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INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS SUPPORTING
THE ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES
IN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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B.A. June 1973, Michigan State University
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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
May 2009

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ABSTRACT

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS SUPPORTING THE ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Alfred A. Roberts
Old Dominion University, 2009
Director: Steven P. Myran

The participation and persistence rates of African-American males in American institutions of higher education consistently trail those of other ethnic and gender subgroups. These national enrollment, graduation, and transfer statistics are reflected in the member institutions of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males.

The study utilized existing VCCS college enrollment and persistence data along with data reported through a survey of academic and student development administrators to examine relationships between identified variables and African-American male enrollment and persistence.

Administrator responses to open-ended survey questions along with an institutional case study of one VCCS college found to be among the leaders in black male enrollment and persistence were examined to explain and add context to the quantitative results.

The findings of the study confirmed differences in proportional enrollment and persistence of African-American males among Virginia community colleges, and found that a range of institutional characteristics and practices may influence the enrollment of African-American males. These characteristics and practices are clustered into the broad categories of strategic effort, student development, and campus climate. Findings related to African-American male persistence were less conclusive, but did suggest that curricula and a campus environment inclusive of the academic contributions of Africans and African-Americans can contribute to the success of black male students.

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"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6). To God be the glory.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study was initiated in response to the low participation and limited success of African-American male students in American institutions of higher education. According to Gumport and Zemsky (2003), "For the past thirty years, the staple of higher education policy in the United States has been the agenda of access - the objective being to make it possible for every American ... to enjoy the benefits of a college education." One segment of the American population, however, appears far less likely to reap the benefits from this promise. In nearly all academic categories, the growth rate of Africa-American men in higher education over the past 20 years is extraordinarily slow when compared with other groups (Hefner, 2004). Equally alarming is the actual number of African-American men earning college degrees over the past 20 years. The rate of attrition among African-American male college students is reported as disproportionately high, while the rate of degree completion is disproportionately low (Leach, 2001).

Background

While the actual number of African-American men enrolled in American colleges and universities over the

past two decades has increased, both the rate of growth and the percentage of total enrollment have been described as "disturbingly low and small enough to be perceived as fragile" (Cuyjet, 1997, p.1). The growth rate of African-American males in higher education over the past 20 years has been characterized as so slow that other subgroups are becoming proportionately far more educated. African-American women in particular are enrolling in college at nearly double the rate of their male counterparts. This level of disparity does not exist among any other minority group (Hefner, 2004; Cuyjet, 2006).

In 2002, of the 16,611,700 students enrolled in American colleges and universities, 43.4 percent were men and 56.6 percent were women (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 2005). According to the *Chronicle* report, the ratio of white students in 2002 was 44 percent men and 56 percent women; the ratio of Asian students was 46.9 percent men and 53.1 percent women; the ratio of Hispanic students was 42.1 percent men and 57.9 percent women; the ratio of American Indian students was 39.6 percent men and 60.4 percent women; and the ratio of Black students was 35.8 percent men and 64.2 percent women. These figures serve to validate the earlier assertion that African-American men not only attend college at rates lower than males in other

ethnic/racial groups, but they also represent the most skewed male/female ratio of any ethnic/racial group. According to Cuyjet (2006), there is no reason to believe that this trend has changed in recent years. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2005) indicate no substantial change in the male/female enrollment patterns of white, Asian, Hispanic, and African-American college students in the years since the *Chronicle* report (See Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

College Enrollment by Gender and Ethnicity: October 2005

(Numbers in thousands)

Race/Ethnicity	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
White non-Hispanic	11,715	5,144	43.7	6,601	56.3
Asian	1,184	605	51.1	579	48.9
Hispanic	1,942	804	42.5	1,137	58.5
Black non-Hispanic	2,298	864	37.6	1,434	62.4

Source. U.S. Census Bureau, 2005

Likewise, degree attainment for African-American men at all levels - associate, bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional - represent a lower proportion of their ethnic population when compared to African-American females than do Asians, Latinos, or Native Americans (Cuyjet,

1997). In the California community college system, African-American men have been identified as the lowest performing subgroup relative to persistence rates and degrees earned (Bush & Bush, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Community College Enrollment and Persistence

American community colleges have long been identified as the point of entry to higher education for many underserved American citizens, especially minority students. Community colleges often serve as the sole opportunity for access to higher education for many African-American males (Pope, 2006). There is growing criticism, however, of community colleges' failure to retain and graduate African-American male students (Hrabowski, Maton, & Greif, 1998; Cross & Slater, 2000). According to Pope, critics have directly focused on the inability of community colleges to reconcile their open admissions policies with academic standards. In response to this criticism, some community college practitioners have recommended establishment of admissions requirements for the first time. Most practitioners, however, feel that community colleges have an obligation to maintain an open door because they are the primary institutions providing educational opportunity for underprepared and

nontraditional students. This position reinforces the need for community colleges to establish policies and interventions that provide appropriate support to meet student needs and overcome institutional barriers to enrollment and persistence.

In the years between 1993 to 2003, African-American male enrollment in community colleges increased from 203,000 to 224,000. While this equates to an enrollment increase of 10.3 percent, it is far short of the 14.1 percent increase in overall community college enrollment over the same period and pales in comparison to the 45.9 percent increase in African-American female enrollment (see Table 1.2).

Similarly, graduation rates for African-American males attending community colleges have increased over the past two decades; but the increase is far below that of African-American females and other minority males (see Table 1.3). While the annual number of African-American male community college graduates increased by 83 percent between the 1984-85 and 2003-2004 academic years, the annual number of African-American female graduates increased by 155.6 percent; and the increase in the number of annual graduates among other minority males ranged from 128.7 percent for

Table 1.2

Comparisons of Community College Enrollment for African-American Males, Females, and All Students

Cohort	1993	2003	% Change from 1993 to 2003
African-American Males	203,000	224,000	10.3
African-American Females	327,000	477,000	45.9
Overall Enrollment	4,196,000	4,787,000	14.1

Source. U.S. Census Bureau, 1994; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003

American Indian/Native Alaskan males to 225.1 percent for Hispanic males during the same period (NCES, 2006).

Data available from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Peer Analysis System indicate similar disparities for African-American male enrollment and persistence in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) (NCES, n.d.).

The VCCS, composed of 23 colleges on 40 campuses, is the largest institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with an enrollment of more than 150,000 students in the fall semester of 2004 (NCES, n.d.).

Table 1.3

Associate Degrees Completed by Ethnicity and Gender

Ethnicity/ Gender	1984- 1985	1989- 1990	1994- 1995	1999- 2000	2003- 2004	Change 1984-85 to 2003-04
Africa-American						
Male	14,184	12,502	16,727	20,967	25,961	83.0%
Female	21,607	21,824	30,340	39,254	55,222	155.6%
Hispanic						
Male	8,561	9,370	15,670	20,946	27,828	225.1%
Female	10,846	12,134	20,292	30,627	44,442	309.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander						
Male	5,492	6,170	9,252	12,010	13,907	153.4%
Female	4,422	6,896	11,425	15,772	19,242	335.1%
American Indian/ Alaska Native						
Male	1,198	1,364	2,098	2,225	2,740	128.7%
Female	1,755	2,066	3,384	4,272	5,379	206.5%

Source. NCES, 2006

A complete listing of VCCS member colleges is provided in Appendix A. Established in 1966 during an era of democratization of higher education in Virginia, a primary goal of the VCCS has always been to ensure that educational opportunities are available to all Virginians (VCCS, n.d.).

With this noble ambition, the VCCS is the Virginia institution of higher education most likely to address the unique needs of under-served populations, including African-American males. Of the 152,317 students enrolled in VCCS colleges during fall semester 2004, 29,233 were African-American, 7,925 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 6,517 were Hispanic, and 1,140 were reported as American Indian or Alaskan Native. Of the African-Americans enrolled in VCCS colleges, however, only 32 percent were males. This stands in stark contrast to other racial and ethnic groups, including whites, in which males accounted for 42 to 47 percent of enrollment (NCES, n.d.). Table 1.4 presents SVCC enrollment by gender and racial status for 2002, 2003, and 2004 fall semesters.

African-American males in VCCS colleges also lag behind other ethnic/gender groups relative to program completion and transfer. Of the VCCS full-time, first-time degree or certificate seeking students enrolled during the fall semester of 2001, only American Indian male students graduated at a lower rate than African-American males. The limited persistence of African-American men attending VCCS schools toward program completion is evident in the 1999 and 2000 cohorts, as well. Their completion rates in these cohorts were the lowest among all ethnic/gender groups.

Table 1.4

VCCS Enrollment by Gender and Racial/Ethnic Status

Ethnicity	Fall 2002			Fall 2003			Fall 2004		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
African-American	28,886	33%	67%	29,499	33%	67%	29,233	32%	68%
White	104,321	42%	58%	106,158	42%	58%	106,247	42%	58%
Hispanic	5,919	44%	56%	6,075	43%	57%	6,517	43%	57%
Non-Resident Alien	2,041	45%	55%	1,688	46%	54%	1,255	44%	56%
American Indian	1,468	44%	56%	1,495	46%	54%	1,140	45%	55%
Asian or Pacific Islander	7,365	48%	52%	7,334	47%	53%	7,925	47%	53%
All	150,000	41%	59%	152,249	41%	59%	152,317	40%	60%

Source. National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.

Likewise, African-American men are among the lowest ethnic/gender groups in the VCCS relative to transfer to 4-year institutions. Data from the 1999, 2000, and 2001 cohorts of first-time, full-time degree or certificate seeking students show that African-American males are consistently among the lowest ethnic/gender groups relative to transfer. Tables 1.5 and 1.6, respectively, present VCCS graduation rates within 150% of anticipated program completion and transfer rates by gender and ethnic group for fall 1999, 2000, and 2001 full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students.

In 2003, the VCCS developed and adopted a body of strategic goals under the banner of *Dateline 2009*. These goals were implemented to "propel Virginia community colleges forward, creating more opportunities for Virginians and creating the economic vitality and skilled workforce Virginia needs (VCCS, 2008)." Three of the *Dateline 2009* goals target Virginia community college enrollment and persistence and are directly impacted by the previously documented low enrollment and persistence rates of African-American male students. These goals include:

1. Serve at least 16,000 new students.

2. Rank in the top ten percent of the nation's community college systems in rates of student graduation, retention, and job placement.
3. Triple the number of graduates who successfully transfer to four-year institutions.

Table 1.5

VCCS Graduation Rates by Gender and Racial/Ethnic Status

Ethnicity	1999 Cohort		2000 Cohort		2001 Cohort	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
African-American	5%	8%	5%	7%	4%	7%
White	14%	18%	13%	19%	15%	16%
Hispanic	6%	11%	9%	11%	5%	9%
Non-Resident Alien	7%	18%	5%	13%	7%	18%
American Indian	6%	11%	8%	7%	3%	13%
Asian or Pacific Islander	6%	12%	9%	14%	12%	22%
All	12%	15%	11%	15%	13%	14%

Note. Graduation rates for degree and certificate seeking adjusted cohorts within 150% of normal program time.

Source. National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.

Table 1.6

VCCS Transfer Rates by Gender and Racial/Ethnic Status

Ethnicity	1999 Cohort		2000 Cohort		2001 Cohort	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
African-American	7%	9%	10%	7%	7%	8%
White	13%	12%	14%	11%	12%	12%
Hispanic	12%	10%	6%	8%	14%	5%
Non-Resident Alien	7%	6%	3%	7%	8%	2%
American Indian	13%	4%	6%	7%	13%	3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	10%	14%	13%	8%	13%	16%
All	12%	11%	12%	10%	12%	10%

Note. Transfer rates for degree and certificate seeking adjusted cohorts into 4-year institutions within 150% of normal program time.

Source. National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.

Social and Economic Implications

The low enrollment and persistence rates of African-American males in Virginia community colleges is particularly distressing given the relationship between

educational attainment and many of the social and economic problems associated with Black males. Cuyjet (2006) suggests that the disproportion of any one subgroup of the American population in any particular demographic component has sweeping effects on the society as a whole. To illustrate, Cuyjet points to how the disproportion of African-American families concentrated in the bottom economic quartile sheds racial overtones across almost all federal and state political, economic, and social policies.

Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Hagedorn (1999) suggest that participation in higher education may serve to counter many of these social and economic troubles. They contend that:

Benefits associated with a college degree are multiple. From a societal standpoint, a college graduate is far less likely to commit a crime and approximately 30% less likely to be unemployed compared to a student who has simply earned a high school diploma. . . . Moreover, earning a college degree is known to produce greater gains in occupational prestige and economic returns as compared to simply attaining a high school diploma. (p. 1)

The over-representation of African-American males involved in the criminal justice system has been well

documented (Kunjufu, 2001; Mauer, 1999). Mauer reports that, while African-Americans constitute about 13 percent of the general U.S. population, forty-nine percent of prison inmates nationally are African-American.

Additionally, he indicates that nearly one in three African-American males between the ages of 20 and 29 is either in prison or jail, or on probation or parole.

According to Kunjufu, over the past decade, for every one African-American male enrolled in college, six are added to the prison and jail population.

At the same time, Harlow's (2003) examination of state prisoners' education levels shows that twice as many males in the general population have high school diplomas than their inmate counterparts and four times as many have attended some college or other postsecondary training. Additionally, of African-American males who graduated from high school and went on to attend college, only five percent were incarcerated in 2000 (Raphael, 2004).

In 2003, 24.4% of African-Americans were reported below the official poverty threshold, a rate higher than any other racial group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). The poverty rate for African-Americans was consistently highest regardless of family or household type, including

households headed by married couples and those headed by single men.

A U.S. Census Bureau Report issued in 2002 validates the generally accepted correlation between educational attainment and income. According to the Census Bureau Report, between 1997 and 1999, the average full-time, year-round worker with only a high school diploma earned \$30,400, compared to \$38,200 for the worker with an associate's degree and \$52,200 for the worker with a bachelor's degree.

The implications for African-American male participation in higher education are underscored when potential lifetime earnings are estimated for both men and African-Americans. Though on average, lifetime earnings are lower for African-Americans than for white Americans of the same educational level, earnings for African-Americans increase substantially with each level of educational attainment (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). African-American workers with a high school diploma can expect to earn \$1 million during their work-life, increasing to \$1.4 million with an associate's degree, and \$1.7 million with a bachelor's degree.

While the educational gap between men and women in the general population has narrowed sharply over the past 25

years, men continue to earn more at each educational level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). On average, a man with a high school diploma will earn about \$1.4 million over his lifetime. This compares with \$1.8 million for men completing an associate's degree and \$2.5 million for men with a bachelor's degree. Women at the same educational levels can expect to earn considerably less. Women completing high school will earn an average of \$1 million, while women with associate's and bachelor's degrees will earn \$1.3.

The previously documented relationship between educational attainment and incarceration rates and projected lifetime earnings support the assertion that many of the social ills prevalent among African-American males "could be alleviated and reduced with larger scale, more focused efforts in postsecondary education" (Hagedorn, Maxwell, and Hampton, 2002).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the

enrollment and persistence of African-American males. The study examined the relationship of identified institutional characteristics and practices with the enrollment and persistence rates of African-American males at Virginia community colleges. The author chose to highlight institutional commitment to the needs of African-American male students by examining institutional characteristics and practices as perceived by college academic and student development leaders.

Research Questions

The proposed study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?
2. Given the likely differences in the persistence rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the persistence of

African-American males at Virginia Community
College System member schools?

Overview of Methodology

The study was conducted using a mixed methods design, providing a more complete analysis of the research questions than could have been accomplished using either quantitative or qualitative analysis alone.

The quantitative phase utilized descriptive analysis of existing data to identify differences in African-American male enrollment and persistence at VCCS colleges. Correlation analysis using both existing data and data reported through a survey of VCCS academic and student development administrators was conducted to ascertain the degree of linear relationship between enrollment and persistence of African-American males and predictor variables identified in the literature. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to identify those characteristics and practices that best predict African-American male enrollment and persistence, and summarize the interrelationships between the set of predictor variables and African-American male enrollment and persistence.

The qualitative phase of the study utilized constant comparative data analysis of participant responses to open-ended survey questions along with an institutional case

study of one Virginia community college found to be among the leaders in both African-American male enrollment and persistence to explain and add context to the results obtained in the quantitative phase.

Significance of Study

Despite the comparatively low enrollment and persistence rates of African-American male students in community colleges, and the assumption that American community colleges are best positioned to implement policies and initiatives to address this concern, there is a pronounced scarcity of literature and research specifically targeting African-American men and their enrollment in community colleges. Nora (1996) reports that a review of existing research reveals no theoretically based studies focusing exclusively on African-American male community college students. As such, this study was needed to fill, in part, a void in the research through analysis of institutional factors that promote the enrollment and persistence of African-American males in community colleges.

Results of this study contribute to the documentation of institutional characteristics and practices associated with high enrollment and persistence of this specific population within the Virginia Community College System.

Key study findings have prompted a number of policy recommendations regarding institutional characteristics and their relationship with African-American male enrollment and persistence. These findings provide valuable information to community college leaders and others who are concerned about and committed to addressing the alarmingly low rates of participation and persistence among African-American male college students.

Limitations and Delimitations

The following limitations and delimitations are applicable to this study.

1. Only data for first-time, full-time, degree or certificate-seeking African-American male students attending VCCS institutions was used in determining college persistence rates.
2. All existing and new data used in the study was self-reported.
3. The study did not take into account possible differences between campuses of multi-campus institutions.
4. The study was not designed to discover or analyze a cause and effect relationship between institutional characteristics and the enrollment and persistence of African-American males.

5. The conclusions of this study are not necessarily generalizable to other institutions, community college systems, or populations.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions are used.

1. Adjusted Cohort - A specific group of students established for tracking purposes minus any allowable exclusions, including students who died or were totally and permanently disabled; those who left school to serve in the armed forces; those who left to serve with a foreign aid service of the federal government, such as the Peace Corps; and those who left to serve on official church mission (NCES, n.d.)
2. African-American or Black - Person with origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa (NCES)
3. American Indian/Alaskan Native - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community attachment (NCES)

4. Asian or Pacific Islander - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and Pacific Islands. This includes people from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, American Samoa, India, and Vietnam (NCES)
5. Cohort - A specific group of students established for tracking purposes
6. Degree or Program Completion - achievement of all requirements to receive a degree, diploma, or certificate
7. Enrollment - Students registered for one or more credit courses during a given semester or session
8. Hispanic - Person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (NCES)
9. Minority - Racial/ethnic description that includes people identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native
10. Persistence - enrollment through program or degree completion, or transfer to a four-year institution

11. Transfer - moving enrollment from the community college into a four-year institution of higher education
12. White - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (NCES)

Organization of the Dissertation

This study includes five chapters. Chapter I contains the introduction, background, statement of the problem, and the purpose, significance, description, and limitations of the proposed study. Chapter II is a review of the literature, including: research on the characteristics of African-American male students; enrollment and persistence theory; the role of institutional characteristics; and suggested enrollment and persistence interventions. Chapter III describes the methodology which incorporated a sequential explanatory mixed methods design. Data collected for this study is presented and examined in Chapter IV. Chapter V presents an overview of the study, a summary of data previously presented including conclusions, key findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review examines a variety of previous studies, grouped into four major categories, which provide both a theoretical and a practical framework for the current study. First, the literature describes the characteristics of African-American male students that both contribute to and detract from their participation and success in higher education. Second, the literature examines the impact and importance of community college institutional characteristics as factors contributing to student success. Third, the literature provides a theoretical foundation for the study of college enrollment and persistence at both community colleges and 4-year institutions. Finally, from these three bodies of research, institutional characteristics and practices can be identified as possibly contributing to the enrollment and success of African-American male students in community colleges.

African-American Male Students

Cuyjet (1997) suggests that the disproportionately low representation of African-American men on America's college campuses can be attributed to a number of factors which can be sorted into two categories: those preventing African-American males from enrolling in college in the first

place, and those leaving them underprepared when they do enroll and contribute to the high rate of attrition. Among the first group, he includes high rates of incarceration, disproportionate high school dropout rates, a high rate of homicide, and serious health problems. Among the barriers faced by African-American men who do make it to college, Cuyjet includes: poor academic preparation, generally the result attending poorer elementary and secondary schools; lowered expectations of peers and significant adults toward academic achievement; peer pressure to disdain academic accomplishment; financial hardship; and lack of appropriate role models.

These observations are supported and expanded by the Joint Subcommittee of the Virginia General Assembly Studying the Status and Needs of African-American Males in Virginia (1998). The Subcommittee's findings indicate that African-American male students are often urged to pursue non-college preparatory programs, tracked into programs of study taught by the least capable teachers, and stigmatized by low ability group assignment. The Subcommittee further found that a disproportionately low number of African-American male students are represented in advanced placement, honor, and accelerated courses, gifted and talented programs, and regional Governor's Schools which

provide learning experiences and opportunities to prepare them for college.

In a longitudinal study of African-American male students attending a large, suburban community college, Hagedorn, Maxwell, and Hampton (2002) identified several background and academic factors that predict retention. Among those students more likely to persist were men who were younger, attended on a full-time basis, were certain of their major, and expressed a high degree of importance to self in completing college. Other factors found to support persistence were grade point average, number of course credit hours earned, extent of high school preparation, and perceptions of the need for assistance. Among factors negatively correlated with persistence were inaccurate self-assessment of skills and dropping of courses.

A similar study prompted by the low level of persistence of African-American male students at a large, non-residential, urban community college examined a number of background, academic, and environmental variables previously identified as having a possible relationship to the persistence of college students (Mason, 1998). Variables considered were: background variables including age, enrollment status, educational goals, and high school

performance; academic variables including study habits, academic advising, absenteeism, major certainty, and course availability; and environmental variables including finances, employment, outside encouragement, family responsibility, and opportunity to transfer. Using a causal/comparative design, Mason found that variables related to educational goals, outside encouragement, and utility have a significant influence on African-American male student persistence. The clearer students were about what they wanted to achieve, coupled with greater depth of goal internalization, directly correlated with several educational variables including lower absenteeism, longer hours of study, and certainty of major, which lead to increased persistence. Persistence was also enhanced by greater student support from outside the college, usually by a mother, girlfriend, or wife; and by a student's strong belief that the educational program would benefit his future.

Mason's (1998) study also led to the identification of a new factor related to African-American male persistence characterized as the "helplessness/hopelessness factor." This "helplessness/hopelessness factor" reflects the belief of many African-American male students that no matter what they do or achieve, they will not get a good job or be but

so successful in life. The factor was found to be negatively correlated with student persistence.

Institutional Characteristics

Despite the findings of previously discussed studies, others suggest that student characteristics generally, and African-American male student characteristics specifically, cannot alone predict enrollment and persistence in higher education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Bush, 2004; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzel, & Leinbach, 2005). Rather, these researchers suggest that a variety of institutional characteristics may also contribute to student success, particularly for low-income and minority community college students.

Much of the contemporary research regarding institutional characteristics and their relationship to student success is built upon the findings of Pascarella and Terenzini (1991). Their examination of the influences of college attendance on students found that institutional characteristics encouraging social integration, such as smaller college size, more full-time students, and residential campuses, positively impact student success at four-year colleges. Pascarella and Terenzini also reported that black students attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are more likely to persist toward

graduation than black students enrolling in predominantly white colleges. They theorized that black students enrolled in HBCUs experience higher levels of social integration than in white institutions. Pascarella and Terenzini further hypothesized that attendance at single-sex institutions similarly impacts the persistence and success of female students, although their research indicated that the extent of this effect is relatively small. Finally, Pascarella and Terenzini noted that other institutional factors such as selectivity and instructional expenditures also impact student persistence.

Three more recent studies have attempted to analyze the relationship between institutional characteristics and persistence of community college students, and offer insight into this issue as it relates to African-American males.

Using data from 386 community colleges, Habley and McClanahan (2004) examined the association between student outcome measures of retention and graduation, and certain institutional practices. Colleges were identified as high or low performing based on first-to-second year retention rates and three-year graduation rates. Colleges were given a list of 82 retention practices and asked to identify practices used at their respective colleges. Colleges were

also asked to evaluate each practice as to whether it made a "major," "moderate," or "no" contribution to retention. Practices that were reported to have more than a "moderate" impact on retention and had a significantly higher incidence of use at high-performing colleges were identified as successful. Among the list of successful practices were advising interventions for special student populations and programs for racial and/or ethnic minority students. Other successful practices included learning communities and mathematics, reading, writing, and foreign language centers.

The Habley and McClanahan (2004) study is remarkable in that it uses a large sample of community colleges and examines a relatively large number of institutional practices. It fails, however, to control for any other institutional characteristics, such as institution size, location, or student diversity. Additionally, Habley and McClanahan examine the practices independently, making it difficult to determine if each practice is effective on its own or in combination with other factors.

Bailey et al. (2005) examined institutional characteristics that affect community college student success, particularly for low-income and minority students, using both national institutional and individual student

data. The researchers developed a model of institutional graduation rate determinants using 3-year graduation rates published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). They used measures of institutional characteristics provided by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as independent variables. Additionally, Bailey et al. were able to control for individual student characteristics by using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 to analyze student probability of program completion or transfer, and linking institutional characteristics from IPEDS to the individual student data.

While acknowledging that individual student characteristics appear to be more reliable determinants of retention and graduation than institutional variables, Bailey et al. (2005) identified several community college characteristics that consistently impact student outcomes. First, they found institution size to be negatively correlated with successful student outcomes, and suggest that higher completion rates at smaller community colleges may be related to the more personalized environment that such institutions can provide. Second, they found that a larger percentage of minority students at an institution is associated with lower graduation rates even after

controlling for the race of individual students. All students, not just minorities, tend to graduate at lower rates when they attend community colleges with high minority enrollment. Additionally, Bailey et al. found that higher percentages of both part-time students and part-time faculty correlate with lower graduation rates, and that rates of instructional and student service expenditures have positive impacts on graduation rates. Finally, Bailey et al. found that the state in which a college is located has a significant impact on graduation rates, suggesting that state policies and how they play out at individual institutions are an important factor in determining student outcomes.

Edward Bush (2004) looked specifically at the effects of community college institutional factors on the academic achievement of African-American male students as part of a case study examining African-American male student experiences at a suburban, multi-campus community college in southern California. Using student outcome data from the California Community College information management system and results from a recent student success survey, Bush examined the relationship between both institutional and non-institutional variables on student success as measured by grade point average, persistence, transfer, and degree

attainment. Institutional variables used in the analysis included (1) informal and formal faculty interactions, (2) campus involvement, (3) campus climate, and (4) peer interaction. Non-institutional variables included (1) parents education, (2) academic preparation, (3) family support, and (4) study habits.

Using a stepwise regression model, Bush's (2004) analysis identified faculty interaction as a strong predictor of African-American male grade point average, persistence, and transfer. Likewise, campus climate was found to predict the grade point average, degree attainment, and transfer of African-American males. Peer interaction was found to be a significant predictor of transfer; while African-American male involvement on campus was not found to be a predictor of any of the outcome measures. Overall, Bush found that the institutional variables examined in this study emerged as being better able to predict academic success of African-American male students than the non-institutional factors. These findings are contrary to previously cited research focused on student characteristics and serve to validate the intent of the current study. According to Bush, these findings "lend further support to the emerging research that institutional factors play a prominent role in the academic success of

African-American males (p. 104).” He further suggests that community colleges create and foster institutional environments that are supportive of the success of African-American males if they want to impact significantly the academic achievement of this population.

Enrollment Theory and Research

For the past several decades, America’s community colleges have provided a significant opportunity for African-American men to gain access to higher education. At the same time, there is immense concern about the low rates of African-American male enrollment in community colleges and their subsequent retention and graduation rates (Hrabowski, Maton, & Greif, 1998; Cross & Slater, 2000). Most of the literature, however, on college enrollment choice has focused on majority students attending 4-year colleges and universities. In these studies, minority students have not been routinely disaggregated and ethnicity has been treated as one of several independent variables (Bateman & Hossler, 1996; Kern, 2000). Additionally, very little research has been conducted on why students choose to attend 2-year colleges (Somers, Haines, & Keene, 2006).

Three recent studies have, however, attempted to examine the phenomenon of college choice as it relates to

community colleges. Central to each of these studies is the influence of price and location on the decision to attend community college (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Stokes & Somers, 2004; Somers et al., 2006).

Bers and Galowich (2002) examined the role that parents play in college choice for students attending an affluent suburban community college. The researchers interviewed parents of students who had graduated from high school and enrolled in the community college the previous year and found that college cost was the primary concern for parents across all socioeconomic levels. Over half of the parents indicated that they had initiated consideration of community college attendance in response to their children's uncertainties about college and their own desire to maintain a high level of involvement in their children's postsecondary education experience.

Stokes and Somers (2004) compared 2-year college students with students attending 4-year colleges using the Beginning Postsecondary Student Survey. They found 2-year college students more likely to have lower academic achievement, work outside the college, and be financially independent. Additionally, 2-year college students were found to be very price conscious and more responsive to costs than to availability of financial aid.

Somers et al. (2006) conducted focus groups involving over 200 community college students that led to the development of a preliminary model of 2-year college choice based on ten factors categorized into three areas: aspirations and encouragement, institutional characteristics, and finances. The factors of aspiration and encouragement consist of both positive and negative supports for attending a 2-year college including encouragement from family, information and encouragement from friends, desire for education and training, and determination to "beat the odds." The institutional characteristics found to influence community college choice include location, access, academic programs, and support services. College location appeared to be equally important to students in both urban and rural communities. Ease of access encompassed open admission policies, expedited admission and advising, and flexible scheduling, along with access to financial aid. The final category, finances, include both the cost of the 2-year college and the availability of financial aid, with college cost being described as important by virtually every student participating in the study.

Two additional studies of note have examined variations in college enrollment choice among students of

different ethnic/racial groups (Bateman & Hossler, 1996; Perna, 2000). Both suggest that variables related to the decision of African-Americans to attend college may differ from those of white students, and that different intervention strategies may be needed to influence college enrollment of African-Americans than those that are used for whites. Further, Bateman and Hossler found differences in the factors related to postsecondary enrollment between African-American males and females and suggest differential intervention strategies for these groups as well.

Perna (2000) compared the college enrollment decisions of African-Americans, Hispanics, and whites using an econometric model expanded to include social and cultural measures. Key among her findings were several factors that may serve to limit African-American enrollment in postsecondary education. Perna suggests that while affirmative action programs may have served to heighten interest in college among African-Americans, African-Americans have less access to information and knowledge about how to actually acquire a college education and achieve their educational goals than their white and Hispanic counterparts. Perna's study also found academic achievement to be an important predictor of college enrollment and illustrates the continued need to improve

pre-college academic achievement among African-Americans as a step toward postsecondary enrollment. Additionally, Perna found that, while grants and scholarships increase the likelihood of college enrollment across all three groups, there is a negative relationship between loans and college enrollment among African-Americans. She suggests that this relationship may be the result of inadequate knowledge about the availability of financial aid and/or an aversion to borrowing based on personal or family history.

Using survey data from nearly 3,000 Indiana high school students, Bateman and Hossler (1996) examined the development of postsecondary education plans among African-American and white students focusing on factors previously thought to positively influence such plans. The Bateman and Hossler study is particularly pertinent since it not only studied the extent to which these variables are good predictors of the postsecondary education plans for African-American and white students, but also explored the power of these variables as predictors of the postsecondary plans of males and females within each ethnic group.

Results indicate that the variables previously found to impact students' decision to continue education beyond high school (family income, parent education levels, academic ability, parental encouragement, and involvement

in high school activities) have more predictive power for whites than for African-Americans and, subsequently, there is considerably less understanding about the development of educational plans among African-Americans when compared to white students. Additionally, Bateman and Hossler (1996) found differences in the factors that impact postsecondary plans for African-American males and females. Specifically, of the five variables included in the study, only parent expectations was found to be powerful as a predictor of both African-American male and female postsecondary educational plans. For African-American females, mother's educational level was also found to positively impact the development of postsecondary plans; while academic ability as measured by grade point average was the only other factor in the study found to be significant for African-American male students.

Retention Theory and Research

Student retention is also an important issue in community college's today in light of their historical mission of access and affordability, and calls for greater accountability and declining state funding (Summers, 2003). Community colleges are challenged, however, in how to define student retention. Cohen and Brawer (2003) suggest that students attend community colleges for many reasons

including the acquisition of job entry and upgrade skills, and fulfillment of personal interests. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2003), however, indicates that 9 of 10 community college students enroll intending to obtain a degree or certificate, or transfer to a senior institution. The Southern Regional Education Board (2003) found that of the first-time, full-time community college students who intended to earn a certificate or degree, 32% failed to return for their second year of community college or transfer to another institution.

Much of the current research on student retention is based on the conceptual model of retention drawn from the previous literature on postsecondary student attrition by Vincent Tinto (1975). Tinto's model suggests that college students enter institutions of higher education with varied backgrounds and attributes which impact the students' entering levels of goal and institutional commitment. Over time, individual student goals and commitments interact, both academically and socially, with the college environment, resulting in changes to student goals and commitments. Tinto stated that positive, integrative experiences contribute to higher levels of institutional commitment and lead to student retention. Lower levels of

involvement serve to weaken goals and commitment, leading to departure from college.

Tinto's model, while originally based on studies involving traditional age students at 4-year institutions, has been revisited and revised to include non-traditional students and community colleges (Tinto, 1997). His mixed method study of the efforts of one community college to enhance student persistence through the use of learning communities and collaborative learning strategies found that these experiences bond students to the social communities of the college while engaging them in the academic life of the institution. Tinto's study suggests that these experiences are particularly important to the promotion of student involvement, interaction, and persistence for community college students in non-residential settings who generally must attend to multiple responsibilities outside of college.

Other research (Burnett, 1996; Napoli, 1996; Ross, 1992), however, has been inconclusive regarding the role of social and academic integration relative to community college retention. Ross, for example, in an examination of the impact of academic and social integration on students at a 2-year residential college, found that social integration had a positive effect on persistence only for

residential students and those considered not to be academically at-risk. Conversely, social integration had a negative impact on the persistence rates of academically at-risk students. Academic integration was found to have a greater effect for commuting and at-risk students. Consequently, Ross recommended that these students concentrate on academics during the first year of college while delaying social involvement until they are more academically integrated.

Napoli and Wortman (1998), attempting to validate Tinto's (1975) model in a community college setting by examining the relationship between a variety of traditional risk factors and psychosocial measures on student persistence, found that both social and academic integration were important factors in student decisions to remain in or withdraw from college. These findings confirm the generalizability of Tinto's model of college retention to 2-year college populations.

In an examination of the effects of social integration as defined by student involvement in co-curricular activities on full-time freshman students at a 2-year California institution, Burnett (1996) found student retention unrelated to participation in co-curricular activities. Burnett did find, however, that students who

participate in co-curricular activities tended to exhibit higher academic performance and appeared to be more closely connected to the institution than students who did not.

Borglum and Kubala (2000) examined the relationship between community college academic and social integration measures, along with student performance on a college placement test, and student withdrawal rates at a large, multi-campus community college. They found that students who felt academically integrated also felt socially integrated and suggested one reason for this finding could be that most community college students who commute, attend part-time, work, and have families, "have little or no desire to take part in extra-curricular activities and feel they are getting all of the social integration they need" in the classroom (p. 574-575). Additionally, Borglum and Kubala found no correlation between academic and social integration and student withdrawal rates, although they admit this finding could be due to the fact that second-semester students who may have already been through a "weeding out process" were used in this study (p. 575). What they did find was that background skills and abilities of entering community college students had a significant relationship with withdrawal. They suggested that weak academic backgrounds and other academic variables may be

too much for efforts aimed at enhancing social and academic integration to overcome.

This suggestion is supported by Summers' (2000) comprehensive investigation of theoretical models and previous research intended to explain and predict community college student attrition. Summers found significant differences between the background and academic characteristics of students who persisted compared to students who dropped out. According to Summers, white students who were not eligible for financial aid and were enrolled in transfer majors were most likely to persist. The only characteristic not found by Summers to have any statistically significant difference for attrition was student gender. Additionally, remarkable relationships were found between student enrollment patterns and persistence. For example, Summers reported that the earlier a student registered, the fewer changes a student made to his or her schedule, and the fewer courses dropped during the semester all related positively to retention. Summers also reported that both higher fall semester grade point average and higher numbers of credits earned during fall semester increase the odds of subsequent spring semester enrollment.

Recruitment and Retention Policies and Practices

The study of African-American male student characteristics, along with theory and research related to community college student enrollment, retention, and persistence, have led to an abundance of institutional practice and policy recommendations that may enhance both the enrollment and retention of African-American male community college students.

Bourdon and Carducci's (2002) examination of research on community college issues including student achievement and persistence, and related intervention strategies, has resulted in the delineation of 27 findings divided into nine topics. These topics include: administration and governance, faculty, student achievement and persistence, curriculum and instruction, enrollment management, school/business relationships and partnerships, student service and intervention programs, vocational education, and community college life. Some of the findings of particular interest to this study indicate that: (1) community college student success is inextricably linked to great teaching; (2) students who receive peer mentoring get higher grades and re-enroll and graduate at higher rates; (3) increasing the applicability of curriculum to real life increases community college student retention; (4)

instruction in basic skills is most effective when faculty are well trained and multiple instructional strategies are used; (5) articulation between high schools and community colleges better prepares students to attend college, increases retention rates, and eases the transition from high school to college; (6) quality academic advising increases retention, graduation, and transfer rates, especially for at risk students; (7) community college students involved in learning communities earn higher grades and persist at higher rates; and (8) minority student persistence rates improve when intervention programs are implemented.

Many of these findings are supported by the University System of Georgia's African-American Male Initiative (2003) which examined factors contributing to low enrollment and persistence rates of African-American men from an institutional perspective, preferring not to dwell on those factors over which higher education institutions have little control. Its findings concluded that very few college programs exist specifically to recruit, enroll, and retain African-American male students. Key institutional barriers identified by the Georgia Initiative include: (1) lack of available and inadequate orientation, mentoring and tutoring programs; (2) inadequate and inappropriate

academic advising and career counseling; (3) lack of relevance, focus, and connectedness of institutional retention efforts; (4) inadequate role of faculty in retention efforts; (5) lack of an adequate structure for peer support; (6) lack of institutional commitment to address needs of African-American male students; and (7) lack of institutional priority on retention of African-American males.

Numerous researchers, some already included in this review, have suggested specific institutional policies and interventions that support the findings of Bourdon and Carducci (2002) and fill the voids identified by the University System of Georgia (2003). Other researchers not previously cited include: Beatty-Guenter (1994) whose synthesis of literature about retention programs in community colleges led to a typology of retention strategies; Perez (1998) who expanded the efforts of Beatty-Guenter to include implications for under-represented and at-risk students; Dawson-Threat (1997), developer of a model for enhancement of in-class experiences for African-American male college students; and Lavant and Anderson (1997) who have provided best practices for implementation of mentoring programs as an intervention

strategy to enhance retention and success for African-American male students.

Others include: Lundberg (2004) whose study of both background and institutional variables identified quality relationships with faculty as a predictor of retention across all ethnic/racial groups; Sutton and Terrell (1997) who examined African-American male perceptions of leadership and the availability of leadership opportunities on college campuses; Swail and Holmes (2000), developers of a persistence model for minority students in science, mathematics, and engineering programs; and Tovar and Simon (2003) who examined the impact of participation in extended college orientation on student academic success and retention.

A compilation of the institutional policies, practices, and interventions recommended by these researchers is presented in Table 2.1.

Summary

National data indicate that an alarmingly low number of African-American males are enrolling in America's colleges and universities. Equally troubling is the very low number of those entering who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to other institutions. The presence of

Table 2.1

Intervention Policies and Practices

Policies and Practices	Researchers
Research and strategic planning toward the implementation of program efforts to positively impact the experience, retention, and graduation of African-American males	Mason, 1998; University System of Georgia, 2003
The employment of African-American male faculty, counselors, and staff or others who are interested in the success of African-American male students	Perez, 1998; Woodlief & Olsen, 2002
Faculty and staff development that highlights the socioeconomic, educational, and developmental barriers to the persistence of African-American males, defines the role of faculty/staff in addressing student needs, and assists teachers in the use of interactive teaching strategies	Mason; Swail & Holmes, 2000; Tovar & Simon, 2003; Woodlief & Olsen
Targeting programs to move African-American males toward the college preparatory curriculum at an early age and providing support services for African-American male students throughout the elementary and secondary pipeline	Swail & Holmes; University System of Georgia
The implementation of programs to establish immediate and frequent connection between college personnel and students at the moment they arrive on campus	Lavant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997; Lundberg, 2004; Swail & Holmes; Tovar & Simon

Table 2.1 cont.

Policies and Practices	Researchers
The establishment of African-American male learning communities and cohorts, and the inclusion of significant contributions made by Africans and African-Americans in all areas of academic disciplines	Beatty-Guentter, 1994
Creating campus and classroom environments that facilitate and promote the understanding of difference and provide a safe place for the expression of personal experience and the opportunity to explore issues related to African-American manhood	Dawson-Threat, 1997; Swail & Holmes; Woodlief & Olsen
The implementation of college mentoring and other targeted programs that assist African-American males in integrating into the mainstream of college life and provide support necessary to overcome many of the barriers that inhibit persistence	Hagedorn, et al., 2002; Lavant, et al.; Swail & Holmes; Woodlief & Olsen
Coordinated advising that takes into account placement test scores, choice of major, and enrollment status, along with other services that assist students with study habits and skills, time management, library usage, learning technology, academic assistance, goal commitment, financial aid and management, career development, job placement, and transfer	Hagedorn et al.; Mason; Swail & Holmes; Tovar & Simon; Woodlief & Olsen
The establishment and support of minority student organizations that provide opportunities for African-American males to integrate into the college community and develop leadership skills and experience	Sutton & Terrell, 1997

Table 2.1 cont.

Policies and Practices	Researchers
Increased collaboration with other higher education institutions, local school divisions, and religious, civic, and community organizations which target African-American males and their families	Mason; Swail & Holmes; University System of Georgia

African-American males on college campuses has been described as "disturbingly low" and "fragile" (Cuyjet, 1997).

Much of the existing research on college enrollment has focused on majority students attending 4-year institutions and has failed to disaggregate minority students or examine issues related to 2-year college choice (Bateman & Hossler, 1996; Kern, 2000; Somers, et al., 2006). Recent studies , however, have begun to look at college choice as it relates to community colleges (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Stokes & Somers, 2004; Summers et al., 2006), and variations in college choice of different ethnic/racial groups (Bateman & Hossler, 1996; Perna, 2000). These studies suggest significant differences in the factors contributing to college enrollment by 2-year college students and African-American students.

Likewise, the literature related to student retention reflects the experiences of majority culture students attending residential 4-year colleges and universities (Tinto, 1975). Studies that have examined Tinto's model in community college settings have been inconclusive (Borglum & Kubala, 2000; Burnett, 1996; Napoli, 1996; Ross, 1992; Tinto, 1997). The studies that have targeted African-American male students have tended to examine student characteristics contributing to enrollment and persistence, and have primarily been limited to students attending a single institution (Hagedorn et al., 2002; Mason, 1998). Some researchers suggest that student characteristics alone cannot predict enrollment and persistence in higher education, and that institutional characteristics may also contribute to successful college participation, particularly for low income and minority college students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Bush, 2004; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzel, & Leinbach, 2005).

From the literature review, a number of institutional characteristics can be identified that may contribute to community college student enrollment and persistence in general. Additionally, institutional characteristics, policies, and practices, can be identified that may

contribute to the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students in particular.

The major studies cited in this review along with key findings pertinent to this study are listed in Table 2.2.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. Results of this study contribute to the documentation of characteristics and practices associated with high enrollment and persistence of this specific population within the VCCS, and provide valuable information to community college leaders and others involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of efforts to support this population.

Table 2.2

Summary of Literature Review

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzel & Leinbach (2005)	2-year	A variety of measures of institutional characteristics	(1) institutional graduation rates (2) individual student outcomes	National cohort of students completing high school in 1992	National Educational Longitudinal Study Of 1988 (NELS:88); National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Student Right-to-Know (SRK) 3-year graduation rates; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)	Several community college institutional characteristics exhibited impacts on student outcomes
Bateman & Hossler (1996)	2-year & 4-year	(1) Parents' expectations (2) Student ability (3) parents' income (4) mother's educational level (5) father's educational level (6) involvement in school activities	Student's reported post- secondary plans	2,930 high school students selected by cluster design to assure adequate numbers of students of color, all SES levels, and urban and rural schools	Survey conducted by the Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center	Variables examined have more predictive power for white students than for black students; differences in the factors that influence aspirations of African-American males and females were indicated

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Beatty- Guentter (1994)	2-year	Synthesis of literature about retention programs in community colleges in attempt to identify commonalities and implications for practice and research				Typology of retention strategies according to purposes of sorting, supporting, and connecting, and transforming
Bers & Galowich (2002)	2-year	Examine the role of parents in student choice to attend community college		225 sets of parents of student who had graduated high school in 2000 and attended a particular suburban community college in fall of 2000.	Researcher designed survey and focus groups	Factors influencing the decision to enroll in community college are primarily related to finances or to students' academic skills and maturity
Borglum & Kubala (2000)	2-year	(1) Academic and social integration (2) Background academic skills	Student withdrawal rates	462 second- semester, degree- seeking community college students	(1) Unnamed survey used to measure satisfaction with academic and social climate of the institution (2) Computer Placement Tests	Students who felt academically integrated also felt socially integrated; no correlation between academic and social integration and withdrawal rates

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Bourdon & Carducci (2002)	2-year	Synthesis of recent literature on community college issues including student achievement and persistence, and student service and intervention programs				27 best practices that include research findings, comments, and references
Burnett (1996)	2-year	Involvement or lack of involvement in co-curricular activities	(1)retention (2)predicted level of achievement (3)endorsement of personal or institutional factors predictive of retention (4)expectations of transfer	709 full-time freshman students attending a single community college	Researcher developed survey and institutional data	Students who participate in co-curricular activities predict higher academic performance and appear to be more closely connected to the school than those who do not.
Bush (2004)	2-year	A variety of institutional and non-institutional variables based on review of literature	(1)graduation rates (2)transfer rates (3)persistence rates (4)GPA	African-American males included in the 1994 cohort of first-time students at an urban community college	Institutional survey and student outcome data	Faculty interaction and campus climate have a stronger relationship with academic success of African-American males than other variables

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Dawson- Threat (1997)	4-year	Synthesis of literature surrounding use of student development theory to enhance learning for African- American male students				Model for enhancement of in-class experiences for African-American male students
Habley & McClanahan (2004)	2-year	Assess the prevalence and impact of institutional interventions on student retention and degree completion		386 two-year public colleges	Survey developed by the ACT Survey Research Department and Office for Enhancement of Educational Practices	Successful retention practices fall into 3 main categories: academic advising; learning support; and assessment
Hagedorn, Maxwell, & Hampton (2002)	2-year	A variety of background and academic variables	Retention	202 African- American community college students	Institutional data	Identified high school grades, age, number of courses, positive view of personal skills, goals, and early identification of major as factors that best predict retention.

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Lavant, Anderson & Tiggs (1997)	4-year	Synthesis of literature surrounding use of mentoring as an intervention strategy to enhance retention and success for African-American male students				Best practices for implementation of mentoring programs
Lundberg (2004)	4-year	A variety of background variables along with 14 other variables designed to measure the frequency and quality of student interaction with faculty	Student learning	4,501 undergrad students; non- white students were oversampled to assure representation of the experiences of students of color	College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)	Identified quality of relationship with faculty as only variable predicting learning for all racial/ethnic groups; African- American and Native American students tend to have high interaction scores, but low perceptions of faculty interactions

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Mason (1998)	2-year	A variety of background, academic, and environmental variables based on extensive literature review	Persistence	93 African-American male first-year college students	Researcher designed survey to obtain both quantitative and quality data, and structured interviews	Identified educational goals, outside encouragement, and utility as major influencers of persistence; identified "helplessness/Hopelessness" factor
Napoli & Wortman (1998)	2-year	A variety of traditional risk factors and a comprehensive set of psychosocial measures	Persistence	1,011 first-time freshmen students enrolled in randomly selected freshmen seminar classes, drawn from a college-wide population of 3,300 first-time, full-time freshmen	Collected at three time intervals over an academic year using institutional data, and a variety of surveys and questionnaires	Confirmed the generalizability of Tinto's model of college retention to 2-year community college populations
Pascarella & Terenzini (1991)	4-year	Review and synthesis of research on the influence of college on students				Report on college influences relative to cognitive development, personal growth, socioeconomic attainment, and quality of life, with implications for institutional practice and public policy

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Perez (1998)	2-year	Expands the efforts of Beatty-Guenter (above) to include implications for under-represented and at-risk students				Typology of retention strategies that includes programs and strategies for under-represented and at-risk students
Perna (2000)	4-year	(1) Direct costs (2) labor market opportunities (3) future benefits (4) financial resources (5) academic ability (6) social and cultural capital	College enrollment decisions	Sample of 11,933 individuals drawn from the national cohort of students completing high school in 1992	National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88)	Highlights the importance of examining differences among racial/ethnic groups in the variables that influence college enrollment decisions
Ross (1992)	2-year	(1) Academic integration (2) Social integration (3) Commuting/residential (4) at-risk/not at-risk	Persistence	846 2-year college students (39.4% of the student population) from a 2-year residential college in Georgia	Institutional database and survey	Positive effect of social integration among residential and not at-risk students; positive effect of academic integration on commuting and at-risk students

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Somers, Haines & Keene (2006)	2-year	Examination of why and how students choose to attend 2-year colleges.		223 2-year college students from 5 different institutions representing both urban and rural areas	Focus groups and researcher designed questionnaire with background and open-ended questions	A model of community college choice with factors in 3 categories: aspirations and encouragement, institutional characteristics, and finance
Stokes & Somers (2004)	2-year	Compared characteristics of 2-year college students with those of 4- year students		National sample of 2-year and 4- year college students	Beginning Postsecondary student survey	Significant differences in areas academic achievement, work outside of college, and financial independence
Summers (2000)	2-year	Examination of theoretical models that explain and predict student attrition, and synthesis of recent literature on enrollment behaviors as predictors of attrition.				Grouping of attrition research variables into several broad categories with suggestions for future research

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Sutton & Terrell (1997)	4-year	Assessment of African-American men's perceptions of leadership and the availability of leadership opportunities on campus		80 students belonging to African-American Greek organizations on two predominately white campuses	Researcher developed questionnaire	Black men perceive the climate within white-dominated groups as less supportive of leadership development, and identify minority support groups as providing the best opportunity for initial leadership experiences.
Swail & Holmes (2000)	4-year	Development of a research based model outlining practices likely to reduce minority student attrition		16 experts in the area of minority student persistence	Researcher designed survey utilizing a two- stage Delphi technique	Research based model focusing on the persistence of minority students in math, science, and engineering programs.
Tinto (1975)	4-year	Synthesis of literature on dropout behavior in higher education				Theoretical model that explains processes of interaction between students and the institution that lead to student attrition

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Tinto (1997)	2-year	Participation in learning community	(1) Involvement in social and academic activities (2) Perceived developmental gains (3) Persistence	121 first-year students enrolled in learning community; 166 first-year students in comparison group	Researcher designed questionnaires and modified Quality of Student Effort Scales.	Learning communities and related classroom experiences contribute to greater involvement in academic and social activities, perceived developmental gains, and persistence
Tovar & Simon (2003)	2-year	Participation in an extended college orientation	(1) GPA (2) Units completed (3) Retention(%) (4) Persistence(%) (5) Academic probation(%) (6) Progress probation(%)	317 first-time freshmen from a randomly selected pool of 1,000 invited to participate; an additional 500 from the same pool were randomly selected as a control group	(1) Researcher designed demographic survey (2) Institutional student outcome data	Program participants demonstrated significant gains over control group in 5 of 6 outcome variables
University System of Georgia (2003)	2-year & 4-year	Identification of barriers faced by African-American males to participation in University System of Georgia schools		700+ African-American males and key influencers	Telephone surveys and focus groups	A list of 15 recommendations centering on increasing access and improving retention of African-American male students

Table 2.2 cont.

Researchers (Date)	Type of Institution	Independent Variables or Research Issues	Dependent Variables	Population/Sample	Instrument/ Data Source	Key Findings
Woodlief & Olsen (2002)	2-year	Identification of learning conditions needed to support students of color and immigrants at California community colleges		363 students and 160 faculty and staff from nine representative campuses; students of color and immigrant students were oversampled	Interviews	Identification of 7 high quality learning conditions and a list of "promising practices" geared toward improving the college experiences of immigrants and students of color

Research Questions

The current study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?
2. Given the likely differences in the persistence rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the persistence of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?

Overview of Proposed Study

The study was conducted using a mixed methods design, providing a more complete analysis of the research questions than could have been accomplished using either quantitative or qualitative analysis alone.

The quantitative phase utilized descriptive analysis of existing data to identify differences in African-

American male enrollment and persistence at VCCS colleges. Correlation analysis using both existing data and data reported through a survey of VCCS academic and student development administrators was conducted to ascertain the degree of linear relationship between enrollment and persistence of African-American males and predictor variables identified in the literature. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to identify those characteristics that best predict African-American male enrollment and persistence by summarizing the interrelationships between the set of predictor variables and African-American male enrollment and persistence.

The qualitative phase of the study employed constant comparative data analysis of participant responses to open-ended survey questions along with a case study of one Virginia community college found to be among the leaders in both African-American male enrollment and persistence to explain and add context to the results obtained in the quantitative phase.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. This study was conducted using a mixed methods design, providing a more complete analysis of the research questions than could have been accomplished using either quantitative or qualitative analysis alone.

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) mixed methods research methodologies provide researchers with techniques that are closer to those actually used in practice. They contend that the pluralism and eclecticism of mixed methods designs often make them superior to monomethod quantitative or qualitative designs by drawing from the strengths of each while mitigating their respective weaknesses. Mixed methods designs help provide a balance between the often competing proponents of quantitative and qualitative methods and produce more complete data necessary to inform theory and practice.

The study incorporated descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses to first examine African-American male enrollment and persistence at Virginia community colleges and, secondly, identify institutional characteristics that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. In addition, the researcher, consistent with the tenets of mixed methods design, examined participant responses to open-ended survey questions to support and clarify the quantitative data. Finally, the author conducted a brief case study of the only Virginia community college found to be among the leaders in both the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students. Selected institutional documents, focused interviews with key college personnel, and student focus group were used to craft the case study.

Design

This mixed methods study followed a sequential explanatory design consisting of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003). The first phase included a combination of descriptive statistics and correlation and multiple regression analyses. A similar design was used by Bush (2004) in his case study examination of the relationship between institutional factors and African-

American male achievement at a California community college. According to Bush (p. 41), this methodology allows the researcher to "describe both the achievement level of African-American males and use multiple regression analyses to observe the effects of institutional variables on African-American male student achievement." Additionally, multiple regression allows for data analyses that may lead to the formulation of theories regarding predictor values and their relationship with achievement (Gall & Borg, 1996).

The second, qualitative, phase of the study utilized constant comparative data analysis of participant responses to open-ended survey questions to explain and add context to the results obtained in the first phase. The constant comparative method allows the researcher to compare observations applicable to various categories and analyze different perspectives on common issues (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman, 2000). The qualitative phase was strengthened by the inclusion of a brief case study of a college identified as a leader in both enrollment and persistence of African-American male students.

The value of this mixed methods design is that the quantitative data and analysis identified differences in enrollment and persistence rates of African-American males

in Virginia community colleges along with factors that best predict their enrollment and persistence. The qualitative data and analysis then served to expand and explain the statistical results and possibly identify practices related to the enrollment and persistence of African-American males.

The methodology selected is appropriate to answer the following research questions:

1. Given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?
2. Given the likely differences in the persistence rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the persistence of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?

Subjects

The subjects of this study included all full-time, degree/certificate-seeking African-American male students enrolling in Virginia Community College System (VCCS) institutions for the first time during the 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 academic years as reported to the National Center for Educational Statistic's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Only full-time, degree seeking students were used in order to facilitate the measurement of persistence, defined for this study as graduation or transfer within 150% of the anticipated program completion time. Likewise, the study did not include students entering Virginia community colleges after the 2002-2003 academic since persistence data based on the above definition was not yet available. Three student cohorts were included in the study as insurance against isolated spikes or dips in enrollment or persistence.

Also participating in this study were senior level (dean, director, associate or assistant vice president, vice president, and provost) academic, student affairs, and enrollment administrators of Virginia community colleges. These participants were purposefully selected because of their anticipated knowledge of college characteristics,

programs, policies and practices relative to student enrollment and retention.

Finally, seven administrators and faculty members, along with five African-American male students at Danville Community College were interviewed as part of a brief case study. The researcher did not use individual names or other identifying information to avoid concerns related to public release or publication of interview responses. Interviewees and focus group participants were purposefully selected to ensure a broad range of perspectives.

Setting

Established in 1966, the Virginia Community College System is a comprehensive, statewide, publicly supported system made up of 23 colleges. During the 2003-2004 academic year, 228,936 individual students were enrolled in credit courses (VCCS, n.d.). The VCCS reports that 63% of Virginians enrolling as undergraduates in public institutions of higher education enroll in a community college. The VCCS awarded in excess of 15,000 degrees, diplomas, and certificates during 2003-2004.

According to the VCCS, 32% of Virginia's community college students are minorities, with African-Americans as the largest minority group comprising 19% of the total

student population. Approximately 40% of Virginia's community college students are male.

Variables

The following is a list of criterion and predictor variables examined in the quantitative phase of this study. The predictor variables are based on institutional characteristics, policies, procedures, and programs associated with African-American male student enrollment and persistence suggested in the literature.

Criterion variables:

1. **African-American male enrollment:** The percent of African-American males residing within a community college's service area who enroll in each of the academic years included in the study.
2. **African-American male persistence:** The percent of African-American males enrolled for the first time as full-time, degree-seeking students in each of the academic years included in the study who earn certificates, diplomas or degrees, or transfer to a 4-year institution within 150% of anticipated completion time.

Predictor Variables

1. **College size:** Full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE).

2. **African-American male enrollment** (used as an independent variable when examining African-American male persistence): The percent of African-American males residing within a community college's service area who enroll in each of the academic years included in the study.
3. **African-American male persistence** (used as an independent variable when examining African-American male enrollment): Percent of African-American males enrolled for the first time as full-time, degree-seeking students in each of the academic years included in the study who earn certificates, diplomas or degrees, or transfer to a 4-year institution within 150% of anticipated completion time.
4. **African-American faculty**: Percent of college faculty and administrators identified as African-American.
5. **Advising**: Degree to which the college's advising model addresses the broad range of academic and personal needs of African-American male students including placement testing, early program placement, early registration, tutoring, goal planning, career development, job placement,

transfer assistance, and instruction in study skills, time management, and information and learning technology.

6. **Enrollment planning:** Degree of planning toward the implementation of program efforts to positively impact the enrollment of African-American males.
7. **Persistence planning:** Degree of planning toward the implementation of program efforts to positively impact the retention, and/or graduation of African-American males.
8. **Enrollment training:** Degree to which staff development activities highlight the socio-economic, educational, and developmental barriers to African-American male enrollment.
9. **Persistence training:** Degree to which staff development activities highlight the socio-economic, educational, and developmental barriers to African-American male persistence.
10. **Use of Data:** Degree to which the college collects and disseminates institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American male students.

11. **Interaction:** Degree to which the college promotes immediate and frequent connection between African-American male students and college personnel.
12. **Curriculum:** Degree to which contributions made by Africans and African-Americans are included in all areas of academic discipline.
13. **Voice:** Degree to which the college promotes the understanding of difference and provides a forum for the expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood.
14. **Mentoring:** Degree to which mentoring or other targeted programs assist African-American male students in integrating into the college community and/or provide support necessary to overcome barriers to persistence.
15. **Minority student organizations:** Degree to which the college promotes and supports minority student organizations that provide opportunities for African-American males to integrate into the college community and develop leadership skills and experience.
16. **Cooperative/collaborative programs:** Degree to which the college cooperates and collaborates with other

higher education institutions, local school divisions, and religious, civic, and community organizations to provide support services to African-American male students in the K-12 pipeline.

17. **Climate:** Degree to which the general social and cultural climate within the college is supportive of African-American male students.

Measures

The measures used in the quantitative phase of this study included existing self-reported data available from the VCCS and National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), and the U.S. Bureau of the Census, along with a researcher designed survey of college administrators.

The VCCS routinely gathers and reports data from member colleges related to student and faculty demographics and student enrollment and persistence. These data were accessed using the VCCS website. Using the NCES' IPEDS, the author was able to access data for institutions included in the study and generate reports using selected variables. The system allowed for the use of descriptive variables including ethnicity and gender, outcome variables including completion and transfer rates, and the designation of comparison groups. A variety of report formats were

available including school rankings based on selected variables (NCES, n.d.). The U.S. Bureau of the Census' Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights provided demographic data by geographic area (U.S. Bureau of the Census, n.d.) and was used along with data from NCES to determine proportional enrollment.

A researcher designed survey was used in this study to collect data on college characteristics not available from previously identified sources. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix B. Like the earlier defined predictor variables, the survey items were based on the institutional characteristics, policies, and practices associated with African-American male enrollment and retention suggested in the literature, enhancing its content validity. The survey included questions in a structured response format using a Likert-type scale. Space was also provided as appropriate for comments from survey respondents. These comments were used to support, validate, and clarify the quantitative survey responses in the qualitative phase of the study.

The survey was subjected to expert review and modifications were made prior to use in the study, further enhancing its content validity. The researcher identified representatives from academia with broad, unique insight on both the target population and the type of information

requested by the survey, but who were not prospective respondents in the proposed study. Experts were asked to examine survey content for importance, meaningfulness, and comprehensiveness of question topics to the purpose of the study, and for appropriate wording and terminology of survey items. A list of the survey reviewers along with their credentials are presented in Appendix C. Ultimately, the survey was distributed to Virginia community college academic and student development administrators to solicit information from each participating VCCS college regarding institutional characteristics, programs, policies, and practices.

Qualitative Data Collection

As stated above, a researcher designed survey was used to collect respondent comments on institutional characteristics and practices associated with African-American male enrollment and persistence at the same time that quantitative data was collected. These comments were grouped and recorded by college. Many survey respondents provided multiple responses to the questions. Each of these responses was recorded separately.

Case study data was collected using institutional documents, focused interviews, and a focus group. Documents used for this purpose included the Danville Community

College website, catalog, student handbook, mission statement, strategic plan, and various program publications. The interviews of administrators and faculty, along with a student focus group were conducted over a two-day period in November of 2008. Each interview and the focus group followed a pre-determined protocol and set of questions (Appendices D and E).

A matrix was developed to guide and document the examination of data used for the case study (Appendix F). The matrix was based on a blueprint from institutional characteristics, policies, practices, and programs associated with student enrollment and retention identified in the quantitative phase of the study. The matrix remained dynamic in its structure, however, allowing for expansion and reorganization of categories and subcategories as required for analysis. This method of examining qualitative data includes both open and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding refers to that part of the analysis that allows data to be grouped together into broad categories. Axial coding refers to the process of developing main categories and their sub-categories.

Procedures

The quantitative phase of this study was conducted by the researcher using data from NCES and the U.S. Bureau of

the Census. Using data from IPEDS described above, the author was able to determine the percent of full-time, degree-seeking African-American male students enrolling for the first time during the 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 academic years who had earned certificates or degrees or transferred to another institution within 150% of anticipated completion time.

IPEDS was also used to ascertain the total number of African-American male students enrolled during each of the academic years included in the study. These numbers were used with data from the Bureau of the Census to determine a proportional rate of African-American male student enrollment for each institution. This information was used to rank Virginia community colleges according to enrollment of African-American male students.

Using data from the academic years included in the study, mean persistence and enrollments rates were calculated for each of the VCCS member colleges. SPSS software was used to accomplish this and subsequent statistical analyses. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the degree of linear relationship between enrollment and persistence of African-American males in Virginia community colleges.

Data for the predictor variables of college size and African-American faculty were also available from IPEDS. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the degree of linear relationship between enrollment and persistence of African-American males and college size and African-American faculty.

Data gathered through the previously mentioned researcher-developed survey was used to analyze the remaining variables. Prior to distribution of the surveys, approval of the study from the VCCS was requested using the VCCS' established procedures. Additionally, the presidents of all participating VCCS colleges were notified of the purpose and design of the study, and of their school's selection for participation in the study. The permission and support of the presidents was requested. Following approval, introductory letters were sent to senior level academic, student affairs, and enrollment officers at each of the Virginia community colleges informing them of the survey purpose and encouraging their participation. Shortly thereafter, the surveys, along with introductory comments and instructions, were electronically distributed. An electronic reminder was sent to administrators who had not responded to the survey within 14 days of the initial distribution. A follow-up letter with a printed copy of the

survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope was sent to administrators who had not responded to the electronic survey within 14 days of the electronic reminder.

Survey responses were sorted by college and a mean score was calculated for each VCCS college for each of the variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the degree of linear relationship between each of the variables rated on the survey and enrollment and persistence of African-American males.

Multiple linear regression utilizing all of the predictor variables determined to have a relationship to enrollment was used to provide a single index of predictive power for all of the predictor variables together. Likewise, regression analysis using the variables related to persistence was used to provide a single predictive index. Multiple regression was used in this study as a result of its ability to accurately predict the relationship between the criterion variable and two or more predictor variables (Aron & Aron, 2003), and because many of the assumptions of multiple regression are "robust" to violation (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Additionally, this study employed the simultaneous method of variable inclusion in an effort to build the strongest prediction models possible since other methods require higher numbers

of survey respondents than utilized in the present study (Allison, 1999). Multiple regression has been successfully used in numerous studies related to student enrollment and persistence in higher education for a variety of populations and in a variety of settings (Anderson, 1999; Green, 1998; Heard, 2002; Meredith, 2004; Koker, 2000; Vare, DeWalt, & Dockery, 2004).

A qualitative phase followed the quantitative analysis. First, the researcher examined comments solicited from survey participants during the collection of quantitative data. The survey solicited comments directly related to the predictor variables measured during the survey and were used to identify factors influencing the survey results. The author reported responses provided by administrators from the colleges identified as having African-American male enrollment and persistence rates greater than the mean rate for colleges in the study. Responses were explored and detailed utilizing total counts, frequencies of response, and rank order of responses within each question.

Additionally, the researcher examined selected institutional documents, interviewed administrators, faculty, and staff, and conducted a focus group of African-American male students from Danville Community College, the

only Virginia community college found to be among the strongest in both the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. This case study provided a more in-depth look at institutional policies, procedures, and programs to further explain and build upon the initial quantitative results. Open and axial coding of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used to categorize and examine evidence of institutional factors found in documents and interviews that may influence the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. A researcher designed matrix was used to record and organize findings.

In order to guard against the introduction of subjective bias in the coding and analysis of qualitative data, an individual other than the researcher independently examined the qualitative data. The results of the independent analysis were compared with those of the researcher to establish inter-rater reliability. When discrepancies were found, responses in question were reviewed and discussed by the primary researcher and the independent examiner leading to the most appropriate category placement.

Limitations of the Methodology

The design of this study was not without limitations. Several threats to its internal validity were identified

that served to confound the results of the study. Researcher effects, including researcher bias and unintentional errors in observation, are always threats when the study design includes examination of documents and existing data (Ocher, 2005). The researcher attempted to control the impact of research effects in this study by limiting variables to those identified in the literature and by taking steps to establish inter-rater reliability. Internal validity may also be confounded by subject effects if respondents do not respond candidly to the questionnaire and give answers that misrepresent the characteristics, policies, practices, and programs of their institutions in order to portray a more positive image; or if they fail to provide documentation and/or examples that respondents may consider damaging. This effect was minimized to some degree by assurances of confidentiality.

External validity, the degree to which the results of this study can be generalized, is limited to the Virginia Community College System and to the target population of this study. Generalizations to other colleges and other subgroups should be made with extreme caution.

It should also be noted that this study, as a limitation of its design, does not attempt to predict a cause and effect relationship between institutional

characteristics and the enrollment and retention of African-American male students. Further study using an experimental or ex post facto design should be conducted to establish such a relationship.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. The data collected for this study are reported and examined in this chapter; and are organized around two research questions:

1. Given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?
2. Given the likely differences in the persistence rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the persistence of

African-American males at Virginia Community
College System member schools?

These questions were addressed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Overview

This study was conducted using a mixed methods design, providing a more complete analysis of the research questions than could have been accomplished using either quantitative or qualitative analysis alone.

The data used in the quantitative phase of the study included existing population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, and enrollment, persistence, and faculty data for each of Virginia's 23 community colleges from IPEDS. Using these data, the researcher was able to calculate college enrollment rates, persistence rates, size, and ratio of African-American faculty to overall faculty.

U.S. Census Bureau data also identified eight Virginia Community Colleges (Blue Ridge, Dabney S. Lancaster, Lord Fairfax, Mountain Empire, New River, Southwest, Virginia Highlands, and Wytheville), located in the western part of the state, that serve areas where African-American males make up only 2.28% or less of the total population. Consequently, these eight colleges are also among the lowest in the VCCS in enrollment of African-American male

Table 4.1

VCCS college African-American male service area population and enrollment

	Total Population	A-A Male Population	Percent	Total A-A Male Enrollment*	A-A Male Full-time, Program-Placed Enrollment*
Mountain Empire	99,217	349	0.35	18	3.33
Virginia Highlands	84,807	862	1.02	13	2.33
Southwest Virginia	110,043	1,460	1.33	54	3.33
Wytheville	105,010	1,967	1.87	20	1.33
New River	164,800	3,218	1.95	80	7.66
Lord Fairfax	247,404	6,358	2.57	86	7.66
Dabney Lancaster	73,246	1,662	2.27	22	5.37
Blue Ridge	217,764	4,963	2.28	58	4.00
Northern Virginia	1,815,797	97,917	5.39	2,372	94.00
Virginia Western	249,115	15,005	6.02	242	21.67
Piedmont Virginia	206,544	15,040	7.28	164	13.00
Germana	304,055	22,525	7.41	178	9.67

Table 4.1 cont.

	Total Population	A-A Male Population	Percent	Total A-A Male Enrollment*	A-A Male Full-time, Program-Placed Enrollment*
Central Virginia	228,494	21,047	9.21	256	17.67
Patrick Henry	116,274	10,830	9.31	202	16.67
Rappahannock	153,765	15,853	10.31	116	8.33
John Tyler	426,893	56,632	13.27	426	20.33
Tidewater	989,856	143,747	14.52	2,259	207.67
J. Sargeant Reynolds	583,921	87,413	14.97	1,062	71.33
Danville	128,834	19,879	15.43	408	22.67
Thomas Nelson	454,550	71,310	15.69	880	87.33
Eastern Shore	51,398	8,147	15.85	63	9.67
Paul D. Camp	86,238	15,221	17.65	151	12.67
Southside Virginia	157,024	30,582	19.48	561	19.67

*Three-year average enrollment (2003, 2004, 2005)

Source. U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census; National Center for Educational Statistics

students including both total enrollment and full-time, program-placed enrollment. Table 4.1 presents VCCS college service area population data pertinent to this study, along with African-American male enrollment data.

The low service area African-American male populations of the previously identified eight community colleges, and their corresponding low African-American male enrollments, make it highly likely that the inclusion of these schools in this study would disproportionately impact the distribution of enrollment and persistence rates among VCCS colleges. This is of particular concern in as much as African-American male enrollment and persistence rates are both used in this study as criterion variables. Consequently, these schools are not included in the study in an effort to maintain its integrity.

Additional data on college characteristics were gathered using a researcher-designed survey of VCCS academic and student affairs administrators. The survey (Appendix B) was conducted during January, February, and March of 2008. Responses were solicited from all 198 identified academic and student affairs administrators employed at VCCS institutions. One hundred thirty-five (68%) of the administrators responded to the survey. One hundred fourteen (57.5%) completed the survey in its

entirety. Survey responses were sorted by college and a mean score was calculated for each VCCS college for each of the variables measured by the survey.

In addition to survey items designed to collect information on institutional characteristics, policies, and practices associated with African-American male enrollment and persistence, the survey included items to solicit demographic information needed to describe the population. The findings indicated that 67% of the survey respondents were over the age of fifty; with 72% identified as White, non-Hispanic. The population was relatively evenly distributed by gender. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents work primarily in academic affairs, with 36% working primarily in student affairs, and 25% working in both academic and student affairs. Sixty-four percent of respondents have worked in their current position for five years or less. A complete demographic description of survey respondents is presented in Table 4.2

Qualitative data, used in this study to explain and add context to the quantitative analyses, were gathered through open-ended questions included in the above referenced survey. These responses were recorded and explored as appropriate, utilizing total counts, frequencies of response, and rank order of responses within

Table 4.2

Survey participant demographic data

Demographic	Number	Percent
Age		
40 - 49	28	20.9
30 - 39	17	12.7
50 - 59	57	42.5
60 and over	32	23.9
No response	1	
Race/ethnicity		
African-American	34	25.8
Hispanic	1	.8
White, non-Hispanic	97	73.5
No response	3	
Gender		
Female	70	53.0
Male	62	47.0
No response	3	
Work Area		
Academic Affairs	52	39.1
Student Affairs	48	36.1
Academic & Student Affairs	33	24.8
No response	2	

Table 4.2 cont.

Demographic	Number	Percent
Experience		
1 year or less	17	12.7
2 - 5 years	70	52.2
6 - 10 years	24	17.9
11 - 15 years	3	2.2
16 - 20 years	5	3.7
21 or more years	15	11.2
No response	1	

each question. A final qualitative component of the study utilized interviews, a focus group, and a document review to present a brief case study of the only Virginia community college identified through the quantitative analyses as having both significantly higher African American male enrollment rates and significantly higher African-American male persistence rates.

Research Question 1: Quantitative Findings

Research Question 1 asked what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools, given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male

students among the colleges. To answer this question, proportional African-American male enrollment rates were calculated for the 15 colleges in the study utilizing existing population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and college enrollment data from IPEDS. The populations, enrollments, and enrollment rates are presented in Table 4.3. It should be noted that the inmate populations in the college services areas are not included in the population data since African-American males are traditionally overrepresented in prison populations. The mean enrollment rate for the fifteen colleges was .0134 ($SD = .0053$). The distribution exhibited a moderate, positive skew with college enrollments somewhat clustered toward lower rates. Only six of the colleges had enrollments rates higher than the mean. Of those, only Northern Virginia Community College and Danville Community College exhibited enrollment rates higher than one standard deviation above the mean.

The Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between college African-American male enrollment rates and each of the predictor variables identified in the literature review as possibly related to African-American male enrollment. The results of the correlation analyses presented in Table 4.4 indicate moderate to strong relationships between 21 of the

Table 4.3

VCCS college African-American male enrollment rates

	A-A Male Population	Total A-A Male Enrollment*	A-A Male Enrollment Rate (%)
Northern Virginia	97,917	2,372	2.42
Danville	19,879	408	2.05
Patrick Henry	10,830	202	1.86
Southside Virginia	30,582	561	1.83
Virginia Western	15,005	242	1.61
Tidewater	143,747	2,259	1.57
Thomas Nelson	71,310	880	1.23
J. Sargeant Reynolds	87,413	1,062	1.22
Central Virginia	21,047	256	1.21
Piedmont Virginia	15,040	164	1.09
Paul D. Camp	15,221	151	.99
Germanna	22,525	178	.79
Eastern Shore	8,147	63	.78
John Tyler	56,632	426	.75
Rappahannock	15,853	116	.73

**Three-year average enrollment (2003, 2004, 2005)*

*Source. U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census; National Center
for Educational Statistics*

Table 4.4

VCCS African-American male enrollment rate correlations
with enrollment and persistence variables

	Pearson Correlation(<i>r</i>)	<i>r</i> ²	Sig. (2-tailed)
Persistence rates	-.110	.012	.696
African-American faculty	-.202	.041	.471
College size	.595	.354	.019
Enrollment planning	.616	.379	.015
Persistence planning	.562	.316	.029
Collection and dissemination of data	.554	.307	.032
Enrollment training	.598	.358	.018
Persistence training	.530	.281	.042
Interaction	.425	.181	.114
Advising model			
Early registration	.078	.006	.783
Study habits and skills	.438	.192	.102
Time management	.453	.205	.090
Information and learning technology	.263	.069	.344
Tutoring	.616	.379	.015
Goal Planning	.400	.160	.139
Financial management	.572	.327	.026
Career development	.343	.118	.210
Job placement	.449	.202	.093
Transfer assistance	.399	.159	.141

Table 4.4 cont.

	Pearson Correlation(r)	r^2	Sig. (2-tailed)
Overall advising	.431	.186	.108
Curriculum	.250	.063	.370
Voice	.409	.167	.131
Mentoring	.476	.227	.073
Student organizations	.571	.326	.026
K12 collaboration	.513	.263	.050
Higher education collaboration	.557	.310	.031
Other collaboration	.449	.202	.093
Climate	.527	.278	.044

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

predictor variables and African-American male enrollment. Of these, eleven were statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that these relationships are not likely to be the result of chance. Strategic planning toward the enrollment of African-American males and an advising model that included tutoring were shown to have the highest correlation ($r = .616$, $p = .015$) among the related variables and had an r squared value of .379, suggesting that 38% of the variance in enrollment of African-American males can be attributed to each of these two variables. The r square values for other related variables range from .006 to .358.

The correlations of African-American male enrollment with the remaining variables tended to be lower and not significant. In general, high levels of African-American male enrollment are associated with:

1. larger institutions;
2. strategic planning efforts that include programs to positively impact the enrollment and persistence of African-American males;
3. collection and dissemination of institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American males;
4. staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment and persistence;
5. advising models that include tutoring;
6. advising models that include financial management;
7. promotion and support of minority student organizations;
8. support of African-American male students in the K12 pipeline through cooperation and collaboration with other institutions of higher education; and
9. a general social and cultural climate within the college that is supportive of African-American male students.

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well the eleven significantly related variables (the predictor variables) predicted college enrollment rates of African-American males (the criterion variable). The shared variance between the linear combination of the predictor variables appeared to be high, with an R square value of .903 indicating that approximately 90% of the variance in the enrollment rates can be accounted for by the combination of these variables. While the linear combination of the predictor variables was highly related to African-American male enrollment, the relationship failed to reach statistical significance at the $p .05$ level, $F(11,3) = 2.53$, $p = .241$. This failure to reach statistical significance is likely related to the small number of institutions included in the study (N) and should be considered cautiously since significance is strongly influenced by sample size (Pallant, SPSS Survival Manual). The p value in regression analysis is generally set at .05, indicating only a 5% probability that the observed relationship in the model is a result of chance alone. In this case, the larger p value of .241 suggests a much larger probability that the relationship is a product of chance. While this is outside of the boundaries of what

can be confidently reported, it is worth examination given the large R square value of the model.

Beta coefficients were used to compare the contributions of the related independent variables. Collaboration with other higher education institutions to support African-American males in the K-12 pipeline (Beta = .944) and advising models that include tutoring (Beta = .924) appear to make the strongest unique contributions toward African-American male enrollment. The Beta values of the remaining variables range from $-.007$ to $.868$, indicating that they make less of a contribution. None of these values, however, were found to be statistically significant. Only one of the variables, institution size, approached statistical significance at the $.05$ level ($p = .064$). Again, failure to reach significance is likely due to the small N, along with overlap among the predictor variables in the model (Pallant, SPSS Survival Manual). Readers are cautioned not to be overly distracted by a static view of an alpha of $.05$. In this case, the p value of $.064$ indicates only 6.4% probability that the relationship between college size and black male student enrollment is a result of chance. While this does not meet the standard benchmark, it is still quite compelling. Table

4.5 presents the comparative contributions of the individual predictor variables.

Research Question 1: Qualitative Findings

The survey of academic and student affairs administrators provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on survey items. The administrator comments from the six colleges identified as having African-American male enrollment rates greater than the mean rate of the colleges

Table 4.5

Comparative contributions of predictors with African-American male enrollment rates

Predictors	Beta value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Higher ed collaboration	-.944	.269
Tutoring	.924	.211
Enrollment training	.868	.597
Persistence planning	-.764	.316
Enrollment planning	.737	.301
Size	.700	.064
Climate	.630	.292
Data	-.239	.633
Student organizations	-.191	.704
Persistence training	-.182	.885
Financial management	-.007	.992

in the study to the related open-ended questions were recorded, reviewed, and explored to add context to the quantitative results. The correlated variables and associated comments logically clustered into three distinct categories: strategic efforts, student development, and campus climate. The administrator responses, including total counts, frequencies of response, and rank order of responses, are presented using these clusters. Many survey respondents provided multiple responses to the questions. Each of these responses is reported separately.

Strategic Efforts

The largest number of variables associated with high enrollment of African-American males fall into this group. These variables include: strategic planning efforts to positively impact both the enrollment and persistence of black males; collection and dissemination of institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American males; staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to both African-American male enrollment and persistence; and collaboration with other institutions of higher education to support African-American males in the K-12 pipeline.

When asked to describe their college's strategic planning efforts as they relate to African-American male

enrollment, twelve administrators reported that they were not aware of any planning efforts directed toward enrollment of this population. An equal number, however, reported planning efforts toward strategies and services to meet the needs of "at risk" and/or "underserved" populations in general, including TRIO, Achieving the Dream, and Middle College programs, along with targeted learning communities and college success skills programs. Another four administrators identified programs specifically designed to support African-American male students and another four cited recruitment activities that target African-American males. Four other administrators cited planning toward increasing faculty diversity as related to African-American male enrollment. Table 4.6 presents all of the responses to this question from 35 college administrators at five of the six colleges identified as having high African-American male enrollment rates. No comments were provided by administrators at the other college.

When asked to describe their college's strategic planning efforts as they relate to African-American male persistence, 13 administrators identified planning toward strategies and services to meet the needs of all "at-risk"

Table 4.6

Planning related to African-American male enrollment

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Strategies/services to meet the general needs of "at risk" and "underserved" populations	12	21.8
1	Not aware of any planning efforts related to African-American males	12	21.8
2	Programs specifically intended to support African-American male students	4	7.3
2	Efforts toward faculty diversity	4	7.3
2	Recruitment activities that target African-American males	4	7.3
3	Sports programs	3	5.5
3	Diverse student activities	3	5.5
3	Marketing toward diverse populations	3	5.5
3	Collaboration with area high schools	3	5.5
4	Creating an environment that respects and nurtures diversity	2	3.6
4	Identified African-American males as a target population	2	3.6
5	Personalized communication	1	1.8
5	Career coaches	1	1.8
5	Black History Month programs	1	1.8

and "underserved" populations. Again, included in these responses were references to both federally funded and local initiatives such as Achieving the Dream, Upward

Bound, Supplemental Instruction, learning communities, early alert systems, mentoring, and tutoring. Ten administrators reported planning toward student persistence in general, citing efforts to enhance orientation courses and students' first year experience. Seven identified student activities, including sports programs; six reported programs to address the unique needs of African-American male students; and four others reported program to support all African-American students. Table 4.7 presents all of the responses to this question from the high African-American enrollment colleges and includes responses from 28 administrators at five colleges.

Twenty-seven administrators representing five high African-American male enrollment colleges responded when asked to comment about African-American male data collected and disseminated at their respective colleges. Seven respondents reported that such data is collected and available, but not generally disseminated; six reported that their colleges generally collect and disseminate data on all students by race and gender; and five reported that data on African-American males is or will be collected as part of a special program or project. Table 4.8 presents all of the responses to this question from the high African-American enrollment colleges.

Table 4.7

Planning related to African-American male persistence

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Strategies/services to meet the general needs of "at risk" and "underserved" populations	13	25.5
2	General approach to retain all students	10	19.6
3	Student activities/sports	7	13.7
4	Programs to support African-American male students	6	11.8
5	Programs to support African-American students	4	7.8
6	African-American males not identified as a target group	2	3.9
6	Identified African-American male persistence as an area of concern	2	3.9
7	Inclusion of diverse stakeholders in planning process	1	2
7	College-wide goal relating to diversity	1	2
7	Campus climate addressing needs of all students	1	2
7	Improve student access to financial aid	1	2
7	No knowledge of planning directed at African-American male persistence	1	2
7	Collaboration with other colleges to promote transfer	1	2
7	Diversity training for faculty and staff	1	2

Table 4.8

Collection and dissemination of African-American male data

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Collected and available, but not disseminated	7	23.3
2	General approach to collection/dissemination of data on all students by race and gender	6	20
3	Done/will be done as part of a special program or project	5	16.6
4	Done/will be done as a component of strategic planning	3	10
4	Data collected/reported by institutional research/effectiveness	3	10
5	Data is aggregated	1	3.3
5	Data indicates that African-American males are at great risk	1	3.3
5	No data is reported on African-American males	1	3.3
5	College does not do a good job of dissemination	1	3.3
5	Data is reported but without analysis	1	3.3
5	College depends more on anecdotal information	1	3.3

When asked to describe their college's staff development activities as they relate to African-American male enrollment, seven community college administrators stated that no activities of this type were provided at their respective institutions and four others did not know

or were not sure if such staff development activities were provided. Four other respondents cited staff development activities related to African-American male enrollment as part of Achieving the Dream projects. Three others reported a general approach toward increasing enrollment of minority and/or "at risk" students. Only 19 administrators representing five of the six high African-American male enrollment colleges responded to this question. All of their responses are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Staff development activities to support African-American male enrollment

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	No activities provided	7	35
2	Don't know/not sure of any activities	4	20
2	Providing as a component of Achieving the Dream	4	20
3	Provided as a general approach to increase enrollment of minority and "at risk" students	3	15
4	Provided only for college management team	1	5
4	Provided as faculty/staff in-service	1	5

Similarly, when asked to describe staff development activities as they relate to African-American male persistence, only 13 administrators representing five of the six high African-American male colleges responded. Four of them reported general activities aimed at overall student persistence, including enhancement of the "first year experience." Four others reported no staff development activities related to African-American male persistence. Only two reported targeted staff development activities,

Table 4.10

Staff development activities to support African-American male persistence

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Activities aimed at overall student persistence	4	27
1	No activities provided	4	27
2	Activities aimed at minority student persistence	2	13
2	Provided as component of "Achieving the Dream" project	2	13
3	Not aware of any activities	1	6
3	Provided only for college management team	1	6
3	Activities provided through faculty/staff in-service	1	6

again as part of "Achieving the Dream" projects. All of the responses are presented in Table 4.10.

The survey included three variables related to college collaboration in support of African-American male students in the K-12 pipeline. Only one of these variables, collaboration with other institutions of higher education, was found to be significantly related to African-American male community college enrollment. However, when asked to describe college collaborative efforts with other agencies, six respondents cited partnerships with religious, civic, and/or community organizations; and only three administrators reported collaboration efforts with other higher education institutions. In each of these three cases, respondents cited cooperative arrangements with neighboring universities. Five administrators described programs that place college employees in local K-12 schools, while three described activities that bring K-12 students onto the college campus and three others described K-12 partnerships including dual enrollment opportunities. Table 4.11 presents all of the responses provided by 18 administrators representing all six of the identified high African-American male enrollment colleges.

The responses presented above indicate that the enrollment of African-American male students at Virginia

Table 4.11

Collaborative efforts supporting African-American males in the K-12 pipeline

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Religious, civic, and community partnerships	6	23.1
2	College staff in K-12 schools	5	19.2
3	K-12 schools on college campuses	3	11.5
3	Other K-12 partnerships	3	11.5
3	Partnerships with local 4-year institutions	3	11.5
3	No effort focused on African-American males	3	11.5
4	Drop-out recovery program	1	3.8
4	Open communication with K-12 administrators	1	3.8
4	Unaware of any efforts	1	3.8

community colleges might be best enhanced by a broad, strategic effort toward the enrollment and persistence of all "at-risk," "underserved," and minority populations. There is further indication that efforts of this type are often connected to structured programs designed to meet the needs of these populations, including federal TRIO programs, Achieving the Dream, and other system or college-based programs. Additionally, there is indication that programs targeting African-American students in general and

African-American male students specifically may contribute to increased enrollment of African-American male students. Finally, the administrator comments also suggest that collaboration with a variety of agencies to support African-American male students, including other institutions of higher education, may contribute to increased enrollment of black students.

Student Development

Two of the factors found related to African-American male enrollment were presented in the survey as components of a comprehensive advising model that addresses a broad range of academic and personal development needs of African-American males. These correlated variables were financial management counseling and the availability of tutoring. Survey respondents were asked to share comments or observations regarding their respective college's advising model as related to this population.

Sixteen of the respondents reported comprehensive advising models that meet the needs of all students. While 11 administrators reported no focused attention on African-American males, one respondent did report current efforts to develop strategies to address this need. Twenty-two administrators representing all six high African-American enrollment colleges responded to this question. All of

their responses are presented in Table 4.12. Based on these responses, high African-American male enrollment colleges are characterized as having advising models that address the needs of all students as opposed to models focusing on unique needs of black males.

Table 4.12

Advising model as related to African-American male enrollment

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Comprehensive advising model addressing needs of all students	16	53
2	No focused attention on African-American male students	11	37
3	African-American male needs are addressed indirectly	1	3
3	Currently developing strategy that focuses on African-American males	1	3
3	Not sure we do a great job with any group	1	3

College Climate

The three remaining variables related to higher African-American male enrollment all contribute to college social and cultural climate. These factors include: promotion and support of minority student organizations; a general social and cultural climate within the college that

is supportive of African-American male students; and college size. While this study does not include qualitative data to support the relationship between college size and African-American male enrollment, the correlation analysis indicated a high-moderate relationship ($r = .595$, $p = .019$) between the two variables. The survey of academic and student development administrators did solicit comments on minority student organizations as well as social and cultural climate.

Administrators were asked to describe minority student organizations at their respective colleges that provide opportunities for African-American male students to develop leadership skills and experiences. Seven administrators identified student organizations specific to African-American students. These organizations were reported with a variety of names including African-American Culture Club, Black Student Association, and Black Student Union. One respondent gave the following detailed description of this type of organization.

The purpose . . . is to encourage and increase the achievement, participation, and adjustment of black students to the college community, to increase sensitivity of the college community to the black student, and to create a better rapport

between the college community and the black community.

Five administrators reported that African-American males are involved in all student clubs and organizations. Two administrators reported student organizations specific to African-American male students. Fifteen administrators representing all six of the high African-American enrollment colleges responded to this question. All of their responses are reported in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Student organizations providing opportunities for African-American male leadership skills and experiences

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	African-American specific organization	7	36.8
2	African-American males involved in all clubs/organizations	5	26.3
3	African-American male specific organization	2	10.5
4	Basketball team	1	5.3
4	Organizations to support a variety of ethnic groups	1	5.3
4	Student Government Association	1	5.3
4	Minority student leadership workshops	1	5.3
4	Unaware of any specific clubs/organizations	1	5.3

Finally, administrators were asked to share comments and observations regarding their colleges' social and cultural climate as it relates to African-American male students. Twelve administrators representing five of the six high African-American male enrollment colleges responded to this question. Four of the administrators described their college environment as supportive of all students. Four others observed that African-American males appear to be comfortable and engaged on their respective campuses. All of the responses to this question are reported in Table 4.14.

These comments indicate that the general climates of the schools associated with high black male student enrollment are supportive and inclusive of African-American male students. These college climates are characterized by the presence of African-American and African-American male organizations, and African-American male involvement in other, more general student organizations and activities. Campus climates are described by survey respondents as supportive of all students and as institutions where diversity is encouraged and respected, and where African-American males appear to be comfortable and engaged.

Table 4.14

*College social and cultural climate as it relates to
African-American male students*

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	College environment is supportive of all students	4	23.5
1	African-American males appear to be comfortable and engaged	4	23.5
2	Diversity is highly respected, valued, and encouraged	2	11.8
2	Student activities target diverse groups including African-American males	2	11.8
3	College is supportive and inclusive of African-American males	1	5.9
3	African-American males hold leadership positions at the college	1	5.9
3	No targeted programs due to low African-American male enrollment	1	5.9
3	A lot more work is needed in this area	1	5.9
3	Some individuals may not be supportive of African-American males, but not in decision-making positions	1	5.9

Research Question 2: Quantitative Findings

Research Question 2 asked what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the persistence of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools, given the likely differences in the

persistence rates of African-American male students among the colleges. To answer this question, African-American male persistence rates were calculated for the 15 colleges in the study utilizing existing college enrollment, graduation, and transfer data from IPEDS. The first-time, full-time, program-placed enrollments, along with corresponding completions and transfers within 150% of program length are presented in Table 4.15.

The mean persistence rate for the fifteen colleges was .1740 ($SD = .0630$). The distribution exhibited a distinct positive skew with most colleges clustered toward lower persistence rates. Seven of the colleges had persistence rates higher than the mean. Danville Community College, Eastern Shore Community College, and Rappahannock Community College boasted persistence rates higher than one standard deviation above the mean.

The Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between African-American male persistence rates and each of the predictor variables identified in the literature review as possibly related to African-American male enrollment. The results of the correlation analyses are presented in Table 4.16. Four of the 30 variables showed moderate correlation with African-American male persistence ($r = .408$ through $.616$). One of the variables,

Table 4.15

VCCS college African-American male persistence rates

	A-A Male Cohort*	Program Completers**	Transfers**	Persistence Rate
Eastern Shore	24	5	3	33.33
Danville	68	9	8	25.00
Rappahannock	25	3	3	24.00
John Tyler	61	6	6	19.67
Central VA	53	5	5	18.87
Piedmont	39	3	4	17.95
Northern VA	285	25	26	17.89
Southside VA	59	6	4	16.95
Patrick Henry	50	7	1	16.00
Thomas Nelson	262	20	13	13.36
J. S. Reynolds	214	6	22	13.08
VA Western	65	2	6	12.31
Tidewater	623	26	47	11.72
Paul D. Camp	38	0	4	10.53
Germanna	29	0	3	10.34

*Three-year total (2003, 2004, 2005); first-time, full-time, program-placed

**Three-year total (2003, 2004, 2005); within 150% of program length

Source. National Center for Educational Statistics

curriculum, was statistically significant ($p < .05$) indicating that the correlation was not a result of chance alone. The three remaining moderate correlations showed p values ranging from .086 to .131 indicating a greater possibility that the correlations may be the result of chance. The correlations of African-American male persistence with the other 26 variables were weak or negligible. In general, high levels of African-American male persistence are associated with the inclusion of contributions made by Africans and African-Americans into academic disciplines. Additionally, there is inconclusive evidence to suggest a possible relationship between African-American male persistence and staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment and persistence, and between persistence and opportunities for the expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood.

The author's intent was to replicate the methodology used to examine the enrollment data to examine the persistence data, employing standard multiple regression analysis to evaluate how well the significantly related predictor variables predicted African American male persistence. The correlation analysis, however, identified

Table 4.16

*VCCS African-American male persistence rate correlations
with enrollment and persistence variables*

	Pearson Correlation(<i>r</i>)	<i>r</i> ²	Sig. (2-tailed)
Enrollment rates	-.110	.012	.696
African-American faculty	-.329	.108	.231
College size	-.230	.053	.410
Enrollment planning	.083	.007	.768
Persistence planning	.197	.039	.483
Collection and dissemination of data	.279	.078	.314
Enrollment training	.409	.167	.130
Persistence training	.458	.210	.086
Interaction	.020	.000	.943
Advising model			
Early registration	.051	.003	.856
Study habits and skills	.232	.058	.404
Time management	.157	.025	.575
Information and learning technology	.242	.059	.385
Tutoring	.164	.027	.560
Goal Planning	.309	.095	.262
Financial management	-.068	.005	.811

Table 4.16 cont.

	Pearson Correlation(r)	r ²	Sig. (2-tailed)
Career development	.189	.036	.501
Job placement	.294	.086	.288
Transfer assistance	.130	.017	.645
Overall advising	.180	.032	.520
Curriculum	.616	.379	.015
Voice	.408	.166	.131
Mentoring	.152	.023	.588
Student organizations	.108	.012	.701
K12 collaboration	.051	.003	.857
Higher education collaboration	.111	.012	.694
Other collaboration	.041	.002	.885
Climate	-.205	.042	.463

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

only one variable as significantly related. As reported above, three other variables were found to be moderately related but failed to reach significance at the $p .05$ level. Failure of these correlations to reach significance is likely the result of the small sample size and the skewed distribution of the persistence rates. With this in mind, the author chose to proceed with the regression analysis, using all four of the related variables, ignoring

the failure of three of them to reach significance at p .05.

The shared variance between the linear combination of the predictor variables appeared to be weak with an R square value of .392 indicating that the combination of these variable accounted for only 39% of the persistence rates. Additionally, the relationship failed to reach statistical significance at the p .05 level, $F(4,10) = 1.61$, p .246.

Beta coefficients were used to compare the contributions of each of the related independent variables. Curriculum, defined for this study as the inclusion of contributions made by Africans and African-Americans into academic disciplines, appears to make the strongest unique contribution toward African-American male persistence with a Beta value of .744. The Beta values of the remaining variables ranged from -.140 to -.221, indicating that they made less of a contribution. None of these values, however, were found to be statistically significant. Again, the failure of the regression model and beta coefficients to reach significance at the p .05 level is likely due to the small sample size and skewed distribution of persistence rates. Table 4.17 presents the comparative contributions of the individual predictor variables.

Table 4.17

Comparative contributions of predictors with African-American male persistence

	Beta value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Curriculum	.744	.175
Voice	-.221	.664
Enrollment training	.216	.857
Persistence training	-.140	.908

Research Question 2: Qualitative Findings

As indicated in the presentation of findings related to the first research question, the survey of academic and student affairs administrators provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on survey items. Responses provided by administrators from the seven colleges identified as having African-American male persistence rates greater than the mean rate for colleges in the study to the open-ended questions possibly related to the variables associated with African-American male persistence were recorded and reviewed. These responses are presented, along with the number and percentage of administrators who provided each response, and the ranking of the responses provided. Many survey respondents provided multiple responses to the questions. Each of these responses is reported separately.

The four related factors and associated comments logically fell into two of the three clusters identified in the qualitative analysis of African-American male student enrollment.

Strategic Efforts

Two of the factors associated with high African-American male persistence were also found to be associated with high African-American male enrollment and, as such are also linked to the colleges' strategic efforts.

Administrator comments associated with these two variables, (1) staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment, and (2) staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male persistence, are presented below.

When asked to describe their college's staff development activities as they relate to African-American male enrollment, four administrators reported that they were not aware of any planning efforts directed toward enrollment of this population. Two others reported that no such activities were provided. Two administrators indicated staff development activities directly related to African-American males. Also reported were activities provided as a general approach to increase enrollment of minority students and students in general, and diversity training

provided to key campus groups. Table 4.18 presents all of the responses to this question from 11 college administrators at four of the seven colleges identified as having high African-American male persistence rates. No comments were provided by administrators at the other three colleges.

Table 4.18

Staff development related to African-American male enrollment

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Don't know or not aware of any staff development activities related to African-American male enrollment	4	36
2	No staff development activities related to African American males provided	2	18
2	Staff development activities provided specific to African-American males	2	18
3	Staff development activities provided as a general approach to enrollment of minority students	1	9
3	Staff development activities provided as a general approach to enrollment of all students	1	9
3	Diversity training provided to key campus groups including college management team and Achieve the Dream Core Team	1	9

When asked to describe their college's staff development activities as they relate to African-American

male persistence, three administrators reported no activities specific to African-American male students; while three others cited general activities directed toward persistence of all students. Other respondents identified staff development activities directed to African-American male and minority student persistence in general, along with diversity training and training related to learning styles. Table 4.19 presents all of the responses to this question from the high African-American persistence colleges and includes responses from eight administrators at four colleges.

These survey responses indicate that very limited staff development activity targeting black male student enrollment or persistence has been made available at these high persistence institutions. There is some evidence, however, that more generalized staff development has been offered toward student enrollment and persistence, including training specific to minorities and students with learning disabilities. These findings suggest that African-American male student persistence may be enhanced by staff development activities of a general nature.

Campus Climate

The remaining factors related to African-American male persistence are most appropriately discussed as they relate

Table 4.19

Staff development related to African-American male persistence

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	No staff development activities related to African American males provided	3	27.3
1	Staff development activities provided as a general approach to enrollment of all students	3	27.3
2	Staff development activities provided specific to African-American males	1	9.1
2	Staff development activities provided as a general approach to enrollment of minority students	1	9.1
2	Diversity training provided to key campus groups including college management team and Achieve the Dream Core Team	1	9.1
2	Staff development activities provided related to learning styles	1	9.1
2	Don't know of any staff development activities related to African-American male enrollment	1	9.1

to college climate. They include (1) inclusion of contributions by Africans and African-Americans into college curriculum, and (2) opportunities for expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood.

Twelve administrators representing five high African-American male persistence colleges responded when asked to

comment about their respective colleges' efforts to include contributions by Africans and African-Americans into academic disciplines. While four respondents reported that they were not aware of such efforts, three administrators cited efforts to recognize African and African-American contributions through student activity and other special programs. Two other respondents reported course offerings

Table 4.20.

Inclusion of contributions by Africans and African-Americans in curriculum

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Don't know or not aware of efforts to include contributions by Africans and African-Americans into curriculum	4	26.7
2	African and African-American contributions recognized through student activity and other special programs, including Black History Month	3	20
3	Courses offered in African-American studies	2	13.3
3	Availability of study abroad opportunities	2	13.3
4	Courses offered in African studies	1	6.7
4	Contributions of Africans and African-American are often included in history, humanities, and social science courses	1	6.7
4	Courses offered in inter-cultural health care	1	6.7
4	General broadening of focus in many disciplines from Eurocentric to world view	1	6.7

in African-American studies. Two others reported study abroad programs. Table 4.20 presents all of the responses to this question from the high African-American persistence colleges.

When asked to describe their college's efforts to provide opportunities for the expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood, three community college administrators cited activities related to Black History Month. A variety of other activities were cited by individual administrators including African-American male focus groups, male-only student development classes, and African-American clubs and organizations. Ten administrators representing four of the seven high African-American male persistence colleges responded to this question. All of their responses are presented in table 4.21.

While there is some evidence to suggest limited inclusion of the contributions of blacks into college curricula, most often these high persistence community colleges are characterized by a variety of extra-curricular programs and activities that provide for the recognition of such contributions. These activities are often centered around Black History Month. Likewise, opportunities for African-American male expression and self-exploration are

Table 4.21

Opportunities for expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood

Rank	Response	No.	Percent
1	Black History Month activities	3	25
2	Don't know/not sure of any opportunities	2	16.7
2	Opportunities provided by African-American clubs/organizations	2	16.7
3	Opportunities are provided within some courses	1	8.3
3	Opportunities provided through African-American male focus groups	1	8.3
3	Opportunities provided through male-only student development/orientation courses	1	8.3
3	Opportunities provided through sports clubs	1	8.3
3	Don't know or not aware of any such opportunities	1	8.3

available through a variety of venues. These also include Black History Month programs and activities, along with African-American clubs and organizations.

Danville Community College: A Case Study

Data from the current study identified Danville Community College as the second most successful Virginia community college relative to both African-American male enrollment with a proportional enrollment rate of 2.05% and African-American male persistence with a combined graduation and transfer rate of 25%. DCC was the only

Virginia community college found among the leaders in both African-American male enrollment and persistence. As a result, the author examined survey comments from DCC administrators, reviewed a variety of DCC documents, interviewed seven DCC employees, and conducted a focus group made up of African-American male students at DCC to formulate the following case study. The purpose of the case study is to ascertain programs and/or strategies in place they may have contributed to the high enrollment and persistence rates of African-American males at DCC.

Overview of Danville Community College

Danville Community College (DCC) is a single-campus college located in the City of Danville in the south central part of Virginia. The college, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, serves the residents of Danville along with Pittsylvania County and Halifax County. Like all Virginia community colleges, DCC is governed by the policies established by the Virginia Board for Community Colleges with guidance and support from the Danville Community College Board.

DCC developed from two institutions, Danville Technical Institute, founded in 1836, and the Danville Division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, founded in 1946. Programs taught by Danville Technical Institute were

brought under the Virginia Community College System during the summer of 1966; and, during the summer of 1968, the Danville Division of VPI merged with the existing community college (DCC, 2007).

DCC ranks twelfth among Virginia's 23 community colleges with a 2007-2008 full-time equivalent enrollment of 2,508 and an unduplicated headcount of 6,491 students. Thirty-nine percent of DCC students are identified as African-American; 59% are white; and 2% are classified as other. Males make up 39% of the student population. DCC boasts a graduation rate of 26.2% and a transfer rate of 8% for full-time, first-time program placed students entering the college during the fall 2004 semester (VCCS, 2008).

DCC is guided by the following vision statement found in its *2007-2008 Catalog*: "Danville Community College will be the college of choice in our region for exemplary educational programs and services" (p. 10). Its mission statement, found on the college's official website and in the catalog, states that "Danville Community College is committed to providing quality comprehensive higher education and workforce programs and services to promote student success and to enhance business and community development programs" (p. 10).

Also located in the college catalog, and of particular interest to this study, is the statement below.

Danville Community College values the multicultural diversity of its students, faculty, and staff. We are committed to creating and nurturing a campus environment that welcomes and empowers all individuals. We recognize cultural differences of background, experience, and national origin, and we seek to promote a genuine understanding and appreciation of these differences. We also seek to recognize and promote the common bonds of humanity, which cross the boundaries of cultural difference (DCC, n.d., p.9).

A similar statement is prominently displayed on the college's website.

Results

Data obtained from DCC documents, survey responses, interviews with key personnel, and a focus group made up of African-American male students revealed four specific programs and two other themes that may contribute to the success of DCC in the retention and persistence of African-American male students. These programs and themes are described below.

Achieving the Dream. Danville is one of 83 colleges in the nation participating in the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative funded through the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Knowledge Works Foundation, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. While Achieving the Dream does not specifically target African-American males, the goal of the program is to support strategies to enhance learning and success for all students, particularly low income students, students of color, and first-generation students. Specific objectives of Achieving the Dream at DCC include increasing the percentage of students who complete developmental courses and advance to credit-bearing courses; enroll in and complete gatekeeper courses; complete courses they take, earning a grade of C or higher; re-enroll from one semester to the next; and earn certificates, diplomas and degrees (DCC, n.d.).

Since starting the project in 2004, Danville Community College has employed the following research-based strategies to improve retention and graduation:

- providing learning communities for underprepared college students;
- providing expanded support services for learning community students;

- offering a revised student success course to improve students' knowledge of college orientation information and success strategies;
- expanding training for academic advisors and support personnel;
- establishing an enrollment management team to address retention and graduation; and
- providing short-term topical workshops to enhance student knowledge of academic processes (Boylan, 2008).

Universally, DCC personnel interviewed for this study identified the Achieving the Dream project as influential in the persistence of students served, including African-American males. Specifically, they cited Achieving the Dream for positively impacting the college's strategic planning, use of data, and staff development activities as they relate to low income, first-generation, and minority students. As one DCC employee stated:

. . . I think the Achieving the Dream, and the education that came with it, was huge for this campus because with that program a lot of outside resources came in. It brought up conversations that I don't think this campus would have had otherwise. It really directed the staff and

faculty to do that. When you break out the statistics and the faculty and staff see that, to me, right there, it's just screaming "we have some issues."

African American Culture Club. The African American Culture Club, formerly known as the Afro-American Culture Club, was established at Danville Community College in 1973 by Fred Lloyd III, DCC's first full-time black faculty member, and Russell Scruggs, a faculty colleague (AACC, n.d.). According to a club publication, the club was organized "to promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for African American culture" through a combination of exhibits, programs, speakers, and other events. The club is also very instrumental in the college's annual Black History Month activities. Members of the club are involved in a variety of community service projects. Past club sponsored events include sickle cell anemia testing, art exhibits, plays, fashion shows, and trips to the National Black Student Leadership Development Conference and the Virginia Community College System Student Leadership Conference. Membership in the African American Culture Club is open to all DCC students.

During interviews with DCC personnel, the African American Culture Club was identified as a critical element

in the recruitment and enrollment of African-American students including African-American males. The club was recognized for providing opportunities for African-American male self-exploration and expression, and as a partner in providing a wide range of advising and student development services required to meet the needs of African-American male students. While none of the focus group participants are active members of the African American Culture Club, all of them were aware of its contributions to the college and all had participated in one or more club activities.

Alliance for Excellence. Formed in 1986, Alliance for Excellence, a coalition of African-American churches and four community colleges including Danville Community College, seeks to increase participation in higher education among African-Americans in communities throughout central Virginia (Alliance for Excellence, n.d.). This collaborative effort promotes awareness of higher education opportunities and stresses the importance of academic excellence. According to the organization's website, "Churches provide a compelling motivational foundation for the program, and college counselors, faculty and staff provide educational assistance and guidance." At Danville Community College, Alliance activities are guided by four overarching goals:

- to increase African-American enrollment;
- to increase African-American retention and graduation rates;
- to provide programs to enhance the African-American experience on campus; and
- to increase transfer rates from two-year to four-year colleges and universities (DCC, 2006).

Some recent activities include an annual Academic Awards Program for local high school graduates, campus tours of DCC and historically black colleges and universities, annual College Day, admissions and financial aid workshops, and leadership conference scholarships.

DCC personnel were extremely complimentary of the role played by Alliance for Excellence as a bridge between the college and the African-American community. According to one interviewee:

The Alliance for Excellence is able to make connections with African-American churches . . . , identify students performing well at the secondary level . . . , and conduct activities geared toward all students of color including African-American males. The Alliance for Excellence is the one thing that comes to mind immediately that connects DCC to the community.

College personnel recognize Alliance for Excellence as a critical element in both the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students at DCC.

President's Advisory Panel on Black Concerns. The President's Advisory Panel on Black Concerns was established at Danville Community College 1989 by then-President Arnold Oliver and continues under current President B. Carlyle Ramsey (A. Burney, personal communication, November 19, 2008). The Panel is currently made up of 30 African-American business, government, education, and religious leaders who serve at the invitation of the college president. Meetings of the panel are regularly attended by the Vice President for Academic and Student Services and other members of the President's Cabinet as needed to implement strategies suggested by the Panel. The singular purpose of the Panel is to support the mission of DCC by recruiting and retaining greater numbers of African-American students so that the College will better reflect the demographics of the service region. The Panel has also identified and nominated potential African-American faculty, staff, and administrators as a strategy to enroll more black students.

Like Alliance for Excellence, college personnel recognize the vital role played by the President's Advisory

Panel in connecting the college to the African-American community. Referring to the Panel as a "think tank," one interview participant offered the following description of the Panel.

Those folks come together, and . . . the discussions are very frank. Nobody hedges around. They come out and say whatever they think or believe. If there happens to be a particular issue that may be of some concern, like graduation rates, that's an issue that is on the table. And these folks give their opinions. Again, people are very open . . . I don't ever hear anybody hold a punch.

While the Panel seeks to support the enrollment and persistence of all African-American students, it is obvious from staff comments that the Panel is aware of and concerned about the unique needs of African-American males. According to one staff member who regularly meets with the Panel, "The committee . . . [has] a very narrow, very targeted scope dealing with issues of black students, and African-American males are at the forefront of our conversations."

Recognition of the needs of African-American male students. As stated earlier, Danville Community College

prominently displays in a variety of college publications a value statement regarding its commitment to recognizing and meeting the needs of a diverse student body. It is evident from review of institutional documents and personnel and student comments that this statement is not just words on paper. Rather, it is a commitment that has apparently permeated and saturated the Danville Community College culture. It is also evident that this commitment to "a campus environment that welcomes and empowers all individuals" includes African-American males in spite of only a few references to African-American males in college documents and suggestions from college staff and students that there are no programs that target this population.

Input from survey and interview participants indicates that concern for the special needs of African-American male students has influenced each of the programs described above and flavored the college's research and planning efforts and staff development activities. This concern is clearly described in the following comments from one DCC administrator.

When developing our Quality Enhancement Plan for SACS and the Achieving the Dream grant initiative, a vision to action strategic planning process was followed to institutionalize the

strategies developed around the first-year experience and improving success for all students. Demographic data on student groups were presented and African-American male enrollment was identified as an area of concern. The new college success skills course and learning communities developed as a result of those discussions indicated a need to recruit African-American males and have a diverse faculty to mentor and teach them. Discussions were tied to activities to support African-American males once we got them on our campus. We have conducted diversity professional development and recruited mentors and adjunct faculty that we thought could relate well to [African-American male] students and inform our practice.

The College's commitment to African-American males is further supported by comments from other College personnel who cited specific examples of staff development activities related to the needs of black male students. These included a variety of presentations and workshops, including one conducted by a recognized expert, and a field trip to an all-male, historically black college.

Many of the survey and interview respondents referenced the College's attempt to establish a section of the mandatory SDV 100 Student Success Skills course designed to address the unique needs of African-American males. While this effort was not deemed a success, primarily because of the College's inability to restrict enrollment in the course to African-American males, it clearly indicates the College's intent to support this population.

The College's commitment to this group is also evident in the personal commitment to their success expressed by many of the personnel participating in the study. While there is not a formal mentoring program at DCC for African-American males, several respondents spoke of both an individual and a collective effort on the part of some personnel to fill that role. According to one respondent, "We've hit each other across the head enough to know that we have to work with that [African-American male] population." This informal mentoring effort on the part of DCC staff was acknowledged by participants in the student focus group. Each of them was able to identify an individual at the College that served as a mentor and confidant.

Recognition of Need to Improve. While most of the interview participants described the racial and social climate at Danville Community College as good or, at least, getting better, they unanimously saw opportunities for enhancement, using such phrases as "a lot of room for improvement" and "a huge way to go." One interviewee described the climate this way:

When I first came to work here so many of the majority race faculty . . . made the comment that we need to get back to the days of the good old student. And what they meant by the good old student was that they were homogenous. We have come far beyond that; but, at the same time, we still have a ways to go.

Another provided this assessment, ". . . we are respectful of each other, we work with each other, but . . . there is more we need to do to get together."

Many respondents offered specific areas in need of improvement that could enhance the college climate and make it more supportive of African-American male students. One issue identified by both staff and students is the underrepresentation of African-American faculty in general, and, more specifically, the absence of African-American male faculty members. One DCC employee pointed out that in a

faculty of about 60, there are only three full-time African-American faculty members, and all are females. As one student stated:

I wish there were a few more African-American teachers, especially African-American male teachers. When I was in high school, the African-American male teachers would stop you in the hall and check up on you. They would pull me to the side and just talk to me. . . . And it hit you a little bit harder because he was black, too.

DCC personnel and students also identified expanded student activities as important to the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students, noting that extracurricular activities have in the past been a strength that has helped to keep African-American male students on campus. The basketball team, eliminated last year for financial reasons, was specifically named by several respondents. Members of the student focus group also talked about the need for more activities that "stretch your mind" and provide opportunities to research and express ideas.

Several interview respondents pointed to the overall increase in African-American student enrollment over the past several years as evidence that DCC is working hard to improve its appeal and support of minority students. Both

the successes and challenges are reflected by the following statement by one DCC employee. "Students are coming to us now. We are the first choice among local students of color. It's something we must be doing that's right; but I know there are other things we need to improve to ensure that African-American males graduate."

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. The study was conducted using a mixed-method design, providing an inclusive investigation of the research questions.

Existing data was used to calculate individual college enrollment and persistent rates, along with two other variables in the study. A researcher designed survey of college academic and student development administrators was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data on other variables. A document review, faculty and administrator interviews, and a student focus group were used to gather additional data on one Virginia community college

identified as having high African-American male enrollment and persistence rates.

The quantitative analysis identified eleven variables significantly related to high African-American male enrollment. In general, high levels of African-American male enrollment are associated with:

1. larger institutions;
2. strategic planning efforts that include programs to positively impact the enrollment and persistence of African-American males;
3. collection and dissemination of institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American males;
4. staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment and persistence;
5. advising models that include tutoring;
6. advising models that include financial management;
7. promotion and support of minority student organizations;
8. support of African-American male students in the K12 pipeline through cooperation and collaboration with other institutions of higher education; and

9. a general social and cultural climate within the college that is supportive of African-American male students.

The eleven associated variables were used in a regression model to determine how well they predict college enrollment of African-American males. While the shared variance of the predictor variables was high, the relationship failed to reach significance at $p .05$.

Only one of the variables used in the study, the inclusion of contributions by Africans and African-Americans into college curricula, was found to be significantly related to African-American male student persistence. Three other variables, (1) staff development activities aimed at overcoming the barriers to African-American male enrollment, (2) staff development activities aimed at overcoming the barriers to African-American male persistence, and (3) opportunities for the expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood, were moderately correlated but were not found to be significant at $p .05$. Ignoring the significance standard, the author used these four variables in a standard regression model. As anticipated, the shared variance of these factors was weak and failed to reach significance.

The failure of many of these analyses to reach statistical significance can be directly linked to three factors: (1) the small number of community colleges in the study, (2) the skewed distribution of the enrollment and persistence rates, and (3) overlap among the variables used in the regression models. The p value in correlation and regression analyses is generally set at .05, indicating only a 5% probability that the observed relationships are a result of chance alone. Larger p values suggest a larger probability that the relationships are a result of chance. While many of these results are outside the boundaries of what can be confidently reported, they are worthy of further examination in light of the limitations of the study.

The results of the quantitative analyses were then used to guide the qualitative component of the study. Survey participant comments and observations associated with enrollment and persistence correlated variables were recorded and explored.

While there is some evidence of programs and practices targeting African-American males at high enrollment and high persistence community colleges, the prevailing evidence suggests that both African-American male enrollment and persistence can be enhanced and encouraged

by strategic efforts and student development activities intended for a wide range of students. The participant comments also indicate a connection between many of the associated variables and structured programs that target "at-risk," "underserved," and minority populations including federal TRIO programs, Achieving the Dream, and other regional and college-based programs.

Campus climates on the high enrollment and high persistence colleges were portrayed as supportive of all students and as institutions where diversity is encouraged and respected. These college climates are enhanced by the presence of African-American and African-American male student organizations, and by African-American male involvement in other more general student organizations and activities. These colleges are further characterized by a variety of extra-curricular activities that provide for recognition of the contributions by Africans and African-Americans to American society.

Lastly, a case study was conducted of Danville Community College (DCC), the only college in the study identified as having both African-American enrollment and persistence more than one standard deviation above the mean college rates. The case study was also guided by the

variables identified as associated with high enrollment and persistence rates.

The case study revealed four specific programs that may contribute to the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students at DCC. The programs include:

1. Achieving the Dream - a national, grant funded program designed to enhance learning and success for all students, particularly low income students, students of color, and first-generation students;
2. African American Culture Club - organized to promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for African American culture through a combination of exhibits, programs, speakers, and other events;
3. Alliance for Excellence - a coalition of African-American churches and four community colleges including Danville Community College that seeks to increase participation in higher education among African-Americans in communities throughout central Virginia;
4. President's Advisory Panel on Black Concerns - made up of African-American business, government, education, and religious leaders, the panel seeks to support the mission of DCC by recruiting and

retaining greater numbers of African-American students.

In addition to these programs, two general themes emerged from the DCC case study: (1) a recognition of the unique needs of African-American male students, and (2) a recognition of the college's need to improve its social and cultural climate as it relates to African-American male students. Elements of these programs and themes validate and contribute to the earlier findings from the open ended survey questions.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have been able to enroll and graduate or transfer the highest proportional number of African-American male students and to identify the institutional characteristics and practices that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males. This chapter presents an overview of the study and a summary of the data previously presented including conclusions about the data. Additionally, recommendations for implementation of the study's results and suggestions for additional research will be offered.

Overview of the Study

Background

While the number of African-American males enrolled in American institutions of higher education have increased over the past 20 years, both the rate of enrollment and the rate of graduation have been reported as proportionately low when compared to other groups (Hefner, 2004; Leach, 2002). Although community colleges often serve as the primary opportunity for access to higher education for many underserved Americans, U.S. census data indicate the rate

of African-American male enrollment in these institutions has increased at a rate far short of the overall enrollment increases over the past decade. Similarly, graduation rates for black males from community colleges remain far below those of African-American females and other minority males. These national enrollment and degree attainment statistics are reflected in the member institutions of the Virginia Community College System.

Existing research on college enrollment has focused primarily on majority students attending 4-year institutions and has failed to disaggregate minority students or examine issues related to two-year college enrollment (Bateman & Hossler, 1996; Kern, 2000; Somers, et al., 2006). Emerging research, however, suggests significant differences in factors contributing to college enrollment for community college students (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Stokes & Somers, 2004; Summers et al., 2006) and African-American students (Bateman & Hossler, 1996; Perna, 2000).

Likewise, prevailing research related to student retention and persistence reflects the experiences of majority culture students attending residential 4-year colleges and universities; while studies who have examined community college retention have been inconclusive (Borglum

& Kubala, 2000; Burnette, 1996; Ross, 1992; Tinto, 1997). Studies that have targeted African-American male students have focused on student cognitive and background factors and have been limited to students attending a single institution (Hagedorn et al., 2002; Mason, 1998). Other researchers suggest, however, that student characteristics alone cannot predict persistence in higher education, and that institutional characteristics may also contribute to successful college persistence, especially for traditionally underserved populations (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Bush, 2004; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzel, & Leinbach, 2005).

The literature review identified a number of institutional characteristics and practices that may contribute to community college enrollment and persistence in general and among African-American male students in particular. The current study sought to determine which of these factors best predict African-American male enrollment and persistence in Virginia community colleges. The following research questions were posed to accomplish the purpose of this study:

1. Given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the

Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?

2. Given the likely differences in the persistence rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics and practices best predict the persistence of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?

This study was conducted to fill, in part, a void in the research related to institutional factors that promote the enrollment and persistence of African-American males in community colleges. Study findings provide valuable information to community college leaders and others who are concerned about and committed to addressing the alarmingly low rates of participation and persistence among African-American male students.

Methodology

The study was conducted using a mixed methods design allowing for a more inclusive analysis of the research questions than could have been accomplished using

quantitative or qualitative analysis alone. This mixed methods study followed a sequential explanatory design consisting of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003).

The data used in the quantitative phase of the study included existing population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, and enrollment, persistence, and faculty data for each of Virginia's 23 community colleges from IPEDS. Using these data, the researcher was able to calculate college enrollment rates, persistence rates, size, and ratio of African-American faculty to overall faculty.

U.S. Census Bureau data also identified eight Virginia community colleges located in the western part of the state that serve areas where African-American males make up only 2.28% or less of the total population. These eight colleges are also among the lowest in the VCCS in enrollment of African-American male students including both total enrollment and full-time, program-placed enrollment. It is highly likely that the inclusion of these schools in this study would disproportionately impact the distribution of enrollment and persistence rates among VCCS colleges; and as a result, these schools are not included in the study.

Additional data on college characteristics were gathered using a researcher-designed survey of VCCS

academic and student affairs administrators. The survey included questions in a structured response format using a Likert-type scale. Survey responses were sorted by college and a mean score was calculated for each VCCS college for each of the variables measured by the survey.

The study incorporated descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses to first examine African-American male enrollment and persistence at Virginia community colleges and, secondly, identify institutional characteristics that best predict the enrollment and persistence of African-American males.

The results of the quantitative analyses were then used to guide the qualitative component of the study. College administrator comments regarding institutional characteristics related to African-American male enrollment and persistence were gathered through open-ended questions included in the above referenced survey. The responses from high enrollment and persistence colleges were recorded and explored as appropriate, utilizing total counts, frequencies of response, and rank order of responses within each question. These comments provided insight into how the related variables are brought into play at high performing institutions.

A final qualitative component of the study utilized interviews, a focus group, and a document review to present a brief case study of the only Virginia community college identified through the quantitative analyses as having both significantly higher African American male enrollment rates and significantly higher African-American male persistence rates. The case study was also guided by the results of the correlation and regression analyses and provided an opportunity to see how the characteristics, policies, and practices of a single institution have been synergized to positively impact the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students.

Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1: Given the likely differences in the proportional enrollment rates of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics best predict the enrollment of African-American males at Virginia Community College System member schools?

The current study confirmed differences in proportional enrollment of African-American males among Virginia community colleges. These enrollment rates ranged from .73% to 2.42%, with a mean enrollment rate of 1.34%

(SD = .0053). Eleven of the 29 predictor variables included in the study were found to be significantly correlated with African-American male enrollment. In general, high levels of African-American male enrollment are associated with:

1. larger institutions;
2. strategic planning efforts that include programs to positively impact the enrollment and persistence of African-American males;
3. collection and dissemination of institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American males;
4. staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment and persistence;
5. advising models that include tutoring and financial management counseling;
6. promotion and support of minority student organizations;
7. support of African-American male students in the K12 pipeline through cooperation and collaboration with other institutions of higher education; and
8. a general social and cultural climate within the college that is supportive of African-American male students.

These variables were inserted into a standard regression model that indicated a high predictive value for the model, suggesting that approximately 90% of the variance in enrollment rates might be accounted for by the combination of these variables. This relationship, however, failed to reach statistical significance, likely a result of the small number of institutions in the study. While this relationship falls outside of the standard range of significance, it is worth reporting given the high predictive value of the model.

The variables related to African-American male enrollment logically cluster into three broad areas: strategic effort, student development, and campus climate. The majority of the variables, however, are related to strategic effort. These clusters and related variables are reported in Table 5.1.

The survey comments related to the strategic effort variables from high African-American male enrollment colleges indicate that strategic planning and staff development activities impacting black male enrollment and persistence often target (1) all students in general, (2) "at risk" and "underserved" groups, and (3) African-American males in particular. Survey comments also indicate that data related to the educational outcomes of African-

American males is collected and disseminated most often as part of a general approach to data management. It is further evident from the survey comments that the identified strategic planning, staff development, data utilization are often associated with structured programs that target "at-risk," "underserved," and minority populations. Examples of these programs include federal TRIO programs and Achieving the Dream initiatives.

An additional variable, collaboration with other higher education institutions in support of black males in the K-12 pipeline, was included in the strategic effort cluster. When asked to describe college collaborative efforts, however, most participants cited partnerships with K-12, religious, civic and community agencies. The few who addressed collaboration with other higher education entities reported cooperative arrangements with neighboring 4-year colleges and universities.

The two variables grouped under student development were presented in the survey as components of a comprehensive advising model that addresses a broad range of developmental needs. Survey respondents were asked to share comments regarding their respective college's overall advising model. As such, comments specific to tutoring and

Table 5.1

Variables related to African-American male enrollment

Strategic effort	Student development	Campus climate
Enrollment planning	Financial management	College size
Persistence Planning	Tutoring	Student organizations
Use of data		Climate
Enrollment training		
Persistence training		
Higher education collaboration		

financial management counseling were not available.

However, based on the comments presented, high African-American male enrollment colleges are described as having advising models that address the needs of all students as opposed to models focusing on unique needs of black males.

The three remaining variables associated with higher African-American male enrollment all contribute to college

social and cultural climate. Unfortunately, this study does not include qualitative data to support the relationship between college size and enrollment. Regarding student organizations, these high enrollment colleges are portrayed as having African-American and African-American male organizations, and African-American male participation and involvement in other more general student organizations and activities. Campus climates are described as supportive of all students, and supportive and inclusive of African-American males.

The case study conducted at Danville Community College (DCC) validates many of the survey findings, especially the role of structured programs as a medium for delivery of many of the characteristics and practices found to be associated with high African-American male enrollment. The case study identified four such programs: Achieving the Dream, the African American Culture Club, the Alliance for Excellence, and the President's Advisory Panel on Black Concerns. These programs contribute to strategic planning, use of data, staff development, student services and activities, collaboration with outside agencies, and a supportive campus climate. The case study also revealed two pervasive themes that may also contribute to African-American male enrollment. These themes, (1) a recognition

of the unique needs of African-American male students and (2) a recognition of the need to improve services and programs targeting African-American male students, have influenced each of the programs above and flavored the college's research, planning, and staff development activities. Additionally, these themes provide the foundation for the personal commitment expressed by DCC staff toward the success of black male students, and contribute a climate supportive of them.

The research findings presented in this study support emerging research on community college enrollment, suggesting that community college characteristics can play a prominent role in the enrollment of African-American male students. The current findings suggest that a range of institutional characteristics and practices may influence the enrollment of African-American males in Virginia community colleges. These characteristics and practices are grouped into three larger categories, (1) strategic efforts, (2) student development, and (3) campus climate. Further, the current study indicates that, while African-American male enrollment may be enhanced by targeted programs and practices, their enrollment may also be strengthened by robust, more generic efforts aimed at all "at-risk," "underserved," and minority populations, and at

all students in general. Findings also suggest that many of the characteristics and practices related to African-American male enrollment may be best delivered through formal, structured programs and activities similar to those described in the Danville Community College case study. Finally, the study points to the importance of an institutional recognition of the unique needs of African-American males and a commitment to meet those needs.

Research Question 2: Given the likely differences in the persistence of African-American male students among the 23 member colleges of the Virginia Community College System, what institutional characteristics best predict the persistence of African-American males at Virginia Community College member schools?

The current study confirmed differences in persistence of African-American male students among Virginia community colleges. These persistence rates ranged from .34% to 33.33% with a mean enrollment rate of 17.4% (SD = .0630). The distribution of persistence rates exhibited a distinct positive skew with most colleges clustered toward lower rates of persistence. Only one of the 29 predictor variables included in the study, inclusion of contributions made by Africans and African-Americans into academic disciplines, was found to be significantly correlated with

African-American male persistence. Three other variables displayed moderate correlation with persistence, but failed to reach significance at the $p < .05$. These variables suggest possible relationships between African-American persistence and (1) staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment and persistence, and (2) opportunities for expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood. Failure of these correlations to reach statistical significance is likely related to the small number of schools in the study and the skewed distribution of persistence rates, and indicates a greater possibility that the relationships are a result of chance. The author ignored the generally accepted boundaries regarding significance and used all four correlated variables in a standard multiple regression model. The shared variance of these factors was weak and failed to reach significance.

The four related variables were further investigated by examination of survey comments from high African-American male persistence colleges and the Danville Community College case study. Survey comments indicated only limited staff development activities aimed specifically at overcoming barriers to African-American

male enrollment and/or persistence. Others indicated that staff development activities more often focused on the more general needs of minority students; while others pointed to even more universal training aimed at enrollment and persistence of all students.

Survey respondents reported some college efforts to incorporate contributions of blacks into the curriculum through a variety of courses. More often, however, these high African-American persistence colleges are characterized by a variety of extra-curricular programs and activities that highlight the contributions of Africans and African-Americans. Regarding opportunities for African-American male expression and self-exploration, respondents pointed to such venues as Black History Month activities and African-American clubs and organizations.

The Danville Community College case study supported the survey findings and again pointed to the role of previously identified programs in providing activities possibly related to African-American male persistence. These programs offer the stimulus for staff development activities, forums for recognition of academic contributions by blacks, and a platform for expression and exploration of ideas related to African-American manhood. Additionally, the two prevailing themes uncovered in the

case study, (1) recognition of the unique needs of African-American male students and (2) recognition of the need to improve services and programs targeting African-American male students, have influenced staff development activities and contributed to a campus climate inclusive and supportive of African-American male students.

The quantitative findings are inconclusive about the role that institutional characteristics and practices play in the persistence of African-American male students in Virginia community colleges. Furthermore, these findings do little to refute the traditional literature and research which conclude that individual characteristics and pre-college experiences are better predictors of persistence.

There is evidence, however, that a curriculum and campus environment inclusive of the academic contributions of Africans and African-Americans can contribute to the success of black male students. There is also some indication that African-American male student persistence may be enhanced by staff development aimed at the overcoming the barriers related to black student enrollment and persistence, and by providing opportunities for African-American male student expression and self-exploration. Finally, findings suggest that the characteristics and practices possibly related to African-

American student persistence may be best delivered through formal, structured programs and activities within a supportive and inclusive campus environment as described in the Danville Community College case study.

Key Findings and Recommendations

This study was implemented to identify community college characteristics and practices that best predict African-American male enrollment and persistence in Virginia Community Colleges. The research findings suggest a number of recommendations for community college leaders and others concerned about the alarmingly low rates of college participation and achievement by African-American males. It is the hope of the author that these findings and recommendations will serve as a springboard for all Virginia community college stakeholders to begin both system-wide and institutional dialogue regarding the disproportionately low enrollment and persistence rates of black male students and how these rates can be most effectively influenced. The key study findings and related recommendations are delineated below.

Key Finding #1

Community college characteristics can play a prominent role in the enrollment of African-American male students. A range of institutional characteristics and practices were

identified in the current study under the broad categories of strategic effort, student development, and campus climate. Recommendations related to strategic effort include:

- The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and its member colleges should collect and distribute system-wide and institutional data related to the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students.
- The VCCS and its member colleges should develop system-wide and institutional goals and strategies aimed at increasing the number of African-American male students attending Virginia community colleges.
- The VCCS and its member colleges should develop system-wide and institutional goals and strategies aimed at increasing the graduation and transfer rates of African-American male students attending Virginia community colleges.
- The VCCS and its member colleges should provide staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male student enrollment and persistence.
- The VCCS and its member colleges should expand collaborative programs with K-12 partners, community-

based organizations, and other institutions of higher education to support African-American male enrollment and achievement.

Relative to student development, the author recommends that:

- Each VCCS college provide a comprehensive student development program that address a wide range of developmental and counseling needs, including tutoring and financial management.

Recommendations related to campus climate include:

- The VCCS and its member colleges should encourage and support the formation of African-American and/or African-American male student organizations.
- The VCCS and its member colleges should encourage and support campus activities that contribute to a college climate that is welcoming and supportive of African-American male students.

Key Finding #2

While African-American male enrollment may be enhanced by targeted programs and practices, their enrollment may also be strengthened by robust, more generic efforts aimed at all "at-risk," "underserved," and minority populations, and at all students in general. As a result, it is recommended that Virginia community college leaders:

- Develop college, regional, and/or state-wide support programs that directly target African-American male students.
- Develop college, regional, and/or state-wide support programs that target "at-risk," "underserved," and minority students.
- Provide resources to strengthen and enhance existing student development programs that support all students.

Key Finding #3

Many of the characteristics and practices related to African-American male enrollment may be best delivered through formal, structured programs and activities comparable to those identified in the Danville Community College case study. The previously stated recommendations to develop college, regional, and/or statewide support programs targeting "at-risk," "underserved," and minority students in general, and African-American male students specifically, provide a partial response to this finding. It is further recommended that VCCS colleges pursue participation in national grant supported programs designed to meet the needs of "at-risk," "underserved," and minority students such as Achieving the Dream and federal TRIO programs.

Key Finding #4

Although the study findings were inconclusive regarding the relationship between institutional characteristics and African-American male student persistence, the study does indicate that curricula and campus environment inclusive of the academic contributions of Africans and African-Americans can contribute to the success of black male students. In response to this finding, it is recommended that VCCS faculty members include significant contributions by Africans and African-Americans in all academic disciplines and that colleges provide activities and programs that highlight the academic and cultural contributions of Africans and African-Americans.

Key Finding #5

A final finding from the study highlighted the importance of an institutional recognition of the unique needs of African-American males and a commitment to meet those needs. Adoption of any or all of the above recommendations would serve as evidence of such recognition and commitment.

Suggestions for Future Research

The alarmingly low rates of African-American male enrollment and persistence in higher education, and the

social implications related to their lack of participation and achievement, underscore the glaring need for additional research in this area. Moreover, since community colleges often serve as the primary point of access to higher education for many African-American males, further research should focus on factors that support enrollment and persistence in the two-year college setting. These observations, combined with the results and conclusions of the current study, suggest a number of recommendations for further research.

Since the results of the current study were likely limited by the small number of schools examined, a similar study including substantially more institutions might provide more significant results and provide additional insight into the role of institutional characteristics. Additionally, the current study was limited to Virginia community colleges. Broadening the study to include other states and regions of the country would also be helpful.

Additional study that would isolate the effects of institutional characteristics, programs, and practices on African-American male enrollment and persistence would be beneficial in helping community college decision makers determine specific strategies for improvement. The current study was unable to account for a number of other factors

such as: differences between urban, suburban, and rural colleges; socio-economic status; region of the state; and enrollment and graduation rates of other subgroups.

Larger college size as determined by full-time equivalent enrollment was identified in the current study as associated with higher African-American male enrollment. The current study, however, failed to provide a mechanism to further explore this phenomenon. Additional research should be conducted to examine characteristics of larger community colleges as they relate to black male student enrollment and persistence, and offer recommendations for replicating these characteristics on smaller college campuses.

While the current study examined college characteristics that support enrollment and persistence, it does not offer insight into characteristics that discourage African-American male participation and success. A qualitative study is needed that would include interviews with black male students who fail to enroll or who drop out of community colleges. Such a study would provide a greater understanding of why African-American males fail to enroll and graduate. Additionally, the current study examined college characteristics from the viewpoint of college academic and student development administrators.

Examination of these characteristics from the viewpoint of African-American male students would offer an alternative perspective.

Finally, a thorough analysis of best practices in community colleges with exemplary African-American male enrollment and persistence rates is needed to corroborate the findings and recommendations of the current study.

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APPENDIX A

Virginia Community College System Member Colleges

College	Campus Locations	Service Region
1. Blue Ridge	Weyers Cave	Augusta County Highland County Rockingham County Harrisonburg City Staunton City Waynesboro City
2. Central Virginia	Lynchburg	Amherst County Appomattox County Bedford County Campbell County Bedford City Lynchburg City
3. Dabney S. Lancaster	Clifton Forge	Alleghany County Bath County Botetourt County* Rockbridge County Buena Vista City Clifton Forge City Covington City Lexington City
4. Danville	Danville	Halifax County* Pittsylvania County Danville City
5. Eastern Shore	Melfa	Accomack County Northampton County
6. Germanna	Fredericksburg Locust Grove	Caroline County Culpepper County King George County* Madison County Orange County Spotsylvania County Stafford County Fredericksburg City

7. J. Sargeant Reynolds	Goochland Henrico Richmond	Goochland County Hanover County Henrico County Louisa County* Powhatan County
		Richmond City
8. John Tyler	Chester Midlothian	Amelia County Charles City County Chesterfield County Dinwiddie County Prince George County Surry County Sussex County
		Colonial Heights City Hopewell City Petersburg City
9. Lord Fairfax	Fauquier Middletown	Clarke County Fauquier County Frederick County Page County Rappahannock County Shenandoah County Warren County
		Winchester City
10. Mountain Empire	Big Stone Gap	Dickenson County* Lee County Scott County Wise County
		Norton City
11. New River	Dublin	Floyd County Giles County Montgomery County Pulaski County
		Radford City

12. Northern Virginia	Alexandria	Fairfax County
	Annandale	Loudoun County
	Loudoun	Prince William County
	Manassas	
	Springfield	Alexandria City
	Woodbridge	Fairfax City
		Falls Church City
		Manassas City
13. Patrick Henry	Martinsville	Franklin County*
		Henry County
		Patrick County
		Martinsville City
14. Paul D. Camp	Franklin	Isle of Wight County
	Suffolk	Southampton County
		Franklin City
		Suffolk City*
15. Piedmont	Charlottesville	Albemarle County
		Fluvanna County
		Louisa County*
		Nelson County
		Buckingham County*
		Charlottesville City
16. Rappahannock	Glenns	Essex County
	Warsaw	Gloucester County
		King and Queen County
		King George County*
		King William County
		Lancaster County
		Mathews County
		Middlesex County
		New Kent County
		Northumberland County
		Richmond County
		Westmoreland County

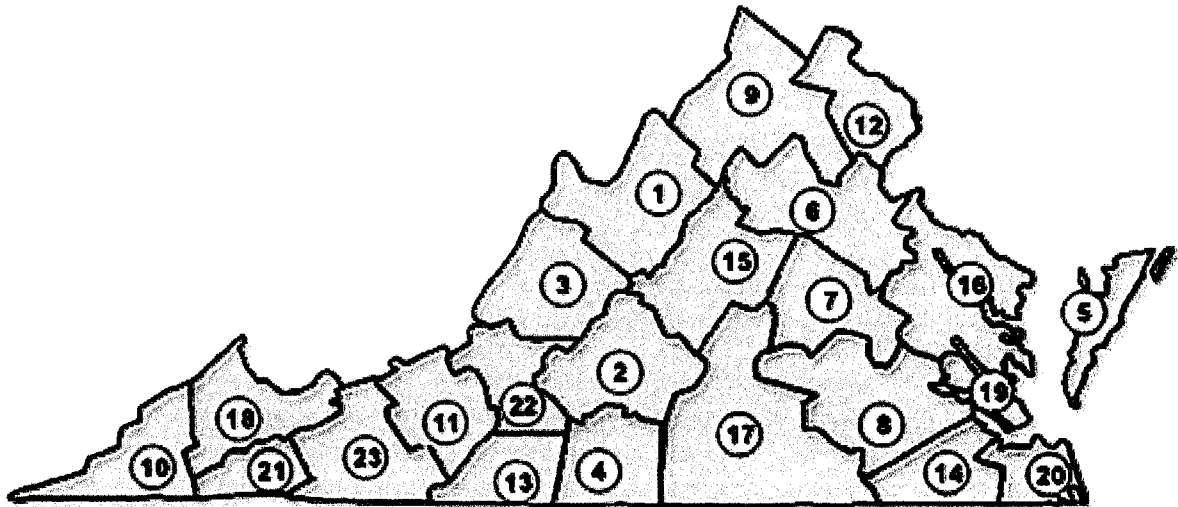
17. Southside Virginia	Alberta Keysville	Brunswick County Buckingham County* Charlotte County Cumberland County Greensville County Halifax County* Lunenburg County Mecklenburg County Nottoway County Prince Edward County Emporia City
18. Southwest Virginia	Richlands	Buchanan County Dickenson County* Russell County Tazewell County
19. Thomas Nelson	Hampton Williamsburg	James City County York County Hampton City Newport News City Poquoson City Williamsburg City
20. Tidewater	Chesapeake Norfolk Portsmouth Virginia Beach	Chesapeake City Norfolk City Portsmouth City Suffolk City* Virginia Beach City
21. Virginia Highlands	Abingdon	Smyth County* Washington County Bristol City
22. Virginia Western	Roanoke	Botetourt County* Craig County Franklin County* Roanoke County Roanoke City Salem City

23. Wytheville

Wytheville

Bland County
Carroll County
Grayson County
Smyth County*
Wythe County

Galax City



APPENDIX B

Institutional Practices and African-American Male Enrollment and Persistence

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey on institutional practices that may impact African-American male enrollment and persistence in Virginia community colleges. Respondent identities will not be reported in research findings. Thank you for your participation. Please note that the survey is printed on front and back of the page to reduce paper consumption.

Demographic Information

Please indicate the age group to which you belong:

- ☐ Under 30
 ☐ 30 – 39
 ☐ 40 – 49
 ☐ 50 – 59
 ☐ 60 and over

Please indicate the racial or ethnic group with which you identify:

- ☐ African-American or Black
 ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
 ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
 ☐ Hispanic
 ☐ White, non-Hispanic

Please indicate your gender:

- ☐ Female
 ☐ Male

Please indicate the area in which you primarily work:

- ☐ Academic Affairs
 ☐ Student Affairs
 ☐ Both Academic and Student Affairs

Please indicate the number of years you have been employed in your current position:

- ☐ Less than 1 year
 ☐ 2 to 5 years
 ☐ 6 to 10 years
 ☐ 11 to 15 years
 ☐ 16 to 20 years
 ☐ 21 or more years

Survey

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the community college where you work.

My college's strategic planning efforts include planning toward the implementation of programs to positively impact the enrollment of African-American males.

☐ Strongly Disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Strongly Agree

Please describe your college's strategic planning efforts as they relate to African-American male enrollment.

My college's strategic planning efforts include planning toward the implementation of programs to positively impact the persistence of African-American males.

☐ Strongly Disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Strongly Agree

Please describe your college's strategic planning efforts as they relate to African-American male persistence.

My college collects and disseminates institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American male students.

☐ Strongly Disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Strongly Agree

Please describe institutional data about African-American male students collected and disseminated by your college.

My college has provided staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male enrollment.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Please describe your college's staff development activities as they relate to African-American male enrollment.

My college has provided staff development activities aimed at overcoming barriers to African-American male persistence.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Please describe your college's staff development activities as they relate to African-American male persistence.

My college promotes interaction between African-American male students and college personnel.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Please describe your college's efforts to promote interaction between African-American male students and college personnel.

My college's advising model addresses the broad range of academic and personal needs of African-American male students, including:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Placement testing					
Early program placement					
Early registration					
Study habits and skills					
Time management					
Information and learning technology					
Tutoring					
Goal planning					
Financial management					
Career development					
Job placement					
Transfer assistance					

Please share any other comments or observations you may have regarding your college's advising model as it relates to African-American male students.

Significant contributions made by Africans and African-Americans are included in most academic disciplines at my college.

☐
Strongly
Disagree

☐
Disagree

☐
Neither Agree nor
Disagree

☐
Agree

☐
Strongly Agree

Please describe efforts at your college to include contributions by Africans and African-Americans into academic disciplines.

My college promotes the understanding of differences by providing a forum for the expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please describe efforts by your college to provide opportunities for the expression of personal experience and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood.

My college provides mentoring or other targeted programs to assist African-American male students in integrating into the college community.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please describe mentoring or other programs at your college designed to assist African-American males in integrating into the college community.

My college promotes and supports minority student organizations that provide opportunities for African-American male students to develop leadership skills and experiences.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Please describe minority student organizations at your college that provide opportunities for African-American male students to develop leadership skills and experiences.

In order to provide support to African-American male students in the K-12 pipeline, my college cooperates and collaborates with other agencies, including

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Local school divisions					
Other higher education institutions					
Religious, civic, and community organizations					

Please describe your college's collaborative efforts with other agencies to support African-American male students in the K-12 pipeline.

The general social and cultural climate within my college is supportive of African-American male students.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Please share any comments or observations you may have regarding your college's social and cultural climate as it relates to African-American male students.

Thank you

Thank you for your participation in this study. Survey results will be reported to the VCCS and member colleges. If you have additional questions or comments, please contact:

Al.Roberts@southside.edu

APPENDIX C

Survey Expert Reviewers

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Riverside Community College - Norco
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Professor/Director UCI/USULA Joint Doctoral Program,
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Los Angeles, CA 90032

Dr. Preston Hampton, Associate Professor
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School of Education, University Hall 135
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P.O. Box 3080
Redlands, CA 92373-0999

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Associate Director, Student Development Services
Coordinator, Minority Male Mentoring Program
North Carolina Community College System
200 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

APPENDIX D

Case Study Interview Protocol

Faculty/Administrator Interview Protocol
African-American Male Retention and Persistence

Introductory Remarks:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This interview will probably take about 30-40 minutes to complete. As you probably know, I am doing a study on African-American male enrollment and persistence in Virginia community colleges. Danville Community College has been identified in the study as a leader in both African-American male student enrollment and persistence. This interview and others with Danville administrators, faculty, and students will be used to further explore and explain Danville's success with this population. This interview will be used for this purpose only and will remain confidential. The information collected will be reported as group data only and, as such, no individuals will be identified in any way. I will not identify you by name in reporting the study or in any conversations with other people. I would like to use a tape recorder so that I don't forget anything you tell me. Is it OK with you if I record the interview?

1. Please share with me a little information about yourself:
 - a. How long have you worked at Danville Community College?
 - b. Do you work primarily in academic or student services?
2. As I have already said, Danville is a leader among Virginia community colleges in both the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students.
 - a. What programs or practices at Danville contribute to the high enrollment of African-American male students?
 - b. What programs or practices at Danville contribute to the persistence of African-American male students?
3. Please share with me what you know about:
 - a. Danville's strategic planning as it relates to African-American male students.

- b. Collection and dissemination of institutional data about the educational outcomes of African-American male students.
 - c. Staff development activities related to African-American male enrollment and persistence.
4. How do advising and student development services at Danville attempt to meet the needs of African-American male students?
5. Please describe efforts at Danville Community College to:
- a. Include contributions by Africans and African-Americans into academic curricula.
 - b. Provide opportunities for expression and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood.
6. Tell me what you know about Danville's efforts to collaborate with other agencies to support African-American male enrollment and persistence.
7. How would you describe the general social and cultural climate at Danville Community College?
8. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about Danville Community College relative to African-American male students?

Conclusion:

Thank you very much for taking time for this interview and for all you have shared with me.

APPENDIX E

Case Study Focus Group Protocol

Student Focus Group Protocol
African-American Male Retention and Persistence

Introductory Remarks:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This session will probably take about an hour to complete. As you probably know, I am doing a study on African-American male enrollment and persistence in Virginia community colleges. Danville Community College has been identified in the study as a leader in both African-American male student enrollment and persistence. This interview and others with Danville administrators and faculty will be used to further explore and explain Danville's success with this population. This interview will be used for this purpose only and will remain confidential. The information collected will be reported as group data and, as such, no individuals will be identified in any way. I will not identify you by name in reporting the study or in any conversations with other people. I would like to use a tape recorder so that I don't forget anything you tell me. Is it OK with you if I record the interview?

1. Please share with me a little information about yourselves:
 - a. How long have you attended Danville Community College?
 - b. Do you attend part-time or full-time?
 - c. What is your major or program of study?
2. As I have already said, Danville is a leader among Virginia community colleges in both the enrollment and persistence of African-American male students.
 - a. Why did you choose to attend Danville Community College?
 - b. At the time you chose to enroll at Danville Community College:
 - i. Were you aware of any efforts by the college to recruit African-American males? What did you know about those efforts?
 - ii. Were you aware of any programs designed to meet the needs of African-American male students? Tell me about those programs?

- c. Why do you think African-American male students are more successful at Danville Community College than they might be at other Virginia community colleges?
 - d. Tell me what you know about programs or practices at Danville intended to meet the needs of African-American male students?
- 3. Do you believe that the advising and student development services at Danville meet the needs of African-American male students? Why or why not?
 - 4. From your experience, are there efforts at Danville Community College to include contributions by Africans and African-Americans into course content? Can you give me any examples from classes you have taken?
 - 5. How does Danville Community College provide opportunities for expression and exploration of issues related to African-American manhood?
 - 6. How would you describe the general social and cultural climate at Danville Community College?
 - 7. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about Danville Community College relative to African-American male students?

Conclusion:

Thank you very much for taking time for this interview and for all you have shared with me.

APPENDIX F

Case Study Data Collection Matrix

Data Source:		
Category	Key Words in Context	Subcategories
Enrollment Planning		
Persistence Planning		
Use of Data		
Staff Development - Enrollment		
Staff Development - Persistence		

Advising/Student Development		
Curriculum		
Voice		
Collaboration		
Climate		
Central Themes:		

VITA

Alfred A. Roberts, the second son of Willie and Christine Roberts, was born and raised in Greensville County, VA. Following short periods of residency in East Lansing, MI, Washington, DC, Petersburg, VA, and Virginia Beach, VA, Alfred returned to Greensville County with his wife, Janet, and young son, Ross, in 1979. After 30 years, a second son, Scott, and a daughter, Lauren, Alfred continues to make Greensville County, VA his home.

Education

B.A., Mass Communications, 1973
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

M.Ed., Educational Media, 1976
Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA

A.B.D., Community College Leadership
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA
Anticipated graduation: May, 2009
Dissertation topic: Institutional Factors Supporting the
Enrollment and Persistence of African-American Males in
Virginia Community Colleges

Employment

Vice President of Workforce Development Services and
Continuing Education
Southside Virginia Community College, Alberta, VA
May 2008 to Present

Dean of Off-Campus Instruction - Christanna Campus
Southside Virginia Community College, Alberta, VA
July 2005 to May 2008

Director of Campus Without Walls and Student Support
Services
Southside Virginia Community College, Alberta, VA
July 1999 to July 2005

Administrator (Counselor) for Student Support Services
Southside Virginia Community College, Alberta, VA
November 1995 to July 1999

Program Director
Sussex-Greensville-Emporia Adult Activity Services, Inc.,
Emporia, VA
October 1983 to November 1995

Instructor
Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA
August 1976 to May 1979

State/National Presentations

MAKE IT HAPPEN: African-American Males in Higher Education
1998 Minority Student Today Conference
San Antonio, Texas

MAKE IT HAPPEN: African-American Males in Higher Education
2001 Symposium for the Recruitment and Retention of
Students of Color
Lawrence, Kansas

High Performance Technology Dual Enrollment Program
2006 High Five Conference
Virginia Career Education Foundation
Richmond, Virginia

High Performance Technology: Providing Multiple Career
Pathways
2006 National Tech Prep Network Annual Conference
Dallas, Texas

Southside Virginia Community College - Nottoway County
Public Schools Dual Enrollment Associate Degree Program
2007 Governor's Conference on Education
Richmond, Virginia

2008 Commencement Address
Virginia Department of Correctional Education - Lunenburg
Correctional Center
Victoria, Virginia

Recognitions and Awards

Distinguished Service Award, 1990
Emporia-Greensville Industrial Development Cooperation

Certificate of Recognition, 2000

Excellence in Education

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

College of Human Resources and Education

Moses D. Knox Freedom Fighter Award, 2000

Greensville-Emporia Branch

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

CYC Extravaganza Award, 2001

Excellence in Leadership

Community Youth Center, Inc.

Certificate of Completion, 2001

Developing Diversity Training in the Workplace

National MultiCultural Institute

Certificate of Recognition, 2002

Creating Excellence Award

Virginia Department of Education

Division of Career and Technical Education

Business Associate of the Year, 2002

Brunswick-Greensville Chapter

American Business Women's Association

Certificate of Completion, 2003

Teaching Skills and Cultural Competency

National MultiCultural Institute

Distinguished Service Award, 2005

Greensville County School Board

Distinguished Service Award, 2007

Virginia Community Colleges Association

Black Concerns Commission