A Study Of The Perceptions And Performance Of Native And Community College Transfer Students At A Rural Land-Grant Institution

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A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND PERFORMANCE OF NATIVE AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS AT A RURAL LAND-GRANT INSTITUTION

By

Kimberly Reed-Nolan

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Mississippi State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Community College Leadership in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi

December 2009
A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND PERFORMANCE OF NATIVE AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS AT A RURAL LAND-GRANT INSTITUTION

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and performance of native and community college transfer students at a rural land grant institution. The study included students’ perceptions of the following areas: (1) academic and intellectual development; (2) faculty concern of student development and teaching; (3) social integration; (4) goal and institutional commitment; and (5) transfer students’ perceptions of their transfer process. The theoretical framework of the study was Tinto’s Longitudinal Model of Student Departure.

A survey research design was employed in this investigative study to collect and analyze the data. A total of 567 Mississippi State University (MSU) students participated in the research study. An instrument entitled *The Student Experience Survey* was used to gather the data utilized in the research study. The researcher sought to answer 6 research questions related to participants’ perceptions and performance at MSU. To analyze the
collected data both a Multivariate of Variance (MANOVA) and an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used.

Other statistical tests that were utilized in this research study were cross tabulations, descriptive frequencies, and Chi-Square. All results were presented in both descriptive and table forms. Among the major findings of the research study were: (a) there was a significant difference in the grade point averages (GPAs) of university native and community college transfer students, (b) there was a significant relationship between the collegiate GPAs of community college transfer students and their perceptions of specific transfer variables; and (c) there were significant differences in the students’ perceptions of the factor variables of academic and intellectual development, faculty concern for student development, social integration, and goal and institutional commitment among university native and community college transfer students.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my nieces, nephews, and God children. Never let anyone discourage you from achieving your dreams for with God, nothing is impossible.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank God for giving me this opportunity and allowing me to make it this far. I am so grateful to reach this new milestone, and I know that if had not been for God’s grace and unmerited favor, this would have been impossible. My motto has always been that, “The only way to achieve success is to please the Lord and follow His directions diligently, willingly, and cheerfully, for if He is happy with what I am doing, then there is no better story of success to tell!”

I would also like to express sincere gratefulness to my committee. Special thanks to my chair, Dr. Ed Davis, for your patience, guidance, flexibility, and words of encouragement during this endeavor. I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to Dr. Marty Wiseman and Dr. Wayne Stonecypher for your guidance and your assistance throughout this process. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Joe Adams and Dr. Joshua Watson for the wisdom and insight that you both have given me, I am so grateful for your patience and willingness to assist me throughout this process. I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to Dr. Frankie K. Williams for your time, flexibility of schedule, and the spirit of excellence you showed during this process.

I would also like to thank all of my family members and friends their support and love throughout this time. First, I would like to thank my husband, Charles Nolan, for your support. Throughout, the years you have taught me the true meaning of strength and endurance, and for that I will be eternally grateful, and I thank God for you. I would also
like to thank my mother, Norma Triggs, for always being my number one supporter and instilling in me the importance of always keeping God first. You have always encouraged me to dream big and work hard, and I am thankful to God for you every day. Also, I would like to thank my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Charles and Mary Fair, for your support and encouragement. In addition, I would like to extend a thank you to my sister and brothers for your continued support and words of encouragement throughout this process. It has meant the world to me, and I love you all. I would also like to take the time to thank my friend and fellow Community College Leadership (CCL) classmate, Kishki Hall, for all of your support throughout this process. God, saw us all the way through to the end and I am glad we made it together. And to my other family members, I just would like to say thank you for always being there and showing me the true meaning of family support. Finally, I extend my sincere appreciation to my spiritual leaders, Bishop Roderick and Pastor Mary Mitchell, and the entire New Life Church family for your prayers and encouragement throughout this process.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Over the last 40 years the educational sector has experienced and undergone some drastic changes. Many of these changes have been partially credited to the development of the community college. Community colleges have played a major part in an educational sector that seeks to meet the ever-increasing demands for expanded educational participation and opportunities (Glass & Harrington, 2002). Vaughn (2000) stated, “Community colleges have their roots in the nation’s history and are set apart by their mission to provide ever expanding educational opportunities for all” (p.1). At their inception in the early 1900s, community colleges were known as “junior colleges” and were defined as “those university divisions that offered lowered division collegiate work either on their parent campus or on a separate satellite campus” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 5).

Kasper (2002) suggested that in the early developmental stages, community colleges were developed as an extension of area high schools. Over time, the roles of community colleges have become more and more expansive. The 1930s saw a great increase in enrollment statistics at community colleges as they began to offer a variety of job training programs. Community colleges’ focus on job training programs, which is now one of their major roles, continued to be at the forefront of the college’s mission
well into the 1940s and 1950s. Then in the 1960s with baby boomers being of college age, enrollment at state community colleges soared. The increases in enrollment at these state community colleges caused for a great increase in the number of community colleges being built. Community college enrollment continued to increase well into the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, with enrollment increasing from one million in 1965 to 2.2 million by 1970. The increases in community college enrollment continued well into the 1980s with enrollment almost doubling from 2.2 million in 1970 to 4.3 million by 1980 (Kasper, 2002). As the enrollment at junior colleges continually increased, there were many researchers that looked at those factors that might have played a role in the increase in enrollment. Kasper stated, “The rapid increase in enrollment among community colleges was greatly influenced by three major factors, that included: (1) the coming of age for many baby boomers (2) the heightened desire of parents to seek out postsecondary opportunities for their children; and (3) many students sought draft deferments” (p. 16).

Despite the major increases in enrollment experienced during the 1900s, the latter part of the century saw a slight decline in enrollment with enrollment only growing 23% between 1980 and 1999 (Kasper, 2002). However, in recent years community colleges have seen a great increase in enrollment among minority students. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2003) reported, “From 1990 to 2000, full and part-time enrollments at two-year institutions rose from 5.2 million to 5.9 million, an increase of 13.5%. During the same period, enrollment of underrepresented minority students attending two-year colleges increased by almost 65%” (p. 7). NCES also reported, “During the 2003–2004 academic years, about four in ten undergraduates, or 7.6 million
students, were enrolled in public two-year institutions, also known as community
colleges” (pg. 1). The increases in enrollment at community colleges have been largely
accredited to their open enrollment policies and relatively low cost of attendance. One of
community colleges’ main goals has been to provide access to educational opportunities
to underserved populations who might otherwise not have had the opportunity to pursue a
collegiate education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Despite the major increases in enrollment
and positive attributes of community college attendance presently, much of the criticism
regarding student transfer is aimed at community college. This criticism stems from the
fact that many people feel that the community colleges do not give students a full
collegiate experience, which can ultimately lead to a reduction in university matriculation
and retention rates among community college transfer students.

**Historical Perspective of the Community College Transfer Function**

Community colleges, since their inception, have played a prominent role in the
educational experiences of many degree-seeking students. Presently, community colleges
are defined as “any institution regionally accredited to award the associate of arts or the
associate of science degree as its highest degree” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 5). Vaughan
(2000) defined a community college “as a regionally accredited institution of higher
education that offers the associate degree as its highest degree” (p. 2). Although
community colleges’ main goal mirrors that of other educational institutions, which is to
provide superior educational opportunities, they differ from other educational
establishments because of their open access policies and their focus on community
building (Vaughan). When community colleges were first created, their main mission
was that of “transfer education.” The traditional transfer pattern for students is for students to take lower level classes at a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution to take those upper level courses (Vaughan).

Even though the promotion of successful transfer from the community college to a four-year institution is still at the forefront of the community college’s mission, community colleges have an array of missions that include things such as vocational training, remedial programs, and community education. The completion of an associate degree is not a typical phenomenon because many students transfer before completion (Tatum, 2006). Either way, great measures are being taken to encourage community college students to further their education at a four-year institution in order to increase transfer rates and baccalaureate attainment among community college transfer students (Tatum).

Recent analysis of community college transfer rates has revealed a gradual increase in the transfer rates over the years (NCES, 2003). However, this has not always been the case. Throughout the years, colleges and universities have experienced both increases and decreases in transfer rates, which have occurred over several decades. In recent years there have been substantial decreases in the transfer rates among community college students. The 1950s saw low transfer rates, with only two-thirds of community college students seeking transfer to four-year universities, whereas in the 1980s only one-third of those community college students sought transfer (Cohen, 1989). Despite the decrease in the transfer rates during these times, recent years have brought about an increase in the rate of transfer among community college students (NCES, 2003). Tobolowsky (1998) suggested that presently, efforts are being taken to continuously
increase these transfer rates and improve the transfer process. The needs to improve transfer procedures are due largely to the complexity and criticism that has surrounded the transfer function over the years. Some researchers feel that the transfer process has lost its simplicity, which typically included students moving from high school, then continuing their education at a community college, and ultimately completing the educational process at a four-university by attaining a baccalaureate degree (Tobolowsky, 1998).

Tobolowsky (1998) stated that another issue, other than the simplicity of the process, which has complicated the transfer function, is the lack of communication that exists between community colleges and senior universities, as well as the non-existence of programs that would assist students in the transferring process in order to ease the transition. Yet another problem that is greatly hindering the transfer function is the process used in the evaluation of the transcripts of transfer students. In many cases, students are unable to gain credit for courses taken at community colleges and have to retake these courses. Many transferring students view this problem as a very costly and very frustrating process; one they feel should and could be avoided. This issue may also result in many transfer students deciding not to continue or further their education at a four-year university. All of these factors can make the transferring process very difficult and can be very discouraging (Tobolowsky). To eliminate these hindrances, the need to improve the transfer function has become a priority in the educational sector. Several suggestions have been outlined in an attempt to improve the transfer process. Some of the most helpful suggestions were outlined by Cohen (1989). Cohen’s suggestions included the following:
1. Enforcing universal course prerequisites,
2. Developing a system to monitor student progress,
3. Providing students with information as it relates to transfer opportunities,
4. The development and implementation of centralized student databases that will monitor student progress,
5. Schools working together to devise a common course numbering system (Cohen, 1989).

The implementation of the ideas brought forth by Cohen could greatly improve the transfer process for those community college students desiring to continue their education at four-year universities. The improvement of the transfer function is vital because of its importance and impact on the enrollment rates at universities and colleges. Furthermore, many researchers feel that by analyzing the transfer rates of community college students at senior-level institutions and highlighting efforts taken on by educational administrators to assist transfer students in their transition, will aid in understanding the importance and benefits of the transfer function, as well as the impact that it has on higher education (Christian, 2000). Many states and institutions of higher education have made great strides in attempting to implement strategies similar to those outlined by Cohen (1989), however, more still needs to be done to improve the transfer function. The development and implementation of strategies aimed at improving the success of community college transfer students at four-year universities is important because of the increased focus placed on articulation and retention. Measures have to be taken to increase and ease the transfer function among community college transfer students.
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study included Tinto’s (1993) Longitudinal Model of Student Departure (Figure 1.1). The basis of Tinto’s model rests in the fact that there are various pre-entry variables that are integrated into both the social and academic systems of an institution. These interactions can be either negative or positive and the outcome of these interactions can adversely or positively affect a student’s level of commitment to the institution. Tinto’s model organizes the variables into five primary categories. These categories are pre-entry attributes, goals and commitments, institutional experiences, integration, and outcome. The variable categories outlined by Tinto can play a major role in a student’s decision to continue or discontinue his or her education at a four-year university after transferring from a community college (Tinto, 1993).

The first category outlined by Tinto consists of a student's pre-entry attributes. This category includes variables such as the student's family background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling. Basically, this category involves almost every student related factor experienced by the student prior to the student entering college (Tinto, 1993).

The next category included in the model is that of goals and commitment. This category relates to the individual’s commitment to the institution, as well as the individual’s commitment to the actual completion of their degree at the particular university. There are two types of commitments that were identified. The identified commitments are internal and external commitments. Internal commitments refer to commitments within the college community whereas external commitments refer to commitments outside the college community (Tinto, 1993).
Tinto's next category is institutional experiences. This component is divided into both academic and social systems. The academic system refers to those educational experiences whereas; the social system refers to those extracurricular or day-to-day activities that a student may be involved in (Tinto, 1993).

The next category included in the model is that of integration. This refers to the academic and social integration that a student has been engaged in. The outcome of these interactions will determine whether or not a student continues or departs a college. If the interactions are positive, the student will gain a higher level or commitment to the organization and will be very likely to continue at the college. However, if the interactions are negative the student may experience a reduction in their level of commitment to the college and may decide to leave (Tinto, 1993).

Finally, a student’s decision to remain or to depart an institution is the last and final category in Tinto's model. This category is labeled as outcome. It is at this point, that a student decides whether or not he or she will continue at their current institution of higher learning or depart (Tinto, 1993).
Overall, Tinto’s model is based on the theory that the more informed students are, the more comfortable they are with both their academic and social integration at an institution. The student’s level of comfort will determine the student’s level of commitment. Therefore, the higher student’s level of commitment to the institution, the greater the chances the student will remain at the institution.

The present research study is built upon the framework of Tinto’s model and the model variables are considered to be vital in determining whether or not a student is successful in transitioning to a new institution. These variables are also considered to be a determining factor in whether or not a student remains at a university. For this research study, the model variables were used to help explain the participants’ academic performance and perceptions of their collegiate experiences at Mississippi State University (MSU).
Statement of the Problem

Over the years questions have been raised related to the performance of community college transfer students when compared to native university students. Several studies have examined the academic performance and experiences of community college transfer students when compared to those native university students (Gold, 1971; Nolan & Hall, 1978). Many of these studies revealed that community college students do not perform as well academically upon transferring to a university, with studies documenting a .20 or .30 decline in the grade point averages (GPAs) of community college transfers students upon leaving a community college and transferring to a four-year university (Gold; Nolan & Hall). This phenomenon is often referred to as “transfer shock.” This term was first used by Hill (1965) in order to describe the drop in a student’s GPA during his or her first semester of enrollment at a four-year university. The concept of “transfer shock,” which has had several variations since it was first developed, typically is used to describe students’ variations in their academic performance. However, the concept fails to evaluate those underlying factors that may also play a vital role in a transfer student’s successful transition and commitment to degree completion at a four-year university (Gold, 1971; Hill, 1965; Keeley & House, 1993; Nolan & Hall, 1978; Webb, 1971).

Therefore, this study sought to explore the perceptions and performance of students as they transition from a community college to a rural land-grant institution. The study compares the variables of community college transfer students to those of university native students. The researcher examined community college transfer students’ and native students’ perceptions on the academic environment of the institution,
as well as their views on the institution’s social, environmental, and educational practices.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study sought to further build on previous research by examining the performance and perceptions of experiences of both community college transfer and native students at a rural-land grant institution. Therefore, the overarching purpose of this research study was to determine if there were any significant differences in the perceptions and academic performance of MSU native students when compared to community college transfer students. The information gained as a result of conducting this research study will provide a better understanding of how a student’s perceptions of their collegiate experience and performance at the community college level determine the student’s level of performance at a four-year university.

**About Mississippi State University**

MSU is a comprehensive, doctoral-degree-granting university that offers its students a plethora of wide-range opportunities by challenging their learning, enhancing knowledge, and providing vigorous and expanding contributions in research, discovery, and application. The university also offers a wide variety of expert services to the state and other entities. MSU is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The college currently is accredited to award baccalaureate, masters, specialist, and doctoral degrees (MSU, 2008). MSU sees a great number of community college transfer students in a given academic year. Therefore,
because of the number of students that transfer to MSU each semester, the institution was ideal for the purposes of this study. Table 1.1 shows the number of transfer students by ethnicities that were enrolled at MSU as of the Fall semester of 2008.

Table 1.1

MSU Transfer Students for Fall 2008 By Ethnicity

<table>
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<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,522</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that during the Fall semester of 2008, MSU had a total of 1,522 transfer students. Of the reported number of transfer students, the largest percentage of these students reported being Caucasian (76%) in terms of ethnic background. Another 19% reported being of African American descent. The remaining 5% reported being of the remaining five ethnic categories of International, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, and Unknown.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to investigate the academic performance and collegiate perceptions of community college transfer students. The study investigated the academic performance and perceptions of those MSU transfer students, as well as those native
students. The main research questions that were addressed in the study included the following:

1. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of academic and intellectual development?
2. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching?
3. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of social integration?
4. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of goal and institutional commitment?
5. Is there a significant difference in the GPAs of MSU’s native students when compared to MSU’s community college transfer students?
6. Is there a significant relationship among MSU’s community college transfer students’ current GPA and their perceptions of the transfer variables of academic adjustment, comparison of collegiate experiences, social adjustment, and campus satisfaction?

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited by the possibility that survey respondents were not completely honest in responding to the items included in the survey. Another limitation of the study rests in the fact that two separate categorical groups were being surveyed, therefore, response rates were higher for one group than for the other categorical group.
which could have possibly influenced the statistical outcomes and limited the number of statistical tests that the researcher was able to utilize in analyzing the study data. The study was further limited by the fact that there was the possibility that the participants’ responds might have been influenced by other factors not included in the survey. Furthermore, because of the potential threats and limitations identified, the study has the potential of being biased. A final limitation of the study was the method utilized to collect the GPAs of study participants. Participants were asked to self-report their GPAs based on an already derived scale. Students were not allowed to enter their actual GPAs, nor were the GPAs obtained from official university records. The GPAs collection method ultimately limited the statistical tests that could be utilized to analyze the data.

**Delimitations of the Study**

The four that were identified for this research study included the following.

1. The survey was administered to students at one university, and the results of the study may not be applicable to students at other institutions of higher education.

2. Only MSU’s native and community college transfer students were surveyed and no faculty or staff members were asked to provide input.

**Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions were used to clarify the terms used throughout the study.
1. *Community/Junior College* refers to a public supported, regionally accredited institution of higher education offering the associate’s degree as the highest degree either on their home or satellite campuses (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Vaughan, 2000).

2. The *transfer program/function* is typically a transfer agreement that allows students to complete the first two-years of their college course work at the community college rather than completing their baccalaureate at a university, thus reducing the cost of obtaining a four-year degree (Kasper, 2002-03). Students are allowed to use their community college hours toward the completion of a baccalaureate degree.

3. *Transfer* can be defined as a “transition between postsecondary institutions in which the second institution (the destination or receiving institution) typically grants the student credit for coursework taken at the first institution (the origin, or sending institution)” (NCES, n.d., para. 2).

4. The *grade point average (GPA)* “represents the average number of grade points a student earns for each graded course. Grade points are points per course credit assigned to a passing grade, indicating the numerical value of the grade. Dividing a student's total grade points earned by the total course credits attempted determines a student's GPA” (NCES, n.d., para. 6).

5. A *transfer student* is defined as a “student entering the two-year college in a given year who has no prior college experiences and who completes at least twelve college-credit units before transferring to a senior-level institution” (Koppel, 1994, p. 6).
6. A native student is defined as a student who started his or her academic career at a four-year university immediately after high school or at the beginning of the student’s academic career (NCES, n.d., para. 7).

7. Transfer Shock is defined as “the first term decline in the grade point average of those community college transfer students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

8. Baccalaureate Degree is “an award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least 4 but not more than 5 years of full-time equivalent college-level work requiring the completion of at least 124 credit hours” (NCES, n.d., para. 6).

9. Associate Degree is “an award that normally requires at least two but less than four years of full-time equivalent college work” (NCES, n.d., para. 7).

10. The social integration variable consists of the “student’s extracurricular activities, peer group interactions, and interactions with faculty and staff” (Gumm, 2006, p. 19).

11. The academic and intellectual development variable “includes the student’s academic performance, academic and intellectual development, and the faculty concern for student development and learning” (Gumm, 2006, p. 18).

12. The goal and institutional commitment variable “consists of student’s highest expected academic degree, the highest expected academic degree at a particular institution, and the students’ ranking of the college among their collegiate choices” (Gumm, 2006, p. 19).

13. The transfer adjustment variable is described “as the modification of the transfer students’ behavior as a result of changed circumstances at the new university as it
relates to psychological and social connection to the environment (Gumm, 2006, p.18)

14. Transition is defined “as the transformation of the transfer students that occurs as a result of the changes in the collegiate environment with the attendance at a new university; the transition process is impacted by the students’ goals and institutional commitments, as well as their academic and social integration (Gumm, 2006, p.20).

Organization of the Study

This chapter presented an overview of the study as well as a brief history of the community college and the transfer function. The chapter began with the historical information followed by theoretical framework for this study. This chapter revealed that this study was an examination of the variables that were outlined in the Tinto’s (1993) Longitudinal Model of Student Departure. This chapter also outlined the purpose of this study, identified the specific research questions that this study sought to answer, the need for the study, as well as specified the limitations and definitions of this research study. The next chapter discusses current literature on the issue of community college transfer and the relationships between community colleges and four-year institutions. Chapter Three details the research design and methodology that was employed in the research study, as well as the survey instrument and sample population. The fourth chapter of this study reports the results of the study and the statistical results for each observed research question. The final chapter of this study outlines the conclusions of the study and recommendations for future research studies.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Though community colleges are considered the stepping-stones to higher education, a considerable number of community college students leave the educational sector before attaining a bachelor’s degree (Barr & Schuetz, 2008). Barr and Schuetz suggest that this disintegration of the community college educational structure has long been a problem within the realm of public higher education. The nearly 50% dropout rates have basically remained unchanged over the last 40 years. When institutions of higher learning fail to accomplish their didactic goals, their overall benefits and reliability are weakened (Barr & Schuetz). Best and Gehring (1993) suggested that some individuals feel that students who enroll in community colleges have a lower chance of obtaining a bachelor’s degree than those who go directly to a four-year university. Learners who attend community colleges have a smaller probability of receiving a bachelor’s degree than their university counterparts because community college students have to overcome a number of obstacles before they can achieve their goal of attaining a bachelor’s degree (Best & Gehring).

Best and Gehring (1993) have suggested that the two biggest hurdles faced by community college students are those of transfer and articulation. Research has shown
that there is less than a 50% chance that a student entering a community college will ever transfer to a four-year institution in order to attain a bachelor’s degree. Even if the student does actually transfer, there still remains a 50% chance that the student will actually graduate (Best & Gehring). Because of these assumptions, there has been great criticism regarding community college transfer students. Much of this criticism is aimed at the community college as it relates to their preparation of these students.

**Historical Underpinnings**

Community colleges have been a major part of the education sector for many decades. Cohen and Brawer (2003) stated that since the 1901 establishment of the first community college, Joliet Junior College, a major function of two-year colleges has been the transfer function. A two-year college, along with its team of well credentialed faulty is assumed to offer courses to fulfill the first two years of a student’s collegiate education at a level equivalent to the education offered at universities but in a setting with more faulty-student interaction and smaller class sizes. For those students that begin their education at a community college it is their hopes that they would be able to transfer earned community college credits to a senior-level college thereby, beginning their university studies as a junior-level student. At the completion of a students’ community college study, students are awarded an Associate Degree. The introduction of the Associate Degree has been credited to William Rainey Harper in the late 19th century (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Specifically, Kintzer (1996) suggested that increased interest in transfer began with well-known educational personalities such as William Rainey Harper, Charles
McClane, Alexis Lange, and James Angell. These early scholars aided in the development of the articulation process by speaking of the junior college as part of the public school system. One of the major moves in the development of transfer and articulation took place in 1896 when Harper divided the undergraduate program at the University of Chicago into both senior and junior level divisions; this move signified the importance of transfer. Another historical move that took place to encourage transfer happened in 1907 when a new educational program was started at the University of California. The program was developed in order to encourage high schools to provide college-level courses to students; in turn students were awarded junior certificates and were allowed to transfer these credits to the university (Kintzer). In 1921 legislation was passed in full support for programs of this type and the relationship between the high schools and the University of California existed until 1926 (Kintzer). “In the early decades, the transfer function was a comparatively simple enterprise confined almost entirely to be the vertical transfer of high school graduates to junior colleges then to universities” (Kintzer, p. 5). As summarized in the works of some early educational scholars, the transfer function and objectives of the junior college were in place and fully functioning. However, the collegiate transfer function appeared to be limited to vertical transfer (Kintzer).

Furthermore, Kintzer (1996) concludes that as the issue of transfer was becoming more prevalent, several commissions and policies were developed during the 1950s and 1960s. One of the earliest groups was the National Education Association (NEA)-appointed committee on secondary school studies. One of the committee’s most notable accomplishments during this time was the acceptance of the widespread adoption of the
Carnegie unit which led to the development of formulation methods for calculating transfer credits. Another commission developed during this time was the Commission on the Relation of School to College. This committee conducted a study on the student success and was noted as the first sizable attempt at measuring student transfer success. Another committee formed during this time was the Truman Commission. This commission served as a major force in establishing the junior college as a recognizable and respectful academic institution during this era. This commission produced a six-volume report that brought major attention to junior colleges. The report recommended expansion of junior colleges by making the colleges extensions of high schools (Kintzer, 1996). Kintzer (1996) also noted that during this era, The Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1922, which brought forth a number of activities that affected college relations, was developed. This act also helped to develop collaborations between schools and colleges, also played a major role in the development of the Advanced Placement Programs which were further developed in 1955.

Kintzer (1996) noted that during the 1950s and 1960s great milestones were made related to the issue of transfer function. One great milestone event that took place was the publication of the 55th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, which included an entire chapter that focused completely on the magnitude and importance of the transfer function. A year after the publication of this landmark publication, the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of Junior Colleges created a national committee to enhance the transfer function. Then in 1953, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers joined in the efforts of the associations to form the Joint Commission. As part of the efforts to
address the transfer issue, in 1959 the Joint Commission gave the University of California
the task of developing studies on the characteristics and transfer problems faced by junior
college students. As a result, *Beyond High School*, which was a psychological study of
high school graduates, was conducted in 1968. This landmark study remains one of the
classic analyses of students as they seek to advance their educational career beyond high
school. Also during this time, focuses of states’ master plans were strengthened to deal
with the transfer function in order to improve articulation services, more importantly to
improve the counseling services offered to transfer students (Kintzer, 1996).

Kintzer (1996) further noted that although great strides were made during
previous eras, the 1970s and 1980s saw a great increase in the number of community
college transfer and articulation research. By the end of the decade, colleges experienced
increases in enrollment due to financial programs like the Serviceman’s Readjustment
Act of 1922. This period also saw an increase in publications related to transfer and
articulation which included a *Nationwide Pilot Study on Articulation* and the *Airlie House
Conference Report* on college transfer. These publications provided a clear picture of the
status of articulation and transfer. Then with the 1980s, several other national important
publications were developed. These reports included the publication of the second edition
of the “Guidelines for Improving Articulation between Community/Junior and Senior
Colleges.” The second publication focused on reverse transfers, interinsititutional and
intersegmental transfers, and issues faced by those identified groups. Another influential
report was published by Kintzer (1996) was entitled *Improving Articulation and Transfer
Relationships*. The overall goal of this report was to outline measures that could be used
to develop a new era of stimulating and enhancing articulation and transfer through
increased dialogues among national leaders. Yet another vital publication during this time was the “Articulation/Transfer Phenomenon: Patterns and Directions,” which identified four state-based patterns of articulation agreements, as well as looked on the transfer function as whole (Kintzer). The four state patterns of articulation that were identified included: (a) formal and legally based guidelines and policies; (b) voluntary agreements among institutions; (c) social agreements on vocational and technical credit transfer; and d.) special agreements on vocational and technical credit transfer” (Kintzer, 1996, p. 14).

Kintzer (1996) stated that as for the 1990s, these years started off with the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Board of Directors declaring 1990 as the year of the transfer. Two major publications were released during this time. Those included “Transfer, Articulation, and Collaboration: Twenty-Five Years Later” and “Spotlight on the Transfer Function: National Study of State Policies and Practices” (Kintzer, p. 26). Both publications looked at state practices related to transfer and articulation. There were also several vital studies that were conducted during this time that sought to identify the method by which transfer rates were to be calculated and how transfer students should be identified (Kintzer). One of the most widely use methods of calculation of the transfer function was developed in 1991 by the Transfer Assembly.

Over the past decades, there has been great research and publications aimed at improving the articulation and transfer policies and procedures (Kintzer). Even though there has been substantial growth in transfer rates over the years, there is still more that can be done and the educational sector is on board to aid in the process.
Characteristics of Community College Students

From their origin, community colleges have always been known to attract a variety of different students, with great differences existing between the characteristics of community college students and those attending four-year universities. Community college students are a diverse group of individuals who have various reasons for attending the community college (NCES, 2008). “As reported in 2003–2004, nearly 40% of community college students were dependent students meaning that they were less than 24 years old and not independent financially from their parents. Yet, another 26% reported to be 24 years of age or older and financially independent from their parents. Another, 20% were independent and married with children, and 15 % were independent single parents” (Horn & Neville, 2006, p. 9).

The NCES (2008) noted that the median ages of community college students which was 24, as reported during the 2003–2004 academic year, was higher than the median age for both public and private not-for-profit four-year college students (21 years old). In addition, 35% of community college students were 30 years old or older (compared with 13% at public four-year institutions and 21% at private not-for-profit 4-year institutions), 18% were between 24 and 29 years old (compared with 16% at public four-year institutions and 12% at private not-for-profit four-year institutions), and 38% were between 19 and 23 years old (compared with 60% at public four-year institutions and 55% at private not-for-profit four-year institutions (NCES, 2008). NCES (2008) also noted that community college students also greatly differ from those students enrolled at public and private four-year institutions as it relates to sex, race/ethnicity, and income level. The NCES reported that about 59% of community college students enrolled during
the 2003–2004 school term were female, which was a slightly greater percentage than the
number of females enrolled at public four-year institutions (54%) and at private not-for-
profit four-year institutions (56%). Caucasians made up a larger percentage of the student
body at community colleges during 2003-2004, but African -American and Hispanics
students made up a greater percentage of students at community colleges than at public
four-year universities. Also during this time, it was reported that 15% of community
college students were African-American, and 14% were Hispanic. Whereas, 10% of
students at public four-year institutions were Black and 9% were Hispanic (NCES, 2008).

Horn and Neville (2006) also notes that the percentage of students at private not-
for-profit four-year institutions who were African-American was not measurably
different from that of community colleges, but the percentage of Hispanics (12%) was
much smaller. When incomes for community college students were compared with
poverty thresholds, 26% of community college students were in the lowest income level
during the 2003–2004 academic year, while only 20% of students in public and private
not-for-profit four-year institutions reported being at the lowest income level. In addition,
“when comparing students attending four-year colleges and universities in 2003–2004,
higher proportions of community college students were older, female, and from low-
inecome families, and lower proportions were White” (Horn & Neville, p. 9).

Given the great diversity that exists among community college students, their
varying reasons for attending community colleges, and their different levels of
commitment a holistic analysis of community college students can be a complicated one.
There are also varying levels of commitment that exists among community college
students’ goals as it relates their intentions of completing an actual degree program
A 2006 NCES study classified community college students into three commitment levels: “more committed,” “less committed,” and “not committed” (Horn & Neville 2006, p. 19). The NCES (2008) noted that a student’s level of commitment was based on three factors: enrollment in a formal degree or transfer program, intensity of attendance (full-time, less than full-time but at least half-time, less than half-time), and the student’s reason for enrolling in a community college. Community college students were classified as “more committed” if they (a) were enrolled in a formal transfer, associate’s degree, or certificate program; (b) attended at least half time; and (c) reported that they enrolled in order to transfer to a four-year institution or to earn an associate’s degree or vocational certificate. Students were designated as “less committed” if they (a) enrolled in formal degree or transfer programs but did not report explicit intentions to complete a degree or transfer or (b) attended classes less than half time. Students were designated as “not committed” if they were not enrolled in a formal degree program (e.g., students who enrolled to take a course or two for personal enrichment). Applying this taxonomy, 49% of 2003–2004 community college students were found to be “more committed,” 39% were “less committed,” and 12% were “not committed” (NCES, 2008). These statistics are evidence of the vast range of characteristics that exists among community college transfer students. Furthermore, they reveal the importance of institutions developing strategies that will address the transfer needs of these diverse groups of students.
Reasons and Benefits of Attending Community Colleges

Townsend (2007) noted that over the past centuries, there have been a plethora of research that has looked into the many benefits and reasons for students attending community colleges before transferring to four-year universities. Although there have been some researchers that have suggested that community colleges students do not perform at the same level as those native students, there is still a vast number of studies that have proven otherwise. Many researchers feel that the high level of performance exhibited by many transfer students is due largely to the many stated benefits of attending a community college prior to attending a four-year university (Townsend).

Townsend (2007) stated that as for the benefits related to attending community college prior to enrollment at a four university, one of the main reasons given is the tuition cost at the community college. Tuition cost at community colleges is typically lower than that of four-year colleges and universities. A second advantage for attending a community college is geographical convenience. Most communities have a community college that is within 50 miles or less of their community, which is typically important for those students that may need to commute and do not have the opportunity to reside in college residential halls. A third advantage for attending a community college is the open door policy that community colleges have. For many students with an average or below average academic record, community colleges serve as the best opportunity for educational advancement. Yet another reason for students beginning at community colleges is that many students would like to begin their collegiate career at a place where they feel they would be the most comfortable. Since one of the main roles of community college faculty is to teach and focus on student learning coupled with the fact that they
also have a relatively low student faculty ratio, community colleges can often provide such an atmosphere. Therefore, community colleges are an excellent choice for those students who desire teaching-centered faculty, smaller classroom sizes, and a smaller campus environment. Also, community colleges can serve as an opportunity for those students who are unsure about attending college to experience the collegiate educational process on a much smaller scale (Townsend, 2007). All of the above mentioned benefits have proven to be very important and influential in many students’ decision to begin their collegiate academic career at a community college.

The NCES (2008) noted that despite the many advantages of attending a community college prior to attending a four-year university, not all students who begin at community colleges transfer to a university with the hopes of attaining a bachelor's degree. Although some community college students may not have the desire to pursue education beyond the associate degree there are others that may desire to put their educational goals on hold for a while after completing an associate’s degree to pursue other interests such as seeking employment opportunities. Despite the various personal factors that may contribute to community college students deciding not to pursue a baccalaureate degree, many feel that certain circumstances at community colleges such as the lack of residence halls, social clubs, and social activities, also play a role in the number of community college students that fail to pursue a bachelor’s degree. The community college’s focus on occupational programs is often considered to be a contributing factor in students not enrolling in transfer and academic programs. In spite of the perceived negative aspects of attending a community college there are some students that prefer the community college over a four-year institution for a variety of
different reasons (NCES, 2008). Table 2.1 outlines the top reasons that were given in

*The 2008 Special Analysis Report* released by the NCES.

![Figure 2.1](image)

**Figure 2.1**

Reasons for Enrollment in a Community College

Townsend (2007) further noted that despite the negative notations, some researchers feel that the positive aspects of attending a community college often encourage transfer. Some of the positive aspects include the idea that community colleges seek to improve the critical thinking, analytical competencies, and general intellectual development of their students. Furthermore, community college campuses that encourage high levels of interaction between students and faculty, as well as faculty involvement and concern about student growth and development can encourage community college students to transfer to four-year universities. The positive emphasizes of community colleges and the beneficial learning environments that they provide are often overlooked (Townsend). When asked to identify one or more reasons why they enrolled in a community college, over one-third of community college students reported that they
enrolled in order to transfer to a four-year college, 43% reported seeking an associate’s degree, 17% reported seeking a certificate, 42% reported seeking job skills, and 46% reported enrolling for personal interest (NCES, 2008). When addressing the issue of transfer, researcher should be sure to take into consideration the influences that may contribute to a student’s educational decision.

**Recent Changes in Community Colleges**

Townsend (2007) noted that over the years, with increased criticism of community colleges and accusations of these colleges failing to prepare students to pursue a bachelor degree after their attendance at the community college, there have been a variety of changes that have taken place. One major change that has taken place is the development of honors programs on the community college level. These programs have been developed to attract and more intensively engage those academically advanced students. Honors programs at community colleges have been in existence since the 1950s but they have not existed on such a large scale until the 1980s with community colleges beginning to place more emphasis on the academic quality, especially as it relates to the transfer function (Townsend). Many critics feel that the honors programs go against the open-enrollment policies of the community college because these programs are intended to attract those students that meet certain academic requirements. Others feel that these programs are just another way by which community colleges can meet the needs of their students, especially their high academic performing students. Based on the tuition scholarships offered through these programs, the programs are aimed at attracting those high performing students that might have overlooked the options of attending a
community college. In turn, many feel that the presence of such programs will enhance the academic environment of the community college, as well as give other students academically achieving students as role models (Townsend).

Townsend (2007) further noted that another development that has taken place on the campuses of many community colleges is the development and implementation of baccalaureate degree programs. Currently, there are a number of community colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees in fields such as nursing, education, or manufacturing technology. With the increase in community college baccalaureate degree programs, more states are considering the authorization of such programs. Townsend stated that if those students that complete baccalaureate degrees at community colleges would be considered as community college transfer students then the baccalaureate attainment rate of community college students would greatly increase. There are some researchers that feel community college baccalaureate degree programs are community colleges’ way of addressing unmet workforce demands (Walter & Floyd, 2005). There are three main factors that have influenced the growth of these programs at community colleges. These factors include:

1. “The increasing cost of university tuition and tougher university admission requirements create limited access to traditional four year colleges and universities for many students” (Bernmel et al., 2009, p. 152).

2. “The bachelor degree has replaced the associate degree as the entry level requirement for a decent-paying job in numerous occupational fields” (Walker, 2002, p. 5)
3. “The need for baccalaureate degree programs in rural areas to serve nontraditional students such as older students beyond the traditional college ages of 18-22, single parents, students with families, and students not typically served by other universities” (Troumpoucis, 2004, p. 2).

Yet another development that has changed the community college environment is the increased interest in on-campus housing (Townsend (2007). Townsend noted that at least 20% of public community colleges offer on-campus housing and often residence housing is made available only to students such as athletes, full-time students, and students that are less than 21 years of age. Many researchers feel that those students that reside on campus are better adjusted both socially and academically than those students that are commuters. Therefore, when studying the effects of community college attendance, ample consideration should be given to such factors such as housing status, degree completion, and transfer rates. Some researchers feel that if more community colleges would offer on campus housing there would be an increase in the number of community college students who attain baccalaureate degrees because it would be easier for these students to become acclimated to living in an collegiate environment (Townsend). The recent changes that have taken placed on the campuses of many community colleges is evidence that these institutions are taking their role in the transfer process seriously and are willing to do whatever is necessary to improve the overall transfer function. These institutions are also seeking to increase the number of community college transfer students who will ultimately go on to obtain a bachelor’s degree. Although great strides have been made in improving the transfer function, there is still more to be done.
Defining Transfer

With the increased interest in the effectiveness of the community college transfer function, a universal definition of transfer is very much needed. Several previous studies have evaluated the transfer process based on the number of units completed at the community college and at a four-year university (Nolan & Hall, 1974). Yet other studies have looked at transfer based on those who graduated in a certain amount of time based on their initial entrance at the four-year institution (McConochie & Rajashkara, 1992; McHewitt, 1993). Other studies focused on students’ intentions at the time of their initial enrollment (McCormick & Carroll, 1997). The National Transfer Assembly Study defined transfer rate based on the number of “all students entering the two-year college in a given year who have no prior college experiences and who complete at least twelve college-credit units, divided into the number of that group who take one or more classes at an in-state, public university within four years” (Cohen, 1991, p. 3).

According to McCormick & Carroll (1997) “transfer can be defined as a transition between postsecondary institutions in which the second institution (the destination, or receiving institution) typically grants the student credit for coursework taken at the first institution (the origin, or sending institution)” (p. 1). The authors state that transfer is usually characterized as a one-way transition, meaning that the student does not return to the first institution that they attended. Therefore, if a student temporarily enrolls at a second college and then returns to the institution where they were previously enrolled, the transfer process is not characterized as a transfer (McCormick & Carroll). Because of the varying level of student transfer options there have been several types of transfer that have been identified. The types of transfer are horizontal and vertical transfer.
“Horizontal transfer occurs when students transfer between institutions at the same level, for example if a student transfers between two four-year institutions. Vertical transfer involves a student transferring among different institutions by changing their institutional level, for example if a student transfers from a two-year to a four-year institution. Vertical transfer is sometimes described with respect to the direction of transfer: forward transfer involves movement to a higher-level institution, while reverse transfer is movement in the opposite direction” (McCormick & Carroll, p. 1). Furthermore, any transition from a less than four-year institution to a four-year institution is considered to be a transfer even if the student returns to the institution they first attended. This approach to transfer allows researchers to capture all transfers to four-year institutions and to avoid inappropriately excluding those transfer students who may temporarily reenroll at the first institution they attended. Therefore, students do not necessarily have to complete an associate’s degree to transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution in order to be considered a transfer student (McCormick & Carroll). This is an important factor because many students fail to complete the entire course of study at the community college before transferring to a four-year institution.

McCormick & Carroll (1997) stated that “depending upon a particular institution’s or system’s transfer admission practices, students may transfer with an associate’s degree, a certificate, or without any credentials at all. However, students who completed a bachelor’s degree at their first institution are not eligible for transfer, even if they subsequently enrolled elsewhere” (p. 2). As a result, three types of transitions have been defined as transfers:
1. “A student began at a less than four-year institution, left that institution with or without a degree, enrolled at another less than four-year institution, and did not return to the first institution” (McCormick & Carroll, p. 2);

2. “A student began at a less than four-year institution, left that institution with or without a degree, and enrolled at a four-year institution (regardless of subsequent enrollment at the first institution)” (McCormick & Carroll, p. 2); or

3. “A student began at a four-year institution, left that institution without completing a bachelor’s degree, enrolled at another postsecondary institution and did not return to the first institution” (McCormick & Carroll, p. 2).

**Transfer Agreement, Function, and Programs**

From its inception, one of the primary functions of the community college has been to provide students with two years of course work that will enable them to transfer to a four-year university (Glass & Harrington, 2002). However, as the role of the community college has continued to develop over the years, one of the major roles of the community college has been to serve as a gateway for those students who may have otherwise been denied the opportunity to seek secondary education. Community colleges offer associate degrees, which are designed to serve as a gateway for students to pursue traditional academic programs at four-year colleges and universities (Kasper, 2002). In order to increase the number of transfer students, over the years many community colleges and universities have developed transfer agreements and programs. Typically under these transfer agreements, colleges and universities agree to accept a student’s community college credits and allow these credits to be applied toward their bachelor
degree requirements. The transfer agreements allow students to complete the first two-years of their college course work at the community college rather than completing their entire academic program requirements at a university, thus reducing the cost of obtaining a four-year degree (Kasper, 2002).

Glass and Harrington (2002) noted that despite the increase in the scope of the mission of community colleges, the transfer function still remains one of the most important functions and is often used as the measure by which the quality of the community college educational system is evaluated. Some researchers have found that community college transfer students often compare favorably in academic performance when compared with those native students at four-year universities. Although, there are some researchers that feel that the transfer function serves as the foundation by which the community college is based on, there are still others that feel that the need and purpose of the transfer function is still questionable. Because of the various views of the community college transfer function, some researchers feel that the transfer function is experiencing a state of turmoil while others feel that the transfer function aids in the educational quality of community colleges and urge community colleges administrators to continually strengthen their institution’s transfer function to increase student retention at senior-level institutions (Glass & Harrington).

Vaughan (2002) further noted that transfer programs were developed to allow students to complete their first two years of college, while taking classes that are almost equivalent to those they would have taken if they were enrolled in a bachelor’s program at a four-year university. A majority of the classes are in basic subject areas such as mathematics, humanities, sciences, and social studies. The more successful transfer
programs are those that enable students to transfer credits to meet both general degree requirements and programmatic-level courses. Many community college transfer programs have been very successful in transfer students’ credits being accepted, without any problems, at both private and public universities (Vaughan, 2000).

Over the years there has been some concern about the transfer function, as well as the transfer programs at community colleges. Grubb (1991) stated that there have been some researchers that feel that as a result of the vast number of services and programs offered by community colleges and the large number of nontraditional students that are served, the maintaining of transfer programs is should not be of great importance. However, with vast changes that have occurred in community colleges, three reasons have been given for continued emphasis on transfer functions and programs (Grubb). The reasons are:

1. The first is said to be symbolic, meaning that a successful transfer program is confirmation of the academic purposes of community colleges and strengthens their claims to be colleges. Therefore, the ability of students to transfer to four-year colleges and then successfully compete with those natives students is a test of the community colleges’ academic position within the higher education sector (Grubb, p. 195).

2. The second reason being that a large number of community college students still aspire to receive a bachelor’s degree (Grubb, p. 195).

3. The third reason cited was the fact that the claims of community colleges to be egalitarian institutions rest upon the success of the transfer function. Although the community college has been recognized for providing access to those students who might not have otherwise had access to educational
opportunities, many researchers feel that even more is needed from the community college. Some feel that simple access has no substantial meaning. However, the egalitarian claim has promoted the community college as an alternative route to a bachelor’s degree, a second chance institution for many who may unlikely be able to gain access to a four-year university. Therefore, the egalitarian claim of community colleges is contingent upon the fact of transfer and subsequent bachelor’s degree attainment being substantial (Grubb, p. 196).

Laanan (2001) stated that despite the controversy surrounding the issue, the transfer function is still looked upon as an important issue in the educational sector. The transfer function is designed to provide students with those lower level classes that can be used toward their baccalaureate attainment. Community colleges are excellent educational choices for those high schools graduates who may not be eligible for admission into a four-year -university immediately following graduation. Therefore, because of their open access policies and well-rounded curriculum, community colleges provide educational opportunities for a variety and diverse group of students (Laanan, 2001). Because of the important role that community colleges play in the educational arena, programs at community colleges need to be enhanced to better address the issues surrounding the transfer function. In addition, steps need to be made to strengthen transfer agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions.
Ways to Strengthen the Transfer Function

With the ever-increasing pressure on community college to better the transfer functions, there has been a need for the development and implementation of plans that will work to strengthen the transfer function. This is imperative because even today, the community college’s primary function is still seen to be that of the “transfer function” (Knoell, 1982). Researchers feel that there needs to be more than just a look at articulation and credit transfer (Palmer, 1986). The study and improvement of the transfer function should be looked at from a multi-dimensional perspective that includes the following:

1. The first facet of this multidimensional approach is taking efforts to increase a student’s collegiate involvement and academic skills before he or she is even eligible to attend college. Because the path to a successful transfer begins even before a student enters college, many colleges are directly and indirectly taking efforts to sharpen the skills of those students that are presently enrolled in high school. Many colleges are informing and exposing these students to those requirements that will be expected of them upon entering college. It is believed that one method that would improve transfer rates is to reestablishment the relationships between community colleges and high schools (Palmer, 1986).

2. Another facet of this multidimensional program involves basing course and program articulation on student competencies rather than the number of credit transfers. In the past, articulation agreements have always looked at the transferability of credits, but have failed to observe whether these community college transfer students will have those skills needed to ensure success on the
university level. Therefore, researchers should also focus on whether or not the transferring of credits is also linked to the skills and knowledge needed to successfully perform on a higher academic level (Palmer, 1986).

3. Colleges should have a tracking system that tracks transfer students, as well as additional support services. Many researchers feel that the use of such tracking systems and support systems will increase student transfer and baccalaureate attainment. Among community college transfer students (Palmer, 1986).

4. Finally, schools develop an information system that will be used to track student progress. Efforts to improve transfer rates are largely contingent upon the type of information that is made available to both students and collegiate personnel. Collegiate employees need to be provided information related to students’ skills, progress, and the successes students have had since their transfer. In addition, students need information related to their progress, university support services that are available, as well as the transferability of their community college hours (Palmer, 1986).

In conclusion, the efforts to strengthen the transfer function are an attempt to secure the community college’s position within the educational mainstream. Securing community colleges’ position is vital because community colleges have been often overlooked or misrepresented within the educational arena. Therefore, the issue of transfer should be looked at from a multi-dimensional perspective; one that looks at the transfer process as a process that begins in high school and goes all the way up to the university level (Palmer, 1986). Because the issue of transfer is looked at from multiple dimensions, when addressing the issue a multi-dimensional programmatic approach as
the one described above should be utilized on order to strengthen the transfer function between community colleges and universities.

Transfer Shock

Transfer shock has been defined as the decline in the grade point average (GPA) of a student who is transferring from a community college to a four-year university. Transfer shock often occurs in the student’s first semester at the university, which may result in some students leaving the university because of the fear of failure (Laanan, 2001). Laanan noted that there have been several studies that supported the idea that the phenomenon of transfer shock does exist. One of the studies conducted, was an Arkansas-base study was conducted by the University of Arkansas and its Office for Non-Traditional Students (ONTS). This study found that transfer shock was experienced by those students with GPAs of 2.5 or less. The study further indicates that 76.7% of transfer students experience transfer shock and 50% of both transfer and native students experienced at least a 0.5% drop in their GPAs once they began to take higher level collegiate course (Laanan). Frederick (1998) conducted another study of students in the North Carolina collegiate system. The study revealed that community college transfer students experienced transfer shock at a greater level than those private junior college transfer students. Yet another study reported that transfer shock was experienced among community college transfer students with the mean GPA falling to a mere 2.82 and subsequently increasing to 3.05 at the time of graduation from the four-year university. The study also revealed that native student’s GPAs rose slightly, a difference of .06
points from the time they began their junior year until the time of their graduation (Frederick).

In addition to changes in academic performance, Laanan (2001) stated that transfer students also face both psychological and environmental changes as well. Kelly and House (1993) stated that “many students who transfer from community colleges to four-year universities have trouble adjusting to the rigorous academic standards and are often faces a wide variety of other challenges upon enrolling in four-year universities” (p. 5). A lot of the problems faced by these students may be greatly influenced by the difference that exists between community colleges and four-year universities such as size, location, academic rigor, as well as competition among students (Holahan, Green and Kelley, 1983; Laanan, 1996, 1998). Also, as related to student transfer, a student’s previous community college experience my influence both their cognitive and affective outcomes at four-year universities. Therefore, four year colleges are growing even more concerned about the success of those community college transfer students (Laanan, 2001). In addressing transfer shock among community college transfer students, Hill (1965) has come up with three main conclusions. These conclusions are:

1. “Transfer students should expect to suffer an appreciable drop in grades in the first semester after transfer;

2. Transfer students’ grades tend to improve in direct relation to their length of schooling and;

3. Native students as a group are shown to perform better than the transfer students” (Hill, 1965, p. 7).
Hill (1965) goes on to state that those transfer students who plan to attend a four-year university in order to obtain a bachelor’s degree should be properly warned of the great probability that they may experience transfer shock. Because of transfer students’ likelihood of experiencing transfer shock, these students will more than likely encounter greater levels of difficulty when comparing their educational experiences do those of native students therefore, increasing the length of time need for this students to graduate (Hill, 1965).

Despite the many issues that are faced by transfer students, studies focused on the performance of this students have all focused on their GPAs because it is the often the most widely used measure used for admitting transfer students. Even with the vast amount of research centered on GPAs, the research has had some conflicting results. Some research has shown that students experiencing transfer shock suffer a slight drop in their GPAs while other studies have shown that some students experience transfer ecstasy meaning they experience an increase in their GPAs (Laanan, 2001). One in-depth meta-analysis study conducted by Diaz (1992) reflected on 62 previous studies that reported on the magnitude of GPA changes. The studies that were reviewed revealed that although community college transfer students in 79% of the studies actually experienced transfer shock, with the average drop in GPAs being a half of a grade point or less. However, the studies also revealed that of those students that did experience transfer shock, 67% of these students recovered from transfer shock usually within their first year of transferring, with a majority of students recovering completely from transfer shock, 34% recovering almost completely, and 32% showing partial recovery (Diaz).
Thurmond (2007) notes that the concept of transfer shock is one that continues to be a mystery among students, collegiate advisors, as well as those trained in the area of retention. The role of academic advising in reducing the occurrence of transfer shock is becoming more and more important. Academic advising designed specifically around meeting the needs of transfers students provides these students with the opportunities to receive come much needed attention and guidance to aid them through their first semester at a university. Therefore, these advisors should be equipped with strategies and programs that will allow them to implement early intervention methods in order to provide these students with a better chance of reducing or eliminating transfer shock during their first semester (Thurmond).

**Concerns of Transfer Students**

Over the past several years there have been increased focus on the performance of community college students upon their transfer to four-year universities. Despite, the plethora of resources available at four-year universities, many of these students often face problems when transferring from a community college to a four-year university. Over the years there has been extensive research that has looked into those issues and or concerns that are often faced by community college transfer students (Laanan, 2001). One of the major concerns of these students is the level of attention exhibited by university staff members when compared to the individual attention on the university level. Many of these transfer students were also more pleased with the laid-back comfortable environment offered at the community college level (Davies & Casey, 1999). Many researchers feel that university faculty and staff would become more aware of the issues
faced by community college transfer students on their campus and actions need to be taken to make the transition process a much easier process for these students (Rhine, Milligan, & Nelson, 2000).

Researchers have also found that financial issues were also a major concern for community college transfer students. Many of the community college transfer students feel that the community college environment made it more conducive for them to attend school while maintaining a job, while the strenuous environment at the university makes it extremely difficult to work. Many of those community college transfer students also felt that it was much easier to receive financial aid at the community level than at a university (Rhine, et al., 2000).

Many community college transfer students have also expressed concern about the transferring and acceptance of community college credit hours at senior institutions. Therefore, that many students have transferred to universities and have been faced with the issue of not having all of their community college hours being credited to the completion of their bachelor’s degree. Cases such as this have often resulted in students becoming frustrated at the transfer procedures on both the community college and university level. Many states and educational institutions are attempting to change these arising credit transfer issues by developing plans that will automatically transfer and apply students’ community college core courses to the completion of their university degree (Rhine, et al., 2000).

Finally, another frustration that community college transfer students are facing is that of fully meeting a university’s prerequisite requirements. In these cases, a student might have completed all of their general education requirements at a community college
but have failed to complete those lower-level prerequisite courses in their specific area of study. This has resulted in the delay of graduation for many students (Rhine, et al., 2000).

In addressing the concerns of community college transfer students, there have been suggestions about ways by which transfer shock can be reduced (Laanan, 1996). Some of the suggestions that have been given related to reducing transfer shock are:

1. One suggestion is that colleges should host workshops on how students should effectively deal with transfer experiences. These workshops should provide participants with valuable information that will help them in the transfer process, as well as afford them the opportunity to hear real-life transfer experiences from actual community college transfer students (Laanan, 1996).

2. Another suggestion is the development of an information and support system that can easily transition with students when it is time to transfer. These systems can involve such actions such as introducing community college students to university staff and exposing these students to university campus life before they transfer. This gives students the opportunity to establish a personal support system for when they do transfer. This exposure will give students the opportunity to experience and get an overall feel of the university (Laanan, 1996).

3. Universities should also develop a mentorship program which consists of pairing community college transfer students with a current university student. The student mentors would be responsible for assisting transfer students with becoming acclimated with the university by showing and informing the transfer student about campus life (Laanan, 1996).
4. Community college staff should also develop a system that would allow those potential community college transfer students to identify themselves so that a separate orientation can be held for them. This orientation session should be aimed at meeting their needs as a potential transfer student. These students should be informed about the importance of maintaining a good GPA, as well as the possibility of a drop in GPAs during the first and second semesters at the university (Rhine, et al., 2000).

5. Community college should also seek to establish articulation agreements with universities, whenever possible, to increase credit transferability. This will also assist in easing the transfer process (Rhine, et al., 2000).

6. Advisors should make contact with university staff members and become acclimated with the requirements for entrance in the university and stay abreast of these requirements. In addition, advisors should be assigned to students and serve as the contact person for the student during the student’s enrollment at the community college. This will be beneficial in assisting students to transition into university life (Rhine, et al., 2000).

With the ever increasing pressure on community colleges, it is imperative that community colleges and universities work together to address the transfer concerns of those transfer students. Community college and university faculty and staff should be held accountable if they are not actively assisting in easing the transition process for transfer students. Staff and faculty members must take an active role in addressing the issue of transfer in order to minimize those concerns expressed by community college transfer students. Colleges and universities should also develop an informational and a
tracking system in order to address and identify those potential transfer students. Researchers feel that by following the above mentioned steps it can possibly lead to an increase in actual degree completion while reducing student degree completion times (Rhine, et al., 2000).

The College Adjustment Process

The college adjustment process has become a major issue and/or component in addressing the issues that surround transfer students. Despite the importance of the adjustment process in the transfer process there has not been much research on the issue. Because of the complexities surrounding student adjustment in college, scholars have advanced and developed many contending views on the issue. Because of the different views on this issue, there has been a multitude of theoretical perspectives that have been developed. As a result of these contending views, three main themes as it relates to the college adjustment process have been identified. These themes are based on psychological, environmental, and climate approaches. Of all the approaches identified, the psychological factor has been the one that has been addressed more as it relates to the adjustment process. In addition, the climate approach has received a great amount of attention because of the demographics of students on the campuses of the college (Laanan, 2001).

Psychological Approach

There were several studies that sought to investigate the physiological approach to the adjustment process. Through several research studies, adjustment was defined as
“institutional commitment, feeling of academic adjustment, and the absence of psychological distress” (Chartrand, 1992, p. 197). Yet another study, looking at college adjustment when compared to transitional trauma; defined adjustment as “the level of alienation a student experiences when unfamiliar with the norms, values and expectations at the four-year institutions” (Bennett & Okinaka, 1990, p. 37). With the growing interest in studying the college adjustment process as from the psychological process, one should consider adjustment as a type of psychological distress; in addition to the personal, social, and academic dimensions. Another, study conducted related to the psychological factor found that “college adjustment is conceptualized as a function of student attributes, psychological and socio-cultural stresses, and the strategies that students used to cope with these stresses. The researchers found that racial and ethical minorities encounter additional stressors not typical of non-minority students. The researchers concluded that stress derives from both internal sources and demographic composition and social climate on the campus (Myers & Harrell, 1993, p. 10). The psychological factor has been vital in the studying of the adjustment process of transfer students.

**Educational Environment**

Another area that has been examined in studying the college adjustment process has been to examine the educational environment. One study, which examined the structural and climate of college campuses and the extent to which these factors may influence a student’s adjustment process revealed the importance of examining these factors when studying the adjustment process (Carter & Spuler, 1996). Research showed that a major structural component of college is its faculty. In addition, research showed
that the amount of time that a student spends with college faculty will positively influence a student’s level of persistence, satisfaction, and academic performance (Astin, 1984, 1993; Pace, 1983, 1992; Tinto, 1987).

Campus Climate

In assessing the campus climate, one study showed that the campus climate has many dimensions, “meaning that it encompasses student interaction across racial and ethical groups, perceptions of how conducive the climate is for group relations, student experiences of discrimination, and the ethnical and racial diversity of the student body” (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996, p. 10). Research also showed that how selective a college is in its admission procedures will also have an effect on the academic adjustment of the students (Laanan, 2001). Furthermore, additional research showed that both selective and private institutions tend to have distinct racial climates when compared to nonselective institutions. In addition, research showed that college size, as it relates to the size of its student body or its faculty, will contribute to student’s feelings of anonymity, sense of community, or isolation (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In conclusion, other researchers contended that the influence of college size in the adjustment process may be greatly influenced by how students view their environment, which is a very influential component on the adjustment process (Attinasi, 1989).

Review of Previous Studies on the Transfer Adjustment Process

Because of the great importance and emphasis that has been placed on the academic success of those students that transfer from community college to our-year
universities, the issue has become a concern for the faculty and staff of four-year universities (Cross 1968; Thornton, 1972). One of the earliest studies that was conducted on transfer students was one conducted by Martorana and Williams (1954). In this study, the researchers evaluated a group of transfer and native student at the State College of Washington. All participants were reported as being compared on such factors as their sex, their major, the name of the high school they attended, and their current classification. The study revealed that transfer students included in the study had problems adjusting to the environment at the university level, which ultimately affected their academic performance during their first semester of enrollment at the four-year university. However, after those transfer students became acclimated with the environment, the differences between the grade point averages of those transfer students and native students were insignificant (Martorana & Williams, 1954).

As a result of studies such as the ones conducted by Martorana and Williams, the concept of “transfer shock” was developed. Hill’s (1965) works were based on previously reported literature and research dated back from between 1928 and 1964. These previously reported literature and research reviews reported that transfer students experienced a drop in their GPA after transferring. Thereby, Hill concluded that those transfer students seeking to obtain a baccalaureate degree should be warned of the potential threat of “transfer shock” and that it may take them longer to graduate then those students that began their academic careers at the four-year university. He felt that it was important for college hopefuls, as well as transfer students to be made aware of what they may face by first attending a community college and then transferring to a four-year university (Hill).
Studies that were carried out after those conducted by researchers such as Hill, were a direct result of the rapid increases in enrollment at community colleges that took place during the 1980s. As a result of the increase in enrollment at community colleges, there were also increases in the number of students transferring to four-year universities (Thurmond, 2007). Those studies conducted during the 1970s and 1980s revealed that transfer students typically earned grades that were at least .20 or .30 points lower than those grades earned at the community college level (Gold, 1971; Nolan & Hall, 1978; Webb, 1971). Furthermore, other studies revealed that a relationship did exist between community college transfer students’ previous GPA and their current GPA at the university level (Fernandez, et al., 1985). Despite the decreases in the GPA of transfer students it was noted that these students’ grades tend to improve and mirror the grades of those native students after their first semester at the university (Nolan & Hall, 1978).

Other studies focused on the affect of demographic factors on transfer shock. In a study conducted by Durio, Helmick, and Slover (1982) which included both community college transfer students and native students, study results revealed that female community college transfer students had higher GPAs than female university native students. On the other hand, as for the males, study results revealed that male native students earner higher GPAs than male community college transfer students. The researchers also reported that African-American community college transfer students earned higher grades than those African-American native students (Durio, et al., 1982). Yet another study that sought to evaluate the role that demographic factors such as gender have on GPA was conducted by Keeley and House (1991). This study reported that female transfer students had better GPAs than their male counterparts and than women.
generally outperformed men at both the collegiate and the community college level. The study also revealed that age plays a role as well. The study reported that those older, non-traditional students who were 25 years of age or older reported to experiencing very little transfer shock. The study further showed that students who were under the age of 21 performed better academically than students ages 21-24 (Keeley & House, 1991). Yet, another study reported that the older the transfer student the longer it would take the student to graduate. Furthermore, study results reported that the older the transfer student is, the better their GPA will be at the time of their graduation (Moumouris, 1997).

Other research has indicated that students who transferred to four-year universities as juniors tend to perform better academically and are more likely to complete their baccalaureate degree program than those that transferred as freshman or sophomores (House, 1989). Keeley and House (1993) stated that studies revealed that students transferring as sophomores experienced both transfer shock and recovery during their two semesters at the university level. Despite their recovery from transfer shock, the study further revealed that there were no substantial improvements in the students’ GPAs after their second semester at the university. Whereas, those students that transferred to universities as juniors continued to show improvement well into their third semester after transfer. Furthermore, research concluded that the earning of an associate degree has a positive effect on the academic performance of those community college transfer students when they begin at a university. In addition, studies revealed that among those students that transferred to universities as juniors and those that transfer to universities as sophomores there was a higher graduation rate among those junior level transfer students (Keeley & House).
Most of the most recent reviews on the issue of community college transfer students and the issue of transfer shock have looked at these issues from two additional perspectives. These perspectives include: (a) “The student or institutional characteristics associated with transfer students’ persistence at senior-level institutions and (b) The relationship that exists between community college transfer students’ academic performance at senior-level institutions and their personal demographic or environmental characteristics” (Graham and Hughes, 1994, p. 8).

The first perspective, when comparing transfer students to those native students, the focal issues outlined in addressing this perspective have been on attrition and persistence, graduation rates, and academic probation (Laanan, 2001). Some research has shown that community college transfer students had lower GPAs and higher rates of attrition rates when compared to those native students (Cohen & Brawer, 1982, p. 8.) Additional research, which focused on GPA and persistence rates when comparing transfer students to native students, found that there were some differences that exist among the different types of receiving institutions (Richardson & Doucette, 1980). Yet another study, which used academic probation as an indicator of academic performance, found that both four-year transfer and community college transfer students were more likely to end up on academic probation than native students (Graham & Dallam, 1986).

As for the second perspective, there has been extensive research that has looked to identify predictive variables associated with the persistence of transfer students at four-year institutions. These studies used models of student persistence in four-year colleges to evaluate transfer students. One of the major studies in this area was conducted by Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington (1986); this study found that variables associated with
social and academic integration played a role in the persistence of transfer students at four-year colleges. Yet another study, which focused on transfer students’ persistence, revealed four outcomes:

1. “The perceived practical value of education;
2. Educational aspirations;
3. Academic factors which include factors such as satisfaction performance, self-concept, and integration;
4. External factors, such as family, job, and finances (Johnson, 1987, p. 325)

Johnson (1987) also found that a relationship exists between persistence and academic satisfaction, performance, integration, and the perceived practical value of education. “As a result of the investigations into the personal, demographic, and environmental characteristics of community college transfer students, the findings suggest that these factors may affect performance at senior level institutions” (Graham and Hughes, 1994, p. 325). Yet another study, that was conducted in effort to clarify the conflicting results of the research on transfer students sought to identify the prior academic performance and personal and environmental factors that would predict the academic performance of transfer students at senior institutions. The researchers found that those students who met the key requirements of senior-level institutions performed better than other transfers by two- to four-tenths of a grade point average (Phlegar Andrew, & McLaughlin, 1981). Yet another study identified class attendance at the community college as the only variable that distinguished between satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance during a student’s first semester after transferring. For those research projects that focused on personal, demographic, or environmental
characteristics, the above-mentioned researchers argued that the relationship between these variables and academic performance over time needs to be assessed to determine whether transfer shock occurs mainly in the first semester of transfer, thus overshadowing the effects of variables that may predict long-term academic success (Graham & Hughes, 1994, p. 455).

Other well-known studies include those conducted by Townsend (1995), Laanan (1996), and Flaga (2006). Townsend’s study looked at academic adjustment by evaluating the student’s perceptions of the academic environment, as well as the transfer process. In the study, the researcher interviewed community college transfer students on their four-year university experiences and their overall transfer process. Research revealed that students sought out informal resources such as friends and family rather than formal resources. As it relates to their academic achievement, community college transfer students reported experiencing higher academic standards at their four-year institution than at their two-year institution. Students stated that there was a greater focus on writing and the courses were delivered at a much faster pace at their four-year institution than on the community college level (Townsend).

Laanan’s (1996) study addressed the social components of the transfer process. He looked at the academic, social, and psychological factors that may impact adjustment. These factors include the student’s involvement at both institutions, the quality of efforts exerted, and how these efforts impacted educational outcomes. The research showed that traditional and non-traditional age students have different experiences, but their experiences related to the adjustment process were very similar. The researcher found
that significant involvement and the quality of effort variables contribute to a student’s positive adjustment process (Laanan).

Flaga’s (2006) study focused on steps community college and four-year universities can take to facilitate the transition of students, as well as how students can help in their own transition process. It was found that initiative is a key component in transfer. Participants in the study made it clear that as transfer students they must seek out and utilize resources on their own. Study participants were committed students who took responsibility for their education, including individual financial investment. This study looked at the overall experiences of transfer students over a given time. The study emphasized the importance of university advising, collaboration between community college and four-year universities’ academic advisors, and the many benefits of academic advising (Flaga). All of the above mentioned research studies have been vital in examining the transfer function and have provided great insight on the issue therefore, the outcomes of these studies should be considered when seeking to study and improve the overall transfer function that exists between community colleges and four year institutions.

**Barriers to the Transfer Process**

Over the past years, there has been so much attention placed on the transfer process and how it can be improved to increase the rate of success among transfer students. As a result of the extensive studies and research on this issue, there has been several barriers to the transfer function that have been identified (Zamani, 2001). These barriers included the following:
1. *The Lack of Financial Resources.* The lack of financial resources is one of the major barriers facing student that are presently attending community college and have plans to transfer to four-year institutions (McDonough, 1991). Over the past years there has been a reduction in both grant dollars, while there has been an increase in the number of federal student loans. Those students from low-income families are put at a great disadvantage and often the most talented two-year community college students may be hindered from attaining a bachelor's degree because of the high cost of education (Zamani, 2001).

2. *Institutional Factors.* Institutional factors can serve as barriers to those community college students who desire to transfer to four-year institutions. Zamani (2001) stated that the development and implementation of transfer centers can serve as institutional responses to address students’ academic preparations for the attainment of bachelor’s degrees by encouraging community colleges and four-year universities to develop relationships and an understanding of the importance of collegiate culture.

3. *Underprepared students, collegiate environment and culture.* Some research has shown that the transfer function within community colleges can be ineffective largely due to the increase in the number of students who are entering unprepared, in addition to a less inviting collegiate environment. One major difference between community colleges and four-year universities is that universities typically enroll traditional age students who reside in campus dormitory whereas community college’s culture is nonresidential. Research has shown that community college students at commuter campuses are on
campus less than those students at four-year universities. This is said to be a result of the work responsibilities of many community college students which results in them obtaining fewer credit hours and interacting with faculty less because they typically do not reside on campus (Rice, 1990). Furthermore, it has been estimated that commuter students are 43% less likely than residential students to complete bachelor’s degree requirements (Velez, 1985). Therefore, one could conclude that establishing alternate learning environments at community colleges can increase the chances of matriculation among students (Zamani, 2001).

4. **Student Characteristics and Aspirations.** Two factors that have been stated to be very influential to the transfer process have been student characteristics and educational aspirations. Students at both community colleges and four-year universities who desire a bachelor’s degree are more likely to transfer than those that do not. Furthermore, some researcher feel that private four year universities may in some cases allow entrance opportunities for those students that may not met the admissions requirements at public universities (Glass & Bunn, 1998). These actions will in turn help eliminate some barriers to the transfer function.

5. **Student College Fit.** The other issue that has been identified as a barrier to transfer is the lack of student-college fit. Research has found that the institutional environment plays an important role in students’ decisions to transfer to a four-year university and student success in attaining a bachelor’s degree. Moreover, some believed that minority students may perceive
homogeneous institutional environments to be nonexclusive and lacking the commitment to fostering cultural pluralism, multicultural curriculum and campus diversity (Haralson, 1996). Because of the great number of minority students such as African American and Hispanics students who attend community colleges, programs should be developed to encourage minority student transfer (Zamani, 2001).

The above mentioned barriers to transfer are important factors to consider when examining the transfer function because an in-depth analysis of these factors can assist institutions in developing strategies and programs that will improve the transfer function (Zamani, 2001). Community colleges and senior level institutions should examine the issue of transfer utilizing an all encompassing approach with all contributing variables and factors being considered in order to successfully make improvements in the transfer rates of community college transfer students.

**Successful Programs Addressing Student Transfer**

Over the past years, extensive pressure has been placed on community colleges to aid in the successful transfer of students. Therefore, there is a need for two-year and senior level colleges to develop programs and policies and in order to maximize transfer opportunities for students. There have been several successful programs and incentives that have been successfully developed and implemented in order to address these issues. Some examples of these programs include:

1. The Summer Scholar’s Transfer Institute was created in 1993 as a team approach to address the issue of transfer. The program involved Santa Ana
College, numerous other Los Angeles Community Colleges, and the University of California at Irvine, all of which agreed to work together in order to develop intervention programs for underrepresented students. Students who enrolled in the program are those that are undecided about whether or not they want to attend college beyond their two years at the community college. Students enrolled in the program must meet requirements, which include having a minimum of a 2.0 GPA, meet eligibility for Freshman Composition, and have taken fewer than 30 credit units. The program is an 11 day summer program that works with 150 first generational students in an attempt to blend institutional cultures, as well as focus on both academic and social aspects. Participants in the program take college level courses and participate in study groups. A high level of student-faculty involvement is encouraged. As a result of the program, the enrollment at University of California from Santa Ana College doubled between 1993 and 1994 (McGrath & Van Buskirk, 1998).

2. Another program, which was developed by the Illinois Board of Education, has also been successful in addressing the transfer issue. With this program, the Board of Education provided funding to 25 community colleges to operate what they have called minority transfer centers. Each center, under the guidance of the center’s direction, seeks to develop articulation agreements between the community college and four-year institutions. Estimates show that over 25,000 students are being served by these centers annually. As a result of the programs implemented by these centers, transfer rates for
African-American and Hispanics community college students increased by 12.7 and 38.6% from 1990 to 1994. There has also been an increase in Caucasian community college transfer students, with a 61.3% increase. Overall, participating centers reported an increase of 3.4% in total community college student transfers (Illinois Community College Board, 1996).

3. Yet another successful program was developed by The University of California in connection with the Los Rios Community College District. Through this program, nine Northern California community colleges were funded for transfer programs, which were developed with the intention of extending outreach and transfer efforts. As a result of these funding efforts, the Los Rios Community College transfer center sponsors a College Transfer Day in order to inform and give students the opportunity to discuss transfer issues. The University of California at Davis has worked closely with several community colleges to offer early academic outreach programs at elementary, middle, and secondary schools over a seventeen district service area, as well as developing a transfer program for non-traditional students studying in the areas of sciences (Case, 1999).

4. Another successful transfer program is one that was developed as a result of entities receiving funds from the Office of Chancellor in order to further enhance already existing transfer centers. This grant was written by the transfer Center at Glendale Community College and seven other Los Angeles community colleges. The program was developed to provide airfare for community college students who would like to visit four-year universities.
The transfer center also held Transfer Fairs, as well as having outreach advisors from UCLA become part of the program staff in order to host an orientation and reception for Glendale students accepted to UCLA. As a direct result of the vast variety of transfer services offered by the Glendale Transfer Center, the community college ranks second in the number of students that are being accepted to UCLA, with over 52% of applicants being accepted by the university (Glendale Community College, 1998).

The success and ideas of these programs are vital as it relates to the improvement of the transfer rates among community college transfer students. All of these programs have been successful and it would be beneficial to other institutions of higher learning to take the strategies and programmatic features implemented through these programs and use them for the developmental of similar programs aimed at improving the transfer function. These programs have been successful and the program developers and participants have taken great steps toward improving the success of community college students that desire to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

**Community Colleges Contributions to Baccalaureate Attainment**

The mission of community colleges has always encompassed the idea that community colleges play a key role in the baccalaureate degree attainment for those community college transfer students. Cedja (1999) has identified four main contributions related to the contributions that community colleges make in aiding students in attaining a baccalaureate degree from a four-year institution. Cedja (1999) identifies the first role as being one that closely relates to the two-plus-two path or reflect characteristics related
to the traditional transfer role. In researching these characteristics it was found that 58 % of total enrollment at public universities was made-up of transfer students that were characterized as being traditional students. Research showed that these students did not follow the traditional two-plus-two path, but were considered traditional because they enrolled in a two-year college than transferred to a four-year institution to complete their baccalaureate degree (Cedja, 1999).

A second contribution that was identified related to the roles that community colleges play in baccalaureate education deals with students who are concurrently enrolled in both a community college and a four-year institution. In a previous transfer study, which was referenced in the Cedja article, it was concluded that concurrent enrollment accounts for the second largest group of community college transfers, accounting for about 15%. Research shows that rather than following the traditional path of enrollment, many students followed a different pattern of enrollment by concurrently enrolling in both two and four year institutions (Cedja, 1999).

The third contribution identified, related to the use of community colleges by those students looking to attain a baccalaureate degree deals with summer session enrollment. In a study conducted by Bers in 1990, which consisted of those students who attained a bachelor’s degree from Illinois public universities who also attended a community college, it was found that 43 % of these students had only attended one semester at a community college. Further research showed that a significant portion of these students, which was about 64 % of the total graduates, only attended one semester and this semester was typically during the summer term (Cedja, 1999).
The fourth way that community colleges contribute to the attainment of a bachelor’s degree relates to the reverse and lateral transfer function. A recent study that looked at the student transfer rates in urban areas indicated that their students often moved back and forth between their local community colleges and state university. This study, however, failed to provide information concerning these students’ attitudes toward baccalaureate completion. Some researchers have concluded that lateral transfer provides students with the means to complete specific educational needs before transferring to a four-year institution to complete their bachelor’s degree (Cedja, 1999). Whatever, the transfer method employed by students, evidence show that community colleges play a major role in the baccalaureate attainment for many students. Often times, community colleges serve as the educational foundation by which many students complete their advance degree. Because of the vital contributions that community colleges make, it is imperative that the relationship between community colleges and four-year universities are improved and that transfer agreements developed between these institutions. These actions will increase the overall rate of transfer of community college students, which makes everyone a winner in the situation.

**Roles of Community Colleges in Baccalaureate Attainment**

The roles of community colleges is ever expanding, therefore one can assumed that the traditional associate degree track no longer accurately reflects or serves as the path of those students that desire to attain a bachelor’s degree or the role that community colleges play in this degree attainment. Despite this, many feel that community colleges still play a vital role in baccalaureate attainment. To assess the role of community
colleges in baccalaureate attainment, three role definitions have been identified. The first role deals with the traditional role. In the traditional role, community colleges serve as the entry point to higher education. In this role, the student earns twelve credit hours at the community college level and then transfers to a four-year institution in order to fulfill their obtain their baccalaureate degree. This role basically recognizes that many students begin their higher education aspirations by taking a substantial number of hours at a community college before attending a four-year institution (Cedja, 1999).

The second role has been identified as the occasional needs role. In this role, students use the community college for specific baccalaureate requirements. Therefore, the student does not transfer to the community college from a four-year institution. Rather, students are concurrently enrolled at both institutions or enrolled at the community college during the summer months and then return to the four-year institution when the regular semester begins (Cedja, 1999). Community colleges are often utilized in this role.

The final role is known as the returning transfer role. In this role students begin their postsecondary study at a four-year institution and complete at least 12 hours of study, then they formally transfer to a community college, and then return to the four-year institution in order to complete their bachelor’s degree. Several studies that have sought to address this issue of reverse transfers, notes that this process involves students transferring from a four-year institution to a two-year institution. Many transfer students often do not return to their original postsecondary institution. Therefore, it has been stated that returning transfers are first known as a reverse transfer and may become multiple transfers, but the student completes the traditional transfer path by returning to
the original four-year institution to attain a bachelor’s degree (Cedja, 1999). The roles that community colleges play and assisting students in obtaining a bachelor’s degree is vital. There are many students who have followed one or more of the roles that have identified on their road to baccalaureate degree attainment. However they utilize the community college, the most important fact is if they are successful in completing their baccalaureate requirements therefore, actions need to be taken to ensure this.

**Summary**

Despite their many functions and purposes, one of the community college’s main functions has been “to accept students from secondary schools, provide them with general education and introductory collegiate courses, and then send them on to senior institutions to obtain a baccalaureate degree” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 343). Therefore, because of the importance of the transfer function, more efforts need to be taken to continually strengthen the function as well as the relationships that exist between community colleges and senior-level universities. It has been reported that over the years the number of students enrolling at community colleges and universities is on the rise. Because of this, it is imperative that colleges and universities have a clear understanding of the students’ needs and seek to develop ways to retain them. Hinshaw (2003) stated that there has been “a large body of research has been developed in relation to students’ experiences during their first year however, there is still a need for additional research that focuses more specifically on those community college transfer students” (p. 23). This research study sought to do just that by taking a look at community college transfer students as they transfer to a land-grant institution.
The next chapter will describe the research design of this project; including an in-depth look at the variables and instruments utilized in this study. Chapter Four will present the results of the data analysis of student responses and answer the six research questions of the study. Chapter Five summarizes the research, presents the major findings of the research study, and outlines recommendations as it relates to strategies that can be implemented to increase the successful transition of community college transfer students.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions and academic performance of MSU community college transfer students when compared to native students. This chapter gives an in-depth analysis of the procedures that were used to conduct the study. The chapter also describes the research design and survey instrument utilized in the study. In addition, the chapter outlines characteristics of the study sample, the procedures utilized for collecting data, and the results of the analysis of the data.

Research Design

The research design selected for the study was a non-experimental, qualitative survey research design. Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire survey, along with data obtained from the MSU Registrar’s Office. The independent variables included in the study were not manipulated and no interventions were provided during the course of the study. The survey participants, who included both community college transfer and native students, were asked to electronically complete a 77-question survey instrument. The number of questions that each participant was asked to complete as part of his or her participation in this research study was contingent upon whether the student identified him or herself as a native or community college transfer student. Transfer students were
asked to fill out additional questions related to their community college experiences. Native students were asked to complete a total of 55 questions, while community college transfer students were asked to complete 77 questions.

The survey instrument utilized in this research study was emailed to all potential survey participants. The researcher decided to use an on-line survey method because of the many advantages of using on-line survey methods. One of the major advantages listed is that the use of an on-line survey allows a researcher to reach individuals that may have been difficult to reach through other outlets such as mail, etc. (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1999; Wellman, 1997). Yet, another great advantage to conducting an online survey is the time factor. Online surveys can save researchers a lot of time because of the vast number of services that these online-survey programs offer such as reminder e-mails, data analysis, etc. Online surveys also allow researchers to reach a multitude of people in a very short time (Bachmann & Elfrink, 1996; Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 2003; Taylor, 2000; Yun & Trumbo, 2000). Online surveys can also be very cost effective. Therefore, the use of online surveys can eliminate some cost by reducing the need for paper, as well as cost associated with administering paper surveys such as postage, printing expenses, and expenses incurred for data entry (Llieva, Baron, & Heale, 2002; Watt, 1999; Witmer, Colman, & Katzman, 1999). The instrument utilized in the study was adapted from a previous study. Changes were made to the existing survey in order to ensure that the purpose of the study would be clearly addressed. The survey instrument was used to collect data from participants on their perceptions, influences, and academic performance. Community college transfer students were also asked to respond to questions related to their community college experiences.
Population and Sampling

The participants in this study were comprised of community college transfer and native students who were enrolled at MSU during the Spring 2009 semester. All study participants were at least 18 years of age. As for the native students, the study population included enrolled MSU students who had earned a total of between 30 and 89 credit hours. These students were admitted as freshmen at MSU immediately after graduating from high school and had completed at least 30 hours at MSU, but no more than 89 credit hours. As for those community college transfer students, these students were those students who had accumulated between 30 to 89 earned hours, have attended MSU at least one semester prior to Spring 2009 semester, and transferred at least 12 credit hours from a community college.

The researcher provided the registrar’s office with detailed specifications related to the desired sample population. The information that was requested and obtained from the registrar’s office for the purpose of this research study is defined by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as directory information. The database was produced by a member of the MSU Information and Technology Department according to the researcher’s specifications and after approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB), the data were released to the researcher on June 1, 2009. In order to respect the privacy of all potential study participants, all personal information was deleted from the file. The only information that was utilized for the purpose of this research project was the student’s name and e-mail address. The database that was given to the researcher included a total
of 3,600 potential study participants. A total of 100 of these potential participants were surveyed during the pilot study.

The researcher employed a random sampling method to select study participants. A random sampling method is said to be the best method for working with a large population size when the researcher desires to select a representative sample from the identified population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). After the sample was selected, the survey was sent out to a total of 1,500 students. However, 500 of the surveys were returned to the researcher either because the recipients’ mailbox had reached its maximum quota, the e-mail was invalid, the student was no longer a student at MSU, or the student felt that he or she did not completely the profile outlined by the researcher in the consent form. Therefore, a final total of 1,000 students participated in the final study with 567 of these students fully completing the survey. The researcher received over a 50% survey return rate.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The database containing student email addresses, used in the completion of the research study was received from the MSU Registrar’s Office. The researcher obtained student names and e-mail addresses for all potential study participants. These e-mail addresses were used to send survey invitations, as well as the survey tool to all students identified in the specified population. The survey was administered through the use of an Internet based survey company called Survey Monkey. Once the e-mail addresses were entered into the system, e-mails were sent out to all potential participants. However, there were no identifiers between the participants’ responses and their e-mail addresses.
Although, no highly personal information was needed in order to successfully carry out this research project, the researcher took every measure to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants and all data collection methods were consistent with those outlined in the FERPA.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument utilized in this research project was a 77-question survey instrument. The survey was adapted from a previous study that was conducted by Eric Gumm in which he studied the adjustment of students that transferred from community colleges to several Christian universities. The researcher was granted permission to utilize the instrument on April 9, 2009. Because Gumm’s study only observed transfer students and not native students, the researcher had to revise the questions included in the survey, as well as add questions. The researcher had to revise those questions that asked the students about spiritual growth. These questions were not related to the current research project. The researcher divided the survey into three main parts. (See Appendix A)

1. The first section included questions that evaluated the students’ perceptions as related to various aspects of their current collegiate experience.

2. The second section, queried community college transfer students on their perceptions related to their community college experiences, as well as those factors that influenced their decisions to attend their respective community colleges.
3. Finally, the last section asked participants for some general demographic information, as well as allowed them to rank those factors that influenced their decision to attend MSU.

As for the questions that were included in each section, the questions were related to those variables outlined in Tinto’s (1993) Longitudinal Model of Student Departure. The following scales were used to evaluate the students’ perceptions of their collegiate experiences. These included:

1. Academic and Intellectual Development
2. Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching
3. Social Integration
4. Students’ Goal and Institutional Commitment

The survey did not include the names of the variables that were utilized in the study, nor were the questions grouped in any particular order. The non grouping of survey questions was an intentional effort in order to prevent any potential bias or leading in the responses of the research participants. The focus of the instrument was to gain more insight on the collegiate perceptions and experiences of both those native and transfer students who were attending MSU. The research project sought to reveal viable information that may help ease the transition process of community college transfers students. The questionnaire required participants to answer questions using a Likert scale of (a) Strongly Agree, (b) Agree, (c) Neutral, (d) Disagree, (e) Strongly Disagree. Respondents answered questions based on a three point scale of (a) Very Important; (b) Somewhat Important; or (c) Not important as it related to their collegiate influences. The demographic information was based on a categorical scale; with all questions having an
“other” response option for those participants that might have felt as if they did not fit into any of the categorical data categories that were provided. Those questions that were not based on a Likert scale or categorical data were listed as open-ended questions, where respondents were allowed to enter the answers that they felt best reflected their experiences.

Variables

The *Transfer Student Experience Survey* (See Appendix A) that was utilized in this study was developed to measure the differences in the perceptions and academic performance of community college transfer students when compared to native collegiate students. The study sought to compare the academic performance of these students, as well as these students’ perceptions of (1) Academic and Intellectual Development, (2) Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching, (3) Social Integration, and (4) Students’ Goal and Institutional Commitment. The researcher also collected and analyzed data about Mississippi State University transfer students’ perceptions of transfer variables and their current MSU collegiate GPAs Table 3.1 shows those variables that were utilized for this study. The variables that were computed for this study were all based on those variables that were outlined in Tinto’s model.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Item On Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Development</td>
<td><strong>Research Question 1:</strong> Does a significant difference exist between Mississippi State University’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of academic and intellectual development?</td>
<td>Academic &amp; Intellectual Development</td>
<td>Section 2: Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching</td>
<td><strong>Research Question 2:</strong> Does a significant difference exist between Mississippi State University’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching?</td>
<td>Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching</td>
<td>Section 2: Questions 15, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Integration</td>
<td><strong>Research Question 3:</strong> Does a significant difference exist between Mississippi State University’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of social integration?</td>
<td>Peer Group Interaction</td>
<td>Section 2: Questions 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 2, 22, and 38.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal and Institutional Commitment</td>
<td><strong>Research Question 4:</strong> Does a significant difference exist between Mississippi State University’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of goal and institutional commitment?</td>
<td>Goal and Institutional Commitment</td>
<td>Section 2: Questions 8, 9, 24, 35, 36, 37, and 39.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td><strong>Research Question 5:</strong> Is there a significant difference in the GPAs of MSU native students when compared to those MSU community college transfer students?</td>
<td>Current Collegiate GPA</td>
<td>Section 4: Question 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Adjustment</td>
<td><strong>Research Question 6:</strong> Is there a significant relationship among MSU community college transfer students’ current GPA and their perceptions of those included transfer variables?</td>
<td>(1)Student’s Academic Adjustment (2)Social Adjustment (3)Comparison of Their Collegiate Experiences (4)Level of Campus Satisfaction</td>
<td>Section 3: Questions 1, 3, 10, 11 Section 3: Questions 2, 4, 5, 7, &amp; 14 Section 3: Questions 8, 9, 10, &amp; 13 Section 3: Questions 6 and 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Academic Integration
   a. The student’s current GPA at MSU.
   b. A factorial derived scale measuring the students’ level of academic and intellectual development. This variable was derived based on the following: Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12.

II. Faculty Concern of Student Development and Teaching
   a. A factorial derived scale measuring students’ perceived level of faculty concern for student development and teaching: Questions 15, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34.

III. Social Integration
   a. Factorial derived scale measuring the students’ perceived level of interaction with their peers: Questions 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 2, 22, and 38.
   b. A factorial derived scale measuring the quality and impact of students’ interaction with staff outside of the classroom: Questions 17, 27, 28, 29, and 30.

IV. Goals and Commitments
   a. A scale derived from measuring a student’s level of commitment to graduate from college, as well as their intentions of continuing their education at their current university: Questions 8, 9, 24, 35, 36, 37, and 39.

V. Transfer Variables
   a. Transfer Student’s Perception of Their Academic Adjustment-(Questions 1, 3, 10, 11; Sec. 3)
b. Transfer Student’s Perception of Their Social Adjustment-(Questions 2, 4, 5, 7, and 14; Sec. 3)

c. Transfer Student’s Comparison of Their Collegiate Experiences-
   (Questions 8, 9, 10, and 13; Sec. 3)

d. Transfer Student’s Perceptions of their Level of Campus Satisfaction-
   (Questions 6 and 12; Sec. 3)

Validity of the Instrument

The majority of the questions included in the survey were taken from the “Student Experience Survey” (See Appendix A), which was developed by Eric Gumm. However, the researcher did make some deletions, as well as additions. To test the validity of the newly revised instrument, the researcher presented and administered the instrument to a panel of experts, some of which had backgrounds in research and statistics, while others had years of experience in dealing with community colleges students, university students, and transfer students. The researcher also administered the survey to a group of 20 students including both native university students and community college students. The panel of experts was asked to carefully assess the contents of the survey, as well as each individual question to ensure clarity. They were also asked to review the survey to assure that the survey was structured in a manner that would reduce biases or confusion among survey participants. After careful review, some suggestions were made by the panel. As a result, the researcher made changes to the survey based on the suggestions made by both the panel of experts and the student sample. After the survey was declared valid, the
researcher conducted a pilot test to further verify the validity and reliability of the survey instrument.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

Due to the fact that the researcher made some changes to the *Student Experience Survey*, the instrument had to be tested for reliability. To test the reliability of the instrument a Coefficient Alpha Reliability Analysis was conducted. “The coefficient alpha reliability test” is appropriate for the majority of reliability analysis situations. Coefficient alphas provide an estimate of reliability based on inter-item correlations and yields an estimated comparable to the average of all possible split-halves” (Shannon & Davenport, 2001, p. 123). Table 3.2 shows the reliability statistic for the test as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Standardized Items</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.694</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of the alpha reliability test yielded variance scores for each tested variable as well as for the instrument as a whole. The final tabulation of data from the statistical analysis of the survey instrument revealed internal consistency and reliability coefficients for the each instrument dimension and for the test as a whole. A reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered to be “acceptable” in most social science
research situations (Shannon & Davenport, 2001, p. 123). Therefore, based on the outlined criteria, the instrument was found to be reliable for use in the research study with a reliability coefficient of .706. Table 3.3 shows the items total reliability statistics for those included research study variables.

Table 3.3
Item Total Reliability Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Name</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Multiple Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Integration</td>
<td>68.4921</td>
<td>74.014</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>86.0847</td>
<td>134.371</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Intellectual Development</td>
<td>82.3104</td>
<td>98.479</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Concern for Student Development</td>
<td>69.7055</td>
<td>82.021</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.415</td>
<td>.609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for those included variables, the table shows the consistency among the total items and how these items correlated with the total score. All of the included item variables had positive item-correlations. Two of the variables had a correlation value above .50, which indicated that they must have something to do with the included scale. The variable of social integration has the highest item correlation with a value of .687 with the variable of faculty concern for student development having a correlation value of .548. The squared multiple correlations showed that the variable of social integration shares 50% of its variance in common with a combination of the remaining variables.
Whereas, the variable of faculty concern for student development had a squared multiple correlation value of 42%. The higher the squared multiple correlation, the greater the amount of consistency that exists among the variables. Related to the reliability of the instrument, statistical results revealed that the deletion of many of the variables would result in a lower reliability coefficient. However, results revealed that the deletions of the variable of “goals and institutional commitment, would result in a higher Cronbach Coefficient of .774. The total final tabulation of data for the variables included in the study revealed that the instrument was reliable.

Pilot Study

In the summer of 2009, a pilot study was conducted. During the field study a total of 100 surveys were sent out to Mississippi State students. The names of these students were taken from the list that was issued to the researcher by the MSU Registrar’s Office. Out of the 100 surveys that were emailed, only 29 of the participants attempted to complete the survey with seven of the surveys being partially completed and the remaining 22 being fully completed. Another 35 of the surveys were returned either because the recipient’s mailbox was over the allowed quota or because the e-mail address provided was incorrect or no longer active. The researcher credited the low response rate to the semester in which the surveys were administered. This was an important factor because a large number of students do not enroll in classes during the summer months and therefore, fail to access their school issued e-mail account on a regular basis. The pilot study provided the researcher with viable information related to the survey and
some final suggestions were made. As a result, the final version of the *Study Experience Survey* was developed and incorporated for use.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The first step in the data collection process involved getting IRB approval. After IRB Approval was granted, the researcher was able to get the requested data file from the Registrar’s Office in order to distribute the surveys. The survey was administered through an on-line survey service called Survey Monkey. The researcher decided to administer the survey on-line because of the large population of potential survey participants and the many benefits that have been outlined with the use of on-line survey methods.

The questionnaire consisted of 77 questions. The researcher interacted with participants a minimal of three times, with all interaction being through electronic communication. The first interaction consisted of the researcher sending potential participants the invitation to participate in the research project. This first e-mail also included the secure link to the on-line survey. Since the survey was given electronically, subjects were required to electronically give their consent to participate. On the electronic consent form, subjects had the option to either select the “I CONSENT” or “I DESIRE NOT TO PARTICIPATE” button on the consent form. By each statement there was a brief statement stating that each participant has read the consent form and have a clear understanding of the requirements of participating in the research project and have made the decision to either to participate or not participate. Those that accepted and agreed to participate were then automatically taken to the survey, and those that declined were given a thank you and taken back to the previous screen. The consent form clearly stated
that the subject’s participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time if they choose.

The second time of interaction was a follow-up e-mail still encouraging subjects to participate for those who had not already done so, as well as reminding them of the due date. The third time of interaction consisted of an additional e-mail once again to please consider completing the survey, as well as once again reminding them of the proposed project completion date. After the third time of interaction between the researcher and the subjects involved in the project, participants only received further communication from the researcher if they had chosen to receive a final copy of the completed research project.

During the data collection process, the researcher notified all participants that no tangible compensation would be given for their participation in the research project, but they were encouraged to participate because of the first-hand knowledge that they can provide to the researcher. Participants were also notified that while there may be no immediate benefit to them however, the researcher anticipated that the results of this study would help improve the communication between two-year and four–year institutions in order to strengthen the relationships between the two institutions in order to better the transfer process. As an incentive, participants were notified that a copy of the final research results would be available to them at the conclusion of the study if they provided their mailing or e-mail address.
Data Analysis

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0, in order to perform all statistical analysis of the data collected in this research study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and means were used to analyze demographic information. The researcher also conducted Chi-Square statistical tests and cross tabulations to analyze research data. A Multivariate of Variance (MANOVA) was also used in order to answer the outlined research questions. In addition, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in order to determine whether significant differences existed among the included research variables. The level of significance or alpha level was set at .05.

Summary

This chapter covered the methodology that was used in carrying out this research study. The data were collected through the use of a single survey entitled The Student Experience Survey as well as data obtained from the MSU Registrar’s Office. The population for this study included both MSU native and community college transfer students. The study was conducted at the beginning of the fall semester of 2009 and the survey included a final total of 1,000 potential participants. A total of 567 of the 1,000 (57%) surveys were fully completed and analyzed in this study.

The survey required students to answer questions about their experiences at MSU. The study participants answered questions related to their perceptions of their academic and intellectual development; faculty concern for students’ development and teaching; interactions with other students; student interaction with faculty and staff; institutional
goals and commitments; academic adjustment; social adjustment; campus satisfaction; as well as their influential factors. Community college transfer students were also asked to answer questions related to their previous community college experiences and their experiences at MSU.

Moving forward in this research study the next chapter, Chapter Four, includes an analysis of the results from the statistical procedures utilized in this study, as well as answers the six research questions outlined in this research project. Chapter Five presents a summary of the research; presents findings of the study; makes recommendations related to dealing with community college transfer students; and draws some final conclusions about the research project.
The main purpose of this study was to determine if there were any significant differences in the perceptions, influences, and academic performance of MSU native students when compared to community college transfer students. Chapter IV outlines the statistical results from the data analysis. The first section of the chapter presents the demographic characteristics of students that participated in the survey. The demographic information includes frequency distributions and descriptive statistics for the study participants. The second part of the chapter includes statistical results answering the research questions. Data are presented in figures, table formats, and descriptive narrative format.

**Demographic Information**

**Native or Transfer Student**

Participants in the study included a total of 567 students. The survey participants included both community college and native students. Table 4.1 shows the frequency distributions of MSU’s community college transfer students and MSU’s native students.
Table 4.1

Frequency Distribution Among Student Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Type</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Student</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Student</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 567 respondents, 106 of the participants identified themselves as having transferred to MSU from a community college. These transfer students accounted for only 18.7% of the total respondents. Of the respondents, 461 were MSU native students, meaning that they began their academic careers at MSU. These native students accounted for 81.3% of the total sample.

Age

The sample was divided into five age categories. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 outline the frequency distributions of study participants by age.
Table 4.2

Frequency Distribution of Study Participants by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 or OLDER</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1

Frequency Distribution of Study Participants by Age

The age category that accounted for the largest percentage of participants was the 20-22 age category. The total number of students falling between the ages of 20-22 was 374, which accounted for 66% of all survey participants. The next highest age category
was the 17-19 age category. Of the total number of survey participants, a total of 156 participants fell into this category which accounted for 27.5% of all survey participants. For the age group of 23-25, only 2.6% of survey participants fell in this category which accounted for 15 participants. For participants that fell between the ages of 26-28, five participants were in this category which accounted for .9% of the total study participants. The final age category that was included was the 29 or older category which accounted for 2.6% of all survey participants with 15 participants falling in this category.

**Ethnical Background**

The researcher included four ethnicity groups for which participants could use to identify their ethnicity. The researcher also included the “Other” category for research participants that felt they did not accurately fit into either of the included ethnic categories. The results for the ethnicity distributions among research participants are included in Table 4.3.
Table 4.3

Frequency Distribution of Study Participants by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity Categories</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest ethnicity that was represented among survey participants was Caucasian, which accounted for 80.4% of all participants with a total of 456 of all those surveyed falling into this particular ethnic group. The ethnic group with the smallest number of participants was that of Hispanic decent, with only 1.4% of all survey participants identifying themselves with this ethnic group. Survey participants that identified themselves as African-American accounted for 14.1%, with 80 participants identifying themselves with this ethnic group. As for Asian decent, 1.9%, which was a total of 11 participants, identified themselves as being Asian. Overall, there were more Caucasian students than any other ethnicity.

**Gender**

Survey participants were also asked about their gender. The largest percentages of the students surveyed were female. Females accounted for over 50% of all participants. Table 4.4 outlines the frequency distributions of gender among survey study participants.
Table 4.4

Frequency Distribution of Gender Among Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Females accounted for a total of 339 of the 567 survey participants which accounted for 59.8% of study participants. Males accounted for 39.5% of all survey participants, with a total of 224 survey participants being male.

**Family Household Income**

The researcher included six income categories for which participants could use to identify their family income. Table 4.5 and Figure 4.2 show the frequency distributions of participants’ reported estimated family income.
### Table 4.5

Frequency Distribution of Students’ Estimates of Family Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN $20,000</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21,000-$40,000</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$41,000-$60,000</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$61,000-$80,000</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$81,000-$100,000</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORE THAN $101,000</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Income Levels](chart.png)

**Figure 4.2**

Frequency Distribution of Students’ Estimates of Family Income

The largest estimated family income categorical group that was represented among survey participants was that of $81,000-$100,000, which accounted for 21.5% of
all participants with a total of 122 of all those surveyed falling into this particular income range. The family income category with the smallest number of participants was that of the “less than $20,000,” with only 8.5% a total of 48 of all survey participants identifying themselves with this income range. The percentages for all income ranges revealed some slight difference among the student groups in terms of percentages.

**Current Collegiate GPA**

The researcher found some slight differences in the GPAs of MSU’s community college transfer students and native students. Table 4.6 outlines the frequency distributions among MSU transfer students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 or LOWER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 -2.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 -2.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>106</td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest percentage of transfer students reported having GPAs that fell within the 2.6-3.0 GPA group, with 34.0% of students reported to having a GPA in this range. The second highest GPA range was the 3.1-3.5 range, with 25.5% of students reporting to
have GPAs within this range. Finally, the third highest category among native student is the 2.1-2.5 GPA category, with 19.8% of community college transfer students reported to having a GPA in this category. As for the GPAs of those MSU native students, Table 4.7 outlines the Frequency distributions of the GPAs among MSU native students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6 -2.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 -2.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest percentage of native students reporting having GPAs that fell within the 3.6-4.0 GPA range, with 36.4% of students reporting to having a GPA in this range. The second highest GPA range among this student group was the 3.1-3.5 GPA range, with 29.5% of students reporting to have GPAs within this range. Finally, the third highest ranking category among those MSU native students is the 2.6-3.0 GPA range, with 19.5% of native students reported having GPAs in this range. As for the GPA frequency distribution among both student groups, Table 4.8 outlines the GPA frequencies among all study participants.
Table 4.8
Frequency Distribution of GPAs Among Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Categories</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 or LOWER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 -2.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 -2.5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The larger percentages of students surveyed reported having GPAs between a 3.6 and a 4.0, with 185 of the 567 students surveyed falling within this range, which accounted for 32.6% of all participants. The lowest GPA range was that of 1.50 or lower with only .2% of research participants reporting having GPAs falling within this range. Percentages among MSU native students were similar to these same percentages, with 36.4% of these students reporting having GPAs that ranged between a 3.6 and a 4.0. The second highest GPA range reported among native students, which accounted for 29.5% , was the GPA range of a 3.1 and a 3.5. The results were slightly different among those MSU community college transfer students. Among those transfer students surveyed, the highest reported GPA range was 2.6-3.0, which accounted for 34.0% of transfer students surveyed. The second highest reported GPA range among students was 3.1 to 3.5 with 25.5% of students falling within this range. This same range was also the second highest range GPA range among native students as well.
Housing Arrangements

Study participants were also asked to give information as it related to their housing arrangements while attending college. Table 4.9 shows the housing arrangements of surveyed students.

Table 4.9

Frequency Distributions of Housing Options Among Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Options</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other University Housing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus House Or Apartment</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Parents Or Relatives</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that a vast majority of students indicated living in off campus houses or apartments, with over 58.7% of students reporting living off campus. Another 28.2% of students indicated that they were staying in some form of campus housing, with 23.8% indicating they lived in residence halls and 4.4% of students indicating they lived in other university housing.
Degree Attainment

Students were also asked about the highest degree they were planning to attain. Table 4.10 shows the frequency distributions of the highest degree that students are planning to attain.

Table 4.10
Frequency Distributions of Highest Degree Planned Among MSU Native and Transfer Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's (Including MBA)</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate (Ph.D. And Ed.D)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Md, Dds, DO, DVM</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (JD Or LLB)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 567 of survey participants, 40.7% of students indicated that they have plans to complete a master’s degree, whereas 27.3% indicated that they are planning to pursue a bachelor’s degree only. Another 16.6% of students reported plans to attain a doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D). Students were also asked about the highest degree that they were planning to complete at MSU. Table 4.11 shows the frequency distributions of the highest degree that students’ plan to complete at MSU.
Table 4.11

Frequency Distributions of Highest Degree Students Are Planning to Attain At MSU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's (Including MBA)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate (Ph.D. And Ed.D)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (JD Or LLB)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 24.2% of participants indicated that they plan to complete their Master’s degree at MSU, whereas 68.6% indicated they plans to only complete a Bachelor’s degree at MSU.

**Father’s Educational Attainment**

Study participants were also asked about the highest educational level of their fathers. The educational levels of respondents’ fathers are shown in Table 4.12.
The majority of all participants indicated that their fathers had a college degree (50.6%). Out of the 50.6%, 31.9% of students indicated that their fathers attained a bachelor’s degree, whereas another 18.7% of students indicated that their fathers attained a graduate degree. The other half of respondents reported that their fathers did not graduate from college, although 21.3% did report that their fathers attended college, but did not complete a degree. Another, 6.6% of participants’ fathers did not complete high school, while another 16.4% indicated that their fathers had received a high school diploma.

**Mother’s Education Attainment**

Study participants were also asked about the highest educational level of their mothers. The frequency distributions of the educational levels of respondents’ mothers are shown in Table 4.13.
Table 4.13

Frequency Distributions of the Highest Educational Attainment of Participants’ Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment Level</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of participants indicated that their mothers had college degrees (52.7%). Out of this 52.7%, approximately 37.2% of these students indicated that their mothers attained a bachelor’s degree, whereas the remaining 15.5% indicated that their mothers attained graduate degrees. The other half of the respondents’ mothers did not graduate from college. Approximately one-fourth (23.8%) of the participants reported that their mothers attended college, but did not received a degree. Another, 2.3% of participants indicated that their mothers did not complete high school, while another 15.7% received high school diplomas.

**Orientation**

Students were also asked about their attendance of orientation sessions at Mississippi State University. Table 4.14 outlines the frequency distributions of orientation attendance among the students.
Table 4.14

Frequency Distributions of Those Students That Attended Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did You attend Orientation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 567 participants, over 87.5% of the respondents reported having attended orientation prior to beginning at Mississippi State University. This accounted for 496 students indicating that they had attended orientation. Table 4.15 illustrates the number of students that found the orientation to be helpful.

Table 4.15

Frequency Distributions of the Helpfulness Of MSU Student Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did You find Orientation Helpful</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage was much lower for students that found the orientation to be helpful. Of those that attended orientation, only 67.5% of students indicated that they found the orientation to be helpful.
Institutional Ranking

Study participants were also asked to indicate where MSU ranked in their choices of academic institutions. Table 4.16 shows the frequency distributions of respondents’ institutional rankings of MSU as their choice of educational institution.

Table 4.16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Ranking</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>20.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above #3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of students surveyed indicated that MSU ranked as their top choice for their collegiate experience with 67.0% of participants ranking MSU as their first choice. Another, 20.3% indicated that MSU was their second choice. Whereas, another 12.4% of survey respondents indicated that MSU ranked either third of lower on their list of college choices.

Hours Worked

Survey participants were also asked about the number of hours that they work while attending school. Table 4.17 shows the frequency distributions of the number of weekly hours worked as indicated by participants.
Table 4.17

Frequency Distribution of the Number of Hours Worked Per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Worked Per Week</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 or more</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately 48.1% of the respondents indicated that they were not working at all. Another 11.6% of participants reported working between one and ten hours a week, while 24.9% of respondents indicated they worked anywhere from 11 to 20 hours per week. Another 10.1% of respondents indicated that they were working between 21 and 30 hours per week while attending MSU. Only 3.0% of those participants reported working between 31 and 40 hours a week, with an even smaller percentage of 1.9%, reported working 41 hours or more a week.

High School GPA

Participants were asked to indicate their grade point averages upon completion of their high school academic career. Table 4.18 shows the frequency distributions of the high school GPAs of study participants.
Table 4.18

Frequency Distribution of Respondents’ Cumulative High School GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School GPA Categories</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 or LOWER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 - 2.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 - 2.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT STATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of students surveyed reported having a GPA between a 3.6 and a 4.0, with 346 students falling within this range, which accounted for 61.0% of all participants. The second highest ranking GPA range was that of the 3.1-3.5 GPA category, with 27.3% of participants indicating that they had a high school GPA that fell within this GPA range. Another 8.8% of participants indicated that they had a high school GPA that fell within the 2.6-3.0 GPA range. The remaining 2.5% had high GPAs ranging from 2.1 and lower, with 1.6% having GPAs between a 2.1 and a 2.5 and another 0.7% having GPAs that fell between a 1.6 and 2.0. The lowest GPA range was that of 1.50 or lower with only .2% of research participants reporting having GPAs falling within this range.

Summary of Demographic Information

The students who chose to participate in the research study were from a variety of groups and backgrounds. A majority of the participants (81.3%) were MSU native
students, females (59.8%) between the ages of 20-22 years of age (66.0%), Caucasian (80.4%), who lived off campus (58.7%), and maintained grade point averages (GPAs) of 3.1-4.0 (61.3%). The students came from a broad cross section of family incomes. A majority of participants (50.6%) indicated that their fathers had earned college degrees, while another 52.7% indicated that their mothers had obtained college degrees. Another, 67.0% of study participants indicated that MSU was their first school of choice. Approximately three-fourths (72.2%) of participants indicated they had plans of obtaining a degree above a bachelor’s degree, but only 30.9% indicated that they would pursue this advanced degree at MSU.

**Research Questions**

**Results of Analysis for Research Question One**

*Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of academic and intellectual development?*

When evaluating the relationship between the two student groups and the factor variable of academic and intellectual development, an ANOVA statistical test was utilized. The ANOVA statistical test was conducted using the alpha level of .05. The descriptive statistics for the results of the statistical test are listed in Table 4.19.
The descriptive statistics include the means and standard deviations for each group. The means for the two groups are similar. The mean for community college transfer students was 20.44 while the mean for native students was 19.76. The overall mean for both groups was 19.89. As for the standard deviations, these are similar among the student types as well with the transfer group having a $SD=4.73$ and the native group having a $SD=4.07$. Other important statistical data that were computed as a result of the ANOVA test was the statistical test of between subject statistical tests. Table 4.20 displays the results from the significance test for the between subject variables.
Table 4.20
Results of the ANOVA Tests of Native and Transfer Students’ Perceptions of Academic and Intellectual Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>40.342</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40.342</td>
<td>2.285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9976.434</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>17.657</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10016.77</td>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P=.05

A look of the between-subject effects between the groups of MSU community college transfer students and native students’ results revealed that no significant differences exist. The test results revealed the following statistical results $f = 2.285$ and $p = 1.31$. Therefore it can be statistically concluded that students’ perceptions of the variable of their academic and intellectual development does not vary among MSU community college transfer and native students.

Results of Analysis of Research Question Two

Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching?

When evaluating the relationship between the two student groups and the factor variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching; the researcher ran an ANOVA statistical test. The test was conducted using the alpha level of .05. The descriptive statistics for the results of the statistical test are listed in Table 4.21.
Table 4.21

Descriptive Statistics for MSU Native and Community College Transfer Students as it Relates to Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Student</td>
<td>31.1981</td>
<td>5.80709</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Student</td>
<td>32.7896</td>
<td>4.80185</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.4921</td>
<td>5.03797</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics include the means and standard deviations for each group. The reported mean for those community college transfer students was 31.19 while the mean for native students was 32.79. As for the standard deviations, these are similar among the student types with transfer group having a \( SD = 5.80 \) and the native group having a \( SD = 4.80 \). Table 4.22 displays the results from the significance test for the between subject variables.

Table 4.22

Results of the ANOVA Tests of MSU’s Native and Transfer Students on the Variable of Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>218.285</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>218.25</td>
<td>8.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>14147.430</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>25.040</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14365.714</td>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\( p < .05 \)

Results revealed that a significant difference does exist in students’ perceptions of faculty concern for student development and teaching. The test results revealed the
following statistical results $f = 8.718$ and $p = .003$. Therefore, because of the reported significance level, the researcher concluded that there are significant differences in perceptions of the variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching between MSU’s community college transfer students and native students.

**Results of Analysis for Research Question Three**

*Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of social integration?*

When analyzing the relationship between the two student groups and the factor variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching, the researcher ran an ANOVA statistical test. The test was conducted using the alpha level of .05. The descriptive statistics for MSU’s transfer and native students’ perceptions of social integration is listed in Table 4.23.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$N$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Student</td>
<td>34.1604</td>
<td>5.97158</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Student</td>
<td>33.6009</td>
<td>4.70489</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33.7055</td>
<td>4.96522</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics include the means and standard deviations for both MSU community college transfer and native students. The reported mean for the community
college transfer student group was 34.16 while the mean for native students was 33.60. As for the standard deviations, the standard deviation for the transfer group was $SD = 5.97$. For the native group, the standard deviation was $SD = 4.70$. Table 4.24 displays the results from the significance test between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of social integration.

Table 4.24

Results of the ANOVA Tests of MSU’s Transfer and Native Students on the Variable of Social Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>26.980</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.980</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>13926.833</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>24.649</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13953.813</td>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A look of the between-subject effects between the groups of Mississippi State University (MSU) community college transfer students and native students and the variable of social integration, revealed that no significant difference exist between the student groups and the included variable. The test results revealed the following statistical results $f = 1.095$ and $p = .296$. Therefore, it can be statistically concluded that students’ perceptions of the variable of social integration does not vary among MSU community college transfer and native students.
Results of Analysis for Research Question Four

Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of goal and institutional commitment?

When evaluating the relationship between the two student groups and the factor variable of students’ goals and institutional commitment; the researcher ran an ANOVA statistical test. The test was conducted using the alpha level of .05. The descriptive statistics for the results of the MSU’s native and transfer perception’s perceptions of goals and institutional commitment are listed in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25

Descriptive Statistics for MSU Native and Community College Transfer Students as it Relates to Students’ Goals and Institutional Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Groups</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Student</td>
<td>16.51</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Student</td>
<td>16.02</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16.11</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics included the means and standard deviations for each group. The mean for MSU’s community college transfer students was 16.51 while the mean for native students was 16.02. As for the standard deviations, the transfer group had a $SD = 2.65$ and the native group had a $SD = 2$. Table 4.26 displays the results from the significance test for students’ perceptions of goals and institutional commitments.
Table 4.26

Results of the ANOVA Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on the Variable of Students’ Goals and Institutional Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>20.502</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.502</td>
<td>3.228</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3588.274</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>6.351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3608.776</td>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05

A look of the between-subject effects between MSU’s community college transfer students and native students and their perceptions of their goals and institutional commitment revealed that no significant difference existed between the student groups on the included variable. The test results reveal the following statistical results $f = 3.23$ and $p = .073$. Therefore, the researcher statistically concluded that students’ perceptions of the variable of their goals and institutional commitment do not vary among MSU community college transfer and native students.

**Results of Analysis for Research Question Five**

*Is there any significant difference in the GPAs of MSU native students when compared to those MSU community college transfer students?*

In order to answer this question the researcher performed a cross tabulation statistical procedure to create a two-way table. The researcher also conducted a Chi-square procedure. To conduct the statistical analysis of the GPA data, the GPA data were coded as follows: (1) 1 = 1.50 or lower, (2) 2 = 1.6-2.0, (3) 3 = 2.1-2.5, (4) 4 = 2.6-3.0; (5)
5=3.1-3.5, (6) 6= 3.6-4.0, and (7) Not Stated. The cross tabulations are shown in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27
Cross Tabulation Results for Differences in the GPAs of MSU Native and Community College Transfer Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1.5 OR LOWER</th>
<th>1.6 -2.0</th>
<th>2.1 -2.5</th>
<th>2.6-3.0</th>
<th>3.1-3.5</th>
<th>3.6-4.0</th>
<th>NOT STATED</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPECTED COUNT</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>106.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF MSU TRANSFERS</td>
<td>.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% WITHIN YOUR CURRENT GPA IS:</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF TOTAL</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDUAL</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>-17.6</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| COUNT| 0            | 16       | 49       | 90      | 136     | 168     | 2          | 461   |
| EXPECTED COUNT| .8         | 16.3     | 56.9     | 102.4   | 132.5   | 150.4   | 1.6        | 461.0 |
| % OF MSU NATIVE| .0%        | 3.5%     | 10.6%    | 19.5%   | 29.5%   | 36.4%   | .4%        | 100.0% |
| % WITHIN YOUR CURRENT GPA IS:| .0%        | 80.0%    | 70.0%    | 71.4%   | 83.4%   | 90.8%   | 100.0%     | 81.3% |
| % OF TOTAL| .0%         | 2.8%     | 8.6%     | 15.9%   | 24.0%   | 29.6%   | .4%        | 81.3% |
| RESIDUAL| -.8         | -.3      | -7.9     | -12.4   | 3.5     | 17.6    | .4         |       |

| COUNT| 1            | 20       | 70       | 126     | 163     | 185     | 2          | 567   |
| EXPECTED COUNT| 1.0        | 20.0     | 70.0     | 126.0   | 163.0   | 185.0   | 2.0        | 567.0 |
| % OF TOTAL PARTICIPANTS| .2%        | 3.5%     | 12.3%    | 22.2%   | 28.7%   | 32.6%   | .4%        | 100.0% |
| % WITHIN YOUR CURRENT GPA IS:| 100.0%    | 100.0%   | 100.0%   | 100.0%  | 100.0%  | 100.0%  | 100.0%     | 100.0% |
| % OF TOTAL| .2%         | 3.5%     | 12.3%    | 22.2%   | 28.7%   | 32.6%   | .4%        | 100.0% |
In analyzing the cross tabulations the marginal totals show that there are more native students than community college transfer students, with native students accounting for 81.3% and community college transfer students accounting for 18.7%. As for community college transfer students, the highest percentage of students reported having GPAs that fell within the mid-point GPA range. A total of 34% of these students reported having GPAs falling between 2.6 and 3.0. For MSU native students, the largest percentage of these students reported to having a GPA between 3.6 and 4.0, with approximately 36.4% of students reporting having GPAs in this range. Overall, 32.6% of all of the students surveyed indicated having GPAs of a 3.6-4.0, which accounted for the highest percentage among the combined student groups. Figure 4.28 provides a display of the Chi-Square test.

Table 4.28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>30.288a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Coefficient</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>567</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05

The Pearson Chi-Square examines the extent to which the “observed frequencies differ from those that you would expect” (Shannon & Davenport, 2004, p. 154). For this group of variables, the reported Chi-Square was 30.288. The degrees of freedom (df) is 6.
and the significant level is .000, \( p < .0001 \). The significant level of .000 indicates that the frequencies reported among these variables does not differ by chance, but whether revealed that there is a relationship between students’ classification as either a native or transfer student and their GPAs. Therefore, the researcher statistically concluded that there was a significant difference in the reported GPAs of those MSU native students and MSU community college transfer students.

Further statistical evidence that a significant relationship existed between the included student categories and their GPAs is the reported contingency coefficient. The contingency coefficient is vital because it further “describes the magnitude of the relationship between variables” (Shannon & Davenport, 2004, p. 154). The contingency coefficient in this case is .225 which is moderately low, being that “as the value approaches one, the stronger the relationships that exist between the variables” (Shannon & Davenport, 2004, p. 146). Therefore, the contingency coefficient indicates that a moderately low relationship does exist between the variables. However the reported significant level of .000, \( p < .001 \), implies that the likelihood that the relationship between the variables occurring by change is not likely. Identical to the significance level of the Chi-Square statistic, the significance level further indicates that a significant level does exist between the student groups and GPA. Therefore, the researcher statistically concluded that whether a student is a native or community college transfer student will directly affect a student’s GPA.
Results of Analysis for Research Question Six

*Is there a significant relationship among MSU community college transfer students’ current GPA and their perceptions of those included transfer variables academic adjustment, comparison of collegiate experiences, social adjustment, and campus satisfaction?*

In order to determine whether or not relationships existed among the students’ GPAs and their perceptions of the included transfer variables of academic adjustment, comparison of collegiate experiences, social adjustment, and campus satisfaction; the researcher conducted a MANOVA test. The statistical results from the MANOVA tests were combined and the results are displayed in Table 4.29.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box Test</td>
<td>43.349</td>
<td>1.325</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>15544.170</td>
<td>.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>2.118</td>
<td>20.000</td>
<td>400.000</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>2.192</td>
<td>20.000</td>
<td>322.662</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p = .05, *significant at the .05 level

The researcher first examined the results of the Box Test. The Box revealed the following findings, $F (30, 15544.170) = .847, p = .110$. Therefore, the Box Test revealed that there was no significant difference among students’ GPA and their perceptions of those includes transfer variables of academic adjustment, comparison of collegiate experiences, social adjustment, and campus satisfaction. Because the Box Test revealed
no significant difference exists, the Wilk’s Lambda was used in order to further test significance. The Wilk’s Lambda results were Wilk’s $\Lambda = .655$, $F(20, 322.662) = 2.192$. The reported significance level was $p = .003$ thereby, indicating that there is a significant relationship between students’ current GPA and their perceptions of those included transfer variables. Being that previous statistical tests revealed that a significant relationship existed among students’ GPAs and their perceptions of transfer variables, an regression test was conducted as a follow-up in order to determine which dependent transfer factor variables showed a significant influence on these community college transfer students’ current GPA. Table 3.30 shows the results of the regression statistical tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Sum Of Squares</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Adjustment</td>
<td>143.603</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28.721</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Of Collegiate Experiences</td>
<td>127.517</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.503</td>
<td>3.791</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Adjustment</td>
<td>36.199</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.240</td>
<td>.685</td>
<td>.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Satisfaction</td>
<td>7.049</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.410</td>
<td>.529</td>
<td>.754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$

The regression statistical test was conducted using the alpha level of .05. The regression test results revealed that of the tested variables of academic adjustment, comparison of collegiate experiences, social adjustment, and campus satisfaction, two
had a significant influence on students GPAs. Those two variables were academic adjustment and the students’ perceptions of their collegiate experience on both the community college and university level. The level of significance for academic adjustment was $p = .005$ and the level of significance for students’ collegiate experiences was $p = .003$. Therefore, it can be assumed that the for MSU community college transfer students, there is a significant relationship between their GPAs and their perceptions of their adjustment to MSU’s standards, as well as their community college experiences when compared to their experiences at MSU.

**Summary**

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis were given. Six research questions were addressed in this chapter. Demographic information about the study participants was provided with the use of frequency distributions. The research questions were analyzed with the use of Chi-Square, MANOVA, ANOVA, multiple regressions, and cross tabulation statistical tests. The significant level of $p = .05$ was used in statistical analysis. The data analysis revealed significant difference among native and community college transfers across only one of the tested variable. The variable that showed a significant difference between MSU community college and transfer students was the variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching ($p = .003$). The other remaining variables of academic and intellectual development, social integration, and student goal and institutional commitment showed no significant differences between MSU community college transfer and native students.
Today’s community colleges are constantly expanding their roles; however one of their main roles is that of the “transfer function.” “At least one out of every five community college students transfer to a university and these figures are readily increasing” (Eggleston & Laanan, 2001, p. 87). Although these numbers vary, the increase in transfer students indicates that there are students whose needs and demands should be addressed by community colleges and universities. If these students’ needs are not properly addressed universities will continue to have problems with recruitment and retention issues among those community college transfer students. In order to address these needs, there should be a better understanding of the perceptions and factors that influence these students. The purpose of this research project was to determine if there were significant differences in the perceptions, influences, and academic performance of Mississippi State University native students and community college transfer students. The study variables were based on Tinto’s Model of Student Departure. This chapter provides a summary of the study, a discussion of the major findings of the study, and recommendations for transfer strategies and/or programs for colleges and universities. Conclusions and recommendation were also presented.
Summary of the Study

Summary of the Problem

Six specific research questions were developed to guide the study.

1. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of academic and intellectual development?

2. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of faculty concern for student development and teaching?

3. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of social integration?

4. Does a significant difference exist between MSU’s native and transfer students’ perceptions of the variable of goal and institutional commitment?

5. Is there a significant difference in the GPAs of MSU native students when compared to those MSU community College transfer students?

6. Is there a significant relationship among MSU community college transfer students’ current GPA and their perceptions of those included transfer variables?

Review of the Methodology

The research study was a non-experimental, quantitative survey research design.

This method of research was chosen based on the convenience of this type of research
and because the majority of research done based Tinto’s model utilized this research design. The instrument employed in this study was the Student Experience Survey. The sample for the research study was retrieved from a database obtained by the researcher from the MSU Registrar’s Office. A total of 567 MSU students participated in the study. The study participants were asked to complete a 77-question survey, which was sent to them electronically. The instrument was adapted by the researcher from one used in a study of transfer students at several Christian Universities in Texas. The instrument was used to collect data on the students’ academic performance and perceptions related to the variables of academic integration, social integration, students’ goal and institutional commitment, and transfer variable.

A rural land-grant institution was selected for the purposes of this project and students’ directory information was retrieved from the university’s Registrar’s Office. At the beginning of the Fall semester of 2009, a total of 1,000 surveys were e-mailed, with a total of 567 surveys being fully completed. The e-mails sent to potential study participants contained a secured link to access the survey, as well as the consent form (See Appendix A). After two days, those individuals with uncompleted surveys were sent a reminder e-mail. A second reminder e-mail was sent two days later. The multiple reminders led to a respond rate of 57%.

**Data Analysis Utilized**

Data collected during this research project were analyzed through the use of four methods of analysis. First, descriptive frequencies were used to outline those participants’ demographic characteristics. The second method of analysis, to answer research
questions one through four, was the ANOVA. For research question five, cross-tabulations, and Chi-Squares were used for analyzing the GPAs of both transfer and native students. Research question six, was answered through the use of Chi-square, MANOVA, regression, and cross tabulations. All research questions were tested at the .05 significant level.

**Major Findings and Discussion**

The primary focus of this study was on Mississippi State University’s community college transfer and native students’ perceptions and academic performance. Research questions one through four were based on the constructs of Tinto’s (1993) model. The constructs included were based on the variables of: (1) academic integration, (2) social integration, and (3) students’ goals and institutional commitment. The fifth research question examined whether a significant difference existed among student groups and their current collegiate GPAs. The sixth research question examined the relationship between MSU’s native students’ GPA and transfer variables of academic adjustment, comparison of collegiate experiences, social adjustment, and campus satisfaction.

The students who chose to participate in the research study were from a variety of groups and backgrounds. A majority of the participants (81.3%) were MSU native students, females (59.8%) between the age of 20-22 years of age (66.0%), Caucasian (80.4%), who lived off campus (58.7%), and maintained a grade point average (GPA) of 3.1-4.0 (61.3%). The students came from a broad cross section of family incomes. A majority of participants (50.6%) indicated that their father had earned college degrees, while another 52.7% indicated that their mother had obtained college degrees. Another, 67.0% of study
participants indicated that Mississippi State University was their first school of choice. However, 72.2% of participants indicated that they had plans of obtaining a degree above a bachelor’s degree, but only 30.9% indicated that they would pursue this advanced degree at MSU.

The results of this research project can help universities better understand the diverse needs of those students that attend their institution, both native and transfer students in order to ensure that these students receive the best level of education possible. It is imperative that universities develop programs and strategies that make the transition process for community college transfer students a much easier process. The development of such programs will benefit the educational community as a whole and both community colleges and universities will be pleased with the results. This study sought to provide data on any differences that may exist among university native students and community college transfer students. Several variables were used in the study to analyze survey results. The following findings were based on an analysis of the data.

1. Research Question One: Statistical tests revealed that there was not a significant difference in MSU’s transfer and native students’ perceptions of the variable of academic and intellectual development.

2. Research Question Two: Statistical tests revealed that there was a significant difference in MSU’s transfer and native students’ perceptions of the variable of faculty concern for student development.

3. Research Question Three: Statistical tests revealed that there was not a significant difference in MSU’s transfer and native students’ perceptions of the variable of social integration.
4. Research Question Four: Statistical tests revealed that there was not a significant difference in MSU’s transfer and native students’ perceptions of the variable of students’ goals and institutional commitment.

5. Research Question Five: Related to student GPAs, findings revealed that significant differences existed between the GPAs of MSU’s native students and transfer students.

6. Research Question Six: Study results also revealed that community college transfer students’ GPAs are significantly related to their perceptions and/or views of their academic adjustment on the university level, as well as their perceptions of their university experiences when compared to their community college experiences.

These results mirrored previously conducted studies in that this study showed the slow or lack of adjustment of the university’s community college transfer students. One of the major findings was the significant difference that existed among MSU’s native and community college transfer students’ in relation to their GPAs. In addition, community college transfer students also saw a decline in their GPA once they began at the university. There was also a significant difference among study categorical student groups in relation to the students’ perceptions of faculty concern for student development and teaching. The difference in the perceptions of these factors among native and community college transfer students may be the direct result of the university failing to develop programs that could address the special needs of these transfer students.
Implications

Community colleges have become a very important part of the total education process, but the transfer function needs to be more fully researched and understood. Considerable research has been conducted related to the transfer function, but more research needs to be done to clarify how community colleges perform and the importance of transfer education. Although community colleges continue to provide an inexpensive means for students to fulfill the requirements for the first two years of their bachelor’s attainment, some feel that they may not be fulfilling the promise that a large sector of the public holds for them, which is to prepare students to successfully transfer to a four-year institution to complete the requirements for a bachelor’s degree (Best & Gehrin, 1993). Therefore, this issue has been gaining ever-increasing attention and researchers have come to various conclusions regarding to this matter. New information is constantly emerging.

One general theme that has become apparent as a result of this research study is more needs to be done to ensure the successful transition of community college transfer students. More efforts have to be taken to increase transfer and retention rates. Within the outcomes of this research project, the phenomena of “transfer shock” does exist and measures need to be taken to counteract this phenomena. Community colleges and universities have to become more involved in eliminating transfer barriers to ensure student success.

As a result of the findings of this study, the following are suggestions for the improvement of the adjustment process of community college transfer students when they begin at a university.
1. In an attempt to increase transfer rates, community colleges need to get more faculty involved in transfer-based activities.

2. Universities need to develop groups that are specifically geared toward community college transfer students. These groups can serve as a support system for students.

3. Universities should also hold regular seminars that will be related to the adjustment process and provide these students with helpful ways to ease the adjustment process.

4. Because it is imperative that transfer students’ usually have a fall in their GPA upon entering the University, students’ mid-term grades should be utilized to determine how new transfer students are doing in their classes and provide intervention for those who are struggling before the situation gets out of hand.

5. Universities should provide transfer students mentors, who continually work with them throughout their academic careers at the university to ensure that they are successfully adjusting to university life.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

While the study looked at both native and community college transfer students at a land-grant institution, study results may not be quickly or easily applied to other institutions since each university student body is unique. However, the questions that were addressed in this study can be easily adapted to other institutions and they should be considered and explored. As a result of the vital statistical data that was a result of this study, the following are recommendations for further.
1. Although there have been a plethora of research conducted on the issue of “transfer shock,” additional research needs to be done on the adjustment process of community college transfer students.

2. Additional research should also be done to further investigate the impact and importance of variables of academic integration, students’ perceptions of faculty concern for student development, and students’ interaction with faculty.

3. Research also needs to be done on the recruitment and retention of community college transfer students in order to develop a more holistic approach to addressing this issue.

4. Being that this study was conducted at only one rural land-grant institution, additional research can be done by expanding this research study on a much broader scale to include additional states and both private and public universities.

5. Future studies should also investigate the impact of increased faculty involvement in the transfer process.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM & SURVEY
Student Experience Survey

1. Please indicate whether or not you are willing to participate in the survey by selecting the appropriate button.
   - ☐ I CONSENT. I have read the above consent form and have a clear understanding of the requirements of participating in the research project and have made the decision to participate.
   - ☐ I DESIRE NOT TO PARTICIPATE. I have read the above consent form and have a clear understanding of the requirements of participating in the research project and have made the decision to not participate at this time.

2. Expereince Questions

I would like to first thank you for participating in this study. Your participation will allow me to reach the 100% participation rate that I need. To complete the survey just simply mark the box next to the appropriate answer. It should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete the survey. Thanks.

1. Few of my courses this semester have been intellectually stimulating.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Neutral
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. I am satisfied with my academic experience this semester.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Neutral
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. I am more likely to attend a cultural event (such as a concert, lecture, or art show) now than I was a year ago.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Neutral
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

4. I am satisfied with the extent of my intellectual development this semester.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

5. Being on this campus is contributing to my overall growth and development as a young adult.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

6. In addition to the required reading assignments, I read many of the recommended books in my courses.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

7. My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has greatly increased since attending MSU.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

8. I am still unsure about my academic major.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

9. Getting good grades is not important to me.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

10. My academic experiences these past semesters have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in new ideas.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

11. My overall understanding and perceptions of life are being strengthened by my classroom and/or my campus experiences.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

12. My academic performance is as well as I expected it would be.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

13. I have developed close personal relationships with other students on campus.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

14. My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitude.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

15. Faculty, administrators, and/or staff seem to be willing to assist me in resolving issues that I may have academically.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
16. The student relationships I have developed this semester have been personally satisfying.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

17. My interpersonal relationships with university staff and/or faculty has had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

18. It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

19. I am dissatisfied with my current dating relationships.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
20. Few of the students that I know would be willing to listen and help me if I had any personal problems.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

21. Few of the faculty/staff members that I know would be willing to listen and help me if I had any personal problems.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

22. This campus provides adequate opportunities to participate in organized extracurricular activities.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

23. I am happy with my living arrangements this semester.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

24. Given where I am presently in my life, as it relates to both my social and academic desires, this campus is a good fit for me.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. I am satisfied with the opportunities I have had this year to meet and interact informally with faculty members.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. Few of the faculty members I have had contact with this semester are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. This semester, I have developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
28. My non-classroom interactions with faculty members this semester have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

29. My non-classroom interactions with faculty this semester have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

30. My non-classroom interactions with faculty this semester have had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

31. Few of the faculty members I have had contact with this semester would be considered to be genuinely outstanding or superior teachers.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

32. Few of the faculty members I have had contact with this semester are genuinely interested in students.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

33. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with this semester are genuinely interested in teaching.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

34. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with this semester are interested in helping students grow in many areas, not just in the area of academics.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

35. It is important for me to graduate from college.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

36. I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to attend this university.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

37. It is likely that I will register at this university this upcoming semester.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

38. I am involved with social activities at this school.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

39. I am satisfied with the overall environment at this university.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

40. I transferred to Mississippi State from a community college.
   - Yes
   - No

3. Community College Experiences
Student Experience Survey

1. Adjusting to the academic standards at the university has been difficult.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

2. Upon transferring I felt alienated at this school.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

3. My level of stress increased when I started at this university.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

4. It is much easier to make friends at the community college then at the university.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

5. I feel more comfortable making friends with other transfer students than non-transfer students.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

6. I am satisfied with the overall environment at this university.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

7. I was more involved in social activities while attending the community college than I am now.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

8. When compared to the level of involvement among university staff members, I found that the faculty members at the community college were involved at a much greater level with students than university members.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
9. I found the adjustment process to be a much easier process at the community college level than at the university level.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

10. I was more satisfied with the academic environment provided at the community college level than the one provided at the university.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

11. I feel that my experiences at the community college level prepared me to be a successful student at MSU.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

12. Now that I am a student at MSU I wish I would have started my academic career here first instead of attending a community college.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
Student Experience Survey

13. I don’t feel that the community college environment gives you an accurate representation of true collegiate life as it relates to academic standards, social involvement, etc.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

14. While attending the community college, approximately how many hours per week, on the average, did you spend in organized extra-curricular activities?
   - 0 Hours
   - 1-5 Hours
   - 6-10 Hours
   - 11-15 Hours
   - More than 15 Hours

15. How many hours a week did you work while attending the community college?
   - None
   - 1-10
   - 11-20
   - 21-30
   - 31-40
   - 41 or more

16. Did you attend an orientation session prior to starting at the community college?
   - Yes
   - No
17. Did you find the orientation helpful and insightful?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

18. What was your cumulative GPA while attending community college?
   - 3.6-4.0
   - 3.1-3.5
   - 2.6-3.0
   - 2.1-2.5
   - 1.6-2.0
   - 1.5 or Lower

19. What was the name of the college that you most recently transferred from?

20. How many semesters did you complete at the community college before transferring to MSU?
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5 or more

21. While attending the community college, my living arrangement was in the:
   - Residence Hall
   - Other University Housing
   - Off campus house or apartment
   - With parents or relatives
   - Other (Please specify)
### Student Experience Survey

22. How many hours did you transfer from that college? (at your best guess)

23. What factors influenced you to attend the community college? (For this question, rank the selections based on their level of importance. *(NOTE: ONLY ONE ANSWER IS ALLOWED FOR EACH FACTOR LISTED!)*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Friends Here</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Reputation</td>
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<td>Geographic Location</td>
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<td>Athletic Opportunities</td>
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<td>Financial Aid Available</td>
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<td>Family Influence</td>
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<td>Student Activities Available</td>
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<td>Campus Appearance &amp; Amenities</td>
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<td>Services Available</td>
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<td>Knowledge of Faculty</td>
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<td>(Education, Student Involvement, etc.)</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Demographic Information

In this section I would like to collect a little demographic information. Please select the answer that you believe that most reflects your background or experience.
1. What was your cumulative average while in high school?

- 3.6-4.0
- 3.1-3.5
- 2.6-3.0
- 2.1-2.5
- 1.6-2.0
- 1.5 or Lower

2. Where do you live while you are in school?

- Residence Hall
- Other University Housing
- Off campus house or apartment
- With parents or relatives
- Other (please specify)

3. Your Age:

- 17-19
- 20-22
- 23-25
- 26-28
- 29 or older

4. Your current GPA is:

- 3.6-4.0
- 3.1-3.5
- 2.6-3.0
- 2.1-2.5
- 1.6-2.0
- 1.5 or Lower
Student Experience Survey

5. What is your gender?

☐ Male
☐ Female

6. Your ethnical background:

☐ African American
☐ Asian
☐ Caucasian
☐ Hispanic
☐ Other (please specify)

7. What is the highest degree you plan to complete?

☐ Bachelor’s
☐ Masters (including MBA)
☐ Ph.D or Ed.D
☐ MD, DDS, DO, or DVM
☐ JD or LLB
☐ Other (please specify)

8. What is the highest degree you plan to complete at this university?

☐ Bachelor’s
☐ Masters (including MBA)
☐ Doctorate (Ph.D, Ed.D, or DMin)
☐ Professional (JD or LLB)
☐ Other (please specify)
Student Experience Survey

9. What is the highest level of education completed by your father?
- Elementary
- Some High School
- High School Graduate
- Some College
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Other (please specify)

10. What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?
- Elementary
- Some High School
- High School Graduate
- Some College
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Other (please specify)

11. What is the best estimate of your parent’s total household income?
- Less than $20,000
- $20-$40,000
- $41-$60,000
- $61-$80,000
- $81-$100,000
- More than $101,000

12. Where did this university rank among your choices before enrolling?
- #1
- #2
- #3
- Lower than #3
Student Experience Survey

13. Did you attend an orientation session prior to beginning at MSU?
   - Yes
   - No

14. If so, did you find the orientation session helpful?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

15. While in school at this university, how many hours a week do you work?
   - None
   - 1–10
   - 11–20
   - 21–30
   - 31–40
   - 41 or more
APPENDIX B

EMAILS REQUESTING INFORMATION FROM REGISTRAR’S OFFICE
Kim,

Thanks for your reply as well.

Based on our email exchange, the information you seek for your study/research is defined by FERPA as directory information.

Accordingly, I can release that information to you once the IRB has given its approval.

Thanks,

Bobby R. (Butch) Stokes
University Registrar
Office of the University Registrar
Mississippi State University
P.O. Box 5268
Mississippi State, MS 39762-5268
Telephone: (662) 325-2663
Fax: (662) 325-1846
email: registrar@registrar.msstate.edu
http://www.msstate.edu/dept/registrar/

Serving "The Great Bulldog Nation"

Go Bulldogs!!

Kimberly D Reed-Nolan 4/21/2009 10:03 PM
Mr. Stokes;

I am sorry for the previous lengthy e-mail I just wanted to be sure that I had everything outlined clearly because this has been such a long and tedious process for me and because I had never discussed the issue with you. I would like to thank you for your quick response and yes you are correct in what I am requesting. Once, again thanks for your assistance in this matter and I would appreciate any help you can render. Hope you have a great day.

----- Original Message -----
I have read your lengthy email and have restated your request.

Here's the information I understand you are asking that we provide you as a list of students:

A list of currently enrolled (Spring 2009) MSU students with total earned hours between 30 to 89 hours. Students admitted as a freshman directly from High school should have completed at least 30 hours at MSU and no more than 89 hours.

Currently enrolled transfer students who have accumulated 30 to 89 earned hours must have attended MSU at least one semester prior to Spring 2009 and must have transferred at least 12 hours from a community college.

If selected for the list, please provide:

1) Student Last Name
2) Student First Name
3) Student Middle Name
4) Email address
5) If email address not available, then provide
6) home address line 1
7) home address line 2
8) home city
9) home state
10) home zip
11) local address line 1
12) local address line 2
13) local city
14) local state
15) local zip

Thanks,
Bobby R. (Butch) Stokes
University Registrar
Office of the University Registrar
Mississippi State University
P.O. Box 5268
Mississippi State, MS 39762-5268
Telephone: (662) 325-2663
Fax: (662) 325-1846
email: registrar@registrar.msstate.edu
http://www.msstate.edu/dept/registrar/

Original Message
Kimberly D Reed-Nolan 4/2/2009 4:07 PM >>>
Hello Rhonda:

Below is an outline of my research project, as well as the information that is needed. Thanks for all of your help and I look forward to hearing from you.

My name is Kimberly Reed-Nolan. Presently, I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Community College Leadership Program through the Department of Instructional Systems, Leadership, & Workforce
Development at MSU. I am conducting a survey in connection with the research requirements for my dissertation and I am requesting your help.

The goal of this research project is to seek to determine the effectiveness of community colleges in preparing students to successfully transition to 4-year institutions when compared with those native students. Therefore, I am interested in comparing the perceptions and GPA’s of those community college transfer students with those native students. I am hoping that the information gained as a result of conducting this research will help me understand how a student’s prior community college experiences lead them to attend a 4-year institution and the role the 2-year institution has played in their successful transition and academic achievement at Mississippi State.

In order to obtain information for potential participants, I am in need of information from the MSU Registrars Office in order to obtain a list of all the students that have transferred to MSU from 2-year institution, as well as those students that have been enrolled at MSU since completing high school. Therefore, I will assume that I would look at those students that are currently in the completion of the sophomore year or in or around their junior year for those native students and those transfer students that have completed at least one semester at MSU and have transferred at least 12 hours from a community college to MSU. In order to respect the privacy of these individual, all personal information such as the student’s social security number, birth date, home address, etc., will be deleted from the file. The only information that I am requesting on the file would be the student’s name, their college issued student identification number, and an e-mail address and if an e-mail address is not available a possible mailing address for the student. From the list I will then send an e-mail encouraging them to participate in the survey. I am hoping to get the survey out before the end of the current semester so that I can have everything completed this summer.

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you and I would like to thank you for your consideration in this matter. If you should need any additional information or if you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or by phone @ 662-645-6039. I have compiled an official permission letter that I can forward if necessary. Once again thank you.

Kimberly Reed-Nolan, MBA
APPENDIX C

REQUEST & APPROVAL LETTER (VIA EMAIL) TO UTILIZE SURVEY
Kimberly,

Persistence is an important characteristic when striving to complete a dissertation, and you have clearly demonstrated that attribute! I apologize for my delay in replying to your request. This has been an extremely busy semester and I have been behind in replying to emails. Thank you for continuing to follow up. First, let me say congratulations on your pursuit of your doctorate and on being far enough along in the process to be working on your dissertation!

The instrument that you refer to "The Student Transfer Experience Survey" was the instrument that I created for my dissertation research based on other instruments. I have attached a copy of the instrument itself and you can find more information about the full study and the development of the instrument in my dissertation. The instrument was a 70 question survey and my focus was on students who had transferred to a faith-based universities which may be different that your targeted population. I would invite you to look over the instrument and the dissertation information to help you in determining whether it will be useful for you in your research. Best of luck in your research and in the completion of your degree!

Sincerely, Eric

Dr. Eric Gumm
Director of Orientation
Abilene Christian University
ACU Box 29104
Abilene, TX 79699-9104
325-674-2212

From: Kimberly D Reed-Nolan [mailto:kdr17@msstate.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2009 4:39 PM
To: gummj@acu.edu
Subject: Assistance Needed: Please Consider Assisting Me in This Matter

Dr. Gumm:

My name is Kimberly Reed-Nolan. Presently, I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Community College Leadership Program through The Department of Instructional Systems, Leadership, & Workforce Development at MSU. I am conducting a survey in connection with the research requirements for my dissertation and I am requesting your help. The goal of this research project is to determine the effectiveness of community colleges in preparing students to successfully transition to 4-year institutions such as Mississippi State.

Therefore, in researching for my dissertation I ran across research you have done in this subject area as well. In one of you reports you mentioned that you used a survey entitled "The Student Transfer Experience Survey" and I am very interested in using the survey as the instrument used to collect data in my research and I am curious to know how I should go about this. I was wondering if you could direct me to the author of the survey, as well as where I can find a complete coy of the survey in order to seek permission to use the survey. Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you and I would like to thank you for your consideration in this matter. If you should need any additional information or if you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or by phone @ 662-645-6039.
APPENDIX D

INITIAL INVITATION TO SUBJECTS
Subject Line: Assistance Needed

Dear Fellow MSU Student:

Let me first begin by saying that I hope you have had a wonderful and fun-filled summer. I know that this is a very busy time for you with the start of the new Fall semester but I am in need of your assistance. My name is Kimberly Reed-Nolan and presently I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Community College Leadership Program through The Department of Instructional Systems, Leadership, & Workforce Development at MSU. I am conducting a survey in connection with the research requirements for my dissertation and I am requesting your help. The goal of this research project is to compare the perceptions and level of involvement of community college transfer students compared to those native MSU students who attended the university immediately after completing high school. I am hoping that the information yielded as a result of your participation in this research will help me understand the role, if any, that community college attendance has had on students as well as how both transfer and native students view their current college experience so that measures can be taken to improve students’ collegiate experiences both academically and socially.

To assist me in my research, I am asking you to please complete a short questionnaire. The completion of the survey should take approximately 15 minutes. If you are willing to participate please follow the provided link to access the survey. The survey can be accessed by going to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx . This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address so please do not forward this message.

I really hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire because your participation is vital to the success of this research project. I would like for you to understand that your participation is completely voluntary and there is no penalty if you decide not to participate.

If you so decide to complete the survey, please do so by August 19, 2009. If you would like a summary of my findings, you can contact me either by e-mail at kdr17@msstate.edu or call me at 662-645-6039.

Furthermore, please understand that by completing and returning the questionnaire you are acknowledging that you are at least 18 years of age or older and have consented to participate in this study. Please keep this letter for your records. If you should have any questions regarding this research project please do not hesitate to contact either my faculty advisor or me. The contact information for both is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Faculty Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly Reed-Nolan</td>
<td>Dr. Ed Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 1802</td>
<td>Department of Curriculum and Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland, MS 38732</td>
<td>Curriculum and Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 662-645-6039</td>
<td>Campus Mail Stop: Mailstop 9698,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:kdr17@msstate.edu">kdr17@msstate.edu</a></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Foundations, Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State, MS 39762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone: 663-325-7055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:jed@colled.msstate.edu">jed@colled.msstate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, if you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the MSU Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) at 662-325-3294. Once, again thanks for your help.

Please follow the following link to access the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Sincerely, Kimberly Reed-Nolan
Doctoral Student
APPENDIX E

FIRST REMINDER EMAIL TO SUBJECTS
Subject Line: Feedback Still Greatly Needed

Dear Fellow MSU Student:

I understand that this may be a very busy time for you, but I am still in need of your help. A short time ago I sent you a link to a questionnaire asking you about your college experience at MSU. The survey was only sent out to a limited number of students and I am encouraging you to take a few minutes to complete it. The completion of the survey should take approximately 15 minutes and should be completed by August 19th. If you are willing to participate please follow the provided link to access the survey. The survey link is http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx.

I really hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire because your participation is vital to the success of this research project.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be more than happy to discuss them with you. You can reach me by phone at 662-645-6039 or by e-mail at kdr17@msstate.ed.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Reed-Nolan
Doctoral Student
APPENDIX F

SECOND REMINDER EMAIL TO SUBJECTS
Subject Line: A Friendly Reminder

Dear Fellow MSU Student:

I hate to be a bother and I understand that with the start of classes this is a very busy time for you but I am sincerely asking for your assistance. Over the past few days I have sent you several requests asking for your assistance and I am still in need of your help. As I mentioned previously, the survey was only sent out to a limited number of students and I am encouraging you to take a few minutes to complete it. The completion of the survey should take approximately 15 minutes and should be completed by August 19th.

I really hope that you will consider completing the survey. Your participation is vital to the success of this research project.

If you are willing to participate please follow the provided link to access the survey. The survey link is http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Reed-Nolan
Doctoral Student
APPENDIX G

MISSISSIPPI STATE IRB LETTER
May 21, 2009

Kimberly Reed-Nolan
P.O. Box 1802
Cleveland, MS 38732

RE: IRB Study #09-074: Exploring the Perceptions of Students As They Transition From Rural Community Colleges to A Land Grant University

Dear Mrs. Reed-Nolan:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via expedited review for a period of 5/21/2009 through 5/15/2010 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.110 #7. Please note the expiration date for approval of this project is 5/15/2010. If additional time is needed to complete the project, you will need to submit a Continuing Review Request form 30 days prior to the date of expiration. Any modifications made to this project must be submitted for approval prior to implementation. Forms for both Continuing Review and Modifications are located on our website at http://www.orc.msstate.edu.

Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. Please note that the IRB reserves the right, at anytime, to observe you and any associated researchers as they conduct the project and audit research records associated with this project.

Please note that the MSU IRB is in the process of seeking accreditation for our human subjects protection program. As a result of these efforts, you will likely notice many changes in the IRB’s policies and procedures in the coming months. These changes will be posted online at http://www.orc.msstate.edu/humaniahrpp.php.

Please refer to your docket number (#09-074) when contacting our office regarding this project.

We wish you the very best of luck in your research and look forward to working with you again. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Christine Williams at cwilliams@research.msstate.edu or call 662-325-5220.

Sincerely,

[For use with electronic submissions]

Christine Williams
IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: James Ed Davis