_4\text{GENDER} + E$$

The statistical results of testing this model are presented in Table 5

Table 5

Summary of Regression Predicting Final Accumulative GPA

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
Predictors (Constant)	-8.690E-02	.366		-.233	.812
GROUP	.647	.173	.184	3.737	≤ .0009*
SAT	8.463E-04	.000	.122	2.369	.018*
HSGPA	.428	.104	.215	4.101	≤ .0009*
GENDER	6.706E-02	.108	.031	.618	.537

Note: GROUP was coded 1 if STARS and 0 if Non-STARS; N = 379

\*p ≤ .05

As illustrated in table 5 GROUP, independent of SAT, HSGPA and GENDER, is significant in predicting FINALGPA with a p ≤ .0009. Moreover, since “B” is positive, it denotes that the higher value for GROUP (i.e. 1) is associated with higher FINALGPA values. Thus, STARS received significantly higher final accumulative GPA’s than Non-STARS when controlled for SAT, HSGPA, and GENDER.

Additionally, SAT and HSGPA independent of the other predictors in their respective cases, were found to be significant in predicting FINALGPA. Furthermore, the “B” value denotes that the relationship is positive. GENDER was found to be a significant predictor of FINALGPA.

To test research question 3 the following model was used:

$$\text{GRAD} = a_0U + a_1\text{GROUP} + a_2\text{SAT} + a_3\text{HSGPA} + a_4\text{GENDER} + E$$

The statistical results of testing this model are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Regression Predicting Graduation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
Predictors (Constant)		1.008	.312		3.234 .002
GROUP	-.931	.091	-.869	-10.278	≤ .0009*
SAT	-1.407E-04	.000	.044	-.478	.635
HSGPA	3.914E-02	.080	.042	.487	.629
GENDER	2.586E-02	.085	.024	.303	.763

*Note:* GROUP was coded 1 if STARS and 0 if Non-STARS; N = 51

\*p ≤ .05

As illustrated in table 6 GROUP, independent of SAT, HSGPA and GENDER, is significant in predicting GRAD with a p ≤ .0009. Moreover, since “B” is negative, it denotes that the higher value for GROUP (i.e., 1) is associated with a lower GRAD value (i.e., 0). Thus, STARS were less likely to graduate than Non-SATRS. Additionally, no other predictor was found to be significant.

With regard to the research questions concerning interaction, no significant interaction was revealed among GENDER, SAT, GROUP, and HSGPA. That is, no subgroups were found to be significant predictors for R-Score, FINALGPA or GRAD. See Appendix E for details

Based upon the findings:

Hypothesis 1 – The final accumulative GPA of the Academic STARS is significantly higher than the accumulative GPA of Non-Academic STARS African American students at the selected institution—is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 – The retention rate of the Academic STARS is significantly higher than the retention rate of Non-Academic STARS African American students at the selected institution—is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 – The graduation rate of the Academic STARS is significantly higher than the graduation rate of Non-Academic STARS African American students at the selected institution—is rejected.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Place making. Frederick Douglass, in his autobiography of slavery said that there is no place for blacks to learn to read and write, so he creates a place. ... Place-make ... You’ll see how beautiful your life is” (Maulana Karenga, 1995).*

#### *Summary*

An analysis of pertinent literature suggests that many African American college students are not being equipped to successfully navigate the subtle and “not-so-subtle” racism and hostile environment that still permeates many predominantly white institutions (Bennett, 2002; Task Force to Address the Decline in Enrollment and Graduation of the Black Male from Institutions of Higher Education, 1990).

The literature also suggests that African American students who have not developed an authentic sense of self are less likely to develop skills to navigate the social networks often associated with college persistence. Furthermore, the literature suggests that retention programs and services should focus on developing meaningful student-to-student relationships as well as student to faculty/administrator/staff relationships. Additionally, the literature suggests that engaging students in pro-active student development experiences lessens the likelihood that they will embrace academically and socially destructive behaviors and attitudes. Moreover, the literature indicates that students, who have developed meaningful relationships with faculty, staff and mentors, are more likely to learn to channel any resentment associated with being in a hostile environment in healthy ways.

The literature also reveals that the rites of passage process provides a framework through which individuals can be connected to and gain membership in a social network. Furthermore, when the rituals and ceremonies that help forge relationships between the members of the network are grounded in the cultural and historical experiences of the individual, membership can have an insulating effect from hostile situations and other at-risk factors.

Subsequently, African center principles should be central themes in an effective rites of passage process for African American students. Moreover, the African Centered Rites of Passage process facilitates factors such as, positive racial identity, leadership, and development of an authentic sense of self. The significance is that these factors have been identified in the literature as important to developing resiliency in and promoting retention among African American college students.

#### *Discussion of the Results*

An analysis of the data in this study revealed that students who entered the selected institution as first-time full-time freshman participating in the Academic STARS program from the 1999 to 2001 were:

1. More likely to be retained from fall semester to the following fall semester than Non-Academic STARS African American students living on campus who entered the university as first-time full-time freshmen from the 1999 to 2001.
2. More likely to have a higher final accumulative grade point average, than Non-Academic STARS African American students living on campus who entered the university as first-time full-time freshmen from the 1999 to 2001.



3. Less likely to have graduated from the university by the 2003 spring semester, than non-STARS African American students living on campus who entered the university as first-time full-time freshmen from the 1999 to 2001.

Having accepted hypotheses 1 and 2, interpreting results 1 and 2 are relatively straightforward. However, having rejected hypothesis 3, interpreting result 3 requires additional consideration.

The question of graduation is not made clear with only the multiple linear regression analysis. First, one should consider that comparison of graduation status occurred between groups of students who entered the university during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 fall semesters. Given, that graduation rate is calculated at 150% of expected. Thus, a graduation rate for a “four-year” degree is calculated at six years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Therefore, graduation occurrences within a group of students who entered the university as first-time, full-time freshmen from the 1999 to 2001 must be characterized as early graduation.

Subsequently, the finding that participants in the Academic STARS program are less likely to graduate early is logical. The Academic STARS students’ progression through the university is monitored. Students are encouraged to follow the prescribed/recommended major rubric of courses, therefore not fostering early graduations in three years or less. However, comparing the graduation rates of Academic STARS to that of the overall rates at the selected institution a “truer” picture emerges.

Table 7 displays the graduation rates of 1995 and 1996 Academic STARS cohorts to the corresponding overall selected institution graduation rates.

Table 7

## Graduation Rates

	Academic STARS	Overall
1995 Cohort	57%	42%
1996 Cohort	63%	46%

The STARS cohorts out performed the overall rate by 15 and 17 percentage points, respectively. At the very least, this would suggest that STARS students tend not to graduate early. However, they do tend to persist and to graduate at rates greater than the overall population at the selected institution.

In addition to the results based on the findings pertaining specifically to participation in Academic STARS, this study revealed that among African American students living on campus who entered the university as first-time full-time freshmen from the 1999 to 2001:

1. SAT score was significant in predicting retention and final accumulative GPA.
2. High school GPA was only significant in predicting final accumulative GPA.
3. Gender was not a significant predictor for retention, graduation or final accumulative GPA.

### *Conclusion*

Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that students who have experienced the selected institution Academic STARS African-Centered rites of passage

process have performed better academically. Consequently, the researcher concludes that the Academic STARS African-Centered Rites of Passage process is an effective tool to retain and graduate African American college students at the selected institution.

#### *Limitations*

The ex post facto design of this study did not allow causal inferences to be made. Additionally, there many different motivations and influences that affect academic performance and the college experience. Moreover, the participants was comprised of students from the selected institution, and thus local and geographic influences may have affected the results. Therefore, generalization of this study's results must be done with caution.

Although the researcher followed standard research procedures regarding collection and use of student records, information was limited by accessibility to and integrity of student records. According to the selected institution Office of Research, Planning & Institution Effectiveness, much of the student data prior to 1999 was either lost or corrupted due to a change in computer systems. Subsequently, the statistical comparison was limited to students entering the university after 1999.

#### *Implications and Recommendations*

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the Academic STARS African-Centered rites of passage model to deliver educative services and programs is effective in increasing African American college students' GPA, retention and graduation. This study supports literature such as, Afrik (1993), Butler and Glennen (1991), Goggins (1996), Shere (1993), Tinto (1988, 1993), and Warfield-Coppock (1994), that conjectured the use of rites of passage model in education would have positive outcomes

in academic performance. By identifying a statistically significant positive relationship between participating in the Academic STARS African-Centered rites of passage program and empirical outcomes (i.e. final accumulative GPA and retention) along with the supporting evidence of increase graduation rates, this study represents a step forward in establishing a body of literature regarding the use of rites of passage in higher education to effectively deliver educative and developmental services and programs. Additionally, the results of this study support research, such as Durgans (1992), Fleming (1991), Fordham (1991), Schwitzer, Ancis, and Griffin (1999), Taylor and Miller (2002), that emphasizes the importance of providing African American college students, particularly those in predominantly white institutions, with opportunities to develop an authentic sense of self and social networking skills.

Recommendations for further research include an in-depth study of the various components of the Academic STARS experience. Qualitatively, a study of the meanings students associate with the Academic STARS experience and how those meanings affect their decisions about college should be conducted. Quantitatively, it is recommended that a study be conducted to examining if there is a relationship between high African Self-Consciousness and resiliency within the Academic STARS participants. Moreover, can high African Self-Consciousness predict resiliency.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### NGUZO SABA

#### (THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF KWANZAA)

1. Ujoma/Unificacion (unity)
2. Kujichagulia/Determinacion Propia (Self-Determination)
3. Ujima/Responsabilidad Colectiva de Trabajo (Collective Work and Responsibility)
4. Ujamaa/Economica Cooperativa (Cooperative Economics)
5. Nia/Proposito (Purpose)
6. Kuumba/Creatividad (Creativity)
7. Imani/Fe (Faith)

The Nguzo Saba, which in Swahili means the Seven Principles, are the central values of the Kwaaida theory developed by Muluana Karenga. Kwaaida philosophy is a communitarian African philosophy, which is an ongoing synthesis of the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world. Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce seven basic values (Nguzo Saba) of African culture. According to Karenga, contributes to building and reinforcing family, community and culture among African American people as well as Africans throughout the world.



APPENDIX B  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



**Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs**

Akron, OH 44325-2102  
(330) 972-7666 Office  
(330) 972-6281 Fax

February 25, 2003

Lothardus Goggins II  
Pan African Center for Community Studies  
The University of Akron  
Akron, Ohio 44325-1801

Dear Dr. Goggins:

The University of Akron's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) completed a review of the protocol entitled "*African Centered Rites of passage as a Tool for Retention: A Mixed Methodology Analysis*".

The protocol qualified for Expedited Review and was approved on **February 23, 2003**. The protocol represented minimal risk to subjects. Additionally, the protocol matched the following federal category for expedited review:

*research on individual or group characteristics or behavior or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies*

This approval is valid for up to one year from the approval date or until modifications are proposed to the project protocol, whichever may occur first. In either instance, an Application for Continuing Review must be completed and submitted to the IRB.

Please note that within one month of the expiration date of this approval, the IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email, as a courtesy. Nevertheless, please note that it is your responsibility as principal investigator to remember the renewal date of your protocol's review. If your project is funded, failure to comply with IRB requirements could jeopardize your continued funding.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

N. Margaret Wineman, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson

Assigned Research # 20030217

Cc: Sharon Kruse, Department Chair  
Diane Brown-Wright, Advisor

## APPENDIX C

### VARIABLE LIST AND DESCRIPTION

Table 8

Variable List and Description

Variable	Description
GROUP	1=STAR; 0=Non-STAR
GENDER	1=Male; 0=Female
Cohort	1=Fall 95; 2=Fall 96; 3=Fall 97; 4=Fall 98; 5=Fall 99; 6=Fall 00; 7=Fall 01
HSGPA	High School GPA
SAT	SAT Score
MGPA95	Summer 95 semester GPA
FGPA95	Fall 95 semester GPA
SGPA96	Spring 96 semester GPA
MGPA96	Summer 96 semester GPA
FGPA96	Fall 96 semester GPA
SGPA97	Spring 97 semester GPA
MGPA97	Summer 97 semester GPA
FGPA97	Fall 97 semester GPA
SGPA98	Spring 98 semester GPA
MGPA98	Summer 98 semester GPA
FGPA98	Fall 98 semester GPA
SGPA99	Spring 99 semester GPA
FGPA99	Fall 99 semester GPA
SGPA00	Spring 00 semester GPA
MGPA00	Summer 00 semester GPA
FGPA00	Fall 00 semester GPA
SGPA01	Spring 01 semester GPA
MGPA01	Summer 01 semester GPA
FGPA01	Fall 01 semester GPA
SGPA02	Spring 02 semester GPA
MGPA02	Summer 02 semester GPA

*(table continues)*

Table 8

## Variable List and Description (continued)

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Variable	Description
FGPA02	Fall 02 semester GPA
SGPA03	Spring 03 semester GPA
Retain96	Retained in Fall 96 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
Retain97	Retained in Fall 97 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
Retain98	Retained in Fall 98 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
Retain99	Retained in Fall 99 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
Retain00	Retained in Fall 00 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
Retain01	Retained in Fall 01 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
Retain02	Retained in Fall 02 1=Yes; 0=No; blank=N/A
R-Score	Number of years retained within a six-year period; Range 0 – 5, maximum score of 5 given to anyone who graduates.
CGPA96	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 96
CGPA97	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 97
CGPA98	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 98
CGPA99	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 99
CGPA00	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 00
CGPA01	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 01
CGPA02	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 02
CGPA03	Accumulated GPA as of Spring 03
FINALGPA	Accumulative GPA of the last semester enrolled
GRAD	Graduation 1=Yes; 0=No

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APPENDIX D

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION TABLES

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Total Sample (N = 943)

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	Mean	Standard Deviation	
HSGPA	2.78	.6	
Female	2.87	.56	
Male	2.61	.63	
SAT	870	150	
Female	866	153	
Male	879	141	
FINALGPA	1.77	1.06	
Female	1.83	1.09	
Male	1.64	.99	

---

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for STARS Sample (N = 79)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	
HSGPA	3.01	.44	
Female	3.05	.45	
Male	2.88	.39	
SAT	863	127	
Female	857	134	
Male	880	110	
FINALGPA	2.50	.7	
Female	2.55	.73	
Male	2.38	.6	

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations for Non-STARS Sample (N = 846)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	
HSGPA	2.76	.6	
Female	2.85	.57	
Male	2.59	.63	
SAT	871	151	
Female	867	156	
Male	879	143	
FINALGPA	1.70	1.06	
Female	1.76	1.1	
Male	1.59	.99	

APPENDIX E

INTERACTION TABLES

Table 12

Model Summary of the GROUP and GENDER Interaction on Predicting Retention

---

Model	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Significance F Change
<hr/>					
Yretention = a0u + a1GENDER + a2GROUP + E1					
Yretention = a0u + a3GENDER + a4GROUP + a5G1S1 + E2	.001	1.159	1	939	.282

---

Table 13

Model Summary of the GROUP and GENDER Interaction on Predicting Final Accumulative GPA

Model	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Significance F Change
YFinal GPA = a <sub>0</sub> + a <sub>1</sub> GENDER + a <sub>2</sub> GROUP + E <sub>1</sub>					
YFinal GPA = a <sub>0</sub> + a <sub>3</sub> GENDER + a <sub>4</sub> GROUP + a <sub>5</sub> G1S1 + E <sub>2</sub>	.000	.000	1	938	.984

Table 14

Model Summary of the GROUP and SAT Interaction on Predicting Retention

Model	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Significance F Change
Yretention = a <sub>0</sub> + a <sub>1</sub> SAT + a <sub>2</sub> GROUP + E <sub>1</sub>					
Yretention = a <sub>0</sub> + a <sub>3</sub> SAT + a <sub>4</sub> GROUP + a <sub>5</sub> SATG1 + E <sub>2</sub>	.000	.020	1	373	.887

Table 15

Model Summary of the GROUP and SAT Interaction on Predicting  
Final Accumulative GPA

Model	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Significance F Change
Y <sub>final</sub> GPA= a <sub>0u</sub> + a <sub>1</sub> SAT + a <sub>2</sub> GROUP + E <sub>1</sub>					
Y <sub>final</sub> GPA= a <sub>0u</sub> + a <sub>3</sub> SAT + a <sub>4</sub> GROUP + a <sub>5</sub> SATG <sub>1</sub> + E <sub>2</sub>	.000	.113	1	372	.737