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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT
RETENTION AND PERSISTENCE AT LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE
IN EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM AND SERVICES (EOPS)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Kalynda Webber McLean

September 20, 2010

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved grandfather, William Irving Webber, Sr. GP, thank you for instilling in me the value of education and reminding me that education is a privilege. Although you are gone, I am still inspired to strive for excellence and surpass mediocrity, because of you.

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ABSTRACT

As the community college student population becomes more diverse, the traditional student support program activities are limited in their effectiveness (Crawford, 1999). Rodriguez (1992) reports that although community colleges are often the first entry point into higher education for African American students, there does not seem to be equal success in the retention and persistence of this group. As officials in higher education seek to assess the success or failure of the community college in serving its diverse population, many questions may arise concerning the success of special programs in retaining minority students. Some researchers have wondered whether these special programs are positively impacting retention from semester to semester and/or persistence to graduation (Tinto & Russo, 1994).

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which, if at all, there is a relationship between the student retention and persistence of African American students enrolled at LACC, with participation in EOPS. Additionally, the problem is to ascertain what specific EOPS activities or services are perceived by African American students participating in EOPS, to impact their persistence and retention.

Using an existing survey questionnaire developed by Crawford (2001), the researcher collected data from 29 out of 78 (37%) participants, then later facilitated semi-structured interviews that were directly related to the participant's responses to the survey questions about student support services provided by EOPS. The results of the study reveal (a) African American EOPS students do not persist at a higher rate than African American non-EOPS students at Los Angeles City College past one academic year, and non-EOPS African American students persisted at a higher rate than their counterparts in

EOPS by an average of 3.7% over a recent four-year period; (b) African American EOPS students at Los Angeles City College believe seven support services and program activities contributed to their persistence: book service, academic counseling, educational/academic planning, orientation, tutoring, grant money and personal counseling; (c) all of the services and activities of EOPS are of some benefit to them and (d) overall, they perceive the role of EOPS to be essential to their persistence.

Chapter One: Introduction

Among the many issues facing higher education is that of student retention (McIntyre, 1997; Pascarella, Smart & Ethington, 1986). Student retention as well as student persistence behavior at institutions of higher learning are of considerable interest to researchers (Astin, 1975; McIntyre, 1997; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975; Wild & Ebbers, 2002), and attrition rates for both minority students and non-minorities have become an issue of great concern in higher education (Esters & Mosby, 2007; Rendon, Jalomo & Nora, 2000). Student retention has been the focal point of various research publications (Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004; Porter, 1990; Tinto, 1987); however, many of these studies focus on four-year institutions and attrition in the community college system has not been as extensively explored (Hoyt, 1999; Pascarella et al.).

There is still much information undiscovered about the retention of community college students, and the retention of minority students poses an especially significant challenge for many colleges (Crawford, 2001). Statistics from research studies on attrition have shown that while minority retention is problematic for many institutions of higher education (Tinto, 1999; White, 2005), retention rates specifically for African American students in community colleges are among the lowest of all ethnic groups nationwide (Hagedorn, Maxwell & Hampton, 2001). Also, African Americans are 20% less likely to complete college within a six-year period than white students (Porter, 1990).

Attrition rates of community college students are important to community colleges due to the unique mission of these institutions (Hawley & Harris, 2005). Community colleges must find a way to retain their students if they are to fulfill the

mission of these institutions, which is to improve student access to higher education for a diverse student population that is often plagued by academic problems, social, and economic issues (Hawley & Harris).

Community colleges are open to all community members over age 18, and tend to serve those community members that are amongst the lowest socioeconomic groups (Cohen, 1990). In a study from 1995, Rendon provides a general description of community college students' profile as, "non-traditional --first generation, part-time, employed while attending college, low SES [socioeconomic status] backgrounds, [and] poor to average high school achievement records" (p.3). These characteristics are representative of EOPS students and herein resides some of the problems associated with student persistence.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California in 2006 attrition in the California community college system is a major issue, with four out of ten community college students staying in the system for a year or less. Although attrition is a problem for both minority and majority students (American Council on Education, 1994), many studies have confirmed that minority students will encounter various obstacles to their academic success that are in addition to the obstacles other students face when entering higher education (Chavous, 2000; Rowley, 2000; Tinto 1987).

Throughout the history of community colleges, these institutions have proven to be an important part of the higher education system, especially for minority students (Hagedorn, 2004). Researchers have found that over fifty percent of African American and Hispanic students that attend college immediately after high school enter two-year institutions (Nora, 2000). Walters (2003) contends, "We cannot seriously talk about

community college student retention without discussing diversity” (p. 4). Rendon et al. (2000) maintain, “As our society becomes more multicultural and complex, the experiences of multiracial students will merit careful investigation” (p.129). Therefore, as these institutions become the primary choice of minority students for post-secondary education (Nora & Rendon, 1990; Walters) a critical analysis is imperative to examine the trends affecting the retention of these students.

Background of the Problem

As minority students become a larger segment of the high school graduate pool, the effective recruitment and retention of these students to higher education has become increasingly important (Opp & Smith, 1995). Additionally, as two-year colleges recruit these students to participate in post-secondary education at their institutions, methods to effectively service these students must be found. As the community college student population becomes more diverse, the traditional student support program activities are limited in their effectiveness (Crawford, 1999). Rodriguez (1992) reports that although community colleges are often the first entry point into higher education for African American students, there does not seem to be equal success in the retention and persistence of this group.

Nora (2000) cites a 1998 article by Nora and Rendon that states attrition rates for minority students in two-year colleges is about 60 percent, and in some instances as high as 80 percent. The question of student retention is one not easily answered because of the complicated variables that affect retention for community college students. Variables such as students’ academic preparedness, commuter status, work and family obligations,

involvement, and integration are all influential in the students' decision to stop attending or to persist (Walters, 2003). These variables, coupled with the fact that most community college students are generally from a lower socio-economic background (Hagedorn et al., 2001) and have less access to resources than many four-year students, suggests that attrition and retention among minority students attending two-year colleges is an often complex and confusing issue.

Throughout the nation, two-year colleges have attempted a multitude of methods for dealing with the issue of retention. A research study conducted of 163 community colleges in the United States (with enrollment of about 5,000 students) indicated that student success in higher education is highest when there is a coordinated effort by a centralized office or program (Parker, 1997). There are several state and federally funded student support services programs, which were developed to increase rates of minority student success as well as educational equity and access. The services offered vary from institution to institution; however, the basic premise is the same. These services are developed to provide disadvantaged students with the help that will enable them to stay in and graduate from college (Chaney, Muraskin, Cahalan, & Rak, 1997).

Recent literature has illuminated the serious problems community colleges are having retaining minority students, and has caused many education officials (as well as community college systems) to evaluate the work being done to help this population (Crawford, 2001; Glenn, 2004; Nora, 2000; Rendon et al., 2000; Saenz, 2004).

Community colleges across the state of California are experiencing a reduction in student services, increased demands for positive student outcomes, declining student enrollment, increasing student attrition, and fiscal crises due to reduction in funding. Like a number

of other urban community colleges, Los Angeles City College (LACC) is particularly interested in this issue of retention and persistence, and is seeking the most effective methods of assisting minority students in persisting because these are the students that are predominately attending the institution.

As officials in higher education seek to assess the success or failure of the community college in serving its diverse population, many questions may arise concerning the success of special programs in retaining minority students. Some researchers have wondered whether these special programs are positively impacting retention from semester to semester and/or persistence to graduation (Tinto & Russo, 1994).

At this time when post-secondary institutions have experienced a decline in state funding for student services it has become imperative to investigate the impact services provided by retention programs have on student retention and persistence for minority students. Effective retention efforts must be identified in the Los Angeles City College EOPS department to assist African American educationally and economically disadvantaged students in persisting. Los Angeles City College (LACC) has the largest EOPS student population in the state of California, and therefore is an appropriate program in which to examine the effectiveness of retention efforts on student persistence.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers find today that over fifty percent of those participating in higher education in the community college system are persons of color. Community colleges are key vehicles to participation in higher education, and within the community college

system retention programs can be instrumental in assisting minority students to persist. The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which, if at all, there is a relationship between the student retention and persistence of African American students enrolled at LACC, with participation in EOPS. Additionally, the problem is to ascertain what specific EOPS activities or services are perceived by African American students participating in EOPS, to impact their persistence and retention.

More specifically, the problem statewide in California community colleges is the low retention and persistence rates of African Americans and Latinos (Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). These low rates are problematic because of the impact it inevitably has on un- and under-employment. Retention of African American students in the California community college system is critical to the production of educated, well-trained individuals. These individuals must be retained at institutions of higher education until they have completed adequate preparation to compete in a burgeoning workforce and make necessary contributions to the economy. Students that are retained at institutions for higher learning are more likely to complete their desired goal, and make positive contributions to the economy through their participation in the workforce.

As Nora (2000) explains, we find today that “Minority students represent 6 to 8 percent of all students enrolled in higher education, yet they constitute nearly 60 percent of the total enrollment in community colleges” (p.2). Research indicates that minority students are attending community colleges in large numbers and education officials do not appear to be making progress in retaining these students (Flowers, 2004; Rendon, 1994). Several retention strategies used in the past to assist these students in persisting

are not working and must be rectified. In order to identify which strategies and methods are ineffective, one must look at what is working, hence the need for a study such as this.

Significance of the Study

This study will build upon the existing body of educational research by examining the impact of EOPS on the persistence and retention of African American students at LACC. Although other studies have examined retention and persistence as it relates holistically to EOPS, there is still a dearth of information about African American students, community colleges, EOPS, and retention and persistence. Also, there have been no studies conducted at LACC (the largest EOPS program in California) looking specifically at African American students.

The study of student retention in higher education is not new, however the need for improving the academic achievements of minority student populations requires the further investigation of effective retention methods for African American students. Rendon (1994) contends that African Americans are among the minority student groups that appear to be emerging as a new majority on some community college campuses. Therefore, in order to prepare to effectively serve the exponentially increasing African American student population of minority community college students, new research is imperative to blaze new trails toward increasing the retention of these students.

Relative to minorities and non-persistence, Tinto (1975) reported:

“...there is simply too little information regarding the relationship between race and dropout from higher education. It is clear that race is an independent predictor of dropout (independent of both ability and social status) but it is unclear in which ways this aggregate relationship occurs. We simply do not know enough about the

processes of interaction that leads individuals of different racial backgrounds to dropout from higher education. Nor do we know enough about how these processes relate to differing patterns of academic and social integration or how they vary between institutions of different academic and social characteristics” (p. 119).

It is of the utmost importance that persistence and retention be examined to unearth the achievements and outcomes of minority students at the community college. The Council of Chief State School Officers (1987) eloquently stated, “Instead of blaming the student for failing to fit the system, we must design and implement a new structure that provides appropriate educational and related services to those most at risk” (p. 5). Tinto (1998) claims, “We should direct our studies to forms of practice and let the knowledge gained from those studies inform our theories of persistence” (p.175). Ultimately, to improve the effectiveness of these special programs it is necessary to determine the impact these support services have on outcomes (i.e. retention, persistence, and grade point average).

Many practitioners (Crawford, 2001) are asking the question, are special programs providing services that relate to positive student performance outcomes? Are special programs having a positive effect on minority student success as measured by persistence to goal completion, retention from term to term, and above average grade point averages? In this time of concern about the measurable success of special support programs such as EOPS, there is a great need for relevant outcome information.

A review of the literature shows that much of the retention research has been focused on characteristics of persisters and non-persisters, while very few of these studies have attempted to investigate retention strategies of special programs. This lack of information about retention strategies of special programs has been recognized by previous researchers (Farmer, 1980; Wild & Ebbers, 2002). When considering retention,

Farmer argued, “Students should be surveyed concerning their attitudes toward college policies, procedures, programs, services, and staff” (p. 3). Also, Tinto (1986) stated that, “The development of complete, grounded theory of student departure requires that we carry out...qualitative studies that explore the experiences of different students (e.g., adult, minority, and part-time) in varying institutional settings (e.g., two year and non-residential)” (p. 380). Therefore, the literature suggests that if researchers are to completely understand the reasons for student departure and effective/ineffective retention strategies of special programs, there is a need for more studies that include student perceptions.

Pascarella (1999) remarks that considering the amount of students that attend community colleges, student retention is not well researched and “we cannot afford to continue to operate in ignorance of the educational influence of a set of nearly 1,300 postsecondary institutions that educate almost 40% of our students” (p. 13). Despite the lack of adequate research studies that exist in the literature that assist in understanding how minority students react to support services offered at community colleges, and the value they provide this study will provide essential information that will assist legislators, community college officials and practitioners in the organization and evaluation of activities and retention strategies employed by EOPS. This acquired understanding will prove beneficial in improving the effort, which positively affects the retention of African American students, as well as all minority students thereby increasing the students’ chances for program completion of their designated educational objective and ultimately improving the success of EOPS.

A History of Los Angeles City College

In 1929, the Los Angeles Board of Education established a junior college at the site of the current Los Angeles City College, and called this new institution Los Angeles Junior College (LAJC). This site was selected due to its central location in the heart of the city, and served as the city's first Junior College. In 1931, the voters of southern California drastically changed the organization of Los Angeles Junior College by approving the formation of a junior college district that moved LAJC from a department under the guidance of the Los Angeles Board of Education. This changed LAJC into a school in the Los Angeles Junior College District, enabling it access to government funds ("About LACC," n.d.). By 1938, LAJC had continued its evolution and the name of the institution was officially changed to Los Angeles City College (LACC).

After World War II in the 1940s, LACC experienced a rapid influx of students, as there was a group of war veterans interested in using their G.I. bill to pay for an education. These students were different from the past composition of students because most of the students attending LACC at this time were interested in transferring to a four-year university to obtain a Bachelor's degree. Prior to the 1940s, many students had vocational aspirations as opposed to attainment of a Bachelor's degree. This surge in students was the beginning of the increasing enrollment LACC experienced for the next few decades until peaking at 22,000 students in the late 1970s ("About LACC," n.d.).

By 1950, Los Angeles City College had become an established model for the city's subsequent network of Junior Colleges. LACC was the largest Junior College in the United States and had changed from a small school to the epicenter of education for the city's workforce during a post-war economic boom ("About LACC," n.d.). The college

had become a meeting place for international culture and education that supported the educational needs of the time. The California State Legislature initiated the separation of the Los Angeles Community College District from the City Unified School District in 1969, paving the way for the continual growth and development of this major educational institution.

Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS)

The Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) was established to provide educational support services to those students that have been identified as having a special need. In an effort to accommodate and serve under-prepared and underrepresented students, EOPS was designed to provide low-income and educationally disadvantaged community college students with support services that will help them enroll and persist in institutions of higher learning (Nussbaum, 2002). The academic support services that EOPS provides to participating students include financial assistance for required text book purchases, orientation, individual and group counseling and tutoring, peer support, approved instructional programs in basic skills, personal growth and developmental activities, transportation assistance, summer readiness programs, and special academic and needs assessment.

In 1969 with the passage of Alquist's Senate Bill 164 (Chapter 1579, Statutes of 1969) the Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) program was launched (Nussbaum, 2002). EOPS enables community colleges to modify traditional services and develop new, innovative methods for assisting those students most in need. EOPS students are those that have been identified as educationally and/or economically

disadvantaged, and that have also met other eligibility criteria. They typically lack pre-collegiate basic skills, require financial assistance, and are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

After the inception of EOPS, the Legislature later established the Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) program as a result of Assembly Bill 3103, Hughes (Chapter 1029, Statutes of 1982). The CARE program serves EOPS students that are receiving welfare benefits that are in need of college-level training to break the cycle of welfare dependency (Nussbaum, 2002). Through the CARE program, supplemental (but non-duplicative) academic support services are provided for EOPS students receiving AFDC/TANF benefits. As a benefit of the CARE program, these single parent EOPS students are also provided with supplemental financial assistance or direct service for assistance with childcare, school supplies, transportation, and meals.

California's Code of Regulations, Title 5, Article 2 (see Appendix A) stipulates that students desiring to be accepted and participate in the EOPS program must meet strict eligibility criteria, which is restricted to the following:

1. Be a California resident
2. Be enrolled full-time
3. Have not completed 70 degree-applicable college units
4. Be low-income as determined by Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGW) eligibility which is based on public assistance recipient status or meeting the program's sliding scale income standards, and
5. Be educationally disadvantaged as defined by the Board of Governor's via any one of the following:

- (a) Not be qualified at the college of attendance for enrollment into the minimum level English or mathematics course that is applicable to the associate degree
- (b) Not have graduated from a high school or obtained the General Education Diploma (G.E.D.)
- (c) Graduated from high school with a grade point average below 2.5 on a 4.0 scale
- (d) Been previously enrolled in remedial education, or
- (e) Demonstrate other factors set forth in the district's plan submitted to the Chancellor pursuant to Section 56270, such as:
 - i. Student is a first generation college student (neither parent has successfully attended college); or
 - ii. Student is a member of an underrepresented group targeted by district/college student equity goals; or
 - iii. Student and/or the parents are non-native English speakers; or
 - iv. Student is an emancipated foster youth.

Working within these guidelines, each EOPS program at the various California community colleges (CCC) supplies services to students that fit the characteristic needs

of that campus's student population. Also, programs are challenged to supply services, programs, and activities that reflect the unique circumstances and requirements necessary for serving students at that campus in addition to supplementing what is generally available to all students (Nussbaum, 2002). While accomplishing this goal, programs must collaborate with campus and public agencies, as well as community-based resources to provide supportive services in a coordinated non-duplicative manner.

Research Questions

1. Do African American students at Los Angeles City College that participate with Extended Opportunity Program and Services persist at a higher rate than African American non-Extended Opportunity Program and Services students?
2. What specific program activities do they believe contributed to their persistence?
3. What role does Extended Opportunity Program and Services play (in the opinion of the student) in increasing the retention of African American students at Los Angeles City College?
4. What is the pattern of involvement in program activities that contribute to their persistence?

Definition of Terms

The literature of retention studies uses many operation definitions; however the following definitions will function as the foundation for terminology used in this study.

These definitions are also used to measure student performance for the purposes of this study.

1. Book Service- Assistance provided to EOPS students to help them obtain books for their classes (i.e. book voucher or grant).
2. Community College: A regionally accredited public educational institution that provides instruction and training to individuals for educational, vocational, and transfer programs.
3. Economically disadvantaged: Prospective EOPS participants must be low-income, i.e. have an annual income of less than \$29,025 for a family of four or \$14,355 for a single student in the 2006 tax year.
4. Educationally disadvantaged: Prospective EOPS participants must be identified as educationally disadvantaged. This term is used to refer to EOPS students that have taken a college assessment test and placed into a remedial or pre-collegiate level English or Math class, have low high school achievements (grade point average of less than 2.5 or dropped out of high school), have completed a G.E.D., are first-generation college students, or have parents that are non-native English speakers.
5. Enrolled: Those courses in which a student remains in past the add-drop window.
6. Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS): EOPS is a state categorically funded student service program that provides comprehensive support services to students that have been identified as educationally and economically disadvantaged.

7. Non-persister: A student who leaves the college without earning a degree, and never returns.
8. Persistence: The continuous enrollment of a student for two or more semesters, from one semester to another; and more specifically from fall to spring semester (Crawford, 1999).
9. Persister: A student that remains at the same institution and completes his/her goal.
10. Retention: The continuous enrollment in academic classes during one semester (Crawford, 1999).
11. Retention strategy: Those programs or services offered to students to retain them, or to enhance the likelihood of the successful completion of a program of study (for an individual or group).
12. Student Academic Outcomes and Achievements: Measurable student outcomes and academic achievements are listed below:
 - (a) Community college grade point average (GPA)
 - (b) Annual units attempted and completed;
 - (c) Degree applicable classes and transfer units completed;
 - (d) A.A. or A.S. degree or certificate attainment;
 - (e) Obtain transfer-ready status to four-year college or university.

Conceptual Framework

Past research has enhanced our understanding of persistence and retention models (Bean & Pascarella, 1982; Boyle, 1989; Flowers, 2004). Although a variety of relevant variables are suggested in the literature concerning theories of attrition and retention, Nora (1993) posits that there were no *theoretically based* studies of African American community college students. The theoretical models upon which this study rely to make sense of this phenomena are the Student Integration Model developed by Vincent Tinto, the Student Involvement Theory by Alexander Astin and the Causal Model of Student Attrition by John Bean.

Tinto has studied student attrition for numerous years, and even developed the now widely-cited Model of Student Departure (1987). Tinto's continued research on student departure led to the refinement of his theory to include institutional factors that affect retention (Flowers, 2004). This exhaustive research of the *dropout* phenomena common in education has withstood extensive scrutiny through testing and validation by various researchers, and assisted him in garnering the respect and acceptance of many education scholars (Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda, 1993).

As research in this area has advanced, the terminology commonly associated with this field of work is evolving, and terms like *departure* are being utilized in place of terms such as *attrition* and *retention*. Boyle (1989) provides an explanation of Tinto's rationale on the use of *attrition* and *retention* and describes attrition as an experience that may have multiple reasons and causes. However, Tinto's concept of retention is predicated upon the belief that the institution and the student have an impact on the prospect of a student's departure. Tinto's model provides a comprehensive view of the

various influencing factors impacting student attrition and retention, through the assertion that a student's integration into the culture of the institution motivates continuous enrollment (Escobedo, 2007).

One of the most commonly used models of institutional effects on student retention and persistence is Astin's (1975) involvement model. This model stresses that a student's involvement creates a connection to the campus that contributes to the student's persistence. Crawford (2001) asserts that the California Community College EOPS programs have various activities and services that provide opportunities for student involvement, such as:

1. Education plan development
2. Exit interviews
3. Field trips to local colleges and universities
4. Grants
5. Group counseling sessions
6. Mandatory counseling contacts
7. Orientation
8. Progress monitoring
9. Recruitment (i.e. Summer Bridge Institute)
10. Supplemental Instruction
11. Transition services (i.e. transfer and career guidance)
12. Tutoring

Research on student attrition models indicate it is imperative to the reduction of attrition that an institution provide opportunities for involvement from both academic and social arenas (Astin, 1984; Rendon, 2000; Tierney, 1992; Tinto, 1998) which the vast amount of services and interventions offered by EOPS supply.

Bean's (1980) model of student persistence includes factors presumed to affect the decision of a student to depart from his/her institution (Crawford, 2001).

Demographic, financial and academic factors have all been correlated with attrition and can vary with levels of persistence. According to Bean & Pascarella (1982), "The model identifies the interrelationships among the various factors and the relationships between these factors and the dropout decision" (p.18), however a study that explains why these persistence factors may work is still needed.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

At a time when educational accountability is of the utmost importance, determining the effectiveness of student support programs is imperative (Crawford, 2001). Many scholars believe that retention is an indicator of student success (Kern, Fagley & Miller, 1998); therefore understanding the extent to which retention programs help to increase retention and encourage persistence is key.

The issue of attrition has caused many researchers to query about the effectiveness of community colleges in providing access to minority students (Al-Habeeb, 1990). As many questions arise as to the extent to which student support programs decrease student attrition and contribute toward persistence, the provision of information about retention and persistence theory is necessary to answer these inquiries and resolve scholarly debates. A literature review providing background on the community college system and its evolution, covering the factors influencing attrition for African American students as well as various aspects of retention and persistence theory, and including the history of retention programs and multicultural education, will be provided to identify factors that impact and influence the retention and persistence of African American college students in the California community college system.

Master Plan for Higher Education

The evolution of the American community college system began some years ago with a two-part idea that many still subscribe to, which includes the ideas that (a) two-year colleges would provide an additional training ground for individuals seeking

technical training after high school and (b) these first two years would provide an additional source of university applicants (Monroe, 1972).

The community college system is rooted in a strong commitment to university preparation, adult education and occupational training. Nationwide, community college systems have been historically less costly, more abundant, and more accessible for community members. However, the California community college (CCC) system differs from most other statewide community college systems because of its specific educational function.

The function of the CCC was defined in 1960, with the creation of California's Master Plan for Higher Education. This plan for the development of a public higher education system was unique in that it provided an opportunity for any individual interested in learning to participate in higher education. The concept for this plan was that any student seeking a college education in California would be able to pursue their academic aspirations at a public college or university. With the inception of the Master Plan, California became the first state to implement a public policy providing access to higher education to any and all of its citizens (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness & Timar, 2004).

The Master Plan was based upon the principles of access, affordability and excellence (California State Department of Education, 1960), and it outlined which students should be guaranteed access to the state's public colleges and/or universities (Hebel, 2004). Under this new plan a three-tiered system of higher education was developed that includes the University of California (UC), California State Universities (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC). Within this three-tiered system

are clear differentiated missions for each of the three institutional systems (Shulock & Moore, 2005).

As mandated by the Master Plan, the UC institutions enroll students from among the top 12% of California's high school graduates and offer undergraduate and graduate instruction, as well as professional degrees in law and medicine (Piland, 2004). The UC is also recognized as the primary state-supported academic research institution (Shulock & Moore, 2005). The CSUs enroll students from the top one-third of California's high school graduates and offer undergraduate and graduate instruction. The CSUs also serve as the primary provider (in the state) of teacher certification and professional master's degree programs, while also conducting applied research related to the instructional mission (Shulock & Moore). The California community colleges (CCC) have open admissions (to all high school graduates and non-graduates of a certain age) and provide lower-division instruction for remedial education, academic and vocational programs, as well as workforce training (Piland).

The state attempted to foster access to higher education for any student "capable of profiting from the instruction offered" (California State Department of Education, 1960, p.70) through the creation of a transfer pipeline. Since the Master Plan reserves university attendance for California's most qualified and well prepared students, a transfer process was developed within the community college system that gives all students an opportunity to pursue a baccalaureate degree through community college attendance (Shulock & Moore, 2005). Shulock & Moore describe this process as, "...a key concept that underpinned the California dream of higher education for all residents and linked its goals of access and affordability" (p. 420).

The 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education although innovative in its approach to a state-wide higher education system, has been viewed by some to contradict the intention of its development (Christopher, 2005). Piland (2004) states, “Higher education, the California dream for well over 2 million undergraduate students, is turning into a nightmare. The Golden State’s promise of unparalleled access to community colleges and universities is fast becoming a tarnished relic of the past” (p. 20). The three-tiered system created by the 1960 master plan was developed to provide access to higher education for all students; however, according to Christopher this system has become “highly stratified” (p. 16). Mead (2006) reports that over 40% of Californians are Black/African American or Hispanic, but only 25% of UC and CSU students are Black/African American or Hispanic. Thus, the community colleges have become the institutions of choice for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and minority students, while the four-year universities continue to attract (and admit) student from more privileged backgrounds (Hong, 2003).

The Community College

When the legislature adopted its *Master Plan for Higher Education* in 1960 the California community college system became responsible for educating the community and providing open access to higher education for anyone that can benefit from instruction. More so than in other states, the community colleges in California were designed to be a substantial part of the higher education system (Shulock & Moore, 2005). However, researchers have reported that although California ranks among leaders

in the nation for general college attendance, the state also ranks very low in terms of student persistence and completion (Shullock & Moore).

Community college student performance is increasingly concerning to education officials in higher education because of the growing population of minority students (Opp, 2002). However, the community college student population is less homogenous than four-year institutions and therefore more difficult to generalize measures for student retention (Mohammadi, 1996). The literature has shown that the improvement of retention and persistence for community college students is contingent upon accountability, and thus education officials are closely monitoring student outcome measures of this population for purposes such as accreditation, as well as accountability (Bailey & Alfonso, 2005; Green, 2006).

The research literature on community colleges demonstrates the struggles higher education officials are having in retaining students of color, and specifically African American students (Hagedorn et al., 2001; Pope, 2002; Wild & Ebbers, 2002). A literature review conducted by Hoyt (1999) suggests that a consistent theme of higher attrition rates exists for community college students' that are enrolled part-time, older, employed and from minority backgrounds. Bailey & Alfonso (2005) found that community college completion rates for African American students are lower than average. The Chronicle of Higher Education (2000) reported that in 1996, students of color were 31.4% of all students enrolled in two-year colleges nationwide, but only 22.9% of associate degrees obtained belonged to them. Additionally, researchers found that historically, students of color have lower graduation rates, higher attrition rates and more reports of academic difficulty, than their counterparts (Chavez & Maestas-Flores,

1991). This suggests that matriculation to graduation is a challenging issue for colleges that must be addressed to increase student achievements.

A study conducted by Hu & John (2001) found disproportion among racial/ethnic groups and income for college students, and that Hispanic and African American students tend to come from poorer families. These students from low-income families often select the community college as their institution of choice due to the low cost of attendance; however, Mohammadi (1996) reports that retention rates in community colleges are considerably lower than four-year colleges. Therefore, the open access nature of these institutions makes community colleges the pathway to higher education for many minority students, and thus, if these students cannot be retained there (at the community college) their access to higher education is threatened.

A Question of Access

Although community college systems pride themselves on offering a college education to those underrepresented in four-year colleges and universities, the question of access has been studied by various researchers in higher education (Glenn, 2004; Nora, 2000; Rendon et al., 2000). While some community college systems have attempted to make their institutions more geographically accessible, the issue of access entails more than proximity. Some critics have debated about whether or not minority students have equal access to community colleges (Glenn).

It may be the intent of the community college system to serve all, however some researchers argue, “The notion that the door is open to all groups in all programs at community colleges may be questionable” (Nora, 2000, p. 2). Nationally, African-

American students are disproportionately more likely to attend a community college than a four-year college or university, and have tended to have higher attrition rates and a lower grade point average (Ellison & Martin, 1999). Also, Garza (1994) noted that African-American students have lower rates of associate degree completion and transfer from community colleges.

Nora in his 2000 study quoted Cohen (1988, p.398) as saying, “For the past 25 years, occupational education that leads to direct employment has been high on the priority list” (p. 2) of community colleges. Amidst this drive for occupational education, enrollment figures for occupational programs that are high-tech or in other lucrative professional career fields show minority students continuing to be underrepresented in these fields of study (Dougherty, 1992). One might argue that this under representation suggests that educational equity and access in higher education, more specifically community colleges, is not available to all.

The Public Policy Institute of California reports that in California 70% of all public higher education enrollment is in the community college, which makes it the most dominant form of post-secondary education (Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). According to Koltai (1993), community colleges nationwide enroll the largest number of underrepresented (minority) students and act as the entryway for these students to higher education. Esters & Mosby (2007) state in *Disappearing Acts: The Vanishing Black Male on Community College Campuses* that although community colleges are “open door” institutions, African American males are dropping out at alarming rates and lag behind other learners on almost every indicator of academic achievement. Research data shows that of 100 African American children that begin high school only 86 graduate, and of

100 African American high school seniors only 10 go on to receive a bachelor's degree (Newman & Newman, 1999). Therefore, if community colleges are going to continue to be so extensively utilized by minority students (those students most in need of access to higher education), the educational barriers to achievement at the community college must be diminished.

Factors Influencing Attrition for African American Students

In a review of the literature, an abundance of studies on student attrition (and minority student attrition) can be found which have focused on four-year college and university students (Allen, Epps & Haniff, 1984; Gardner, Keller & Piotrowski, 1996; Rowser, 1997; White, 2005), while information about community college student attrition and retention have not been as extensively investigated. Furthermore, while some research studies address the community college population (Pascarella et al., 1986) programs like EOPS that focus their efforts on student retention have all but been ignored. Therefore, this study will address a specific population in the community college system.

Researchers have speculated that the issues impacting the retention of minority students, and more specifically African American students, may have any number of a few root causes (Hauser & Anderson, 1991; Tinto, 1987; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). For example, while studying the retention of African American males in a Maryland community college Dorsey (1995) examined GPA, credits, age, personal goal, term and other variables to analyze retention. Other researchers contend that African American

students enter college with lower grades and standardized test scores, as well as other academic deficiencies (Shultz, Colton & Colton, 2001; Zamani, 2000).

The transition from secondary education to post-secondary education has proven to be more difficult for African American students than white students (Johnson, 1986; Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt & Alisat, 2000). According to Foster (2001) since the 1980's the college-going rates for African American high school graduates have increased, but are still lower than whites. Some studies (Astin, 1982; Porter, 1990) have shown a correlation between academic preparation and persistence for minority students. Thus, the difficulty for minority students to make that transition could be attributed to the lack of adequate preparation for success in post-secondary education.

Attrition and retention studies suggest that the high rate of minority student attrition is due to these students (especially African American students) being academically unprepared for the rigors of college (Kozol, 1990; Oakes, 1990). The literature on student access to higher education has found that a smaller number of African American and Hispanic high school graduates (than white and Asian high school graduates) are academically prepared for college (Berkner & Chavez, 1997; Collatos, Morrell, Nuno & Lara, 2004). This inadequate preparation for college is addressed in the community college system through the completion of remedial courses.

Dodson (2007) reported that over 40% of first-year community college students enroll in one or more remedial courses; however, data shows that only 27.5% of minority students enrolled in developmental programs in community colleges were retained through graduation (Boylan, Bliss & Bonham, 1994). Remedial education is designed to bridge the gap between what was learned in high school and what is necessary for college

preparation (Glenn, 2004). However, repeating coursework that students believe should have been learned in high school may be daunting for some students and contribute to their desire to discontinue enrollment (Boylan, Sutton & Anderson, 2003).

It is imperative that the academic community refrain from ignoring this pervasive issue so prevalent in higher education (Ashburn, 2006; Marbley, Bonner, McKisick, Henfield & Watts, 2007). Some researchers have contended that statistics support the idea that a nexus between high achievement and higher education exists for African Americans; however the retention of this population continues to be a complex issue (Hagedorn et al., 2001). Educators commonly affirm that the retention of African Americans has serious implications for those individuals themselves, as well as the nation as a whole (Parker, 1997; Hagedorn et al., 2001). Devarics (1989) stated, “Education continues to be a major vehicle for upward mobility” (p.3) and he believes degree attainment is the largest single factor for the creation of the Black middle class. If the nation cannot produce more college-trained and credentialed African Americans the economy will ultimately suffer (Ladson-Billings, 2006), so as a college education is increasingly important for success in the job market, goal completion in the community college setting is critical to African Americans. Crawford (2001) explicates that the stability and vitality of the economy is related to the production of an educated population; therefore these individuals must be retained at institutions of higher education until they have completed adequate preparation to compete in a workforce and make necessary contributions to the economy.

Foundations of Retention and Persistence

The information and research associated with retention in higher education is extensive. A significant amount of literature investigating college student persistence exists, with the theoretical framework of student attrition theories at the foundation. In an effort to understand community college student retention, one must consider the theoretical models for student retention addressed in the literature.

Retention and Persistence Models

There are multiple theoretical models in the literature from which this researcher can draw upon for this study. This study incorporates a few theories of student attrition: the Student Integration Model/Interactional System by Tinto (1975, 1993), the Student Involvement Theory by Astin (1984), as well as the Causal Model of Student Attrition espoused by Bean (1980). These theories will be referenced in this study because they provide a comprehensive theoretical framework that can be used to assist in the understanding of student retention and persistence phenomena. This study will also address the interrelationship between academic and social integration and how these factors influence student retention and persistence, by incorporating the theoretical model developed by Pascarella and Terenzini (1980). In addition to incorporating these models in the study, there will also be partial reliance on other variables associated with practical experiences since there is some uncertainty about applicability of these four-year college theories to community college students (Hagedorn et al., 2001; Nora, 1993).

Also, it is imperative to the comprehension of these models that one recognizes that during the time researchers were studying student retention, it was prior to a time

such as this, when there are so many minority researchers publishing information about retention and prior to a time when minority students were so prevalent on college campuses. The lack of minority students contributed to small sample sizes and/or altogether exclusion from the research sample (Rendon et al., 2000). For this reason, research produced a view of student retention, persistence and attrition that did not adequately include minorities.

Student integration model/interactional system. Tinto's theories on student attrition and his model of student departure are among the most cited in student persistence literature (Metz, 2004). He developed this theoretical model (which he continued to cultivate through the years) by utilizing the research of social theorists Emile Durkheim and William Spady, as well as an anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep.

Durkheim (1953) theorized that four types of departure (suicide) take place in society. Of these four types of suicide, egotistical suicide has been used to inform educational research and theory (Tinto, 1975). Egotistical suicide is defined by Durkheim as an individual's inability to become integrated into the community, and tended to occur when one failed to become integrated into a new environment. This theory was applied by Tinto to explain student dropout behavior, and adopted to be used in his own departure theory.

Spady (1970) another influence on Tinto's theoretical development, cultivated a student persistence theory by examining the student dropout process. Spady attempted to explain an individual's movement from one place to another by applying some components of Durkheim's work (Metz, 2004). Also utilizing Durkheim's theories as a base, Van Gennep developed his own theoretical expansion, which Metz explains as:

...Van Gennep noted that as a person moves from one place or stage to another, certain rites of passage occur and are celebrated or marked with socially significant events. These events provide tangible evidence of a person's integration into the social setting and serve as evidence of accomplishment and acceptance (p. 192).

Tinto (1993) later built upon the work of various researchers (Durkheim, 1953; Spady, 1970) to restructure his model of attrition and persistence, which he later labeled an "interactional system" (p.136) in which both students and institutions are continually interacting with each other. He used Van Gennep's anthropologically based theory as well as Spady's theory as a foundation for his own, and then applied his theory of student departure to institutions of higher education. This theory included the concept that students need to navigate through the collegiate system and acclimate themselves to their institution's environmental setting. Tinto believed that a student's failure to acclimate to the environment lead to the student's departure from the college, and according to Rendon et al., (2000) "key to the interactionalist view is that persistence is contingent on the extent students have become incorporated (integrated) into the social and academic communities of the college" (p. 127).

Wild & Ebbers (2002) claim that Tinto identifies student integration as a major factor in persistence and with his model posits that persistence is contingent upon how well the student is integrated into the college. Tinto's model is predicated upon the concept that social and academic integration are essential to student retention and the interaction between the student and the academic and social systems of the college are essential to the student's feeling of connectedness and established desire to persist (Wild & Ebbers). Tinto (1987) also later noted that lack of integration could result from isolation and incongruence, both of which are related to social interaction. Isolation is

defined as a process in which a student has little to no social interaction, while Tinto explained incongruence as, “individuals perceive themselves as being substantially at odds with the institution” (p. 53).

Student involvement theory. Astin’s (1970) model of student involvement provided a framework for other theorists and researchers, and their work on student attrition, retention and persistence. Essentially, Astin (1985) defined this involvement theory by stating, “students learn by becoming involved” (p.133). In an article by Charles Schroeder (2003), Astin remarks:

I’m inclined to think there are a number of off-shoots from this idea--- in particular, some of the work of Vince Tinto. Vince and I agree that his theory of college student retention, in which he developed the concepts of commitment and integration, is very similar to the notion of involvement (p.12).

In an early study, Astin (1970) developed a theory of student involvement that included an input-process-output model. He later built upon previous research to include in his student involvement theory the concept that the more a student involves himself/herself in the academic and social aspects of college, the more likely their involvement will influence certain outcomes (Astin, 1984, 1985). Thus, the factors that contribute to student retention suggest involvement and the factors that contribute to student attrition are lack of involvement (Astin, 1984). He states, “Involvement takes many forms, such as absorption in academic work, participation in extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and other institutional personnel” (p. 307).

According to Astin (1984) the amount of physical and psychological energy a student devotes to the academic experience will increase the likelihood of the student persisting. Astin’s theory of student involvement included five tenets:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects.
2. Regardless of the object, involvement occurs along a continuum.
3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features.
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any education policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (p. 298).

The quantity and quality of the student's involvement has been shown to affect educational outcomes (Astin, 1984). Tenet two through four addresses the quantity vs. quality issue. Tenet two can be understood to mean that a student engages in different levels of involvement in different objects at different times and also, different students exhibit different levels of involvement in a particular object. For example, a student may engage in reading a chapter and his level of involvement in this activity may vary (from others or even himself). If time permits, the student may read through the chapter thoroughly then review the reading again to confirm his comprehension of the material (his usual method of reading), while if under time constraints that same student may glaze over the reading to quickly familiarize himself with the content. Another student may have a completely different experience, briefly reviewing the reading and looking for main ideas.

These various degrees of involvement have different features and must be measured accordingly. Involvement is said to be both quantitative which could be the amount of visits to a faculty member's office during office hours, and qualitative which could be the student's comprehension of a reading assignment. Also, Astin (1975) suggested that the display of involvement may be different for some groups of students (such as African Americans and women); therefore more research is needed to study involvement in these groups specifically.

While all of the postulates are significant, this last postulate is of great importance to this study because of the practical implications for this (LACC) institution. The researcher assumes that student involvement refers to activities beyond the classroom and if student involvement is to occur, students must be engaged and offered opportunities to involve themselves. Also, there must be faculty-student contact. The faculty must engage students and involve them in learning experiences such as group projects and assignments, small and large group discussions, and other activities that motivate students to become engaged.

This involvement includes a plethora of activities inside and outside of the classroom that will aid the students in persisting. Student involvement activities may include living on campus, independently studying, participating in study groups, extracurricular activities, participating in campus organizations and clubs, as well as involvement with faculty. The research on student involvement confirms that these involvement activities are crucial to a student's success and persistence.

The academic and social involvement of the student is at the heart of this theory; therefore the responsibility of EOPS is to involve the students more in higher education

and the collegiate experience. Flowers (2004) states that researchers using this theory report findings that indicate that a student's involvement experiences positively impact his/her development in various ways (e.g. leadership skills, cognitive development, moral development, etc.). Therefore, EOPS must compete with other factors for the students' time (Perez, 1999), by instituting policies and practices that encourage student involvement.

Model of student attrition. Through the years, John Bean has cultivated an alternate model to investigate and explain student persistence and attrition. Using Summerhill's 1962 report, which analyzed a fifty-year review of research studies on attrition, Bean (1980) attempted to explain why there were no significant changes in the overall persistence rates of students by applying his theory (based on organizational behavior) to establish reasons for student attrition and persistence. His theoretical framework included models of organizational turnover and models of attitude-behavior interactions to explain student departure. Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda (1993) contend that Bean stressed the importance of behavioral intentions, to stay or leave, as predictors of persistence behavior and that student attrition should be seen as analogous to work turnover in organizations.

Bean (1981) later expanded his model of student attrition to include concepts included in the theoretical models of Spady, Astin, and Tinto. Bean's research advanced the work of Astin and Tinto by including student intent, goals, academic variables, and internal and external factors into a revised model of persistence. He also later collaborated with Metzner (Metzner & Bean, 1987) to investigate elements of

nontraditional students and the influence of external factors (i.e. environment) on attrition.

Bean revised his previous work to develop a new model, established through collaboration with Metzner, which added academic variables (grade point average and high school performance), in addition to exploring certain psychological variables (satisfaction, family acceptance, stress) on student outcomes (Metz, 2004). This research explored the relationship between student and institution interaction and investigated factors influencing student's intent and departure.

Bean's work suggests that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes, which are shaped by beliefs (Cabrera et al., 1993). This student attrition model suggests that beliefs are influenced by a number of factors, internal and external to the institution, which affect a student's experiences with the institution. Student experiences with an institution can impact their attitude and decision to continue at the institution.

Academic and social integration. Pascarella & Terenzini (1980) expanded upon the work of Alexander Astin, as well as other researchers, in an effort to further examine retention and persistence. The basis of their theory on student intent and persistence is based upon academic and social integration. Metz (2004) explains, "Both men outlined student involvement theory from the perspective of student interaction with faculty and peers. They provided a causal relationship model addressing both direct and indirect effects of student involvement and interaction" (p.195).

In other research, Pascarella and Terenzini (as cited in Metz, 2004) focused on student interactions with faculty; both inside and outside of the classroom, and the impact this time spent with faculty influenced student intent and persistence. It was the opinion

of these two researchers that the time spent with faculty members (whether formal or informal) was important to the academic integration of students and thereby essential to the students remaining in school (Wild & Ebbers, 2002). Both researchers recommended that when studying persistence and retention, future studies include race and gender as variables.

Criticism of Theoretical Frameworks

While looking at retention theories, one must examine some issues of concern with respect to these theories and minority students. There are critiques and scholarly debates as to the merit of these theories because the majority of retention and student attrition studies focus on students from four-year institutions (Pascarella et al., 1986).

In Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) review of the literature in *How College Affects Students* they noted that the research excluded two-year colleges from previous research and that the focus was on the four-year college. The researchers claim, "There remains insufficient evidence to conclude that factors that influence educational attainment are the same for two-year...institutions as for four-year institutions" (p. 414). Although community colleges and universities have some commonalities, the lack of studies that specifically address community colleges require a researcher to be cautious if attempting to generalize measures used in retention studies (Wild & Ebbers, 2002).

Tinto primarily focused his student departure theory on traditional-age, white, four-year college students; therefore various researchers have questioned the applicability to community college students (Hagedorn et al., 2001; Nora, 1993) as well as

applicability to non-white students (Rendon et al., 2000; Tierney, 1992). More specifically, Rendon et al. (2000) state:

Because interactionist retention theory adheres to some of the basic premises of the acculturation/assimilation framework, such as separation and incorporation, several researchers have challenged the way these processes have been conceptualized in relation to explaining minority student retention in college. In particular, the assumption that minority students must separate from their cultural realities and take responsibility to become incorporated into the college's academic and social fabric in order to succeed (with little or no concern to address systemic problems within institutions or to the notion that minority students are often able to operate in multiple contexts) becomes central to the critique of Tinto's student departure model (p. 128).

However, according to some quantitative researchers (Nora & Cabrera, 1996) there is evidence that establishes the validity of Tinto's student persistence theory; therefore this theory has enough merit to be utilized by this researcher to investigate factors and influences on EOPS student persistence and retention at LACC.

A History of Retention Programs

Retention programs first got their start as a result of policy makers and educators identifying a need for special consideration and assistance for minority students that were most in need of educational assistance to succeed in a collegiate setting. Although in recent years the issue of affirmative action has been the focus of many impassioned debates, retention programs were originally established to help undo the damaging effects of past and present racial discrimination in education (Foster, 2001). Affirmative action has been defined as programs to ensure full participation by those that have been historically excluded (or denied access) from participation in higher education and the work force (Garcia, 1997).

The implementation of affirmative action programs were believed to be a catalyst, intended to diversify the student body participating in higher education (Crawford, 2001). The commonly shared belief among many educators at that time was that affirmative action would be a vehicle for change that would create campuses, which transcend past and present injustices (Garcia, 1997). O’Neil (1975) asserts:

Clearly, the strongest case can be made for preferring or giving special consideration to those groups that are not only underrepresented in higher education but also disproportionately (a) are victims of overt racial or ethnic discrimination; (b) are socio-economically disadvantaged; (c) are excluded by standardized tests and other entrance criteria; and (d) are graduates of crowded, run down, and poorly staffed public schools where intense segregation persists. Most Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and American Indians meet these criteria. . .those groups clearly present the most compelling case for special consideration (p.150).

Since community colleges are the primary entry point for the post-secondary education of the vast majority of minority students (Nora & Rendon, 1990), it would seem logical that this is where an organizational belief developed that declares retention programs provide an opportunity for interested parties to redress the institutional “wrongs” perpetrated against minority students by assisting these students in persisting.

Multicultural Education

In higher education there is an increasing commitment to multiculturalism and an awareness of the need for multicultural education. Higher education institutions are being challenged to rethink the traditional modes of teaching and learning to explore new methods that will ensure that institutional access, academic success, and equal opportunity for social and career mobility are available and culturally appropriate. This is

particularly important for the increasing numbers of racially and ethnically diverse students at community colleges (Saenz, 2004).

Community colleges represent the rich ethnic and racial diversity so prevalent in American society (Boulard, 2003) and could benefit multicultural education. In *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, Banks & Banks (1995) provides education professionals with a rationale for utilizing multicultural education to improve academic achievements, which could be used in the retention of minority students at community colleges. The integration of principles and the practice of multicultural education in the community college setting provide for the inception of a variety of activities that are essential fundamentals for student persistence and retention.

In *Multicultural Education: Development, Dimension, and Challenges*, Banks (1993) explains the origin of multicultural education and explains its development from the civil rights movement. He contends that the impetus for multicultural education was a challenge to the inequities that students of color experienced in school and society (Banks & Banks, 1995). Moreover, Banks asserts that the focus of multicultural education and the origin of much of the research in this area are not only for the advancement of academic achievements of students of color, but also to increase educational equity for all students.

Banks (1993) puts forth five dimensions of multicultural education that assist in understanding the complex and multifaceted nature of this type of education. These dimensions are content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture. These dimensions and the basic notion of

multicultural education allow for the provision of opportunity for student integration and involvement (Banks, 1993).

The research literature proves a need exists for innovative programs that include multicultural education to improve minority student retention (Green, 1989). Glenn (2004) maintains that important influences specific to the retention of African American students are counseling services, career counseling, a helpful and understanding faculty, financial aid, minority faculty recruitment, and ethnic studies courses, i.e. multicultural educational courses. Multiculturalism is a tool to change (inside and outside the classroom) the cultural and perceptual foundation of a college's procedures and practices (Walters, 1996). The development of culturally relevant retention services has been shown to successfully retain minority students as well as increase the numbers of minority students in community colleges (Saenz, 2004).

Culturally relevant retention services. Many community colleges have attempted to address minority students' attrition by increasing retention through the use of retention programs with culturally relevant services (Zamani, 2000). Although many of these programs are not categorized as minority student programs, students of color are often the participants because many are low-income and first-generation (Zamani). These programs offer an opportunity to enrich learning success for minority students and allow them to be actively involved in the learning process (Tinto & Russo, 1994).

An example of one of these retention programs is the Puente Project. The Puente Project was developed by Felix Galaviz and Patricia McGrath in 1981 as a response to the low transfer rates of Latino community college students to four-year universities (Mendoza, 2005). This program originated in California to combat the high attrition rate

and low transfer rate of Hispanic community college students (Laden, 1998). The project motivates educationally underserved students to increase the retention and degree completion rates at community colleges by bringing Hispanic students together with Hispanic counselors and mentors that share a common experience with the students (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). The program has since expanded to serve educationally disadvantaged students from all races, but the majority of participants are Hispanic/Latino (Mendoza, 2005).

The Department of Education's TRIO programs are another type of successful retention programs that many minority students participate in; however, the TRIO program that was designed to assist students attending college is the Student Support Services (SSS) program. The federal TRIO programs include six outreach and support programs that seek to assist low-income first-generation students from middle school through completion of post baccalaureate study (Mahoney, 1998). Similar to the Puente Project, SSS initiatives provide academic support to students while addressing student concerns including cultural and emotional issues (Zamani, 2000).

Another approach to enhancing student retention is the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP). EOP provides services that enhance persistence and academic achievement for low-income students (Smith, 2005). Also, participation in EOP has been related to student retention and academic success (Fashola & Slavin, 1998).

All of the afore mentioned retention programs are especially important for minority students, as a method of response by community colleges to low retention rates of minorities (Esters & Mosby, 2007). Research shows that services offered by retention programs at institutions of higher education play an important role in assisting students to

make a “fit” with the institution (Smith, 2005). The culturally relevant services offered by these retention programs provide experiences that assist the student in integrating to the campus community, thereby increasing the likelihood of student persistence (Braxton et al., 2004).

Summary

In many community colleges there exist an effort to shape the institutional climate of the campus and classrooms to support individual and cultural differences in learning styles, value systems, and educational preferences (Saenz, 2004). Multicultural program standards require ethnic diversity staff training, cultural events, curriculum development, and educational planning (Walters, 1996). Therefore, in order to retain students, faculty and student services must share a common perspective in the development of multicultural education and diversity on campus (Powell, 1998).

While student services and individual characteristics are important factors in student retention, the campus environment is important to student persistence. Tinto (1975) popularized the idea that the fit between the student and the institution play an important role in the likelihood of persistence (Cabrera et al., 1993). Walters (1996) however provides cues on overcoming institutional barriers, “proactive efforts such as discussion forums (involving students, faculty, and staff) and orientations for new faculty and staff to the multicultural mission of the institution should be used to reinforce the importance and priority of multiculturalism” (p. 46). A campus climate that is inclusive of all students and has an environment of appreciation for difference is the goal that multicultural education can be utilized to attain. Embracing a multicultural spirit will

inevitably create a supportive learning environment for minority students (Walters, 1996). Therefore, colleges must address challenges to the production of a campus environment conducive to learning and acceptance of culture because a retention strategy cannot be successful if the campus environment is discouraging (Glenn, 2004; Hagedorn et al., 2001; Powell, 1998).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This study was designed to test research questions to examine students' attitudes and perceptions of persistence factors, as well as the use of support services and whether a relationship exists with term-to-term retention and persistence. This chapter discusses the research methodology, design and procedures for this study. Included in this chapter is a restatement of the research problem, the purpose for the study, a restatement of the research questions, as well as a description of the methodology of the study. Also included in this chapter is an outline of the research design, identification and description of the study population, data collection instruments and procedures, as well as procedures for data treatment.

Restatement of Problem, Purpose, and Research Questions

Much of the literature on retention and persistence of minority students has been focused on the characteristics of persisters and non-persisters; however, very few studies have investigated the strategies of retention programs and the participating students' perceptions of their effectiveness. This study attempts to ascertain what specific EOPS activities or services are perceived by African American students participating in EOPS, to impact their persistence and retention. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which, if at all, there is a relationship between the student retention and persistence of African American students enrolled at LACC, with participation in EOPS. Additionally, the problem was to ascertain what specific EOPS activities or services are perceived by African American students participating in EOPS, to impact their

persistence and retention. Ultimately, the goal of the study was to investigate the interaction of EOPS students with the program through the EOPS program services activities, as well as generate a theory of the current situation of African American EOPS students at LACC.

This study attempts to address the following questions:

1. Do African American students at Los Angeles City College that participate with Extended Opportunity Program and Services persist at a higher rate than African American non-Extended Opportunity Program and Services students?
2. What specific program activities do they believe contributed to their persistence?
3. What role does Extended Opportunity Program and Services play (in the opinion of the student) in increasing the retention of African American students at Los Angeles City College?
4. What is the pattern of involvement in program activities that contribute to their persistence?

Research Design

The research design for the study was one of mixed methods. Both quantitative methods and qualitative research methods were utilized in this study. The researcher used both perspectives by (first) collecting quantitative data as a basis for the collection and interpretation of the qualitative data, which is consistent with D. L. Morgan's theory on how to combine the two methods (Morgan, 1997). The quantitative research design is

descriptive in nature and includes analysis of results from a survey questionnaire, and the qualitative design includes an interview of five students, which was conducted after completion of the survey questionnaire.

Descriptive research refers to research used to describe the characteristics of a population by examining samples of that population (Smith & Glass, 1987). A cross-sectional survey research design as outlined by Terenzini (1980) will be utilized in the study to elicit information from African American EOPS students at LACC during the Spring 2008 semester (midway through the term), about effective retention strategies for students participating in EOPS at LACC. As consistent with cross-sectional research, this research design includes the collection of data from currently enrolled students at a selected point in time (Wiersma, 1980).

The qualitative research strategy used in this study is that of grounded theory.

Charmaz (2003) stated:

“To seek the respondent’s meaning, we must go further than the surface meanings or presumed meanings. We must look for views and values as well as acts and facts. We need to look for beliefs and ideologies as well as situations and structures” (p. 525).

Grounded theory studies are typically a qualitative research method that uses a systematized set of procedures to develop and inductively derive a grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

These methods were selected to inform the study because the quantitative portion of the study will enable the researcher to gain more of a view of the characteristics of the participants and provide a generalized opinion from participants, while the qualitative

portion will allow for the study to glean meaning about what students believe is needed from EOPS to assist them in persisting.

Methods. The degree-seeking African American EOPS students that have completed 30 units or more and the factors believed by the students to influence their retention and persistence were examined using information obtained from the Los Angeles City College student information system, a survey instrument and interviews of five purposefully selected students from this population. A purposive sample of five African American degree-seeking EOPS students, with an identified objective of vocational degree or transfer that have completed 30 units or more was conducted to determine interviewees. Rather than using another sampling method for the purposes of this study, purposeful sampling was used because it offered the researcher an opportunity to select participants because of their characteristics (Morse & Richards, 2002). Good participants can be characterized as those individuals that know the information required, have time, and are willing to participate and reflect on the phenomena of interest (Morse & Richards). Therefore, the researcher used purposeful sampling to select student participants that are representative of the group being studied (i.e. males and females, vocational and transfer objectives).

The individuals selected to participate in the interview process were contacted by the researcher via telephone to request their participation in the study. Upon their verbal consent, the five selected individuals were scheduled for a meeting time to meet with the researcher to complete their survey and then immediately after, their personal interview was conducted. After the identification of interviewees was completed, the survey instrument was sent via postal mail to the rest of the population. An identical survey

instrument, distinguishable only by color of the paper, was given to the interviewees prior to the interview for completion. The survey instrument can be found in the appendix section (see Appendix B) labeled EOPS Student Survey Questions.

The information from the student information system at LACC was obtained from the application for admission. The application for admission which is completed at the time of entry to the college serves as a general questionnaire from which information about the LACC African American students' age, initial educational goal, ethnicity, and gender will be retrieved. The application contains twenty-seven questions that all students must answer in order to be accepted for admission to the institution (see Appendix C). The researcher also utilized data collected by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) as well as the office of Management Information Systems (MIS) of LACC Extended Opportunity Programs and Services to identify student enrollment and unit completion.

Ultimately, the data was triangulated using a three-point approach. The researcher used a survey instrument, interview process, as well as existing persistence data. This approach provided the researcher an opportunity to elicit data from these three sources for coherence and congruence.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to collect and analyze data for use in this study. Using a listing of degree-seeking African American students in EOPS that enrolled at LACC in fall 2007 and registered for spring 2008 that are classified as sophomores (completed 30 units or more); the researcher collected and analyzed data obtained from

the student information system at LACC and the MIS database of Extended Opportunity Program and Services, as well as student responses to the survey questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The researcher analyzed the data trends of LACC EOPS degree-seeking African American students that have declared a transfer objective as well as those African American students in EOPS at LACC that are non-transfer, to show rates of retention and attrition for the two populations and ultimately analyze data obtained from questionnaires and interviews to examine student perceptions of EOPS.

Personal motive for the study. This study is of particular significance to the researcher because of the opportunity that was presented to study student perceptions of persistence and the role EOPS may play in that phenomenon. As an African-American educator (and former EOPS counselor) that is practicing in the community college system, the researcher has a unique perspective on EOPS and student retention services. It is through both personal and professional experiences that the researcher has acquired an understanding of the African American student experience; however, she now attempts to use these comprehensive experiences to objectively inform this research. This study is also a result of her commitment to good practice, which requires the further engagement in research that will work toward improving minority student retention.

It is also important to note the professionalism and career of the researcher. The researcher's career has included work with disadvantaged community college populations in the classroom as an instructor, as well as outside of the classroom as a counselor. For the past eight years the researcher has been employed in various community colleges in Los Angeles as well as other areas in Southern California. This career is demonstrative of

the level of commitment the researcher has to working with these populations for their advancement.

As an African American researcher that currently works in the community college setting, the researcher is aware that her interest in African Americans at Los Angeles City College may seem self-serving. As consistent with other researchers studying ethnic groups to which they belong, she will attempt to remain objective in the findings of the study and recognize any subjectivity she may have (Ladson-Billings, 1996). This study is intended to contribute to the body of literature a study that gives “voice” to the African American student experience at an urban community college. Ladson-Billings (1995) posits, “Teachers need not shy away from conducting their own research about their practice” (p. 163). Therefore, having served community college students in various roles (i.e. counselor, instructor, and coordinator) and shared in the experience of their successes and failures, the researcher believes it important to find out more about students’ perceptions of the impact of EOPS on their persistence.

Setting

The study took place at Los Angeles City College in Los Angeles, California. Los Angeles City College is located in the Hollywood area in central Los Angeles. This institution provides an appropriate place for a study of EOPS because it is the home of the largest EOPS population in the state. The researcher obtained a private office on campus within the Student Assistance Center within which the interviews were conducted. Many of the students at LACC frequent the Student Assistance Center for information and it offers a centrally located area on campus for students to meet.

Participants

The African American students in the study selected for completion of the EOPS student survey, were degree-seeking students that have completed 30 units or more that were also enrolled in Fall 2007 and registered for Spring 2008. For the purposes of this study, those individuals who have completed 30 units or more will be identified as sophomores.

There were 16,237 students attending Los Angeles City College in fall 2007, 1,746 of which identify as being of African American descent. Of the 16,237 students attending LACC, 2,946 of the students participated in EOPS during this time; 327 of which identify as being African American. From the population of 327 African American students in EOPS, 78 students have completed 30 or more units and are classified in the LACC student information system as degree-seeking.

For the purpose of this study, the sample population consisted of 63 degree-seeking EOPS African American students that have identified a transfer goal and 15 degree-seeking EOPS African American students that have identified a vocational goal, that were attending LACC during the fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters.

Data Collection

Data was collected from students first through a survey questionnaire then through personal interviews. The survey instrument and procedures followed for both phases of the study will be presented separately below. A copy of the survey instrument and interview questions can be found in the appendix (see Appendix B and D).

Survey instrument. An appropriate survey instrument that could be utilized for this study was found in a review of literature of previously conducted education research studies. The questionnaire is called *EOP&S Student Survey Questions* and was developed by Leonard Crawford, Ed.D. for a 2001 study of the retention and persistence of EOPS students at nine California community colleges. Dr. Crawford granted verbal and written consent for the use of his instrument in this study (see Appendix E).

The survey instrument was not used in this study in an attempt to manipulate variables, but rather to evaluate perceptions of existing services. This instrument includes twelve multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions used to solicit demographic information as well as measure level of use of EOPS support services, students' perceptions of campus connectedness, and the perceived benefits and impact of EOPS on them (the respondents). The survey also probed respondents about their perceptions of areas of EOPS that work/need improvement. Survey respondents for this study will be African American students participating in EOPS at Los Angeles City College.

The main focus areas of the survey are student support services provided by EOPS and the students' perception of their benefit from these services. The correlation between the survey questions and the research questions addressed in this study are demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Correlation Between Research Questions and Survey Focus Areas

Research Question	Survey Question(s)	Focus Area
1	N/A	Data about rates of term-to-term persistence obtained from student information system.
2	Questions 2, 4, 5, 8, and 12	Respondents' perception of most important service. Impact of activities and services on respondent. Respondents' perceived benefit of campus support services and activities.
3	Questions 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11	Student perceptions of campus connectedness and places on campus they felt most welcome. Respondents' perceived benefit of program's support services and activities.
4	Questions 1 and 3	Specific support services and frequency of use of services. Respondents' frequency of use of services.

The survey instruments were mailed to each student in the analysis unit, excluding those five students already selected for the follow-up interview, with instructions to complete the survey and return by postal mail, or return to the EOPS office in person. The five students already selected for the interview were to complete the survey instrument and turn it in, in person on the day of their interview.

Participants were asked to respond on the survey to a series of questions relative to the use and frequency of use of EOPS support services, as well as their perception of importance of the program and services. Using a checklist response and likert-type scale, participants will indicate their responses to each item.

Interviews. In addition to the survey questionnaire, the personal interviews with the five designated students (representing both genders) were conducted. The interviews

were conducted in a semi-structured format. The five students selected for the interview were selected through purposeful sampling by the researcher to be representative of the population. Potential interview participants were contacted via telephone to ask for the student's participation in the study and to arrange a time the student would come on campus to complete the survey and then immediately after engage in the follow-up interview. A private office on-campus at LACC in the Student Assistance Center was reserved for the student interviews.

As consistent with practice in qualitative research, the interviews were semi-structured (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). This format allowed the researcher the flexibility to ask a few central questions as well as probing questions relative to participants' responses. The semi-structured interview questions that used in the interview were designed around two major dimensions of program participation considered on the survey questionnaire, which are frequency of use and perceived benefits (see Appendix C). With permission from the participant, the interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

Materials related to methodology. Gathering data, identifying data sources, acquiring permission to conduct the study and utilize copy written materials, as well as the introduction of the survey with request for participation, were presented using the following materials:

1. Appendix A: California Code of Regulations, Title 5
2. Appendix B: Student Survey
3. Appendix C: College Application
4. Appendix D: Interview Questions

5. Appendix E: Signed Letter of Informed Consent for Participants
6. Appendix F: Letter of Authorization to Use Survey
7. Appendix G: Letter of Authorization to Conduct Study at LACC

Data Analysis

After the return of the questionnaires they were reviewed thoroughly for completeness and data from the questionnaire responses were then scored and processed. The data was processed by entering it into an Excel database for analysis using NCSS97. In preparation for data treatment, the Excel database were updated to change gender coding to 1 for male and 2 for females, and degree-seeking intent 1 for vocational and 2 for transfer. Data was then extracted from the Excel database to NCSS 97 for data treatment. Upon completion of the data entry, data was first analyzed using descriptive statistics. Statistical treatment of the data was applied to explore relationships between participation in activities and/or services and persistence. Results were reported in the form of frequency of response and means for the sample population. See Tables 2 through 22 in Chapter 4 for a detailed examination of findings.

The researcher answered the research questions in this study through: (a) statistical results to answer “Do African American students at Los Angeles City College that participate with Extended Opportunity Program and Services persist at a higher rate than African American non- Extended Opportunity Program and Services students?”, (b) statistical results and coded data from interviews to answer “What specific program activities do they believe contributed to their persistence”, (c) statistical results and coded interview data to answer “What role does Extended Opportunity Program and Services

play (in the opinion of the student) in increasing the retention of African American students at Los Angeles City College”, and (d) statistical results and coded interview data to answer “What is the pattern of involvement in program activities that contribute to their persistence?”

Upon the completion of the analysis of the data, the researcher made suggestions as well as recommendations for further study. These findings will be shared with all interested parties at Los Angeles City College, including the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and faculty and staff working in EOPS.

The grounded theory data analysis approach was used for the qualitative portion of this study to analyze data acquired in the five semi-structured interviews. A focused coding process was used, which included an extensive, in depth review of each transcribed interview (along with any memos developed by the researcher during the interview) for the identification of themes. The end result of this approach was a theory that emerged from the data.

Reliability and Validity

Survey. The survey instrument was tested for content validity during its development, and reviewed by five experts in the field that served as Jurors for the survey questionnaire (Crawford, 2001). Among these five experts were two doctoral faculty (one professor from University of California, Los Angeles and one professor from Pepperdine University), one research specialist working for the California Community College Chancellor’s Office and two educational consultants that specialize in educational evaluation. According to Crawford, a pilot test of the instrument was conducted with

fourteen continuing students from an EOPS program in Northern California that was not a part of the sample used for the original study. The researcher then used the Cronbach alpha to determine the instrument's reliability as related to internal consistency, and the results produced a coefficient that was within the range of internal consistency.

The researcher hypothesized that the African American students participating in the EOPS enrolled at LACC during fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters will have exhibited some level of success in persisting and will therefore be surveyed to determine what qualitative elements of program services they believe are associated with their retention and persistence. Most of the survey questions require a marked check response; however, there are a few short response items that were used to elicit specific information about students' on-campus experiences and perceptions of support services and activities. The last two questions are open-ended, requiring the student to make a personal evaluation of various facets of the EOPS program. In accordance with other research (Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1987), such information being sought concerns items such as utilization of student supportive services, frequency of contact with faculty, attitudes toward academic programs, students' educational and personal goals, as well as other variables believed to be associated with student attrition/retention decisions.

Interviews. Although some researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) question the relevance of reliability or validity in a qualitative study, in this study the researcher worked diligently to assure that the qualitative portion of the study could be found to be reliable and valid. Morse and Richards (2002) contend, "Qualitative researchers can and do defend their own work as solid, stable and correct" (p. 168). To that end, all possible strategies were used in this study to ensure that the study could be replicated with the

same results and the results are accurately reflecting the phenomenon (Morse & Richards).

IRB Requirements

The researcher was given preliminary authorization to later conduct this research (after IRB approval) through consent from the LACC Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Dean of Student Retention/EOPS Director, and the EOPS MIS Specialist, as well as participating EOPS Counseling faculty. The Dean of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for the evaluation of all LACC college data for the determination of a college profile, which includes all student data; thereby making this individual an integral part of the data collection process for this study. The Dean of Student Retention also serves as the EOPS Director and was therefore consulted because of her duty to oversee the LACC EOPS program, and her inclusion in this study was necessary to ensure the proper dissemination and collection of the survey instruments.

Much of the data used for the purposes of this study was obtained from the EOPS MIS Specialist and due to his expertise in EOPS data collection and interpretation, he was consulted. The EOPS Counseling faculty served as the responsible party for in-office survey collection so it was essential to receive their preliminary consent for participation.

The purpose of the research and the proposed research methods was outlined to the program administrators and final authorization from all parties was obtained. The EOPS Counselors were asked for their participation in disseminating survey instruments to participants and upon their agreement to assist in the project; the principal investigator received final authorization to proceed from the EOPS Director.

A formal application for IRB approval was submitted to Dr. Stephanie Woo, Chair of the Graduate and Professional School (GPS) IRB Review Board for Pepperdine University. The application was submitted for approval in the exempt category, since all participants will receive letters of informed consent outlining the purpose of the research study and survey procedures. An example of the letter of informed consent that participants will be asked to sign can be found in Appendix E. Also, the survey responses were kept anonymous and letters of informed consent stored apart from surveys to maintain this anonymity. Upon review of that application the IRB determined that this study met with the federal guidelines for exemption and approved the proposed research protocol. The approved protocol number assigned to this study is E0308D06.

Assumptions of the Study

This study was based upon a few assumptions. One of the assumptions in this study is that the information received from the Management Information Systems (MIS) office of LACC Extended Opportunity Programs and Services is accurate and complete. Participant data such as eligibility for the study, address, units completed, and racial/ethnic background information was obtained by the MIS office and extracted from the student information system at LACC. Also, the researcher assumes that in this study, the students' responses to the survey questions accurately reflect their views and personal opinions of retention strategies and activities employed at LACC.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study attempts to reveal information about African American student retention and persistence at Los Angeles City College in Extended Opportunity Program and Services, the scope of this study was restricted by various limitations. One such limitation is the composition of the sample. The sample will include African American students in EOPS that are identified as transfer and non-transfer degree-seeking sophomores (completed 30 units or more) that were enrolled in fall 2007 and registered for spring 2008. The sample of African American students included any student that self-identified as being African American and may exclude individuals of African descent that are not American (i.e. Jamaicans, Haitians, etc.).

Additionally, the researcher cannot account for the educational programs and services on campus at LACC that may have helped or hindered the success of the students in the study. Any programs or service that a student utilized which contributed or hindered their success is not controlled for in the study.

Another limitation of the study is that only those students agreeing to participate in the study were included. This means that any findings from this study pertaining to student perceptions cannot represent the views of all African American students at LACC but rather only the views of the select few that participated in the study.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations of the study were noted. The study is not a longitudinal study following the population over a few years, but rather takes a snapshot look at one academic year. Implications for practice from the results of this study must be

limited to local interest because only one California community college was involved in the study. The participants in this study were enrolled at Los Angeles City College and therefore the conclusions drawn from this study must be restricted to the local interest of the EOPS program and the institution. Also, African American students were the only racial/ethnic group involved in the study.

Chapter Four: Findings and Data Analysis

This chapter presents the results and findings as they relate to the afore-mentioned research questions. The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which, if at all, there is a relationship between the student retention and persistence of African American students enrolled at LACC, with participation in EOPS. This study examined student performance measures such as term-to-term persistence and retention, as well as African American student perceptions of the effectiveness of EOPS. Additionally, the study assessed what specific EOPS activities or services are perceived by African American students participating in EOPS, to impact their persistence and retention.

The study analyzed two groups of African American students participating in EOPS at Los Angeles City College. Purposeful sampling was utilized to obtain a sample for the study. The sample groups consisted of degree-seeking EOPS African American students that have identified a transfer goal and degree-seeking EOPS African American students pursuing a vocational goal that were attending LACC during the fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters.

The researcher derived the results presented in the following sections from the responses to the survey questionnaire disseminated to the sample population, as well as personal interviews conducted with five participants from the sample group, in an effort to obtain a description of EOP&S student perceptions of program activities and services that are associated with student retention and persistence. The following presentation of findings is designed to answer each of the research questions and the data analyses were conducted according to the process described in the previous chapter.

Population and Sample

The population of interest was African American students participating in Extended Opportunity Program and Services at Los Angeles City College. A purposive sample of 78 was identified consisting of all African American students in EOPS at Los Angeles City College that have acquired 30 units (or more) toward their educational objective of associate's degree or transfer. The final sample of 29 or a response rate of 37%, included students that identified as African American pursuing an educational objective that included the completion of an associate's degree or transfer program, that had acquired 30 units (or more) and had completed and returned the survey.

Demographics

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages for the items reported from the demographic section of the EOP&S Student Survey. In some instances the value of N (sample) may vary, due to the responses received from the participants.

Table 2

Sample that Completed the EOP&S Student Survey

Characteristic	N	%
Age		
35+	14	48.3
25-34	6	20.7
18-24	9	31
(Median Age is 33.7)		

(table continues)

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Males	8	27.6
Females	21	72.4
Educational Goal		
Associate's Degree	13	44.8
Transfer	16	55.2
Amount of Semesters in EOPS		
5+	11	39.3
4	6	21.4
3	5	17.9
2	4	14.3
1	2	7.1
Grade Point Average (GPA)		
4.0	0	0
3.5-3.9	2	8
3.0-3.4	10	40
2.5-2.9	11	48
2.0-2.4	0	0
less than 2.0	1	4
(Median for those with GPA is 2.99)		

The contents of Table 2 illustrate that the sample is mostly comprised of non-traditional age students that are predominately 35 years or older (48.3%) with a median age of 33, and female (72.4%). They are mostly transfer-bound students (55.2%) that are interested in completing a bachelor's degree program at a 4-year college or university, that have also been in EOPS at LACC for 5 semesters or more (39.3%). The median GPA for these students is 2.99 and the majority of the students have a GPA within the range of 2.5 – 2.9.

Description of Interview Participants

As illustrated in Table 3, a total of five participants were interviewed. Both students pursuing a vocational degree and students pursuing transfer were of particular interest in this study, so measures were taken to assure that interviewees were representative of both groups. Consequently, two participants with a vocational degree objective and three participants with a transfer objective were interviewed. Beyond the restrictions used to define the population for the study, no other restrictions were imposed for interview participants.

Table 3 demonstrates the demographic characteristics of interview participants by age, gender, educational goal, length of time in EOPS program and grade point average. These characteristics are similar to the demographic information provided by questionnaire respondents; however there are some differences that exist between the two groups.

Table 3

Interview Participants

Characteristic	N	%
Age		
35+	1	20
25-34	0	0
18-24	4	80
(Median Age is 21)		

(table continues)

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Males	2	40
Females	3	60
Educational Goal		
Associate's Degree	2	40
Transfer	3	60
Amount of Semesters in EOPS		
5+	2	40
4	2	40
3	0	0
2	1	20
1	0	0
Grade Point Average (GPA)		
4.0	0	0
3.5-3.9	0	0
3.0-3.4	2	40
2.5-2.9	2	40
2.0-2.4	0	0
less than 2.0 (Median GPA is 2.8)	1	20

The age distribution of interview respondents was different than questionnaire respondents. The age range for interviewees was 20-44. A large majority of interview respondents, 80%, were 18-24 whereas only 31% of questionnaire respondents were in this age group. In essence, the majority of interview respondents were from a traditional age student population and the majority of questionnaire respondents were from a non-traditional age population.

The distribution of interview respondents by gender is also slightly different than the questionnaire respondents. Although the interview participants were almost equally divided between males and females, the questionnaire respondents were not this equally distributed. Forty percent of interviewees were male, while only 27.6% of questionnaire respondents were male.

As with questionnaire respondents, the majority of interviewees declared transfer as their educational objective and have completed 4 or more semesters in EOPS. Also, the grade point average for interviewees was consistent with that which was reported for questionnaire respondents. The median age for interview respondents is 2.8 and the median age for questionnaire respondents is 2.99.

Findings Related to Research Questions

The following discussion provides the analysis of data compiled to address the research questions. A concise summary has been developed to clearly answer each of the research questions in an organized manner.

Research question 1. Do African American students at Los Angeles City College that participate with Extended Opportunity Program and Services persist at a higher rate than African American non-Extended Opportunity Program and Services students?

In response to this research question the researcher utilized data provided by the LACC EOPS Management Information Systems Office in coordination with the LACC Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Overall analysis of the data from the sample population suggests that African American students at LACC in EOPS do not persist at a higher rate than non-EOPS African American students in the general student population

beyond one academic year (see Table 4). The data illustrated that African American EOPS students do persist at a higher rate than African American non-EOPS students in their first academic year (two semesters); however, after that first academic year the non-EOPS African American students tend to persist at a higher rate than their counterparts. Additionally, the data shows that non-African American students in EOPS are persisting at a higher rate than non-African American non-EOPS students (see Table 5).

Table 4

Persistence Rates Among LACC Full-time African American EOP&S and Non-EOP&S Students For the Academic Years of 2004 through 2008

2004-2005	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment	79 100%	50 100%	0%
Spring Enrollment	59 74.68%	35 70%	4.68%
2005-2006	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment	36 45.57%	26 52%	-6.43%
Spring Enrollment	26 32.91%	17 34%	-1.09%
2006-2007	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment	27 34.18%	17 34%	0.18%
Spring Enrollment	19 24.05%	18 36%	-11.95%

(table continues)

2007-2008	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment	14 17.72%	12 24%	-6.28%
Spring Enrollment	15 18.99%	12 24%	-5.01%

Table 5

Persistence Rates Among LACC Full-time African American and Non-African American EOP&S and Non-EOP&S Students for the Academic Years of 2004 through 2008

2004-2005	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment			
Non African American	373 100%	376 100%	0%
African American	79 100%	50 100%	0%
Spring Enrollment			
Non African American	337 90.35%	306 81.38%	8.97%
African American	59 74.68%	35 70%	4.68%
2005-2006	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment			
Non African American	284 76.14%	248 65.96%	10.18%
African American	36 45.57%	26 52%	-6.43%
Spring Enrollment			
Non African American	223 59.79%	197 52.39%	7.39%

(table continues)

2005-2006	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Spring Enrollment			
African American	26 32.91%	17 34%	-1.09%
2006-2007	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment			
Non African American	193 51.74%	153 40.69%	11.05%
African American	27 34.18%	17 34%	0.18%
Spring Enrollment			
Non African American	161 43.16%	130 34.57%	8.59%
African American	19 24.05%	18 36%	-11.95%
2007-2008	EOP&S	NON-EOP&S	DIFFERENCE
Fall Enrollment			
Non African American	126 33.78%	97 25.80%	7.98%
African American	14 17.72%	12 24%	-6.28%
Spring Enrollment			
Non African American	111 29.76%	80 21.28%	8.48%
African American	15 18.99%	12 24%	-5.01%

The data obtained revealed that the African American EOPS students exhibited an average four year (from 2004 to 2008) term-to-term persistence rate of 35.44%, while non-EOPS African American students had an average persistence rate of 39.14% during this same time period. The data indicates that non-EOPS African American students out persist their counterparts in EOPS by an average of 3.7% over the four year period.

Additionally, the data proved that although African American EOPS students were not persisting at a higher rate than African American non-EOPS students, non-African American EOPS students do persist at a higher rate than non-African American non-EOPS students (see Table 5). The average rate of persistence for non-African American EOPS students during a four year (2004 to 2008) period is 54.96%, while non-African American non-EOPS students have an average rate of 46.01% during this same time period. Of the non-African American students at LACC, the students participating in EOPS during the four year period persisted at a higher rate than non-EOPS non-African American students by an average of 8.95%. Therefore, in response to Research Question 1; the African American students in EOPS do not persist at a higher rate than non-EOPS African American students.

Research question 2. What specific program activities do they believe contributed to their persistence?

The findings indicate that African American students in EOPS do not persist at a higher rate; however, there were specific program activities and/or support services¹ they believe contributed to their persistence. The respondents reported (in response to Student Survey Question 4) that there was one specific program activity or service that they believed kept them enrolled in college (see Table 6). A frequency distribution was performed and the results with sums of the frequency of responses and mean scores for individual EOPS activities and services are presented in Table 6.

¹ EOPS program activities/services that students are required to participate in include book service, educational and academic counseling, orientation, priority registration and progress monitoring.

Table 6

Sum and Means of Responses to One Activity or Service that Influenced Persistence

Service/Activity	Total	Sum	Mean
Book Service	29	12	0.41
Ed. & Academic Planning	29	5	0.17
Academic Counseling	29	4	0.13
Grant Money	29	3	0.10
Personal Counseling	29	1	0.03
Career Guidance	29	1	0.03
Peer Advising	29	1	0.03
Tutoring	29	1	0.03
Other	29	1	0.03
EOP&S Orientation	29	0	0
Transfer Services	29	0	0
Club Activities	29	0	0
Priority Registration	29	0	0
Basic Skills	29	0	0
Progress Monitoring	29	0	0
Summer Readiness	29	0	0
Emergency Loans	29	0	0
Cultural Events	29	0	0
Child Care	29	0	0

(table continues)

Service/Activity	Total	Sum	Mean
Mentor program	29	0	0

In response to Student Survey Question 2 that asks participants to select the one *most important* EOP&S service or program activity that they believe contributed to their persistence and success in college, a description of responses is provided (see Table 7). The survey results confirm that the majority of respondents believe that assistance with textbook purchases is the *most important* service that helps them to persist. More than half of the respondents (55.2%) ranked book service, followed by academic counseling (20.7%), as the most important service. Educational/academic planning was ranked third by respondents (10.3%) as the most important service (see Table 7).

Table 7

Frequency and Percent of Response to Most Important EOP&S Service or Program Activity That Contributed Most to Persistence

Service/Activity	Frequency	Percent of Response
Book Service	16	55.2
Academic Counseling	6	20.7
Educational & Academic Planning	3	10.3
EOP&S Orientation	1	3.45
Tutoring	1	3.45
Grant Money	1	3.45

(table continues)

Service/Activity	Frequency	Percent of Response
Personal Counseling	1	3.45
Transfer Services	0	0
Club Activities	0	0
Priority Registration	0	0
Career Guidance	0	0
Peer Advising	0	0
Basic Skills	0	0
Progress Monitoring	0	0
Summer Readiness	0	0
Emergency Loans	0	0
Cultural Events	0	0
Child Care	0	0
Mentor program	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	29	100

The researcher examined the responses to Survey Question 5 to identify the least helpful support services as reported by respondents (see Table 8). This assessment was conducted to provide a contrasting viewpoint to the responses elicited from Survey Questions 2 and 4, as well as to assist the researcher in understanding the respondents' overall perception of the benefit of program services. The analysis of the benefit the

twenty EOPS services provides to students reveals that the respondents believe that EOP&S Orientation is the *least helpful* service provided (see Table 8).

Table 8

The Least Helpful EOPS Service Frequency of Response and Mean Percentage

List of Services	Number	Sum	Mean
EOP&S Orientation	29	5	0.17
Club Activities	29	4	0.14
Summer Readiness	29	4	0.14
Other	29	4	0.14
Child Care	29	3	0.10
Peer Advising	29	2	0.07
Grant Money	29	2	0.07
Priority Registration	29	1	0.03
Tutoring	29	1	0.03
Basic Skills	29	1	0.03
Personal Counseling	29	1	0.03
Progress Monitoring	29	1	0.03

Survey Question 8 asked participants to identify the college course they believed provided the most help for their success in college. Although EOPS offers a student success course, designed to provide students with an academic course that assists them in cultivating the skills necessary for academic success, none of the students selected this

option when asked about academic courses. The students predominately reported English as the course that assisted them the most. English was selected by approximately 45% of respondents, while Social Science was the next most frequently selected type of college course with 17% of respondents selecting it. These courses are all considered to be traditional courses; however if Psychology and Sociology were to be added to Social Science, since they are both courses within the area of social science, the combined selection result would indicate approximately 38% selection by respondents (see Table 9).

Table 9

Frequency and Percent of Response to the College Class or Course that Provided the Most Help For Your College Success

Class/Course	Frequency	Percent of Response
English	13	44.83
Social Science	5	17.24
Psychology	4	13.79
Sociology	2	6.9
Math	1	3.45
Science	1	3.45
Art	1	3.45
Humanities	1	3.45
Personal Enrichment	1	3.45

The EOPS students surveyed for this study were asked to report their perceived degree of benefit for each of the campus services listed in Survey Question 12. This survey question was designed to provide another view point to examine whether students believe general campus support services contribute to their persistence. The student's belief of the level of benefit of the activity or service was measured according to their responses of *extremely beneficial to never used*. Those responses that were reported as *never used* were treated as missing values when calculating mean scores for responses since they have no bearing on the degree of benefit for that service.

The analysis reveals that Financial Aid Grants and Educational Planning were reported by a preponderance of participants as the most beneficial campus service. The findings in Table 10 are consistent with those in Table 11, which shows little difference in the students' frequency of responses (exhibited in Table 10) and the mean scores for each service (exhibited in Table 11). The mean score reports in Table 10 illustrate that the smaller mean values indicate more feelings of benefit (see Table 11). Overall, the findings reveal that Financial Aid Grants and Education Planning remain the two most beneficial services according to participants.

Table 10

Rank Order of Campus Services/Activities Reported Benefit by Percent of Frequency

Service/ Activity	Extremely Beneficial	Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Did not Benefit	Waste of Time	Never Used
Financial Aid Grants	82.8	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8

(table continues)

Service/ Activity	Extremely Beneficial	Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Did not Benefit	Waste of Time	Never Used
Educational Planning	65.5	20.7	3.4	0.0	0.0	10.3
Registration	58.6	27.5	7	0.0	0.0	7
General Counseling	48.3	27.6	7	3.4	3.4	10.3
Campus Tutoring	48.3	24	7	0.0	0.0	20.7
Orientation	41.4	31	13.8	3.4	3.4	7
Student Activities	34.5	17.2	13.8	3.4	3.4	27.6
Early Alert	27.6	10.3	7	3.4	0.0	51.7
College Work Study	24	17.2	0.0	7	0.0	51.7
Cultural Events	20.7	20.7	17.2	3.4	0.0	37.9
Campus Workshops	20.7	31	3.4	3.4	0.0	41.4
Awards Ceremony	17.2	13.8	7	10.3	0.0	51.7
Mentoring Program	17.2	10.3	3.4	7	0.0	62.1
Matriculation	13.8	20.7	3.4	3.4	0.0	58.6
Campus Child Care	13.8	7	0.0	7	0.0	72.4

Table 11

Rank Order of Campus Services/Activities by Mean Benefit Scores

EOPS Service	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Financial Aid Grants	25	1.04	0.20	1	5

(table continues)

EOPS Service	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Educational Plan	26	1.30	0.55	1	5
Registration	27	1.44	0.64	1	5
Tutoring	23	1.48	0.67	1	5
Early Alert Monitoring	14	1.71	0.99	1	5
Counseling	26	1.73	1.04	1	5
College Work Study	14	1.78	1.05	1	5
Campus Workshops	17	1.82	0.81	1	5
Orientation	27	1.89	1.05	1	5
Matriculation	12	1.91	0.90	1	5
Student Activities	21	1.95	1.16	1	5
Campus Mentoring Program	11	2	1.18	1	5
Campus Child Care	8	2	1.30	1	5
Campus Cultural Events	18	2.05	0.94	1	5
Campus Awards Ceremony	14	2.21	1.19	1	5

For further examination of the relationship between campus services/activities with student outcomes such as grade point average and semesters in EOPS program, the researcher produced a correlation matrix. Using the PASW version 17 (SPSS statistical package) the researcher used the Spearman’s Rank-Difference Coefficient Correlation procedure to analyze the data to obtain correlation coefficients for all of the campus services/activities listed in Survey question 12. This procedure was used to show if there

was a possibility that one set of numbers (i.e. grade point average or student's completed semesters in the program) had an effect on another set of numbers (i.e. perception of benefit of service/activity).

The findings from this analysis yielded no statistically significant correlations for any of the services and/or activities with grade point average. Also, there were no statistically significant correlations for any of the services and/or activities with semesters in the program except for Orientation and General Counseling. The analysis reveals that there is a mild negative correlation (-.524) between Orientation and semesters in the program (see Table 12), as well as a fairly negative correlation (-.398) between General Counseling and semesters in the program (see Table 13).

Table 12

Spearman's Rank Difference Coefficient Correlation for Campus Orientation

Correlations

		Semester	GPAx	ax
Spearman's rho	Semester	1.000	-.332	-.524**
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.091	.005
	N	27	27	27
	GPAx			
	Correlation Coefficient	-.332	1.000	.264
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.	.183
	N	27	27	27
	ax			
	Correlation Coefficient	-.524**	.264	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.183	.
	N	27	27	27

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 13

Spearman's Rank Difference Coefficient Correlation for General Counseling

Correlations

		Semester	GPAx	bx
Spearman's rho	Semester	1.000	-.230	-.398*
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.259	.044
	N	26	26	26
	GPAx			
	Correlation Coefficient	-.230	1.000	.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.259	.	.803
	N	26	26	26 26
	bx			
	Correlation Coefficient	-.398*	.051	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.803	.
	N	26	26	26

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These findings suggest that there is an inverse relationship that exists with Orientation and semesters in the program, as well as General Counseling and semesters in the program. More specifically, these findings suggest that the students that believe Orientation and/or General Counseling are of benefit to them are those individuals that have completed more semesters in the program. Moreover, the more semesters in EOPS the student completed the more likely they were to report deriving benefit from the campus Orientation and/or General Counseling.

In answer to the portion of Research Question 2 that asks *what specific program activities the students believe contributed to their persistence*, the respondents

overwhelmingly cited book service to be the most influential in their persistence as well as the most important in contributing to their overall academic success in college. Also, respondents reported deriving some level of benefit from general campus services and activities.

Research question 3. What role does Extended Opportunity Program and Services play (in the opinion of the student) in increasing the retention of African American students at Los Angeles City College?

Information was gathered from an open-ended question (Survey Question 6), which asks respondents to indicate the department on campus that was the most expressive in providing a welcoming atmosphere for students. This question was intended to gather information about the location on campus that was the most likely to foster a sense of belonging in students. The results indicate that 44.8% of the respondents report EOP&S as the campus department that made them feel most welcome (see Table 14).

Survey Question 7 asks the students to indicate the department on campus they have the *best personal connection* with. The researcher used this question to gather information about the location on campus that provided the most sense of connectedness for the students. As shown in Table 15, 58% of respondents selected EOP&S as the department with the best personal connection and 34% indicated they had the best personal connections with Other campus departments. Counseling and Transfer Center once again followed these departments (as third and fourth in selection) with a selection rate of 3.5%.

Table 14

Frequency and Percent of Response to Most Welcoming On-Campus Department

Department	Frequency	Percent of Response
EOP&S	13	44.8
Other	7	24.1
Counseling	3	10.3
Other	7	24.1
Counseling	3	10.3
Transfer Center	2	6.9
Student Activities	2	6.9
Admissions	1	3.5
Financial Aid	1	3.5

Table 15

Frequency and Percent of Response to On Campus Department with Best Personal Connection

Department	Frequency	Percent of Response
EOP&S	17	58.6
Other	10	34.4
Counseling	1	3.5
Transfer Center	1	3.5

Survey Question 9 asks the students to select the type of individual they believe influenced their persistence. Although the category of Individual Instructor received the most responses (11) with 38% of respondents selecting it; 17% of respondents selected EOP&S Counselor, 10% selected Individual EOP&S Staff and 3% selected EOP&S Peer Advisor as the types of individuals that influenced their persistence the most (see Table 16).

Table 16

Number and Frequency of Response to Individual Who Most Influenced

Individual	Number	Sum	Mean
Individual Instructor	29	11	.38
EOP&S Counselor	29	5	.17
Other	29	4	.13
Individual EOP&S Staff	29	3	.10
College Counselor	29	2	.07
Another Student	29	2	.07
Financial Aid Staff	29	1	.03
EOP&S Peer Advisor	29	1	.03

The participants were asked to rate the importance of the EOPS program to them in Survey Question 10. This question was designed to assess the overall importance of

the program to the respondent, irrespective of their perception of individual program services and activities. All of the participants had a favorable response to this question indicating that EOPS has some level of importance to them. The overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents reported that EOPS was *very important* to them, while the rest of the respondents (17%) rated EOPS as *important* (see Table 17).

Table 17

Rating of the Importance of EOPS

Rating of Importance	Frequency	Percent of Response
Very Important	24	83%
Important	5	17%
Somewhat Important	0	0%
Not Important	0	0%
Waste of Time	0	0%

Survey Question 11 asked participants to rate the benefit of EOP&S activities and services, and record how these support services helped them to persist. The student’s belief of the level of benefit of the activity or service was measured according to their responses of *extremely beneficial* to *never used*. Those responses that were reported as *never used* were treated as missing values when calculating mean scores for responses since they have no bearing on the degree of benefit for that service.

As shown in Table 18 and 19, a strong majority of participants felt as though the extremely beneficial EOPS services and/or activities are Book Service and Educational Plans, while the service they believed provided the least benefit to them was EOP&S Orientation. The findings also revealed little difference in the students' frequency of responses (exhibited in Table 18) and the mean scores for each service (exhibited in Table 19). The findings in Table 19 illustrate that the smaller mean values indicate more feelings of benefit (see Table 19). Ultimately, the findings reveal that Book Service and Education Plans remain the two most beneficial services according to participants.

Table 18

Rank Order of EOPS Services/Activities Reported Benefit by Percent of Frequency

Service/ Activity	Extremely Beneficial	Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Did not Benefit	Waste of Time	Never Used
Book Service	89.6	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	7
Education Plan	82.8	13.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4
Priority Registration	65.5	24.1	3.4	6.9	0.0	0.0
EOP&S Counseling	58.6	31	6.9	0.0	0.0	3.5
EOPS Orientation	48.3	27.6	3.4	6.9	10.3	3.4
Mutual Responsibility Contract	44.8	20.7	17.2	3.4	0.0	13.8
EOP&S Tutoring	34.5	24.1	10.3	0.0	0.0	31
EOP&S Workshops	31	24.1	10.3	0.0	0.0	34.5

(table continues)

Service/ Activity	Extremely Beneficial	Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Did not Benefit	Waste of Time	Never Used
Progress Monitoring	25	25	3.6	3.6	7.1	35.7
Matriculation	20.7	20.7	3.4	0.0	0.0	55.2
Mentoring Program	20.7	17.2	3.4	3.4	3.4	51.7
Peer Advising	20.7	10.3	3.4	10.3	3.4	51.8
Awards Ceremony	20.7	10.3	3.4	6.9	0.0	58.7
EOP&S Work Study	20.7	10.3	3.4	3.4	0.0	62.2
Cultural Events	17.2	10.3	13.8	3.4	0.0	55.2
Summer Readiness	17.2	10.3	6.9	6.9	3.4	55.2
EOP&S Child Care	13.8	10.3	0.0	3.4	3.4	69

Table 19

Rank Order of EOP&S Services/Activities by Mean Benefit Scores

EOPS Service	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Book Service	27	1.04	0.19	1	5
Educational Plan	28	1.14	0.36	1	5
EOP&S Grants	24	1.38	0.65	1	5
Counseling	28	1.46	0.64	1	5
Priority Registration	29	1.52	0.87	1	5

(table continues)

EOPS Service	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Matriculation	13	1.62	0.65	1	5
EOP&S Tutoring	20	1.65	0.75	1	5
EOP&S Workshops	19	1.68	0.75	1	5
EOP&S Work Study	11	1.73	1.01	1	5
Mutual Responsibility Contract	25	1.76	0.93	1	5
EOP&S Awards Ceremony	12	1.92	1.16	1	5
Mentoring Program	14	2	1.24	1	5
EOP&S Orientation	28	2	1.36	1	5
EOP&S Cultural Events	13	2.08	1.04	1	5
Progress Monitoring	18	2.11	1.32	1	5
EOP&S Child Care	9	2.11	1.45	1	5
EOP&S Peer Advising	14	2.29	1.44	1	5
Summer Readiness	13	2.30	1.38	1	5

The researcher examined the relationship between EOPS services/activities with student outcomes such as grade point average and semesters in EOPS program, through the production of a correlation matrix. Using the PASW version 17 (SPSS statistical package) the researcher used the Spearman's Rank-Difference Coefficient Correlation procedure to analyze the data elicited from Survey Question 11. As stated earlier in this chapter, this procedure was used to show if there was a possibility that one set of

numbers (i.e. grade point average or student's completed semesters in the program) had an effect on another set of numbers (i.e. perception of benefit of service/activity).

The findings from this analysis yielded no statistically significant correlations for any of the services and/or activities with grade point average. Also, there were no statistically significant correlations for any of the services and/or activities with semesters in the program except for EOP&S Orientation and EOP&S Grants. The analysis reveals that there is a fairly negative correlation (-0.378) between EOP&S Orientation and semesters in the program (see Table 20), as well as a mild positive correlation (0.415) between EOP&S Grants and semesters in the program (see Table 21).

Table 20

Spearman's Rank Difference Coefficient Correlation for EOP&S Orientation

Correlations

		A	Sem_in_prog	GPA
Spearman's rho	A	1.000	-.378*	.235
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.048	.229
	N	28	28	28
Semester_in_program	Correlation Coefficient	-.378*	1.000	-.245
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.	.209
	N	28	28	28
GPA	Correlation Coefficient	.235	-.245	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.229	.209	.
	N	28	28	28

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 21

Spearman's Rank Difference Coefficient Correlation for EOP&S Grants

Correlations

		Sem_in_pro	GPA	E
Spearman's rho	Semester_in_program	1.000	-.273	.415*
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.198	.044
	N	24	24	24
GPA	Semester_in_program	-.273	1.000	-.344
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.198	.	.100
	N	24	24	24
E	Semester_in_program	.415*	-.344	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.100	.
	N	24	24	24

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These findings suggest that the students that believe EOP&S Orientation is of benefit to them are those individuals that have completed more semesters in the program. More specifically, the more semesters in the program a student has completed, the more beneficial they believe EOP&S Orientation to be. Also, the results show that there is a positive correlation between EOP&S Grants and semesters in the program, which means that the more semesters in the program the student completed they were more likely to report EOP&S Grants as not very beneficial to them.

Overall, the results from the various analyses indicate that these students feel more welcomed by EOPS and have a greater sense of personal connectedness to EOPS

than any other campus department. They also report that individuals affiliated with EOPS strongly influenced their persistence, more than most other departments. Additionally, a strong majority of students reported deriving some sort of significant benefit from all of the EOPS services and activities. In summation, the findings demonstrate that the role of EOPS in increasing the retention of these students (in their opinion) is pivotal.

Research question 4. What is the pattern of involvement in program activities that contribute to their persistence?

In an effort to examine the pattern of involvement in program activities that contributes to persistence the researcher must analyze various elements using a comprehensive approach. The research findings demonstrate that the African American EOPS students at LACC listed book service as well as educational & academic planning to be the top two most frequently used services and activities. Among the reported top five most frequently used services and activities, priority registration, academic counseling and EOP&S orientation are also listed by the students. These results also revealed that the next listed services in ascending order are all academic support services (i.e. career guidance, transfer services and tutoring). Table 22 provides a detailed description of student responses and frequency of use of services and/or program activities in rank order, provided in response to EOP&S Student Survey Question 1.

Table 22

Frequency and Percent of Response to EOP&S Services and Program Activities Used on a Regular Basis

Services	Frequency	Percent of Response
Book Service	25	86.2
Educational & Academic Planning	23	79.3
Priority Registration	21	72.4
Academic Counseling	18	62.1
EOP&S Orientation	18	62
Career Guidance	15	51.7
Transfer Services	12	41.4
Tutoring	10	34.5
Personal Counseling	9	31
Grant Money	8	27.6
Club Activities	7	24.1
Progress Monitoring	6	20.7
Basic Skills	4	13.8
Cultural Events	3	10.3
Emergency Loans	2	6.9
Summer Readiness	1	3.5
Other	1	3.5

Table 23 shows the incidence of use of the EOP&S services participants reported as the most important. In response to EOP&S Student Survey Question 3, 86% of the respondents reported that they utilized the most important EOP&S service more than 3 times (see Table 22). Approximately 59% of respondents indicated that they utilized the most important EOP&S service 3 to 6 times. Also, almost 7% of students reported that they utilized this most important service 12 or more times.

Table 23

Incidence of Use by Frequency and Percent of Response for EOP&S Services

Incidence of Use	Frequency	Percent of Response
None	0	0
1 to 3	4	13.8
3 to 6	17	58.6
6 to 9	6	20.7
9 to 12	0	0
12 or more	2	6.9
Total	29	100

Further examination of Table 7 (findings presented earlier in the study) reveals there were two major areas of classification developed to group the services the participants cited most. As consistent with the research conducted by Crawford (2001), the two areas used for classification are (1) tangible services (2) academic related

services. Within these two areas are the seven services and activities that were most cited by the participants of this study as contributing to their persistence. The tangible services most cited by respondents were book service and grant money, while the academic related services cited included: orientation, academic counseling, tutoring, educational and academic planning and personal counseling.

The findings demonstrate that in answer to Research Question 4, the pattern of involvement that appears to contribute to their persistence includes use of tangible services (e.g. book service) on a regular basis and use (i.e. three or more times) of the EOPS services believed by the student to be most important in contributing to their academic success.

Analysis of Findings from Interviews with Participants

Personal interviews were conducted with five of the survey participants that are degree-seeking African American EOPS students at LACC that have completed 30 units or more. The interview portion of the study is to document the personal observations and experiences of these students to provide a qualitative dimension to the study. More specifically, the interviews were conducted to illuminate the students' perceptions of EOPS, the program's effectiveness and the quality of the services provided by EOPS at LACC. Pseudonyms were used for participants in the data analysis and reports of findings.

The interviewee responses collected supplemented the data elicited from the survey instrument. Comments provided in response to the interview questions showed few commonalities in theme and provided the researcher with additional insight into the

students' perceptions of the role of EOPS in their persistence. The personal experiences and characteristics of interview participants will provide valuable lessons for the enhancement of the EOPS program, as well as provide the researcher with additional information necessary to understand the experiences of African American students in EOPS at LACC.

The participants' interviews were reviewed and analyzed by the researcher for themes that emerged reflecting their experiences with EOPS. The personal interviews explored these students' perceptions of their lived experiences with EOPS and provided a description of factors perceived by the students to impact the effectiveness of the program. The main categories of factors include program activities, services and the student's program involvement. Table 24 lists the factors perceived by students to impact the effectiveness of EOPS.

Table 24

Overall Factors Perceived by Students to Impact the Effectiveness of EOPS

Activities

- Educational planning
- Counseling

Services

- Book grants
- Financial Assistance
 - Book service
 - Transportation assistance
- Transfer Services
- Academic and Social Support

(table continues)

Program Involvement

- Services not utilized
 - Least helpful services and activities
-

The participants' reports of their pattern of involvement with EOPS program activities varied. Of the five participant responses, four participants reported that they were referred to join EOPS. The participants specified that another individual (i.e. friend or counselor) informed them of the benefits of participation in EOPS and thus, they were encouraged to apply to join the program. Based upon the initial introduction to EOPS through a referral, the participants developed some preconceived ideas and expectations of the services provided and of EOPS (as a program). The participants reported that they expected for EOPS to be very helpful to students through assistance with textbook purchases as well as support through counseling; however, none reported any referrals that included discussion of the expected level of involvement once in the program.

In the subsequent section, the researcher has provided a brief description of the interview participants², as well as the interview findings.

Heidi- Grateful for EOPS and Maximizing the Resource. Heidi presented herself as somewhat reserved but very friendly. She is 23 years old and is the first of her family to attend college. Having been raised in an impoverished section of South Central Los Angeles, she is the only child of a single mother that barely completed her high school education. Her mother's experiences with lackluster jobs she obtained to support Heidi and herself have made a significant impact on Heidi and motivated her to pursue higher education so that she can follow a career path that she likes. She often pondered the

² All names used are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participant.

questions before answering, wanting very much to give the most thought possible before providing a response. She also seemed to delight in the opportunity to give voice to her personal experience.

Heidi believes that there were some EOPS program activities that were essential to her academic success. Heidi credited EOPS with helping her with her academic career and remarked, “It helped me to be able to see what I need to do to graduate. I think it is really important” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). She mentioned educational/academic planning and counseling as the specific program activities that she believes contributed to her ability to persist. Heidi acknowledged that the process of educational/academic planning helped to guide her in her academic pursuits. Also, she noted that educational/academic planning and counseling are what really encouraged her to finish school.

While reflecting upon her experiences with EOPS counselors she said, “The counselors there really helped me to get through school” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). She describes the EOPS counseling to be so important to her that even if the program did not offer any financial assistance to her, she would continue to participate in the program just to have access to, and engage in, the counseling sessions. Heidi recalled a specific incidence with her counselor and credited that relationship with helping her in her time of need so that she could continue in school. She stated, “I remember a time and I went to you for support...and I just felt like really comfortable talking to you and I felt like you guys really helped me” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). These activities provided her with the necessary confidence and encouragement she felt necessary to continue in the face of adversity.

Heidi said, “I’m really grateful for the services they provide because I don’t know how I would have made it if I didn’t have EOPS” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). As mentioned in Table 7 from the survey findings, Heidi also credited Book Service as the most important service. When explaining why she selected book service as the most important service, Heidi remarked, “I don’t think I could have afforded the books if I didn’t have the book voucher and of course we need books for the semester classes” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). She credits EOPS services (such as book service) with providing her with necessary resources. Heidi commented on the importance of the services to her by saying, “Most of all I use the book vouchers...that really helped me” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). She also shared that the financial assistance (i.e. book service and transportation assistance) that the program provides was an important factor in her decision to remain in the program. The gas card and the bus passes she received while in the program afforded her with the opportunity to have transportation assistance to get to school. Also, she stressed the need for support in her quest to persist and referenced the academic and social support she received as a result of her participation in EOPS as one of the necessary components to her continued attendance at LACC.

Although she acknowledged that the EOPS program activities and services are important to her, Heidi opted to not actively involve herself in all aspects of the program. She cited cultural events, childcare and program mentoring as the program activities or services that she did not utilize. She explained, “I never really had time for them. (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). She did however note that if she did have extra time she probably would have utilized one or all of these activities/services.

David- Balancing Academic and Financial Demands Using EOPS. David is a 22 year-old male that was born in Nigeria but raised in Los Angeles, California. He left Nigeria before his teen years and spent most of his life in the United States, so he identifies more with African Americans than with his African countrymen. Most of his family was educated in Nigeria so he and his older brother are the first family members to attend an American university. He is very soft-spoken and somewhat shy. He appeared to be so concerned about giving what he deemed as the correct answer that he gave short responses, often with long pauses. He seemed to look at attending LACC as a means to an end and did not appear to be enthused by the idea of anything other than transferring to a university.

David characterized the role of EOPS activities as important. He said, “It’s very important...it’s your first two years of college and it’s challenging. You don’t know where you want to go and with the EOPS program you get some sort of guidance with various things they provide” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). He identified counseling as an important program activity. He noted,

Because they have counselors which help me pick my classes and help me with my transfer. So I know which classes to take. I can mix the hectic classes with the minor classes, through the counseling of the counselors. It was really beneficial to me...what classes to pick, what semester. Yeah, it really was. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

When explaining why the services EOPS provides are so important to him, David says, “I need to come back every semester to finish my program, my classes, because they don’t just provide books. They provide utensils and transportation aid, like bus passes. Mostly, they keep me coming back to school every semester” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). Retention services such as financial assistance and book

service were referenced by him as helpful and necessary for his persistence. Of the retention services mentioned, book service was credited with providing the most help.

David noted,

I'm a full-time student and working part-time. Them providing the service for me to get my books for free was very beneficial because I don't have to work more to try to get money for books. I could work less and study more. The book services was really beneficial to me. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

Consistent with the survey findings reported in Table 8, David identified EOPS Orientation as the least helpful EOPS activity or service. He reported, "It was like an hour or two, of things about the program that we already know about. It was stuff they keep saying over and over again. Kinda boring" (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). He also reported that he did not utilize some of the program activities and services, such as workshops or Cultural Events. When reflecting upon the EOPS services he does not use, the explanation he claims that time does not permit him to participate. He said, "Directly after school I have to work. I have to try to study. I really don't have time to participate in these services" (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). He indicated that the time commitment necessary for attendance at these events is problematic for him so he does not attend. Of the cultural events, David also said, "I'm also a student and then I work. So these are the types of things I cut out" (Personal communication, April 17, 2008).

Sophia - Navigating the Collegiate Waters with EOPS. Her demeanor is one of maturity and focus, so much so that she almost appears to be stern. It is evident that her years of life experience have taught her that laughter and fun is a luxury she cannot afford. She is a 44 year-old single parent with one child that began her tenure in EOPS

while battling homelessness and living in a shelter. Her daughter is her primary focus outside of school and often accompanies her to class or campus appointments that meet after 3:00 p.m. She is very serious and goal oriented and is a first-generation college student. Her family did not have any experience with higher education so everything she learned about college was self-taught. She seemed extremely concerned about completing her academic objectives, so much so that she is almost unwilling to allow herself to engage in or enjoy anything outside of her academic pursuits.

Sophia explained that most of the EOPS program activities were significant to her but none more than the educational/academic planning completed with her counselor. She described this experience as,

The counselor guiding and helping me select the classes as opposed to me just choosing classes that interest me, which was what I did the first time I went to college when I was younger. Because no one ever said you are suppose to do it this way to get to there. So that was very beneficial. They told me exactly what classes I should take and what I shouldn't take. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

The experience of being engaged in a process to determine that academic path she should take, seemed to be of significant value to her.

She also identified counseling as very important to her persistence. Sophia reported that the academic planning done for her by the EOPS counselors provided her with much needed direction on how to attain her educational objective. She said,

I didn't know what classes I was suppose to take in order to accomplish my goal. I just thought that you went to college to take classes and then you get a degree. But there is a formula which you do and I didn't know that. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

She credited this planning with assisting her to identify the "formula" she should use to remain in college until she accomplished her goal.

In her interview, Sophia indicated that if it were not for EOPS (and the services it provides) she would not be able to attend and remain in college. When asked about how important EOPS is to her persistence at LACC, Sophia noted, “It helped me with my academic career. It helped me be able to see what I need to do to graduate and so that’s how it helped me. I think it’s really important” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). Sophia said that without the financial assistance (in the form of book service and transportation assistance) that EOPS provides to her, “I couldn’t have done it without it. No way on earth” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). She also credited other services such as book service and transportation assistance, as providing much needed financial assistance.

Sophia reported utilizing most, if not all program services and activities that she knew were offered by EOPS. She said, “Yeah, I don’t know how I missed it but I did. I had no idea all of those services were offered. I was just aware that you get free books and you have to make these contacts” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). She attributed her lack of knowledge about program activities and services to the EOPS orientation she attended. While discussing the program services she did utilize, she remarked, “...a couple of cultural events I went to. Those were nice but I certainly could have done without them...” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). She also commented on the program services and activities that she believed were not that helpful to her. She said,

Club Activities...That was the waste of time stuff. It’s a waste of time because you’re in school to learn, not to be having a good time and making friends. At my age I already made the friends I’m going to have, so for the younger people I guess coming out of high school, it might be something they want to see but for me it wasn’t anything I could have benefited from. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

Her personal desire to omit any social activities from her participation in the program appears to have limited her involvement in the program.

Deborah- Increasing her Chances of Success with Assistance. Deborah is one of five children, born to college-educated parents that graduated from California universities. She is 21 years-old and appears to be very cheerful and optimistic, but somewhat disconnected from what is going on around her. She seems to have an understanding of what it takes to be a successful college student; however, she is hesitant to identify the areas she could improve her academic performance. Deborah claims that she has always been a “good student” but is now on academic probation at LACC. She seemed excited to participate in the interview and could not wait to begin talking. She spoke quickly often answering the question while still thinking of a response. Her thought patterns and responses appeared to move at so rapid a pace that she assumed the interviewer knew what she was talking about before she said it.

Deborah reported feeling that EOPS program activities are important to her academic success. She credited educational/academic planning and counseling as the EOPS activities that significantly impacted her ability to persist, as consistent with survey findings mentioned in Table 6. She said, “...the counseling, ed planning, stuff like that is good” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). She also commented on the benefits of educational planning by saying, “You can always see where you’re at, how much you have left” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008). She seemed to view these activities as an integral part of her academic experience and identified counseling as the most important program activity or service. She said,

I look at it like the book voucher and the counseling are the two things I use the most out of the program. They are the best for me. That's why it is more important than the other services because it's the one used more than any other services. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

Program services such as book service and transportation assistance were mentioned by Deborah as an essential service for her persistence. She explained:

Without it I wouldn't be able to afford things. Like I said, right now I don't have any financial aid but because of the book voucher I'm able to get at least the books for certain classes and keep up with the reading and doing assignments. I might not have been able to do it if I didn't have the financial aspect of EOPS. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

She also selected book service as the most important service that EOPS provides.

Deborah remarked,

It is nice knowing you won't have to worry about the books. It's helpful in the sense where basically, the books is like the best thing I can use right now. As far as counseling, it's good too...I look at it like the book voucher and the counseling are the two things I use the most out of the program. They are the best for me (Personal communication, April 17, 2008).

Deborah reported that the academic and social support she receives as a result of her participation in EOPS is necessary for her continued attendance at LACC. She reported a feeling of connectedness to the counselors in EOPS, which provided her with a comfortable place to get assistance with issues that may interfere with school. Her relationship with the EOPS counseling staff is valued and transcends the relationship with any other counseling staff at the college. Deborah noted,

You feel more comfortable than you do at the General Counseling office. The Counseling office feels more like the business aspect... but with EOPS it's almost on a personal level. You can talk with your counselor and it's almost like a sense of a genuine care...it's more like they try to help more. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

As mentioned in the previous sections, Deborah reported various program activities (i.e. counseling) as contributing to her persistence; however, there were some activities and services that she did not utilize. She confessed to ignoring various services that EOPS offers. She said, “Well this semester I wasn’t using tutoring. I don’t use childcare. Summer readiness, emergency loans, these mentoring programs...stuff like that I don’t really use.” She remarked,

Basically, there are services I never used like childcare and work study. The Summer Readiness...I never used that. The ones I primarily stick to are the book service and academic planning, and now tutoring because it is a part of the mandatory thing... But, other than that I don’t use too much else. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

Although she acknowledged that EOPS services and activities are beneficial to students, she identified two support services that she believes are the least helpful to her of all the other program activities and/or services. She listed tutoring and childcare as the least helpful services to her because she believed she could not make use of them. She stated, “I don’t feel like there is a use for them so I just use what I need” (Personal communication, April 17, 2008).

Generally, Deborah used the services/activities she believes would be of benefit to her and contribute to her persistence but she did recognize the value of all of the services and program activities. Deborah expressed this sentiment by saying,

Even though I might not utilize all the services there, they are there for a reason; to be used and to be helpful to the student. I know if ever I needed the program I would be able to use it regardless if I used it right now or not. (Personal communication, April 17, 2008)

Tariq- Using EOPS to Transfer. It was very apparent from 22 year-old Tariq’s responses that although he takes his education seriously, he is rather playful by nature. He has a very mature demeanor with a disarming youthful charm. Tariq originally hails from

a small city in Florida, but migrated to Los Angeles (with his parents) a few years ago. His mother is from Ethiopia and his father is a Black Floridian so he calls himself “a true African American” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). His playful nature seems to disappear temporarily when he speaks of school or coursework but then reappears when referencing topics such as classmates or summer break. He spoke confidently throughout the interview but often seemed to get distracted.

Tariq noted that EOPS program activities are of significant benefit to him, and contributed to his retention and persistence in college. He said EOPS was essential to his academic career and provided exactly the type of assistance he needed. Of the various program activities he used, he identified counseling as one of the activities that he believed was of significant benefit to him. He said, “The counselors connect with me on a personal level, like a friend” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). The educational planning he engaged in with the counselor allowed the development of a feeling of connectedness.

Tariq stated that if it were not for the services that EOPS provides he would not be able to attend and remain in college. When asked about how important EOPS services are to his persistence at LACC, Tariq remarked, “It’s very important...if it didn’t exist I don’t think I would have stayed in school...” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). He identified book service as an extremely important service and commented, “Like I said, it is one of the main reasons I keep coming back, that way I don’t need to take time off just to work to make money for transportation and books” (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). When discussing the various program services, he passionately shared his thoughts about the services, “...I wouldn’t say flawless, but near perfect” (Personal

communication, April 16, 2008). Of all the program services, he selected transfer services as the most important activity to his persistence. Tariq said he thought it was so important because of the opportunities provided to visit universities and gain exposure to various transfer institutions before transferring. His interaction with transfer services provided him with information he deemed important to his ability to persist.

He said:

Transfer is very important to me because I am transferring and they take you on field trips. They take you to universities and see if you like it and I think it is very important students who are transferring go out and look at the campuses, see the atmosphere and see if you like it. Because I believe education and being comfortable in the area, is very important. So that's why transfer services. (Personal communication, April 16, 2008)

During his interview, Tariq mentioned that he felt that EOPS was incredibly important to him because as a community college student seeking guidance, he needed the help and support of someone at the college to help him to find his way. He said,

Being a community college student, you are still trying to figure out what you want to do with your future and as I said earlier they counsel you (one on one) on a personal level. So it's... They know your information, your background and I think that's very important to have someone to talk to. (Personal communication, April 16, 2008)

In his interview, Tariq characterized his use of program activities and services as satisfactory; however, he acknowledged that he does not participate in many program activities and does not use many of the program services other than book service, counseling, educational/academic planning and transfer services. He said,

The other programs I haven't used mostly because I don't have that much time. It is time consuming, but I have a very busy schedule so it is difficult for me to try all of these things they offer. I am pretty sure they are beneficial to my college career but... (Personal communication, April 16, 2008)

He also said he did not participate in Club Activities and felt this was the least helpful program activity or service because he doesn't belong to any clubs and he is not sure if they are even important. Overall, although he acknowledges the importance of EOPS program services and activities he has elected to refrain from use of many of them.

The diverse perspectives of these students offer a glimpse into the perceptions of African American students participating in the EOPS program. The students' perceptions about factors that impact the effectiveness of EOPS include program activities and services, as well as program involvement. Table 25 provides a summary of the findings related to the perceived factors impacting the effectiveness of EOPS, from the experiences of five African American EOPS students.

Table 25

Perceived Factors Impacting Effectiveness of EOPS From Five Representative African American Students

Students	Perceived Factors	Quotes of Wisdom	Lessons Learned
Heidi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational/academic planning ▪ Counseling ▪ Book service ▪ Transfer services ▪ Academic and Social support ▪ Didn't use Club Activities 	<p>“The counselors there really helped me to get through school.”</p> <p>“I don't think I could have afforded the books if I didn't have the book voucher and of course we need books for the semester classes.”</p>	<p>Without EOPS and the program resources (i.e. program services) being successful in college would be difficult.</p>

(table continues)

Students	Perceived Factors	Quotes of Wisdom	Lessons Learned
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counseling ▪ Book service ▪ Transportation Assistance ▪ Didn't use Cultural events ▪ Least helpful to student is Orientation 	<p>“It’s very important...it’s your first two years of college and it’s challenging. You don’t know where you want to go and with the EOPS program you get some sort of guidance with various things they provide.”</p>	<p>EOPS provided much needed support through the offering of program activities and services.</p>
Sophia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational/academic planning ▪ Counseling ▪ Book service ▪ Transportation assistance ▪ Didn't use Club activities ▪ Least helpful to student is Orientation 	<p>“I couldn’t have done it without it. No way on earth!”</p> <p>“It helped me with my academic career. It helped me be able to see what I need to do to graduate and so that’s how it helped me. I think it’s really important.”</p>	<p>The program activities and services can make the difference in a student reaching his/her objective.</p>
Deborah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational/academic planning ▪ Counseling ▪ Book service ▪ Transportation Assistance 	<p>“I look at it like the book voucher and the counseling are the two things I use the most out of the program. They are the best for me.</p>	<p>Continue to use services that meet the demonstrated need.</p>

(table continues)

Students	Perceived Factors	Quotes of Wisdom	Lessons Learned
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic and Social Support ▪ Didn't use Childcare or Summer Readiness ▪ Least helpful to student is Tutoring or Childcare 	That's why it is more important than the other services because it's the one used more than any other services."	
Tariq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational/academic planning ▪ Counseling ▪ Book service ▪ Transfer services ▪ Didn't use club activities 	"The counselors connect with me on a personal level, like a friend."	Building a sense of connectedness with the program staff to encourage persistence.

Summary

This chapter presented the statistical results of the significant findings of this study, as well as the results from participant interviews. Seventy-eight student survey questionnaires were disseminated to African American EOPS students at Los Angeles City College, and 29 survey responses were documented and reported. Of the 29 respondents, 5 also participated in a personal interview which elicited qualitative data used in the analysis of findings. Data obtained from the student information system database of the institution in this study provided an opportunity to analyze rates of persistence. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to present the data.

The results of the data analysis for this study indicate that African American students participating in EOPS at Los Angeles City College do not persist at a greater rate

than non-EOPS African American students at the same institution. These patterns of persistence are found in the data presented on Tables 4 and 5, which demonstrate the pattern of persistence for African American students at LACC.

In general, student responses to the survey questionnaire were consistent with responses given in the personal interviews. Results from the participant interviews were evaluated and discussed in the appropriate context, and applied data analyses were conducted to determine which specific program activities the participants believe contributed to their persistence and to determine the role of EOPS (according to the participant) in their retention and persistence. Also, the pattern of involvement in program activities was determined through further data analysis and the responses to interview questions were appended.

Essentially, the study produced findings that demonstrate that although African American EOPS students do not persist at a greater rate than non-EOPS African American students, they believe EOPS is essential to their ability to persist. According to survey questionnaire results the participants listed book service, followed by academic counseling and educational/academic planning as the services provided by EOPS that are the most important to their persistence; and although valued by the students as important services, they listed orientation, club activities and summer readiness as the least helpful to them. Upon first glance of the findings from this study, one might suggest that (over time) those African American students at LACC that are not receiving assistance from EOPS are persisting at a higher rate; however, the issue is much more complex than that simple summation. Overall, the results of the study neither support nor refute the

importance of participation in EOPS for African American students at LACC, but rather the results provide additional support for the need for further research in this area.

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the background, purpose, and findings of this research study. Conclusions were developed from the findings, interpreted and are presented in this chapter. Additionally, a discussion of the results of the research questions as well as the implications for future research is presented.

Overview

This study was designed to test research questions about student perceptions and self reported attitudes that were obtained through survey methods as well as personal interviews of African American students attending Los Angeles City College in Extended Opportunity Program and Services. The initial step in the process was a complete review of the related literature. The review included literature pertaining to the California community college, access to higher education, post-secondary student retention and persistence including factors influencing attrition for African American students, retention and persistence theoretical models, and retention programs.

Later, students were surveyed to determine student-perceived effective components of the program, which the students believe are aiding them in persisting. Finally, personal interviews were conducted and used to examine student perceptions of activities and services provided by EOPS at LACC. Conclusions were then drawn from the data elicited from survey questionnaires and personal interviews.

The population of degree-seeking African American students (N= 327) enrolled at LACC and participating in the EOPS program comprised the pool of potential

participants. The population was identified from data provided to the researcher by the MIS department in the EOPS office at LACC. The sample included 78 (N= 78) students that were comprised of 63 degree-seeking EOPS African American students that have identified a transfer goal and 15 degree-seeking EOPS African American students that have identified a vocational goal, that were attending LACC during the fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters. From the sample, 29 students completed and returned the mailed questionnaire and five students also participated in a personal interview with the researcher.

The general purpose of this study was to determine if African American students in EOPS persist at a higher rate than non-EOPS African American students. Additionally, the researcher sought to collect and examine data in this study to help identify the support services and activities (i.e. counseling, book service, faculty/staff contact) that the LACC EOPS program provides to students, which the African American students participating in the program perceive to assist them or have a positive affect on their persistence at the college.

The research outcomes in Chapter 4 indicate that African American EOPS students are not persisting at a higher rate than non-EOPS African American students, although the EOPS students are eligible for support services (i.e. book grants, counseling and transfer services) that non-EOPS students are not eligible for. The difference between students that access support services effectively and those that do not can make the difference between student success and failure (Brookshaw, 1995). One could suggest that although this theory may be true for non-African American EOPS students, the results of this study demonstrate a much more complex approach to explaining what

contributes to the success of this (African American) specific population. Therefore, it is imperative that community college officials understand and recognize the importance of student support service programs like EOPS and the effect of these programs on minority populations, because of the integral role the programs are supposed to play in the persistence process.

Findings

The study was divided into two parts. The first part of the study examined student perceptions of EOPS at LACC through the completion of an EOPS student survey questionnaire disseminated to 78 African American students in EOPS at LACC. For the second part of the study the participants were interviewed to determine qualitative elements of program services and activities that the students associate with their persistence. These two parts of the study elicited quantitative and qualitative data used for analysis of student persistence rates, as well as student perceptions of the effectiveness of EOPS services and activities.

The most significant finding from the study was that of the persistence rate of African American EOPS students when contrasted with the persistence rate of non-EOPS African American students at LACC. Although the African American EOPS students perceived EOPS as an invaluable resource that was assisting them to persist, their counterparts (non-EOPS African American students) persisted at a higher rate. Thus, the interventions that EOPS employs to retain these students and assist them to persist may have been ineffective, or at the very least, merit more investigation to explore the extent to which they are effective.

The theoretical explanation of the relationship between student motivation and academic ability and the ways in which an institution's academic and social characteristics influence student persistence has been thoroughly examined and evaluated in the literature (Braxton, Shaw-Sullivan & Johnson, 1996; Pascarella, Duby & Iverson, 1983). Upon review of the literature, a number of studies were found that evaluated Tinto's assertion that certain variables of academic and social integration, as well as student demographic characteristics influence persistence (Bean, 1980; Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora & Hengstler, 1992; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). This study explored student persistence within the theoretical framework of Tinto's (1975, 1986) constructs, which explain the student departure phenomena in the context of student academic integration. Additionally, this study investigated whether the African American students perceived an existent relationship between use of support-based services (institutional factors) and persistence.

The preliminary data presented in Table 2 led to the development of various conclusions, by the researcher. First, the majority of the participants in the study tended to be older students and not of the (18-24) traditional age student population, as 68% identified being 25 or older. These students represent an older student population of reentry students returning to college, which is not consistent with the traditional age student population usually associated with EOPS.

Also, it appears as though the vocational EOPS students in the study are predominately older students, while the students that identified transfer as their goal are fairly evenly distributed among the age groupings. Sixty-four percent of the students that listed a vocational Associate's degree as their educational goal were 35 years or older,

and of the participants that identified transfer as their goal 38% were 18-24, 31% were 25-34 and 31% were 35 or older. Essentially when related to age, these findings suggest that the older students in the program seemed to gravitate toward a vocational educational goal, while the younger students exhibit no particular preference for a vocational or transfer educational goal.

As noted in Chapter 4 with respect to gender, 72% of the participants were female. This demonstrates an overrepresentation of women in the study; however, there are definitely some gender characteristics in both groupings. For example, 62% of all female participants identified transfer as their goal while the majority of the male participants chose the vocational educational goal.

Research questions. This study sought to answer four research questions, which were: question (a) Do African American students at Los Angeles City College that participate with Extended Opportunity Program and Services persist at a higher rate than African American non-Extended Opportunity Program and Services students? (b) What specific program activities do they believe contributed to their persistence? (c) What role does Extended Opportunity Program and Services play (in the opinion of the student) in increasing the retention of African American students at Los Angeles City College? (d) What is the pattern of involvement in program activities that contribute to their persistence?

Based upon the data analyses applied in this study several conclusions were established. The data retrieved from the Student Information System at LACC reveal that African American EOPS students are not persisting at a higher rate than non-EOPS African American students for the time period of six semesters examined in this study.

Also, Table 5 illustrates the other finding from the persistence data, which is that non-African American EOPS students are persisting at a greater rate than non-African American non-EOPS students. These findings are significant because it demonstrates that although non-African American EOPS students are persisting at a greater rate than their counterparts, which is consistent with previous research (Crawford, 2001; Perez, 1999) findings, African American EOPS students are not persisting at a greater rate than the comparison group of African American non-EOPS students.

The survey data revealed that although the program activities/services that students are required to participate in are book service, educational and academic planning, orientation, priority registration and progress monitoring; the elements of EOPS program activities and services that the African American EOPS students at LACC reported using on a regular basis include book service, educational/academic planning, priority registration, academic counseling, EOPS orientation and career guidance. More specifically, the most cited services EOPS students reported as having a significant impact on their persistence were book service, academic counseling and educational/academic planning.

Patterns found in the study indicate that participants believe that EOPS services and program activities as well as individuals have influenced their persistence. The services that were perceived to influence persistence are book service, academic counseling, educational/academic planning, grant money, personal counseling, career guidance, peer advising, tutoring and Other. The participants also reported feeling their persistence was most influenced by individual instructors and EOPS counselors.

Various support services were perceived to contribute to overall student persistence including book service, educational/academic planning and academic counseling. The pattern of use for these most important services was 3-6 times for 58% of participants. Also, although students reported deriving some level of benefit from all EOPS activities and services, the most beneficial service/activity according to respondents was Book Service and Educational Plans.

The interview data revealed that student responses were consistent and supported the data obtained from the survey questionnaires. Generally, students believed that EOPS services are beneficial to them; however, in participant interviews they specifically credited book service, transportation assistance and transfer services with assisting them in persisting.

Conclusions

When reviewing the literature one can find various articles that address the issues impacting the retention of African American students (Hauser & Anderson, 1991; Tinto, 1987; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). These studies have shown that African American students often enter college with deficient academic skills (i.e. lower grades and standardized test scores) and other studies (Astin, 1982; Porter, 1990) have shown a correlation between academic preparedness and persistence for minority students. The conclusion could be made that although the students in this study benefited from the EOPS services and believed the program's services assisted them in persisting, their inadequate academic preparation for college inhibited the ability of the program to be effective.

The literature review also indicates that minority students have a difficult time integrating academically and socially at an institution of higher education. When considering the high level of student interaction required in EOPS and the students' report of involvement in the program, one might consider Tinto's explanation of retention as a function of the student's integration into the institution when assessing the persistence of the students in this study. Nevertheless, the findings of this study are quite startling as they do not support the research (Tinto, 1986; Braxton, Vesper & Hossler, 1995), which suggests that connection to the institution through student involvement is positively related to persistence. Although the student responses in the study indicate a high level of satisfaction with EOPS, the effectiveness of the persistence strategies employed by EOPS for this student population is questionable.

Students that attend community colleges do so with considerable demands upon them which make it difficult to dedicate the quality and quantity of time necessary for their education. One could conclude that the students in this study are not persisting at a higher rate than their counterparts because although they are actively involved in EOPS they are still not able to make the learning experience (academic integration) and the social experience (social integration) the focal point of their lives, which according to Tinto (1975) detracts from a student's performance and ability to persist. Also, the additional time commitment necessary because of program requirements may be adversely affecting the students and negatively impacting their persistence.

Furthermore, historically the purpose of the community college has been to serve the needs of the surrounding community. According to Cohen and Braver (1989), the functions of these colleges have expanded to include academic retention, remedial and

continuing education, as well as transfer and vocational/technical education. As the colleges strive to perform all of these curricular functions they are overextended and it has become increasingly difficult for an interaction between the student and the institution to exist. The student is depending upon the institution for guidance on retention and persistence issues and the institution is attempting to efficiently develop programs to address these issues, but without consultation or evaluation of individual needs. Therefore, the institution is developing programs for the student but without student input.

Tinto & Goodsell-Love (1993) contends that the key to successful student persistence is not in any one formula or recipe, but rather is with the institution in its faculty and staff. The results of this study reinforce that concept as the students identified the most influential individual as an instructor or EOPS staff member and the most effective services/activities as those that are related to the efforts of EOPS counselors and staff, (i.e. counseling, transfer services, educational/academic planning). Overall, these research findings should assist college administrators to guide (teaching and counseling) faculty to engage in actions that will promote increased student integration.

A Local Model of African American Student Success

According to Dennis (1998) a college's persistence program must match the organizational culture and personality of the institution, if the program is to be successful. With over half of the student population in California community colleges leaving every semester (State of California, 2000), it has become extremely challenging for colleges to find new methods of retaining students and increasing student persistence. Therefore, the

actions taken by college officials should work toward creating a more campus-specific approach that will increase student integration and involvement in academic related activities to increase student persistence.

To assist colleges with the process of increasing persistence rates, an approach was developed as a result of the findings in this study. The Local Model of African American Student Success (see Figure 1) was developed as an attempt by the researcher to provide a simplified model to assist retention programs in cultivating effective practices for students. This model covers three important areas of retention; matriculation, intervention and evaluation. Emphasis was placed on these areas because of the specific elements necessary for an educational institution's success with persistence strategies, especially for minority students.

The matriculation component of the model refers to the successful movement of the student through an EOPS matriculation, which would be in addition to the college's matriculation process. The student would engage in some of the components of matriculation (i.e. admissions, assessment, orientation and counseling) but within the context of EOPS. Ideally, once a student has completed the EOPS matriculation process the student would be able to receive various EOPS interventions to assist them. Finally, the evaluation component of the model would be for the assessment of EOPS student tracking. Upon completion of these various components of the model, this should lead the student to the successful completion of their educational objective.

Although all of the California community college EOPS programs vary in size and services provided, this model can provide a working framework to assist these programs in enhancing their retention and persistence rates. The programs can modify the

components of this model to compliment their institution, as well as fit with the student population and their specific program requirements. The model has three major areas, each of which has an impact on student success.

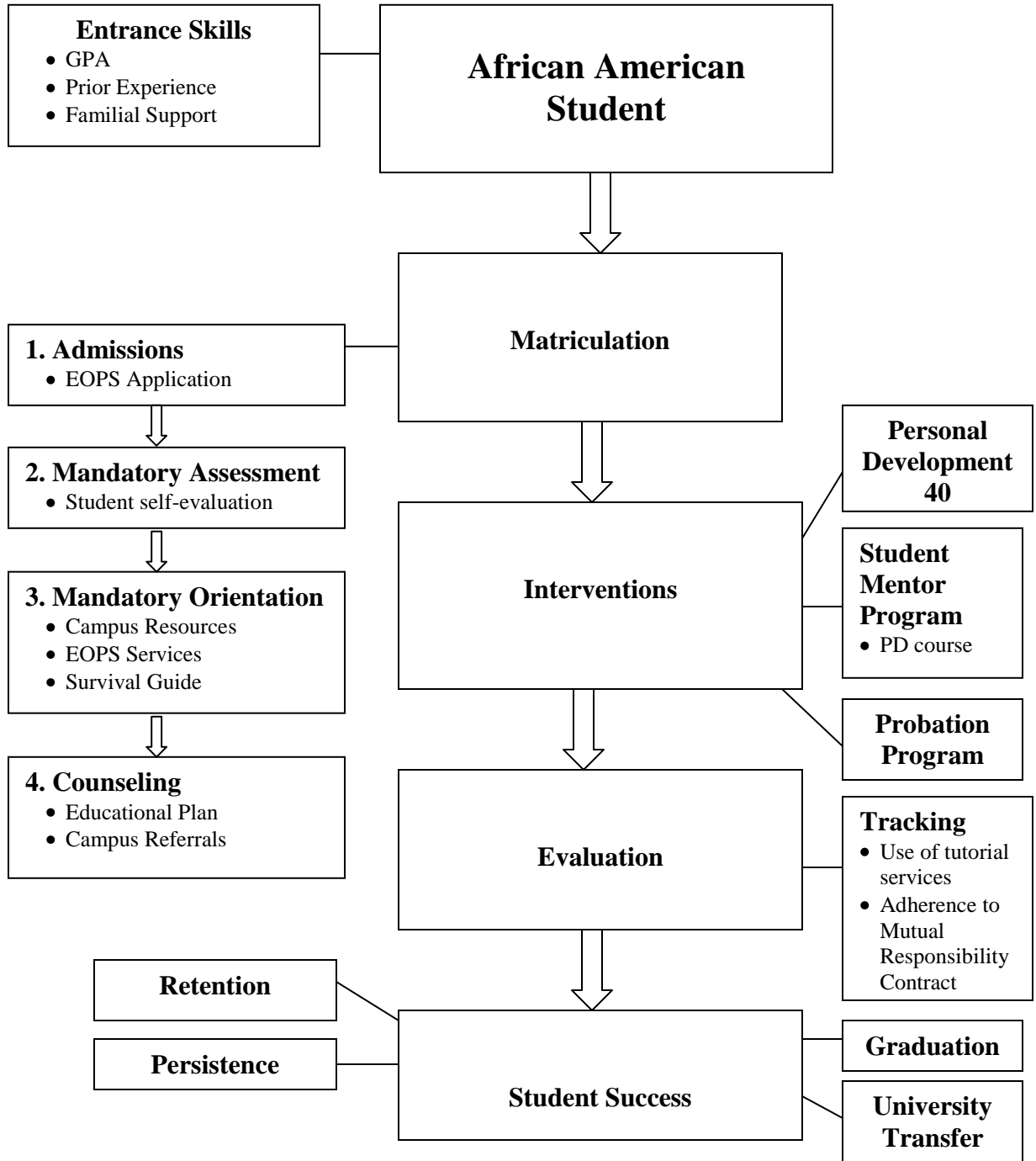


Figure 1. Local Model of African American Student Success

Implications

According to Kulik, Kulik and Shwalb (1983), high-risk students have been offered special enrichment programs by colleges since the 1800s. These programs are necessary to assist students, especially those from minority populations; however, it is essential to the program's effectiveness to determine whether they are meeting the needs of those they serve.

Educators must continually strive to make contributions to the area of student development through program enhancement. There are always opportunities for program enhancement and innovation, and these opportunities may come in the form of a program assessment. These opportunities must be utilized to improve upon student support programs regardless of whether these programs appear to be running smoothly. Also, student support programs must strive to regularly conduct an assessment of student perceptions of the program in order to improve the program's effectiveness and the students' satisfaction with program services and activities. Moreover, the continual evaluation of students should be an institutional goal.

It is very difficult to quantify human behavior and as the needs and demands of students vary and constantly change, it becomes increasingly difficult to evaluate student support programs. This study may be instrumental in providing a method of student evaluation for the EOPS department and the institution as a whole. The findings and conclusions revealed in this study regarding African American student perceptions of EOPS at LACC will serve as a tool to inform the process of improving and strengthening EOPS.

Although each college is unique and specific to the student population and culture of the institution, and no one knows with certainty what makes a student decide to enroll in a particular college and later leave, there are elements of successful retention programs that can be examined, modified and replicated (Dennis, 1998). It is imperative to the academic success of students that a retention program works effectively. This research study will contribute to the limited body of literature on student development programs like EOPS and their impact on minority student populations. More specifically, the results of this study will prove beneficial in the improvement of EOPS at LACC. Furthermore, this study intended to illuminate to the higher education community the student perceptions of the elements of the EOPS program that work effectively and will be helpful in providing a better understanding of African American students at Los Angeles City College.

The investigation of African American student perceptions of Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) at Los Angeles City College is of great significance to the LACC community, as well as the statewide EOPS community. Every California community college operates an EOPS program and LACC houses the largest EOPS program in the state. Being the largest program in the state, many other EOPS programs look to LACC to provide guidance in the direction of effective practices for student service that assists with student retention and persistence. Although there are program similarities throughout EOPS programs in California, an assessment of the effectiveness of the program services and activities for African American students at LACC is of importance in understanding whether or not the current program services may be too limited in scope to be effective for this student population.

This study was the first study conducted at LACC to examine EOPS student perceptions and the first of any study of EOPS students at LACC that included a survey questionnaire and interview. The study targeted seventy-eight African American students but elicited an approximately 37% response rate. The overall responses from students indicate a positive perception of EOPS program services and activities. Also, the students reported feeling as though EOPS was assisting them in persisting.

Recommendations for Practitioners

The results of the study suggest that the support-based services received by the African American students in EOPS are not making enough of an impact on their persistence beyond one academic year, although these students perceive the support-based services to be helpful to them in their persistence. One might conclude that the students enjoy the opportunity, provided by EOPS; to obtain the additional support they believe necessary for them to persevere but these support services need to be modified to increase their long-term effectiveness. Therefore, this researcher proposes the following recommendations for the EOPS program and the administration at LACC:

Recommendation 1. Enhance the EOPS program functions. The EOPS program must find a way to provide services that are mandated by Title 5 but should tailor these services to the needs of the student population at LACC. The results from this study indicate a need to modify the existing EOPS program functions to provide more effective service to students. Although students appear to be satisfied with the current functions of the program, the inability for the program to link the students' direct benefit (i.e. higher

persistence rate) to their participation in the program indicates that the program functions could benefit from enhancement.

Objective 1.1: Modify the EOPS Orientation. The results from this study suggest that the program needs to become more intentional about informing students of program and campus resources. Many of the participants reported EOPS Orientation as the least helpful service to their persistence. An effective orientation session can provide the necessary information to students about resources available to them. The current orientation experience should be modified to assist students in identifying on and off campus resources and the methods used to link students to these resources. This new orientation format should include a short quiz at the end of the session. This quiz will test the students' knowledge of material presented, as well as provide the EOPS staff with information about the areas the students may need clarification or additional information. Upon the completion of the orientation session, a student survival guide will be disseminated to students. This survival guide will provide students with information about some of the barriers to academic success, as well as give helpful hints about how to overcome these barriers. This guide will better equip students to overcome barriers as well as give access to information about campus resources. Essentially, the primary goal of Orientation will no longer be to only orient the student to EOPS but will now include orienting the students to EOPS, the college and college life.

Objective 1.2: Establish probation monitoring program to provide additional support to students, while monitoring student progress and identifying those students with high attrition characteristics. The results of the study indicate that the EOPS students perceive academic counseling to be of significant importance to their persistence. In

order to increase the likelihood of their persistence, greater attention must be paid to students experiencing academic difficulty. Therefore, EOPS must institute a probation monitoring program that supports students' academic needs and monitors their progress.

This intervention would take place early on in the semester that the student is put on academic probation or is subject to dismissal. The program should stipulate that every semester the students complete two additional one-on-one counseling contacts (above the Title 5 requirement for three counseling contacts) and attend one group counseling session. This additional individual counseling contact will provide the student with an intervention that can be utilized to address academic and personal issues that may impact the likelihood of persistence. Also, the group counseling session will provide students with an opportunity to receive information about EOPS activities and services. Both requirements promote an increased level of student involvement, which is necessary if these students are to increase the level of academic and social integration necessary for persistence according to Tinto's (1987) postulate.

Objective 1.3: Establish and implement an EOPS mentor program. The results of the study suggest that African American EOPS students desire access to additional information about campus and program resources to assist them in persisting. EOPS must provide an alternate method for relaying this information, as the program cannot rely solely upon the Orientation sessions to convey all of the information that is beneficial to students. The mentor program would be comprised of mentors that are current EOPS students who have completed at least two semesters in the program and are making successful academic progress, and first semester EOPS students that will be mentored.

The peer mentors will be required to enroll in a one-unit Personal Development course that provides ongoing training. Also, the mentors will be responsible for the administration of Orientation and to inform and update students about program policies and procedures. The peer mentors will be compensated for their participation through the units acquired from their enrollment in the Personal Development course. The EOPS students that decide to participate in this program would be given credit for their walk-in counseling contact as an incentive for participation. The participation in the mentor program will provide mentors and the students being mentored, with the opportunity to be a part of a learning community, which has shown to contribute to the likelihood of persistence (Tinto, 1998).

Objective 1.4: Increase the involvement of EOPS students with campus activities and services. The findings from this study indicate that the EOPS students believe that one of the most important EOPS services is counseling and educational planning, which they receive from EOPS counselors. The educational planning process should include a discussion about the college activities that compliment the student's courses and program of study. The counselors should use the counseling session as a venue to demonstrate to students how participation in student activities can complement their studies. For example, the counselor could show a student how participating in a study group or attending tutorial appointments would be of benefit to them. Although the EOPS program is competing for the time of the student, they must encourage students about the benefits of participating in college-related activities.

Objective 1.5: Evaluate those services and activities that EOPS students believe would be helpful to them. Survey the students to explore the extent to which services are

utilized, and then evaluate the services available that the students report is the least helpful to them in their persistence. The students should be consulted about what they believe is necessary to assist them in being academically successful and from those findings, activities and services (beyond those mandated by Title 5) can be determined.

Recommendation 2. Identify and attempt to address the barriers to retention for students.

Objective 2.1: Develop a student self evaluation that students can complete prior to their attendance at the EOPS Orientation session. The EOPS program at LACC should develop an evaluation that can be given to students upon completion of the program application, which would be returned to a program official prior to the orientation session. According to Tinto's (1975) model prior to entrance to the educational institution, students bring with them skills that can either help or hinder them. EOPS must evaluate their students to identify those students with attrition characteristics or deficiencies which could negatively impact their success so that they know which resources should be accessed to best help the student.

Objective 2.2: Implement a new requirement for the completion of an EOPS Personal Development 40 course. The development of student self-regulated motivation and increased self efficacy is the approach used by EOPS to improve the academic performance of students, as well as equip students with the tools necessary to be successful in school and life. Information obtained from a Personal Development course can provide students with the tools necessary to organize and plan classes, exhibit good time management, as well as balance the demands of school with their personal life, which are all associated with this style of intervention since these skills affect the

student's ability to persist. This approach is consistent with Astin's model of talent development in higher education. Astin (1970) believed that the institution becomes an intervention in the life of the student, and the role of the intervention is to improve and strengthen the talents of the student. Thus, EOPS at LACC can be the intervening force attempting to improve and strengthen the talent of these students.

Objective 2.3: Hire additional African American counselors and staff. At the time of data collection for this study, there was one African American counselor (the researcher) and one staff member working at LACC in EOPS. As reported in a participant interview, *Heidi* mentioned that she would like to see more African American student workers hired. Moreover, the survey findings illustrated in Table 15 show that the campus department the students report having the best personal connection with (after EOPS) is "Other", which may be departments that have African American faculty or staff with which they can identify. Also the preponderance of African American students that sought to meet with the African American counselor, demonstrates the possibility that a need for a more culturally relevant component to EOPS may exist.

Recommendations for Future Research

The empirical data provided in this study has implications for LACC as an institution, but more specifically for EOPS at LACC. There is a significant difference in the persistence of African American students in EOPS and those not in EOPS, after one academic year. More students that are not involved with EOPS seem to have a higher rate of persistence than those participating in EOPS. Since a primary function of EOPS is to assist students in persisting and reaching their educational goal, and as enrollment of

minority students is predicted to increase in the coming years, the retention of these students is essential. As this study was limited to the student information available from the LACC student information system and the students attending LACC, further research is recommended in order to examine African American student persistence at other institutions of higher education that have an EOPS program.

According to Tinto (1998), research should be directed to forms of practice and the knowledge gained from those studies should inform theories of persistence. The decision by African American students to persist appears to be linked to several variables and it is therefore imperative that the elements of student persistence be examined to reveal that which is involved in the achievement of this student population. This research is necessary to improve the quality of service in student support programs by determining the extent to which these services affect student outcomes.

It is therefore recommended that future studies focus on a comparison of EOPS and non-EOPS students, with respect to assessments of attitudes and perceptions concerning activities and services that impact persistence. The collection of this data would provide valuable insight for a more comprehensive perspective on the specific factors that influenced the student's decision to persist. It is also recommended that these studies be conducted using qualitative methods to illuminate the students' experiences. Additionally, future studies should include the types of activities and services that actually have a positive impact on persistence for both populations.

In conclusion, additional research is strongly recommended to establish more credible evidence of the importance of EOPS to community college students. A longitudinal study following a cohort of African American students would provide more

tangible conclusions about the value of this student support program to the African American student population.

Epilogue

The circumstances for EOPS statewide have significantly changed since the inception of this study. Due to the current status of the California state deficit and the proposed cuts to funding for the California community college system and all categorically funded programs for California community colleges, including EOPS, there is much fiscal uncertainty. The recommendations made in this study were made in the spirit of improvement. The recommendations were made to encourage the enhancement of program services and activities in an effort to continue to cultivate that which is provided to students by EOPS; however, the researcher acknowledges that with the looming cuts to funding for California community colleges, as well as EOPS, there may or may not be the financial foundation to support the initiation of these proposed recommendations.

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Appendix A

California Code of Regulations, Title 5
Article 2

56220. Eligibility for Programs and Services.

To receive programs and services authorized by this chapter, a student must:

- (a) *be a resident of California pursuant to the provisions of Part 4l commencing with Section 68000 of the Education Code.*
- (b) *be enrolled full-time when accepted into the EOPS Program. The EOPS Director may authorize up to 10% of EOPS students accepted to be enrolled for 9 units.*
- (c) *not have completed more than 70 units of degree applicable credit course work in any combination of post secondary higher education institutions.*
- (d) *qualify to receive a Board of Governors Grant pursuant to Section 58620 (1) or (2).*
- (e) *be educationally disadvantaged as determined by the EOPS Director or designee. In making that determination, the EOPS Director shall consider one or more of the following factors:*
 - (1) *not qualified at the college of attendance for enrollment into the minimum level English or mathematics course that is applicable to the associate degree.*
 - (2) *not have graduated from high school or obtained the General Education Diploma (G.E.D).*
 - (3) *graduated from high school with a grade point average below 2.50 on a 4.00 scale.*
 - (4) *been previously enrolled in remedial education.*
 - (5) *other factors set forth in the district's plan submitted to the Chancellor pursuant to Section 56270 of this part.*

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 69648, 69648.7 and 71020 Education Code.

Reference: Sections 69640 through 69655 Education Code.

Appendix B
EOP&S Student Survey

EOP&S Student Survey Questions

/_____/

Date of birth ___/___/___ Gender= Male Female Are you an EOPS student? Yes No

Check Ethnicity: Asian Pacific Islander African American Native American Latino
White Other

Community College Educational Goal: AA or AS degree Certificate Transfer to 4 yr. College

Other educational goal

How many semesters have you been in the EOP&S program /___/

What is your college grade point average? /___/

1. Select all of the EOP&S Support Services and/or Program Activities you have used on a regular basis. Please mark the appropriate activity from the list below that identify EOP&S services you have used on a regular basis.

- A= EOP&S Orientation
- B= Transfer services
- C= Club Activities
- D= Priority Registration
- E= Career Guidance
- F= Peer Advising
- G= Academic Counseling
- H= Tutoring
- I= Educational and Academic Planning
- J= Basic Skills
- K= Grant Money
- L= Personal Counseling
- M= Progress Monitoring
- N= Summer Readiness
- O= Emergency Loans
- P= Cultural Events
- Q= Child Care
- R= Mentor program
- S= Book Service
- T= Other, specify _____

2. Select the one most important EOP&S support service or program activity that contributed most to your continued attendance and success in college.

- A= EOP&S Orientation
- B= Transfer services
- C= Club Activities
- D= Priority Registration
- E= Career Guidance
- F= Peer Advising
- G= Academic Counseling
- H= Tutoring
- I= Educational and Academic Planning
- J= Basic Skills
- K= Grant Money
- L= Personal Counseling
- M= Progress Monitoring
- N= Summer Readiness
- O= Emergency Loans
- P= Cultural Events
- Q= Child Care
- R= Mentor program
- S= Book Service
- T= Other, specify _____

3. Check how many times you have used this one most important EOP&S service (from #2 question on page 1).

1. = 2. = 3. = 4. = 5. = 6. =
None (1-3) (3-6) (6-9) (9-12) (12 or more)

4. Select one EOP&S activity or support service you feel kept you enrolled in college.

- A= EOP&S Orientation
- B= Transfer services
- C= Club Activities
- D= Priority Registration
- E= Career Guidance
- F= Peer Advising
- G= Academic Counseling
- H= Tutoring
- I= Educational and Academic Planning
- J= Basic Skills
- K= Grant Money
- L= Personal Counseling
- M= Progress Monitoring
- N= Summer Readiness
- O= Emergency Loans
- P= Cultural Events
- Q= Child Care
- R= Mentor program
- S= Book Service
- T= Other, specify _____

5. Select one EOP&S support service you consider the least helpful to you in college.

- A= EOP&S Orientation
- B= Transfer services
- C= Club Activities
- D= Priority Registration
- E= Career Guidance
- F= Peer Advising
- G= Academic Counseling
- H= Tutoring
- I= Educational and Academic Planning
- J= Basic Skills
- K= Grant Money
- L= Personal Counseling
- M= Progress Monitoring
- N= Summer Readiness
- O= Emergency Loans
- P= Cultural Events
- Q= Child Care
- R= Mentor program
- S= Book Service
- T= Other, specify _____

6. Indicate the department on campus that made you feel the most welcome.

Examples: Admissions; Financial Aid; P.E.; Counseling; Transfer Center; EOP&S; Ethnic Studies; Student Activities.

7. Indicate the department on campus you have the best personal connection with.

Examples: Admissions; Financial Aid; P.E.; Counseling; Transfer Center; EOP&S; Ethnic Studies; Student Activities.

8. Select the type of college class or course that provided the most help for you to be successful in college. Select only one.

1. English
2. Math
3. Science
4. College Success
5. Study Skills
6. Computer
7. Art
8. PE
9. Social Science
10. Humanities
11. Theatre Arts
12. History
13. Psychology
14. Sociology
15. Language
16. Speech
17. Ethnic Studies
18. Personal Enrichment
19. Other, specify _____
20. None

9. Select the type of individual who influenced your continued enrollment in college the most. Please select only one.

1. An Individual Instructor
2. An Individual EOP&S staff
3. College counselor
4. Coach
5. Individual Student Services Staff
6. Financial Aid Staff
7. Club Adviser
8. Another Student
9. Mentor
10. EOP&S Counselor
11. EOP&S Peer Advisor
12. Other, specify _____

10. Please rate how important the EOP&S program is to you. Check one.

1. = 2. = 3. = 4. = 5. =
Very important Important Somewhat Important Not important Waste of Time

11. Please rate the services and/or EOP&S activities listed below according to how you feel these support services helped you. Please mark the appropriate box with a check or X.

Service or Activity	1. Extremely Beneficial	2. Beneficial	3. Somewhat Beneficial	4. Did not Benefit	5. Waste of Time	6. Never Used
A. EOP&S Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. EOP&S Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. EOP&S Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Educational Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. EOP&S Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. EOP&S Work study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. EOP&S Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Book Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Matriculation Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Priority Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Mutual Responsibility Contract for EOP&S	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. EOP&S Peer Advising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Summer Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Progress Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Mentoring Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P. EOP&S workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q. EOP&S Cultural Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R. EOP&S Awards Ceremony	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Please rate the campus services and/or activities listed below according to how you feel these support services helped you. Please mark the appropriate box with a check or X.

Service or Activity	1. Extremely Beneficial	2. Beneficial	3. Somewhat Beneficial	4. Did not Benefit	5. Waste of Time	6. Never Used
A. Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. General Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Campus Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Educational Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Financial Aid Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. College Work study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Campus Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Matriculation services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Early Alert Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Campus Mentoring Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Campus workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

M. Campus Cultural Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Campus Awards Ceremony	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Student Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What aspect or area of the EOP&S program works well? Please write below.

14. What aspect or area of the EOP&S program needs improvement? Please write below.

Appendix C
College Application

<p>11. My present stay in California began on: _____ <div style="text-align: center;"> Month Day Year </div> <p>Are any of the following on active military duty? (Please check all that apply)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Parents </p> </p>	<p>15. Full name of <i>the most recent</i> High School you attended</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name of High School _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>City _____ State or Foreign Country _____</p>
<p>12. The questions below must be answered by every applicant. At any time in the past two years have you: (If you are under 19, answer for your parents)</p> <p>* Registered to vote in a state <u>other than</u> California? Yes No If yes, what year? _____</p> <p>* Filed a legal action in a state <u>other than</u> California? Yes No If yes, what year? _____</p> <p>* Attended a non-California college/university as a resident of that state? Yes No If yes, what year? _____</p> <p>* Filed as a Non-Resident for California State Income Tax Purposes? Yes No If yes, what year? _____</p>	<p>16. <u>Last</u> College attended. If none, check box: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name of College _____ Dates Attended _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>City/State/Foreign Country _____ Degree Awarded _____</p>
<p>The LACCD is made up of the following schools. Please check ONE school.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/> East <input type="checkbox"/> Harbor <input type="checkbox"/> Mission <input type="checkbox"/> Pierce <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Tech <input type="checkbox"/> Valley <input type="checkbox"/> West LA <input type="checkbox"/> ITV </p>	<p>17. I am a citizen of</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Country</p>
<p>18. If you are not a United States Citizen, please circle and complete:</p> <p>2. Permanent Resident Alien _____</p> <p>3. Temporary Resident Alien _____ Permanent Resident or Visa No. _____</p> <p>4. Refugee, Asylee _____</p> <p>5. Student Visa (F-1 or M-1 visa) _____</p> <p>6. Other (Specify): _____ Issue/Adjustment Date _____</p> <p>7. Visitor Visa (B-1 or B-2 visa) _____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Country</p>
<p>OFFICE USE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> Residence <input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> Matriculation <input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> High School </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> <input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> College <input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> Concurrent </p>

23. Special Services (*)

The Los Angeles Community College District is committed to increasing your educational success. Each area listed below provides special services. Please indicate those services that interest you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Aid | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Assistance |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | 6. Information regarding special services and/or accommodations for students with disabilities may be obtained from the Disabled Student Programs Programs (DSPS) Office. |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring | 7. Are you from a low income family and in need of special counseling, tutoring and/or financial aid assistance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer Assistance | |

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

All programs and activities of the Los Angeles Community College District shall be operated in a manner which is free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, age, handicap or veterans status (Reference: Board Rule 1202)

In order to ensure the proper handling of all civil rights matters, each college in the District has its own Affirmative Action Representative, Title IX/Sex-Equity Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator of Handicap Programs, and an Ombudsperson. Direct initial inquiries to the Office of Diversity Programs at (213) 891-2000.

(*) NOTICE TO STUDENTS: Your responses to questions marked by this symbol will be used to provide you with information on college programs and services and/or for statistical purposes only. Refusal to provide this information will not be used to deny admission to the college or any of its programs.

If additional information is needed to determine your residence status you will be required to complete a supplemental residence questionnaire and/or to present evidence in accordance with Education Code sections 68040 et seq. The burden of proof to clearly demonstrate both physical presence in California and intent to establish California residence lies with the student.

29. Certification

I declare under penalty of perjury that all information on this form is correct. I understand that falsifying or withholding information required on this form shall constitute grounds for dismissal.

REQUIRED**SIGNATURE** _____ Date _____

Revised: 5/2007

Appendix D

Interview Questions

Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

Name
Gender
Age
Units completed
Degree sought

1. Why did you decide to apply to EOPS?
2. How do you feel about the services EOPS provides?
3. How important is EOPS to you remaining at LACC?
4. In question 2 on the survey, you selected _____ as the most important support service or program activity in EOPS that contributed to your continued attendance and success in college. Why do you believe it contributed most, or more than other services or activities?
 - a. How important is the financial assistance that EOPS provides, in your decision to remain in the program?
5. In question 5 you selected _____ as the least helpful EOPS support service, why is it not helpful to you?
6. In question 10 you stated that EOPS is _____ in terms of importance to you. Why?
7. What can EOPS do to ensure that you remain in college and meet your educational goal?
8. Which of the EOPS services do you not use?
9. In question 11 you stated you do not use _____, why don't you use these services?

Appendix E

Signed Letter of Informed Consent for Participants

April 2008

Dear Student:

My name is Kalynda Webber McLean and I am a doctoral candidate with Pepperdine University **Graduate School of Education and Psychology** in California, and a Counseling faculty member with Los Angeles City College. As a part of the requirements for my doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership I am conducting a study of African American student retention in Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) at Los Angeles City College (LACC), and am asking for your participation. I ask that you take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey.

This study will survey African American students participating in EOPS at Los Angeles City College. I believe this study is necessary to illuminate to the educational community your perceptions of effective retention strategies employed by EOPS to assist African American students. The included survey examines the extent to which students believe EOPS assisted them in persisting in school and continuing on toward their educational objective.

I am sending surveys to all degree-seeking African American students in EOPS at LACC that have earned 30 (or more) units. If you agree to participate, it will take approximately ten minutes to complete the survey. **Upon completion of the survey, all participants should complete the consent form by signing and dating the form, acknowledging their voluntary participation in this study.** Once completed, place the survey **and consent form** in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or bring **both of the completed documents to** the EOPS office in Clausen Hall 111B. Additionally, five participants will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview. These interviews will take approximately twenty minutes and will be conducted in a private office in the LACC Student Assistance Center.

This study is believed to pose very little, if any, risk to participants. It is possible that individuals who participate in the interview portion of the study may experience mild boredom or fatigue. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Although there are no direct benefits to participants in this study, the research findings will add needed information to the literature on retention of African American students in community colleges and may assist the California community college system in future planning efforts. Also, you may request a copy of the results of this study for your use.

All data collected in this study will be kept confidential. **Respondent names will not be used and the signed consent form will be stored separately from the survey to maintain confidentiality.** Your name and student id number will not be included on the survey. I have affixed on each survey questionnaire a barcode so that I can send a reminder letter if surveys are not returned within two weeks of receipt. I will destroy the

barcode (with all possible connection to the identity of the participant) after reminder letters have been mailed and the research study has ended.

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email provided below. If you have further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Reilly, my Dissertation Committee Chair, at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the GPS Institutional Review Board Chairperson at Pepperdine University, Dr. Stephanie Woo, at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

By signing the informed consent, completing the survey and returning them to me, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your study participation entails, and are consenting to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Kalynda Webber McLean
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

[REDACTED]

Informed Consent Form

*Please complete the information below and provide your signature in the area designated "Participant's Signature" making sure to include the date. By signing the informed consent, completing the survey and returning them to me, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your study participation entails and are consenting to participate in the study. **Return this sheet with completed survey** using the included self-addressed stamped envelope, or return to EOPS office in Clausen Hall 111B on or before [date]. Please keep the duplicate copy of this sheet (provided in your packet) for your own records.*

I, _____, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Kalynda Webber McLean under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Reilly.

Participant's Signature

Date

Date

Appendix F

Letter of Authorization to Use Survey

January 7, 2007

I, Dr. Leonard M. Crawford, EOP&S Director at Santa Monica College in Santa Monica, California do hereby grant Kalynda Webber McLean permission to use the EOPS Survey I developed for use in my 2001 study *California Community College Student Retention and Persistence with Extended Opportunity Programs and Services*.

Kalynda Webber McLean, a doctoral student at Pepperdine University in the Educational Leadership Program is collecting data regarding African American student retention in Extended Opportunities Program and Services at Los Angeles City College. Kalynda is authorized to use my survey instrument to assess student perceptions of the services and programs offered in EOPS at Los Angeles City College.

Sincerely,

Leonard M. Crawford, Ed. D.

Appendix G

Letter of Authorization to Conduct Study at LACC

February 13, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my understanding that Kalynda Webber McLean, a doctoral student at Pepperdine University in the Organizational Leadership Program is collecting data regarding African American student retention in Extended Opportunities Program and Services at Los Angeles City College for her dissertation project entitled *A Study of African American Student Retention and Persistence at Los Angeles City College in Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS)*. I have viewed her IRB Human Participant Protections Education verification, a copy of the survey instrument and the participant letter of informed consent.

As the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness at Los Angeles City College and the primary researcher for the campus, I do hereby authorize Kalynda Webber McLean (upon completion of the IRB process at Pepperdine) to solicit participation from students for the completion of a student questionnaire, for her study. I understand that Kalynda will use her survey instrument to assess student perceptions of the services and programs offered in EOPS at Los Angeles City College. I also authorize Mrs. McLean to use LACC student data for her research purposes, only.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Tillberg
Dean of Institutional Effectiveness