

AN EXPLORATION OF HOW INVOLVEMENT IN A
FRESHMAN RETENTION PROGRAM RELATES TO
INTENTION TO COMPLETE AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE

By

C2010
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Submitted to the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
and the Faculty of the
Graduate School at the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Date defended: June 16, 2010

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Date approved: July 14, 2010

Abstract

The study examined the relationship of the level and type of involvement of freshman students in the Hawk Link Retention Program, a first-year program at the University of Kansas, to intent to return and graduate. The study found that participants were retained at a high level but that their type and level of involvement were not related to retention.

Acknowledgements

The task of completing this degree could not have been accomplished without the help of many people who assisted, encouraged, questioned, and contributed to the process. I would like to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee chair Lisa Wolf-Wendel. I would also like to thank the members of my dissertation committee Susan Twombly, Dongbin Kim, John Rury, and Heidi Hallman. Special thanks go to Vicki Peyton and Mickey Waxman for their efforts and expertise throughout the course of this project. A special thanks to the Office of Multicultural Affairs staff; without their cooperation this research project would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my colleagues, mentors, co-workers, friends and family all across the United States for their professional and personal support of me as I worked on this project. The support you provided to me through e-mails, cards, and one-on-one interactions was priceless and greatly appreciated. In closing, I would like to express my unending gratitude and love to my parents, Naomi and Eugene Clouch, Jr. who instilled in me my faith, the value of a quality education, and the importance of hard work. You always believed that I was able to accomplish any goal I have established for myself. And finally, I am forever grateful to my siblings, Gena, Paul, Rodney, Thurman, and Nate for their unconditional love and continued support of every educational endeavor that I chose to tackle.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Student affairs practitioners in every college environment work to increase student learning and development as well as improve the resources to assist students in obtaining their educational goals (Taylor & Miller, 2002). The call for accountability by state legislators and governing bodies has renewed interest in student retention strategies and in funneling the development of those strategies at universities across the nation. Even though the emphasis on retention strategies has increased over past decades, the national retention rate for students of color continues to lag behind that of Caucasian students (McClanahan, 2004). Retention is defined as students who are continuously enrolled through completion of their academic programs (Seidman 2005; Taylor & Miller, 2002). As reported by the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange, the retention rates for students of color hovers around 76%, while the national first-year retention rate for Caucasian students is 79% (CSRDE, 2007). Students of color, as defined by CSRDE include African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic American, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives.

The road to increased minority student retention has obstacles for both students and administrators. Students encounter obstacles in their transition to universities, including difficulties such as low socioeconomic status, inadequate academic preparation, lack of clear goals, psychological and social adjustment, unfamiliarity with higher education, family responsibilities, job related responsibilities, and difficulties financing college (Chang, 2005; Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005). All of these factors may impede their efforts to persist in college (Chang, 2005).

University administrators across the United States review their retention rates then determine the deficient areas so they may then create and evaluate the newly adopted retention programs. University administrators face barriers such as lack of faculty involvement with students or lack of an inviting campus climate as they strive to improve the retention rates on their campus through programs and services (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005). The assessment of retention programs is often inadequate. A key to program enhancement is improvement of program assessment, which is the foundation for changes of any program (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005; Taylor & Miller, 2002).

As administrators work through challenges to retaining students from their first year through graduation, they realize each obstacle is multifaceted. Taylor and Miller (2002) have identified five obstacles to retention assessment: 1) lack of staff that can efficiently conduct evaluations; 2) lack of resources to evaluate; 3) hesitance to assess programs because of associated historical and political realities; 4) fear among program stakeholders concerning decisions and identifying meaningful outcomes; 5) inappropriate models for examining retention programs for minority students.

Although barriers and obstacles exist, universities should not feel prohibited from reaching out to their students of color and determining their needs (Taylor & Miller, 2002). Retaining students of color—African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic American, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives—through graduation is something for which all universities and colleges should strive. Retention efforts must be made comprehensive and seamless on behalf of the student (Taylor & Miller, 2002; Ye, 2004-2005). It is important to continue to conduct research so that universities have better

data to improve retention programs and increase retention rates of underrepresented students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the level and type of involvement of freshman students in the Hawk Link Retention Program, a first-year retention program at the University of Kansas, to determine its relationship to retention at the university. The study explores the students' type and level of involvement in the Hawk Link Program and the perceived likelihood that students will re-enroll for the fall semester, graduate from the university, and graduate from the university in four years.

The Hawk Link Retention Program is a first year program that focuses on providing academic resources to students of color so they may be successfully retained during their freshman year at the University of Kansas. Findings in this study provide specific evidence for ways to understand student retention of participants in the Hawk Link Retention Program at the University of Kansas and make program improvements. The findings of the study may also have practical applications for educators who are searching for answers regarding the needs of students of color at predominantly white research universities.

The retention rate for fall to spring semesters of Hawk Link participants has been higher than the University retention rate. After the inception of the Hawk Link Program in 1998, there have been increases in the one-year retention rates of all students of color, although a slight decrease occurred in 2003 when it dropped from 81.9 to 78.6 percent (OIRP, 2006a). The first year retention rate for those in the Hawk Link Retention Program in 2003 was 84 percent (Hawk Link End of Year Report, 2003), while the

overall university retention rate was 82 percent (OIRP, 2006a). What has not been studied is the type and level of involvement in the retention program in relation to the retention of the students in the program. This study focuses on whether the freshmen students' type and level of involvement—basic, moderate, or significant—in the Hawk Link Retention Program was related to their retention at the University of Kansas.

Retention of Students of Color at KU

When the one-year retention rates for the Fall 1998, incoming class of all students of color were released, administrators at KU realized that the 71.2% one-year retention rate was 6.7% lower than that of their Caucasian counterparts (OIRP, 2006b). The 1998 retention rate of underrepresented students--African American, Hispanic American, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives-- was 12.2% lower than their Caucasian counterparts (OIRP, 2006b). The ethnic group with the highest retention rate was Asian American/Pacific Islander students, (79.7%) for the 1998 incoming freshmen. The ethnic group with the lowest one-year retention rate in 1998 was African American students (67%) (OIRP, 2006). The combined average one-year retention rate for the African American, Hispanic American, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives was alarming enough in 1998 for university staff to seek ways to better retain students of color at the University of Kansas. Of the nearly 30,000 students at the University of Kansas for the fall 2007 semester, 3,193 identified as students of color. Of that number, 509 students of color were first-time full-time freshmen and 225 registered for the Hawk Link Retention Program.

Institutional Profile

Founded in 1864, the University of Kansas (KU) serves as a major comprehensive research and teaching institution as well as a center for learning, scholarship, and creative endeavor (University of Kansas, 2007). The faculty at the University of Kansas includes more than 990 teaching faculty members with earned doctorates (OIRP, 2006f). KU as a qualified admissions university does not have rigorous entrance qualifications. Qualified admissions provide the university three ways to admit undergraduate students. The students must meet one of the following: 1) achieve an ACT composite of 21 or above; 2) earn at least a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale on defined pre-college curriculum; 3) rank in the top 1/3 of the high school graduating class. There are exceptions made for students who are conditionally admitted to the university. Conditionally admitted students are required to complete 24 hours with a 2.0 cumulative grade point average during their first three semesters at the university. For example, a three semester sequence could include fall, spring and summer. Students admitted conditionally meet with advisors on a regular basis and must enroll in PRE210, which is a career and life planning course that focuses on decision-making for college students to assist with their academic success (UAC, 2007). The composite ACT score of all first-time freshmen 24.6 was above the national average in 2007 (21.7) (University of Kansas, 2007).

Of the 29,260 students enrolled at the Lawrence campus for 2007 fall semester, 3,193 identified themselves as African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic American, or American Indian/Alaskan Native (University of Kansas, 2007). There were 1,624 International students, which was a 2.8 percent increase over fall 2006

(University of Kansas, 2007). Of the fall 2007 enrollment, 12.2% were students of color: 4.1% Asian American/Pacific Islander; 4.1% African American; 3.4% Hispanic; 1.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native; 6.2% Non-resident Alien. 76.8% were Caucasian American, and 4% were unknown. (University of Kansas, 2007). The retention rate, in fall 2007, for African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Hispanic American students who were first-time, full-time freshmen was 79.4 percent (OIRP, 2006b). When Asian American/Pacific Islander students were added into the calculation, the retention rate increased to 81 percent (OIRP, 2006a). This trend was in line with the statistics from the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE, 2007), in that the Asian American/Pacific Islander students' retention rate at KU was the highest (94.5 percent) (OIRP, 2006d). The retention rate was measured based on the student completing a year, their first two semesters, at the university. This study includes students from all racial/ethnic groups who participate in the Hawk Link program.

Hawk Link Overview

Hawk Link is an academic based retention program designed to assist students in navigating their first year by utilizing existing programs at the University of Kansas. The program is open to all students, with a special emphasis on students of color.

Administrators of the retention program collaborate with offices across campus to highlight services for students to utilize.

The Hawk Link Retention Program introduces existing services and programs for first year students and helps them navigate each of these programs through direct intervention. A key aspect of operation for the Hawk Link Program is based on an inclusion model that will prepare students for success well beyond their first year. By

linking students with various departmental services and programs, Hawk Link is designed to bring focus to the first year experience. The retention process begins with recruitment and continues through the tenure of the student. The common thread of regular contact and direct intervention, with personal contact that begins with recruitment, continues through mentoring and tutoring —both faculty and peer—and involves sharing information about available resources is important to this retention program. The program culminates in a celebration of accomplishment, a graduation ceremony. This retention program is designed to help students with both academic and personal success. A full description of the Hawk Link program is included in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship with the level and type of involvement of the participants of the Hawk Link retention program for students of color on their retention at the University of Kansas. The study focuses on freshman students registered for the retention program in 2007. The following research question was addressed: How is level and type of involvement in the Hawk Link Program related to a student's retention? The study controlled for background variables, including parental educational level, Pell grant eligibility, race/ethnicity, and gender.

Both level of involvement and type of involvement of the students in the Hawk Link Retention Program were studied. The dependent variables were the student's intention to re-enroll for the fall 2008 semester, their aspirations to graduate from the University of Kansas, and their aspirations to graduate in four years. The research questions follow.

1. Who participates in Hawk Link?
2. How satisfied are they with their academic experience, their academic performance, and their out-of-class experiences?
3. In what ways were Hawk Link participants involved in the program? What was the extent of their participation as measured by the program administrators?
4. What is the relationship between level and type of involvement and intentions to reenroll, graduate and graduate in four years?
5. What was the relationship between satisfaction with their academic experience, their academic performance, their out of class experiences, and their intentions to reenroll, graduate and graduate in 4 years?
6. What variables predict intention to reenroll in the sophomore year?
7. What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas?
8. What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas in four years?

For questions 6, 7, and 8, variables included demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, parents' education level, Pell grant status), level and type of involvement in Hawk Link, satisfaction variables, and academic performance variables (college grade point average).

The level of involvement in the Hawk Link Retention Program was measured by the participant's involvement in the S.O.A.R. tutor/mentor program, the number of times they attended S.O.A.R. sessions, enrollment in a Hawk Link designated section of PRE101 (an introduction to college classes) and the retention program administrators' assessment of the participants involvement in the program. A program participant is

described as a student who signed up for the program. These results furthered the understanding of the students of color's level of involvement in a retention program as it relates to retention at a predominantly white institution.

Theoretical Framework

There are two theoretical frameworks used in this study, Seidman's (2002) and Astin's (1985), and they are discussed below. Alan Seidman's (2002) Retention Formula is foundational to the Hawk Link Program's curriculum. Seidman (2002) recommend a common sense approach to retention, which focuses on areas colleges may fail to address adequately. His retention formula follows:

$$RET = E_{ID} + (E + In + C)_{IV}$$

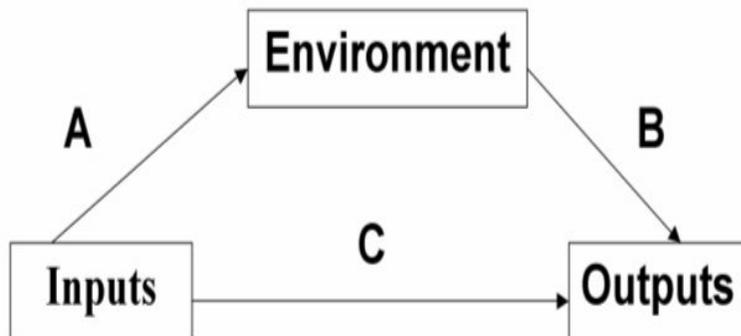
This means Retention equals Early Identification plus Early, Intensive, and Continuous Intervention. Seidman maintains that for student success to occur, early identification of challenges and intensive intervention during the first and second semesters provides the best diagnosis of the student's needs. Once this occurs, there should be continuous intervention, including the programs and services that provide guidance to help retain students, powerful enough to affect change at the institution (Seidman, 2002). It is reasonable to believe that when an individual has a positive experience attending college, the person will have a greater opportunity to be successful.

Astin's theory focuses on student behaviors as key to the educational process. Astin's Student Involvement Theory indicates that "a student's involvement is measured by the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1985, p. 297). Astin also explains how involvement is linked to college student retention (Johnson et. al 2007). Astin's research shows that

when students are highly involved, they spend a large amount of time studying, are active in both extracurricular activities and campus organizations, and have frequent interaction with both faculty and peers. These behaviors are linked to positive outcomes such as retention, graduation, and academic success (Astin, 1985). This study sought to determine academic involvement by determining student level of involvement in specific Hawk Link events and assessment of involvement by the Hawk Link retention program administrators.

Astin (1985) focuses on the behavioral component of involvement in an educational activity or the development of the students. For the involvement study, time is an important resource for the student (Astin, 1985). Astin (1985) states “regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times” (p. 298). Following Astin, this study was based on the assumption that patterns of involvement in the activity offered to students would determine their level of involvement in the retention program. To measure the level of involvement in the Hawk Link Retention Program, the participants in this study were asked about their involvement in the S.O.A.R. Tutor/mentor program and the program administrators were asked to assess the involvement of each of the participants based upon their contact with the student and the student’s involvement in Hawk Link sponsored events and activities. The intent of the study was to operationalize Astin’s (1985) student involvement theory and provide a connection between the level of involvement in the Hawk Link Retention Program and the student’s retention for their first year.

Figure 1



This study also uses Astin’s (1993) Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) Model as a conceptual framework. The I-E-O model developed by Astin is a guiding framework for assessments in higher education. The principle of the model indicates that educational assessments are not complete unless the evaluation includes information on student inputs, the educational environment, and student outcomes (Astin, 1993). Astin’s theory utilizes an Inputs-Environment-Outcomes model with the basic purpose of “assessing the various environmental experiences by determining whether students grow or change differently under varying environmental conditions” (1993, p. 7). The purpose of Astin’s model is to control for input differences, resulting in a less biased estimate of how environmental variables affect student outcomes.

Using Astin’s I-E-O conceptual framework, the influence of student characteristics [inputs] and involvement in Hawk Link [environment] on student retention were examined in this study. Student input predictors included race/ethnicity, gender, and parental education. In this study, the pre-college characteristics were held constant in order to determine influence of the level of involvement.

Importance of the Study

The commitment to retaining students begins with investigating factors that might contribute to the students' retention. Understanding the students' level of involvement in the Hawk Link Program should: 1) help staff provide and improve retention programs and services; 2) help the university better utilize available resources; and 3) provide a better education for racial/ethnic minority students. Knowledge of specific strategies to help students persist may help to target and address the students' concerns in transition to college.

Use of Study Results

The results of the study are to be used to inform the staff about the influence of the S.O.A.R. tutoring/mentoring component (participation and number of sessions attended) of the Hawk Link Retention Program, the Hawk Link section of PRE101, and involvement in another university retention program (e.g. Multicultural Scholars Program). Through this study, the staff will have research-based results that expand beyond simply comparing enrollment from semester to semester or year to year. The data provides information on those who participated in the particular Hawk Link component during their first year at the University of Kansas.

CHAPTER II

Retention Program Description

Chapter two is usually the literature review; nevertheless, for this study it is helpful to first have an understanding of the Hawk Link Retention Program at the University of Kansas. What follows is a detailed description of the Hawk Link Retention Program for first year students at the University of Kansas.

History of Hawk Link Program

A pilot of the Hawk Link Retention Program was introduced in 1998 by the staff of the Office of Multicultural Affairs at the University of Kansas. The pilot year allowed staff to create a comprehensive program that included the support of departments across campus to provide services and guidance for the next group of program participants. The second group of students was registered for the program for the 1999-2000 academic year. During the first three years of its existence, the Hawk Link Retention Program enrolled and focused on racial/ethnic minority students exclusively. Ethnic minority students included African Americans, Asian American/Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians. A year later, in 2000-2001, the Hawk Link Program was open to all freshmen students. The program administrators later saw the importance of focusing on students of color, thus they readjusted the recruitment efforts, giving priority to students of color for the 2007-2008 academic year, though students from all backgrounds could participate.

Hawk Link's major goal was to take a proactive role to assist first year students in navigating their initial year of college life at the University of Kansas. Hawk Link

introduced students to existing resources and helped them navigate each of these programs or services. The programs or services provided by existing offices include orientation, financial aid, academic advising, tutoring, educational development programs, and student leadership development. All offices work collaboratively with the Hawk Link staff to provide individual or group meetings so students could receive the necessary information to assist in a smooth transition to university life.

Hawk Link began as a freshman year program and later expanded by adding a sophomore year component. Since the first year is crucial to student retention, this study focused on the freshman year component of the program, which had been in existence the longest, since 1998. The program operated from an inclusive model that prepared students for success through direct intervention beginning with the recruitment process through graduation from the Hawk Link program. These sessions included topics on freshman transition, academic advising, career exploration, financing college, leadership development, sophomore transition, and program completion.

Program Description

The Hawk Link Retention Program design focused on the first year by linking students with different departmental staff. The students could utilize these resources during their freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years. Three of the main components of the program encompassed Students Obtaining Academic Resources (S.O.A.R.) Tutor/Mentor Program, first year Success Seminars, and Transitions. As noted above, this study focused on the first year components of the program. The Transitions program, which is the sophomore year component, was not a part of this study.

The retention program description has six components that follow. The recruitment process took place during the summer and then curriculum began with the program convocation. Participants then had access to the intake meeting, S.O.A.R. Program, Success Sessions, and Hawk Link Graduation.

Program Curriculum

Recruitment

The Hawk Link Guides, graduates of the program, proactively recruited students of color, encouraged students to enroll in the Hawk Link section of PRE101 Orientation Seminar, and provided assistance during New Student Orientation (NSO). Students voluntarily registered for the program beginning with New Student Orientation in the summer. New Student Orientation, during the Summer of 2007, at the University of Kansas took place in June and July for two days usually a Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday. The last NSO, held one day only, occurs the day before classes begin in August. The attendance for Summer—June and July—orientation had 3,700 freshmen with 4,000 parents/guests. The final two orientation sessions, held in August, averaged 430 students and 200 parents/guests in 2007. The Fall orientation was open to all students. The Spring session had a combined freshmen and transfer student attendance of 300 students with 120 parents/guests.

Throughout the two-day New Student Orientation Sessions, the Office of Multicultural Affairs staff and Hawk Link Guides held early bird sessions or sessions during meals. They then met with students and parents informally, one-on-one or in groups of two to three, and during meals to tell them about the services and benefits of the Hawk Link Retention Program. During day 1 of New Student Orientation, the Guides

and Hawk Link Staff presented information about the program during a 45-minute session held after the lunch hour. Once the session took place, the Guides proceeded to contact the remaining students who did not attend the early bird session, based upon a list of students who were identified by the admissions office as African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic American, and American Indian. The Guides then attempted to get the incoming students registered for the Hawk Link Retention Program. They focused on students of color for their main base, with an established cap of 250. The cap allowed the assigned staff to work with groups of students administering the program properly. Freshmen who signed a registration form were considered a Hawk Link participant, which is different than being a graduate of the program which will be discussed later.

There were 225 students recruited and registered to participate in the retention program for the 2007-2008 academic year. Registration for this year did not reach the cap. The students' race/ethnicity was self-reported to the university through the Hawk Link administrators. Of those in the retention program, the racial/ethnic background of the students were identified as 38% African American, 21% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 15% Hispanic American, 3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 14.6% Caucasian American, 1% Non-specified, and 7% missing ethnic identification (OIRP November, 2007).

Convocation

Students initially learned about the program through the summer and fall new student orientation sessions. The participants were further oriented to the program through a specific Hawk Link Convocation held in September. The program lasted two

hours. During the convocation, the participants heard from an administrator in the Office of the Vice Provost for Student Success and met with the staffs of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Multicultural Resource Center who serve as Hawk Link Advisors. Throughout the convocation, students discovered why their involvement in Hawk Link was important and heard a keynote speaker who talked about the importance of the transition from high school to college and how they should take advantage of the available resources to aid in their success.

Intake Meeting

To enhance the college transitional experience, each participant was required to meet with a Hawk Link advisor in either the Office of Multicultural Affairs or the Multicultural Resource Center. During this 30-minute meeting held between September and October, and then again between January and February, Hawk Link staff conducted an intake interview with the students to gather additional information regarding their academic interests, concerns, and goals for their college experience. The fall meeting provided an opportunity to create a personal connection with the student while reviewing the available resources. During the intake session, the staff member recorded the name, major and answers to nine specific questions as provided by the participants in the table below.

Table 1

Intake Meeting Questions

Fall Intake Meeting Questions
Tell me a little about yourself.
How are your classes going?
What are your impressions after the first few weeks of class?
Have you signed up for S.O.A.R.?
Are you a part of any other student supportive services (SES, AAAC, etc.)
What are your goals for the semester?
What are you doing to reach those goals?
What are you nervous/anxious about?
Are you currently a part of any other student organization (besides Hawk Link)?

The fall semester intake meeting was the first one-on-one meeting held with the participant. During the spring semester, a second intake meeting was held between January and February, and the following questions were asked: 1) How did you do last semester? Academically? Personally?; 2) What are your classes this semester?; What are your expectations after the first few days/weeks of class?; 3) Which classes do you think you may have trouble with?; 4) What are your goals for the semester?; 5) What will you do to reach those goals?

Students Obtaining Academic Resources (S.O.A.R.) Program

Academic Resources (S.O.A.R.) provided the student free peer-tutoring and mentoring service through Hawk Link. The one-on-one tutoring covered a variety of freshman and sophomore level courses to meet the individual needs of students. Students

received tutoring assistance one hour per week. Most of the S.O.A.R. sessions were spent on tutoring; however, peer mentoring was also an important component of S.O.A.R. program. Mentoring, like tutoring, was tailored to meet the needs of the individual student and may have included discussions about time management, note-taking strategies, study skills, transitioning to college life, information about campus resources, or simply checking in to see how the student was doing. Only those registered for Hawk Link were able to utilize the one-on-one tutoring from S.O.A.R. tutors/mentors. The tutor/mentors went through training to be able to properly tutor and mentor the program participants.

The final component of S.O.A.R. were the examination review sessions. The study sessions were focused on a variety of courses and were held several times throughout the semester. Each exam review was tailored specifically to the course syllabus and the particular exam. Students could attend the review sessions regardless of whether or not they participated in one-on-one tutoring. The examination review sessions were also open to non-participants of the S.O.A.R. Program. All S.O.A.R. sessions were held throughout the semester at the Multicultural Resource Center.

Success Seminars

The Hawk Link Success Seminars covered academic advising, career exploration, finals preparation, financing college, leadership development, and sophomore transitions. As listed in Table 2, staff from the specific office or department presents the Success Seminars, held monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Each session was presented only once. This design allowed the student to meet directly with staff who possessed the answers and resources necessary for academic success. The participants met on

Wednesday evenings for one hour a week in the Multicultural Resource Center classroom. The table listed below provides information about the seminars offered during the academic year.

Table 2

Success Sessions

Month	Topic	Duration
September	You're a Freshman: What Now?	1 hour
October	Academic Advising	1 hour
November	Career Exploration	1 hour
December	Finals Preparation	2 hours
February	Financing College	1 hour
March	Leadership Development	1 hour
April	Sophomore Transition	1 hour

Fall Success Sessions: Freshman Transition, Advising, Career, and Finals

Preparation

You're a Freshman: What Now?

The purpose of this session was to provide participants an opportunity to review the events, services, and opportunities at the University of Kansas. They asked questions of the Hawk Link Staff and Guides to fill in the gaps or review information they learned through New Student Orientation and the Hawk Link Convocation. The participants were able to meet other students and get a review of how the program can help them become successful while at college.

Individual Academic Advising

Participants in the Hawk Link Retention Program received advising from a variety of university staff. The students were advised by a faculty member, a professional

school advisor, an academic advisor in the University Advising Center (UAC), an adjunct advisor, or a Hawk Link advisor to get necessary academic advising preparation. The participants had an opportunity to go to a session informing them how to prepare for their advising appointments along with other key points for keeping on track with their degree program.

In October, the advisors from the University Advising Center spoke to the Hawk Link participants about the importance of preparing for their advising appointments. During this session, the students learned about requirements for completing their degree. They talked about the importance of understanding academic information, including their unofficial transcript, their academic responsibilities, and identifying academic resources.

Career Exploration

University Career Center (UCC) staff presented information about how to prepare for an internship, how to research a career, how to design their resume, and how students can access other available UCC resources. The participants had an opportunity to learn about career prospects relating to their degree program and were able to explore their degree options further if they were undecided. A staff member from the University Career Center informed them of the available resources and the best way to use them. The students received information about what they should do during each year of their college experience to prepare for life after graduation.

Finals Preparation

At the end of the fall semester, in November, a finals preparation session took place. The S.O.A.R. Tutor/Mentors met with students to prepare for final exams. This service was a continuance for many students who had utilized the S.O.A.R. services throughout the semester.

Spring Success Sessions: Financing College, Leadership Development, Transitions

Financing College

In February, staff from the Office of Financial Aid provided a session where the students learned about the benefits of the Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA) and keys to financing the remainder of their college education. The session was held in time to discuss the importance of meeting the priority date for the FAFSA and how to get aid as a returning student, which could also include departmental awards.

Leadership Development

As students concluded their second semester at the university, they learned about available leadership opportunities by meeting with Student Involvement and Leadership Center staff. During this March session, they found out about the leadership development programs provided by the University of Kansas.

Transitions

The transition success session presented information to the student about what challenges and opportunities await them as a sophomore. During the April session, the students learned that the same components—advising, career exploration, exam preparation, financing college and leadership development—they experienced as a freshman were shared from the view of a sophomore experience.

Table 3

Hawk Link Retention Program Activities

Event	Description	Length
Program Convocation	Official introduction to the retention program's offerings One time event for 2 hours in early September	2 hours
Intake Meeting	Questions asked of the participant about their academic needs One time meeting for 30 minutes during fall & spring	1 hour
Students Obtaining Academic Resources	Peer tutoring and mentoring Series of 12 1-hour weekly sessions in September, October, November, February, March and April	12 hours
Multicultural Students Success Conference & Fair	Workshops, luncheon speaker and corporate career fair One time conference for 5 hours at the end of September	5 hours
Success Seminars	Staff share information with students regarding available resources Series of 7 1-hour sessions held September to April (4 in the fall and 3 in the spring)	7 hours

Multicultural Scholars Programs

The university provided various additional opportunities for students of color to receive academic and social support. Academic and student affairs departments provided faculty mentoring, peer tutoring, cultural experiences, and academic advising directed specifically to the needs and concerns for students of color. The Hawk Link Retention Program was one of many programs available to students of color that provided resources for academic and social success.

The other programs included ten University sponsored Multicultural Scholars Programs. Students in Hawk Link had the option to participate in one of the Multicultural Scholars Programs (MSP). There were ten MSPs, which include African/African American Studies, Applied Behavioral Sciences, Languages and Humanities, School of Business, School of Architecture, School of Education, School of Engineering, School of Journalism, School of Pharmacy, and School of Social Welfare. The Multicultural Scholars Programs worked with students of color in their discipline to provide tutoring, peer mentoring, and transitional support through degree completion (Multicultural Scholars Programs, March 2007).

PRE101 Orientation Seminar

Of the 27 sections of PRE101 Orientation Seminar, 4 of them were designated Hawk Link focused orientation seminars. The Hawk Link sections had the same components as the other orientation seminars, which introduced the university community and explained the value and role of higher education in our society (PRE101 site). The students learned about strategies for a successful transition to college. Through the seminar, they learned about participating in the university community while informing them about university resources, policies and procedures. Students must have fewer than 30 credit hours from the University of Kansas to take the course (PRE 101 site). The classes had no more than 25 students and were taught by university staff and faculty. The two credit hours counted toward elective hours in degree completion. There were six specialty types of orientation seminars and included Hawk Link, scholarship recipients, transfer students, Mt. Oread Scholars, pre-business, and international students (October, 2007). The four Hawk Link sections were unique in that once the participants

complete the class they should be able to: 1) identify and utilize Hawk Link and other university resources; 2) explore issues of self-identity; 3) discuss contemporary issues of a multicultural society; 4) acclimate to a large predominantly white university (PRE101 Syllabus, 2007). There were 225 Hawk Link students enrolled in PRE101 Orientation Seminar classes for fall 2007 (KU Registrar, 2007). Of the 225 participants in the Orientation Seminar, 32 were in Hawk Link specific sessions that were taught by administrators of the program. The course assignments specific to the Hawk Link section of PRE101 are provided in the table below.

Table 4

PRE 101 Course Assignments

Hawk Link Success Seminars	Must attend seminars before the end of the semester. This is required to pass the course.
Cultural Activity	Must attend one on campus cultural event and write a one-page review.
Multicultural Student Success Conference & Fair	Must attend the conference, attend one workshop and complete the information fair worksheet.
Midterm Grade Check	Must attend the September conference, attend one workshop and complete the information fair worksheet.
Family Diversity Paper	Must write a 3-4 page paper that discusses their family's diversity and the influence of that diversity upon them.

There were five assignments that were unique for the Hawk Link PRE101 sections. The students in the Hawk Link sections, regardless of whether they were Hawk Link participants, were required to attend at least two Hawk Link success seminars during the semester. They were required to attend a cultural event and write a response

paper, attend the Multicultural Student Success Conference and Fair, report mid-term grades for each course, and write a 3-4 page family diversity paper.

Multicultural Student Success Conference and Fair

The Multicultural Student Success Conference and Fair (MSSCF), held at the end of September, is open to all students, but required of the students in the Hawk Link PRE 101 sections, and was highly recommended to the Hawk Link participants. The MSSCF included five hours of workshops, a lunch speaker and information fair and was designed to introduce students of color, both new and returning, to faculty, staff, representatives of student organizations, and corporate representatives. University department staff were available to answer questions about resources to help students with their transition while the student organizations had an opportunity to tell new students about their groups. The final dimension of the event allowed students to meet with corporate representatives regarding internships and available career opportunities. While Hawk Link participants were not required to attend the MSSCF, they were encouraged to attend the conference seminars through personal invitation and reminders sent by e-mail (OMA, 2006a).

Hawk Link Graduation

The acknowledgement that a freshman student had completed the first year at the University of Kansas was important since retention of students of color has been lower than their Caucasian American counterparts (OIRP, 2006). The students were considered for graduation from the Hawk Link Retention Program once they had completed one of the following: participated in two events in the fall and two events in the spring semesters or if they had attended one Hawk Link event in the fall and one in the spring and participated in another University retention program (OMA, 2006a). Students may

attend Success Seminars, S.O.A.R. tutoring/mentoring sessions, or participate in other Hawk Link approved programs which include university tutoring services, and Multicultural Scholars Programs (OMA, 2006a).

After completion of the freshman year of the Hawk Link Retention Program, the Hawk Link staff, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Multicultural Resource Center acknowledge the Hawk Link students during the Hawk Link Graduation Banquet. Each student who attended was recognized for persisting through his or her first two semesters at the University of Kansas.

In summary, the Hawk Link retention program provides students of color an additional support system that encompasses academic and social programming. Students have an opportunity to connect with peers, upper-class students, and administrators from different departments for support to make their freshman year as smooth as possible. The curriculum format provides many opportunities for involvement. The type and level of involvement may impact their aspirations of returning the next year and graduating.

CHAPTER III

Review of Literature

Introduction

The college student population has changed over time. The numbers of racial/ethnic minority students attending college has increased and is changing how universities have provided guidance to underrepresented students so they may succeed academically and socially in the university setting. Retention in higher education is a topic of concern for all students and specifically racial/ethnic minority students as they have lower persistence and graduation rates than their Caucasian counterparts (Braxton, 2001).

Due to the increased number of ethnically/racially diverse students attending colleges and universities, university administrators have worked to find creative solutions that provide supportive environments—both academically and socially. Research indicates that students whose parents did not attend college are more likely to be less academically prepared and have less knowledge of how to maneuver the processes and resources available to them as a college student (Tym, McMillon, Barone & Webster, 2004; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002). Targeted first-year programs and interventions that encompass reaching out to all first year students can mitigate the challenges students may face during their first-year (Morley 2003-2004; Sorrentino, 2006-2007). A review of the literature reveals many studies on student retention and persistence. Looking across these studies, a number of trends appear. These trends, outlined in this chapter, will provide an understanding of the research on college student retention. The remainder of the chapter

outlines the literature in the following areas --changing student population, theoretical models, retention program types, and components and first-year seminars.

Changing Student Population

Students attending colleges come from a variety of ethnic/racial backgrounds, social economic status, and academic backgrounds. While their reasons for attending college may be as varied as their backgrounds, students are entering college in increasing numbers. From 1998 to 2002, undergraduate enrollment in postsecondary institutions rose 15 %, with anticipated increases to continue between 2004 and 2014 (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2004). Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2007) reflected the number of students enrolled in post-secondary institutions as 16.6 million. However, the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange reported that nationwide at public four-year institutions, on average, 30% of freshmen are not returning for their sophomore year of college (CSRDE, 2007). Over a 10 year period, from 1993 to 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau reported increases in the ethnic diversity of students entering post-secondary institutions across the United States with anticipation the diversity would continue to grow (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

From a statewide perspective, the Kansas Board of Regents Universities reported an increase over a 5 year period (2003 to 2007) of 2.8% in the enrollment of undergraduate students. The breakdown of Kansas college students based upon race/ethnicity was 4% African American, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% Hispanic, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, 73% Caucasian, 7% other, 9% unknown (KBOR, 2006). With the change in the demographics of the undergraduate student population, administrators and faculty must work to recruit and retain students of color. The

institution's ability to understand the needs of the students based upon their demographic information—gender, race/ethnicity, age—will provide an opportunity to assess the services and resources that are provided to students and thereby improve undergraduate student retention (Burr, Burr & Novak, 2000). Some students of color entering the higher education system have academic and social integration needs that challenge the traditional university (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Simpson, 2001; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002).

Higher education has students of all racial/ethnic backgrounds seeking admission, and many students attending college come with a different skill set and may not complete their degrees (Tinto, 1982). Regardless of racial/ethnic identity, the students' personal life, uncertainty about college goals, finances, the level of integration into the university setting can also cause students to dropout of college (Gloria & Kurpius, 2001; Kiser & Price, 2008; Walker & Schultz, 2000-2001).

Students of color choosing to attend college do so with the intention of completing and receiving their college degree. The reasons for which they do not complete their degrees are as varied as their reasons for choosing a college; yet, universities must find a way to help students integrate into the university setting.

Theoretical Models

Student Departure Theory

There are several theories to consider when conducting retention research. The next section will discuss the theories relating to college student retention. The first to propose a widely recognized model for college student dropout was Spady from research conducted in 1970 (Leppel, 2002). Since that time, researchers have utilized Vincent Tinto's student departure theory, which focuses on the academic and social integration of the student. Tinto's (1993) model captures both academic and social experiences that impact the student's interactive experiences with their peers, faculty, and staff. The continued research on student departure returns to the basis that if students do not integrate into the university community—both academically and socially—they are more inclined to leave the institution (Fischer, 2007; Guillory & Wolverson, 2008; Tinto, 1993).

Academic and Social Integration

The retention literature reveals that it is difficult to separate academic and social integration (Eimers, 2001; Furr & Elling, 2002). Academic integration is when the student utilizes academic resources to be successful in the classroom, therefore, becoming more comfortable in the setting as a university student (Tinto, 1993). The student's social integration into the university setting indicates the student has found a peer group with whom to interact that provides a connection external to the classroom setting (Tinto, 1993). The thought that academic integration could exist without social integration is plausible, yet only with refinement of previous studies will it be known if one has more significance than another (Eimers, 2001; Furr & Elling, 2002). Researchers

note that when students lack integration—academically and socially—they are likely to not return in consecutive semesters thereby lowering the university retention rates (Fischer, 2007; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008).

The studies that consider the students' academic and social integration reveal that both factors were significant predictors of retention for students (Beil et al, 2000; Eimers, 2001; Furr & Elling; 2002; Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali, & Pohlert, 2003-2004). Research conducted with students of color as participants showed that academic support programs were integral to the successful integration of students (Good, Halpin & Halpin, 2001-2002; Jackson, Smith & Hall, 2003). Some of the academic support systems utilized included tutoring and faculty mentoring (Good, et al, 2001-2002; Jackson, Smith & Hall, 2003). Additional studies reveal that the connection with faculty and the academic department, along with involvement in campus organizations, were significant predictors of students' retention (Littleton, 2003; Reason, 2003; Santos & Reigadas, 2004-2005).

A positive relationship is found among students' of color self-worth and competence, available leadership opportunities, and reliable alliances and integration (Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson & Mugenda, 2000-2001; Taylor and Miller, 2002). This outcome suggests that students' successful incorporation—the final stage of Tinto's model—can be increased through campus involvement and supportive and resourceful peer networks, which are components of a welcoming campus climate (Taylor & Miller, 2002). Eimer's (2001) study also reinforces the need for colleges and universities to pay particular attention to generating positive experiences and environments for ethnic minority students on their campuses. The process of becoming socially integrated via support from peers, faculty, and staff within the university setting during the first year of

the college experience was found to be a significant factor in predicting retention (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Gloria & Ho, 2003; Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez & Rosales, 2005). The Hawk Link program under investigation in the present study is designed to facilitate the academic and social integration of its participants.

Astin I E O Model

Alexander Astin's (1993) Student Involvement Theory encompasses the Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) Model as the conceptual framework. Astin's (1993) design is a guiding framework for assessments in higher education and for this study. The principle of the model is that educational assessments are not complete unless the evaluation includes information on student inputs, the educational environment, and student outcomes (Astin, 1993). When researchers control for input differences, the results minimize the bias of how environmental variables affect student outcomes. Astin (1985) found that when students are highly involved they spend a large amount of time studying, are active in both extracurricular activities and campus organizations and have frequent interaction with both faculty and peers. Researchers who utilized Astin's Student Involvement Theory found when students perceived their environment to be supportive and understanding of their differences, they were more likely to return to the university and continue their education (Gloria, et al, 2005; Jackson, Smith & Hill, 2003; Oseguera, 2005-2006). The key independent variables in this study -- type and level of involvement -- are reflective of the Astin's involvement theory.

Seidman's Retention Formula

While the previously discussed theories have been used by researchers, universities have also utilized Alan Seidman's Retention Formula to assist in the creation of their retention programs. Retention programs serve the students in that they provide a necessary support to help them succeed. The same retention programs are offered by the university as there is a need to improve retention rates. Once the university need is evaluated and determined, a supporting formula helps administrators develop retention programs. The Hawk Link program was founded on the philosophy and formula developed by Alan Seidman (2002), as he recommended a common sense approach to retention based on what colleges regularly fall short of providing for their students. His retention formula is:

$$RET = E_{ID} + (E + In + C)_{IV}$$

This means Retention equals Early Identification plus Early, Intensive, and Continuous Intervention. Seidman (2002) maintains that for student success to occur, early identification of challenges and intensive intervention during the first and second semesters will provide the best diagnosis of the student's needs. Once this occurs, there should be continuous intervention, including the programs and services that provide guidance to help retain students, an intervention powerful enough to effect change at the institution (Seidman, 2002).

Retention Program Components

The Hawk Link Program, described as a comprehensive retention program, has several components to help with transition to college life. A comprehensive retention program defined by authors in the field generally has all or most of the following

components: academic skills training, career planning, cross-cultural awareness events, leadership development, peer mentoring, personal counseling, early academic progress/warning monitoring, frequent meetings, freshman seminar course, group study sessions, “home base” environment, proactive and intrusive advising, time management workshops, and tutoring (Myers, 2003).

Researchers who have assessed retention programs have found that academic assistance, social connections and transition to the campus culture are important in the transition to university life and the retention of students (Gardener, Barefoot, & Swing, 2001; Braxton, Brier & Steele, 2007-2008; Walker & Schultz, 2000-2001). The basis by which a retention program is established will depend upon the needs of the students at the particular university; yet when developing the curriculum for the program, areas of focus may range from few to several components (Gardener, et al, 2001; Braxton, et al, 2007-2008; Walker & Schultz, 2000-2001).

First-Year Seminar Impact

While universities seek ways to develop and implement successful first-year retention programs for their students, there is ample research on first-year retention efforts. One area of research pertaining to the student’s success during their first-year transition has focused on the impact of the first-year seminar courses. Research indicates that when students are enrolled in a first-year seminar and have significant contact hours with the instructor or professor they fare better, in grade point average and graduation rates than their counterparts who are not enrolled in the seminar (Lang, 2007; Starke, Harth & Sirianni, 2001; Strayhorn, 2009). Participants of a longitudinal study were found to be satisfied with their college experience, interaction with faculty and did well

academically and socially when enrolled in a first-year seminar course (Starke, Harth & Sirianni, 2001). Some researchers have found significant relationships between the enrollment in the first-year seminar class and grade point average, reenrolling and contact with faculty (Lang, 2007; Starke, Harth & Sirianni, 2001; Strayhorn, 2009). Yet one study revealed there was no relationship difference between participants and non participants of a first-year seminar course (Janz & Chen, 2007). These researchers had non-significant findings and realized that all students equally benefitted from participation in university events and programs regardless their enrollment in a first-year seminar course (Janz & Chen, 2007; Miller, Janz & Chen, 2007). While some researchers found significant relationships for involvement in a first-year seminar course, other studies lack significant findings therefore indicating further research on first-year retention program involvement and first-year seminars is warranted.

Summary

The research indicates there is a need for further investigation in the area of college student retention, specifically for students of color. There is a need to evaluate existing programs, such as Hawk Link, to determine which components are necessary to improve the retention and graduation rates of students. The present study builds upon existing literature to achieve this goal.

CHAPTER IV

Research Methods

Introduction

This chapter provides a complete explanation of research methods employed to conduct the study. The topics covered in this chapter include restatement of the purpose and research questions, measures, description of participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, and summary.

Restatement of Purpose & Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to examine the involvement of the freshmen students in the Hawk Link Retention Program at The University of Kansas and its relationship to their aspirations at the university. The study explores the students' level and type of involvement in the Hawk Link Program and the perceived likelihood that students will re-enroll for the fall semester, graduate from the university, and graduate from the university in four years. For the purpose of the study, a participant in Hawk Link is described as any student who registered for the program. The research questions were as follows:

- 1) Who participates in Hawk Link?
- 2) How satisfied are they with the institution, their academic performance, and their out-of-classroom experiences?
- 3) In what ways were the Hawk Link participants involved in the program?
What was the extent of their participation as measured by the program administrators?

- 4) What is the relationship between the level and type of involvement and intentions to re-enroll, graduate and graduate in 4 years?
- 5) What was the relationship between satisfaction with the institution, their academic performance and their out-of-classroom experiences and their intentions to reenroll, graduate and graduate in four years?
- 6) What variables predict intention to reenroll in the sophomore year?
- 7) What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas?
- 8) What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas in four years?

For questions 6, 7, and 8, variables included demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, parents' educational level, and Pell grant status), level and type of involvement in Hawk Link, satisfaction variables, and academic performance variables (college grade point average).

The dependent variables in this study are likelihood of reenrolling, likelihood of graduating from KU and likelihood of graduating in 4 years. The answers to these questions was determined by asking respondents to answer the following questions: (1) How likely are you to re-enroll for fall 2008? (2) How likely are you to graduate from the University of Kansas? (3) How likely are you to graduate from the University of Kansas in four years? The answers were measured on a 4-point scale of: (1) Very Likely; (2) Likely; (3) Possibly; (4) Not Likely.

The key independent variable in this study was the level of involvement in the Hawk Link program. Initially the researcher planned to utilize session/event check-in sheets from the Hawk Link Retention Program to measure involvement level; however,

the sign up sheets were not available at the time of the data collection due to staffing changes within the retention program. The researcher then decided to collect involvement information from the Hawk Link program administrators as well as use the self-reported involvement of S.O.A.R. sessions recorded by each participant on their questionnaire. Two program administrators were asked to evaluate the involvement of each student who was registered for the 2007-2008 Hawk Link Program. Program administrators were asked to rank each participant's level of involvement on a 4-point scale: (1) Not involved; (2) Slightly involved; (3) Involved; (4) Highly involved. The researcher computed an average score for each participant.

Type of involvement was measured through three dichotomous variables: whether or not the student participated in the S.O.A.R. Tutor/mentor program, whether or not the student participated in the Hawk Link version of PRE101, and whether or not the student participated in another campus retention program (i.e. Multicultural Scholars Program). These variables were coded as dichotomous variables and used in the regression equations (0=did not participate, 1=did participate). Other types of involvement measures were not available to the researcher.

Other independent variables utilized in the study included race/ethnicity (African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Caucasian American/White, Hispanic Latino, and American Indian/Alaskan Native), gender, father's level of education (High School, Some College/Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, and Master's Degree or Higher) mother's level of education (High School, Some College/Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, and Master's Degree or Higher) and Pell grant eligibility (yes/no).

These measures all came from student self-report with the exception of the PRE101 course information which came from the retention program administrator.

Participants

The participants in this study were enrolled at the University of Kansas and registered for the Hawk Link Retention Program during the fall semester of 2007. The participants were enrolled as full-time students and were in their first-year at the university. There were 225 students recruited and registered to participate in the retention program in the 2007-2008 academic year. The students self-selected to participate in the retention program. The students enrolled in the Hawk Link program in 2007 were all sent a questionnaire. Participation in the study was voluntary. Of those registered for the retention program, the ethnic background of the students were identified as 38% African American, 21% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 15% Hispanic American, 3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 14.6% Caucasian American, 1% Non-specified, and 7% missing ethnic identification (Hawk Link Report, November, 2007). The participant list was collected after the 20th day of class in the fall semester from the coordinator of the retention program.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher applied for and received permission from the University of Kansas Human Subjects Committee to conduct this study. The researcher provided an introduction of the study to the Hawk Link participants by stating it was an assessment of a retention program and that their honest responses were very important. The researcher informed the participants that the study was voluntary and confidential. The participants' completion of the questionnaire indicated their willingness to participate.

The researcher collected data via questionnaire, which was administered via an e-mail web link in April, 2008, and was designed to gather data to determine the relationship between the level of involvement in the retention program and intention to re-enroll in the sophomore year, intention to graduate from the university, and intention to graduate from the university in four years. Permission was granted to access the Hawk Link enrollment database, which included the students' KU identification number, email address, and race/ethnicity. There were 225 retention program participants who were sent the questionnaire. The letter provided to the participants is in Appendix J.

There were 110 participants who responded to the questionnaire, of which 101 were completed and available for analysis. A reminder was e-mailed 2 weeks and 3 weeks following the initial e-mail. Participants who had not replied to the initial questionnaire and the 2 e-mail reminders were then sent 2 reminder messages via Facebook 4 weeks following the initial e-mail. During week 5, following the initial e-mail being sent, approximately 60% of the non-respondents who had Facebook accounts received e-mail messages. Phone calls were placed 6 weeks from initial questionnaire launch to students who had not responded to the e-mails and Facebook message reminders. Finally, the researcher asked the program administrators to encourage students to complete the questionnaire.

Questionnaire responses with more than five missing blank responses were removed from the analysis. The statistics were calculated using SPSS. Due to the low sample size, it was important to include everyone who completed the questionnaire. The data were compiled electronically, statistical analysis was performed, and then the completed questionnaires were stored electronically at the Survey Monkey website until

the conclusion of the dissertation and final approval for graduation. After that time, the information will be deleted from the website and any paper documents destroyed by shredding.

Data Analysis

The researcher used SPSS to run the statistical analyses necessary to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the demographic characteristics of the subjects in this sample. Basic descriptive information was run on all of the key demographic variables: gender, race, parents' education level, and Pell grant status. Descriptive statistics were also computed for level and type of involvement. As noted above, one of the levels of involvement was measured by combining the answers to the average rating of the administrator and others were enrollment in a PRE101 Orientation Seminar, the self-reported involvement in SOAR tutoring/mentoring program along with the number of S.O.A.R. sessions the students attended. The author presented a frequency analysis of the administrator ratings and the number of tutor/mentor sessions self-reported by participants. A frequency analysis and descriptive statistics were also presented on the composite measure of involvement. In addition, the author computed descriptive statistics on the key dependent variables (intention to reenroll, intention to graduate from KU, and intention to graduate from the university in 4 years).

Analyses of Research Questions

The primary focus of this study was to determine the relationship the level of participation in Hawk Link and intention to re-enroll in the sophomore year, intention to graduate, and intention to graduate in four years at a predominantly white research university.

The research plan included the use of bivariate statistical analyses.

1. Descriptive analyses were conducted to describe who participated in Hawk Link.
2. Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine how satisfied they were with their academic experiences, their academic performance, and their out-of-classroom experiences.
3. Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine the ways the Hawk Link participants were involved in the program.
4. T-tests analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between and type of involvement and intentions to reenroll in the sophomore year, graduate from the university and graduate in four years. Bivariate correlations looked at the relationship between level of involvement and the outcome variables.
5. Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between their academic experience, their academic performance and their out-of-classroom experiences and their intentions to reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four years.

6. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictors of intention to re-enroll in the sophomore year.
7. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictors of intention to graduate from the university.
8. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictors of intention to graduate from the university in four years.

For questions 6, 7, and 8, variables included demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, parents' educational level, and Pell grant status), level and type of involvement in Hawk Link, satisfaction variables, and academic performance variables (college grade point average).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were associated with five specific areas. First, this study was limited by the sample being taken exclusively from the participants of the Hawk Link Program at the University of Kansas, a Midwestern research university. Since the students are from one university, it is difficult to compare the findings of this study to that of other universities that are of different institutional types.

Second, the time frame of the study did not allow persistence to be tracked over a longer period. A future study that took into consideration the time of year the study was conducted could make a difference in the responses received. Beginning contact with students during the recruitment stage of Hawk Link, possibly collecting data prior to their involvement, and following them through their sophomore year would provide more detailed information about the students.

The lack of a longitudinal study is the third limitation. The longitudinal study allows the researcher to observe the student in different retention events and activities to thereby provide a better indication of their reasons for reenrolling and graduating from the university and graduating from the university in four years. This study did not consider pre-existing variables such as the high school grade point average and the ACT score. Controlling for these variables could possibly make a difference in future studies. Finally comparing two groups, utilizing a Hawk Link participant group and non-participant Hawk Link group would allow a clearer view of the impact of the Hawk Link retention program compared to their peers who entered the same semester.

Chapter V

Results

The purpose of this study is to examine the type and level of involvement of freshman students in the Hawk Link Retention Program and their relationship to student aspirations, reenrolling, graduating, and graduating in four years, at the University of Kansas. The researcher designed the study to explore the relationship between students' level of involvement in the Hawk Link Program and the perceived likelihood that the students would re-enroll for the fall semester, graduate from the university, and graduate from the university in four years. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

- 1) Who participates in Hawk Link?
- 2) How likely are Hawk link participants to enroll in the following fall semester, to graduate from the university and to graduate in four-years?
- 3) How satisfied are they with the institution, their academic performance, and their out-of-classroom experiences?
- 4) In what ways are the Hawk Link participants involved in the program? What is the extent of their participation as measured by the program administrators?
- 5) What is the relationship between the level and type of involvement and intentions to re-enroll, graduate and graduate in 4 years?
- 6) What is the relationship between satisfaction with the institution, their academic performance and their out-of-classroom experiences, and their intentions to reenroll, graduate and graduate in four years?
- 7) What variables predict intention to reenroll in the sophomore year?

8) What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas?

9) What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas in four years?

This chapter presents results of the analyses. Descriptive statistics about the student population are provided in Section I while Section II presents the results of the bivariate and multivariate analyses.

Section I – Descriptive Statistics

Who participates in Hawk Link? The population for the study consisted of 225 Hawk Link participants; all of them were registered for the Hawk Link retention program during the 2007-2008 academic year. Of the 225 registered for the Hawk Link Retention Program, 101 complete responses are used for this study, thus 101 is the sample size for the study. A frequency distribution, presented in Table 5, shows the characteristics of the respondents. In terms of ethnicity, 35% were African American, 17% were Asian American/Pacific Islander, 14% were Hispanic American, 2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 13% were Caucasian American, and 20% were Multiethnic. Women represented 67% of the respondents. More than 50% of the respondents reported having fathers and mothers with an educational level below a bachelor's degree: 22% of the fathers and 28% of the mothers had a bachelor's degree while 22% of the fathers and 15% of the mothers had a master's degree or higher. Almost 60% of the respondents had at least one parent who earned a bachelor's degree or higher. About 39% of the respondents are Pell grant eligible. Students who are Pell eligible meet a specified income as designated by the federal government. Therefore, Pell eligibility was included as a measure of family income.

Table 5

Participant Demographics

Descriptive Statistics	Valid Percent (Number)	N
Gender		101
Male	31.7% (32)	
Female	68.3% (69)	
Ethnicity		101
American Indian/Alaska Native	2% (2)	
Asian	16.8% (17)	
Black	34.7% (35)	
Latino	13.9% (14)	
White	12.9% (13)	
Multiracial	19.8% (20)	
Father's Highest Education Level		101
Elementary Middle School	4% (4)	
High School	31.7% (32)	
Associate's Degree Some College	20.8% (21)	
Bachelor's Degree	21.8% (22)	
Master's Degree or Higher	21.8% (22)	
Mother's Highest Education Level		101
High School	24.8% (25)	
Associate's Degree Some College	32.7% (33)	
Bachelor's Degree	27.7% (28)	
Master's Degree or Higher	14.9% (15)	
Parent Education Level		101
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	58.4% (59)	
Elementary to High School Education	41.6% (42)	
Pell Grant Eligibility		101
Yes	61.4% (62)	
No	38.6% (39)	

Student Aspirations: Reenrolling, Graduating, and Graduating in 4 Years

How likely are Hawk Link participants to enroll in the following fall semester, to graduate from the university and to graduate in four-years? The primary interest variables are intentions to reenroll for fall 2008, intention to graduate from the university, and intention to graduate in four years from the university. Student aspirations are measured as four point scales, from very unlikely to very likely. Participants mean responses were higher for reenrolling for their sophomore year than they were to graduate in four years. The means are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Aspirations Mean

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
How likely are you to re-enroll at KU for the fall 2008 semester?	3.72	.763	101
How likely are you to graduate from KU?	3.57	.782	101
How likely are you to graduate from KU in four years?	2.91	1.069	101

* Scale of 1-4, 1-very unlikely to 4-highly likely

Table 7 presents the percentage distribution of participant responses to the key dependent variables. Over 84% of the respondents indicated they were very likely to reenroll for their sophomore year and over 70% indicated that they were very likely to graduate from the university. While they believed they would graduate from the university, not as many were sure they would graduate in four years from the university;

only 37% indicated they were “very likely” to do this. This finding makes sense given that the 4-year graduation rates at KU is 34%, indicating not many of KU students do actually complete their degrees in 4-year (OIRP, 2007).

Table 7

Student Aspiration Frequencies Reenroll, Graduate and Graduate in Four Years

Aspiration	Valid Percent (Number)	N
How likely are you to reenroll for the fall semester?		101
Not Likely	5.9% (6)	
Possibly	1% (1)	
Likely	8.9% (9)	
Very Likely	84.2% (85)	
How likely are you to graduate from KU?		101
Not Likely	4% (4)	
Possibly	6.9% (7)	
Likely	17.8% (18)	
Very Likely	70.3% (71)	
How Likely are you to graduate from KU in four years?		101
Not Likely	13.9% (14)	
Possibly	19.8% (20)	
Likely	28.7% (29)	
Very Likely	37.6% (38)	

Student Satisfaction

How satisfied are they with the institution, their academic performance, and their out-of-classroom experiences? The respondents were asked about their satisfaction with non-classroom interactions with faculty; their satisfaction with their academic experiences, and their satisfaction with their academic performance. More than 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their non-classroom interactions with faculty had a positive influence on their academic performance. When students were

asked about their satisfaction with their academic experiences at the university more than 82% indicated they were satisfied. Over 45% believed they performed as well academically as they anticipated. The mean responses are provided in Table 8. Descriptive statistics in Table 9 provide more details about student satisfaction.

Table 8

Student Satisfaction Mean Responses

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.	3.82	.81	101
I am satisfied with my academic experiences at this university.	4.07	.85	101
I have performed academically as well as I anticipated I would.	3.09	1.22	101

* Scale of 1-5, 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree

Table 9

Student Satisfaction Descriptives

Satisfaction indicator	Valid Percent (Number)	N
My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.		101
Strongly Disagree	1.0% (1)	
Disagree	5.0% (5)	
Neutral	22.8% (23)	
Agree	53.5% (54)	
Strongly Agree	17.8% (18)	
I am satisfied with my academic experiences at this university.		101
Strongly Disagree	2.0% (2)	
Disagree	3.0% (3)	
Neutral	11.9% (12)	
Agree	51.5% (52)	
Strongly Agree	31.7% (32)	
I have performed academically as well as I anticipated I would.		101
Strongly Disagree	10.9% (11)	
Disagree	25.7% (26)	
Neutral	17.8% (18)	
Agree	33.7% (34)	
Strongly Agree	11.9% (12)	

Level and Type of Involvement

In what ways are the Hawk Link participants involved in the program? What is the extent of their participation as measured by the program administrators? The Hawk Link participants had several curriculum components in which to involve themselves. They could attend Students Obtaining Academic Resources (S.O.A.R.) tutor/mentor sessions, enroll in a regular or Hawk Link specific section of the PRE101 Orientation Seminar, or participate in a Multicultural Scholars Program. The researcher also asked the program administrators to assess the involvement of the students as an additional

measure of their involvement. The questions regarding the tutor/mentor program and orientation seminar are noted in Appendix I.

Only 21.8% participated in the weekly S. O. A. R. Tutoring/Mentoring Program. The subjects were unevenly split in that almost 80% were not enrolled in Hawk Link specific PRE101 Orientation Seminar. Sixty percent of the sample was involved in a Multicultural Scholars Program at the university. Table 10 provides the percentages of the type of involvement. Appendix C provides the frequency for participation in the Multicultural Scholars Program.

Table 10

Involvement Percentages

Involvement Type	Valid Percent (Number)	N
S.O.A.R Tutoring/Mentoring		101
No	78.2% (79)	
Yes	21.8% (22)	
PRE101 Enrolled		101
No	78.2% (79)	
Yes	21.8% (22)	
Multicultural Scholar Participant		101
No	39.6% (40)	
Yes	60.4% (61)	

The administrators of the Hawk Link Program were asked to measure the extent of the students' involvement in the program. This assessment was determined through a Likert scale measurement. The administrators rated the student on a scale of 1-4 not involved (1), slightly involved (2), involved (3) or highly involved (4). Over 80% of the sample was rated as involved or highly involved in the Hawk Link Program (See Appendix A). Administrators assessed that the majority of the respondents attended 2 or

more events throughout the academic year. Table 11 provides the mean for the administrator evaluation of student involvement.

Table 11

Administrator Assessment of Involvement

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
How involved was the Hawk Link participant?	3.32	.72	101

* scale of 1-4, with 4 = very involved

Section II – Mean Analysis, Correlations, and Regressions

What is the relationship between level and type of involvement and intentions to reenroll, graduate and graduate in four years? The results from the analysis did not demonstrate significant differences in the aspirations of students to reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four years by the level and type of involvement. This finding is rather surprising given that the researcher anticipated that students who involved in themselves the Hawk Link Program would show a significantly higher mean in students’ aspirations to reenroll and graduate from the university and to graduate in four years. Previous research indicates the more involved students are in the university setting, the more likely they are to graduate (Astin, 1985; Leppel, 2002). The implications of the lack of significant differences by the type of involvement will be discussed further in the final chapter.

To examine if there are significant differences in students’ responses on their likelihood of reenrollment, graduation from KU, and graduation from KU in 4-years, a series of t-tests were conducted and are presented in Tables 12, 13 and 14. Participating in any type of involvement (e.g., PRE101, S.O.A.R., and MSP) is not associated with

significant difference in students' reenrollment intentions. Specifically, although the students who participated in PRE101 and a Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP) had slightly higher means for intention to reenroll, the differences between students who participated in PRE101 and MSP versus those not in those activities were not statistically significant at the .05 level. Interestingly, students who participated in S.O.A.R. tutoring programs had a lower mean in their intention to reenroll. However, again, the difference between students who participated in S.O.A.R. versus those not involved in S.O.A.R. was not statistically significant. The table with self-reported attendance data is provided in Appendix B.

Table 12

Intention to Reenroll and Involvement Type

Involvement Type		N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
PRE101	No	69	3.66	.834	-.889	.376
	Yes	32	3.81	.592		
S.O.A.R.	No	79	3.74	.706	.843	.401
	Yes	22	3.59	.959		
MSP	No	40	3.62	.867	-.933	.353
	Yes	61	3.77	.692		

Table 13

Intention to Graduate and Involvement Type

Involvement Type		N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
PRE101	No	68	3.61	.753	1.057	.293
	Yes	32	3.43	.877		
S.O.A.R.	No	79	3.57	.730	.399	.691
	Yes	22	3.50	1.01		
MSP	No	40	3.45	.932	-1.131	.291
	Yes	60	3.63	.688		

Table 14

Intention to Graduate in Four Years and Involvement Type

Involvement Type		N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
PRE101	No	69	2.86	1.13	-.473	.665
	Yes	32	2.96	.897		
S.O.A.R.	No	79	2.91	1.07	.185	.853
	Yes	22	2.86	1.03		
MSP	No	40	2.97	1.04	.565	.574
	Yes	61	2.85	1.07		

Table 15 presents the relationship between the student aspirations and the number of times students' attended S.O.A.R. and the administrator evaluation of the students' involvement. Participation in the tutoring and mentoring program was not significantly related to students' aspirations to reenroll for their sophomore year, graduate from KU or graduate from KU in four years. Likewise, the administrators' evaluation of the students' involvement did not significantly relate to their intention to reenroll for the sophomore year, graduate and graduate in four from the university.

Table 15

Multicultural Scholars Program and Administrator Average

Aspiration		S.O.A.R. Attend	AdminAverage
How likely are you to reenroll for the fall semester?	r	-.047	-.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.638	.400
	N	101	101
How likely are you to graduate from KU?	r	.001	.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.993	.187
	N	101	101
How Likely are you to graduate from KU in four years?	r	.007	-.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.946	.718
	N	101	101

What is the relationship between satisfaction with their academic experiences at the institution, their academic performance and their out-of-class experiences and their intentions to reenroll, graduate and graduate in 4 years? The results from the analyses indicate some significant findings. There was, for example, a positive significant relationship between satisfaction with academic experiences and intentions to reenroll in the fall. There also was a statistically significant positive relationship between satisfaction with academic performance and intention to reenroll for the fall. The correlation between satisfaction with academic experiences and intention to reenroll for the fall was positive ($r = .447, p < .0001$), as was the correlation between satisfaction with academic performance and intention to reenroll for the fall semester, ($r = .275, p < .005$). Note that there is also a significant correlation between believing you have performed academically as expected and intention to reenroll and intention to graduate in four years. The relationship between this variable and intention to graduate from KU approached significance ($p = .065$). The correlation matrix is shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Relationship between Student Satisfaction and Aspirations

Satisfaction		Non- classroom interactions with faculty had a positive influence on my personal growth	I am satisfied with my academic experiences	I have performed academically as well as I anticipated
How likely are you to reenroll for the fall semester?	r Sig. (2-tailed) N	.093 .354 101	.447** .000 101	.275** .005 101
How likely are you to graduate from KU?	r Sig. (2-tailed) N	.048 .638 101	.298** .003 101	.185 .065 101
How Likely are you to graduate from KU in four years?	R Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.124 .216 101	.108 .284 101	.306** .002 101

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

What variables predict intention to reenroll in the sophomore year? The results from the regression analysis (presented in Tables 17 and 18) indicate that gender, satisfaction with academic performance, and college grade point average are significant predictors of intention to reenroll. Male students had a higher likelihood of intention of reenrollment at KU than their female counterparts, even after controlling for parental education, college involvement, and other academic and non-academic satisfaction variables. This is rather surprising given that current higher education literature continuously report female students are more likely to attend college and reenroll for future semesters (Leppel, 2002).

Controlling for other variables, the more the students are satisfied with their academic experience at KU, the more likely the students report that they are likely to reenroll at KU. This finding supports previous research and current understanding about the importance of academic experience in students' persistence and degree completion (Beil, Reisen, Zea, Caplan, 2000; Leppel, 2002). Further, there was a significant relationship between university grade point average and reenrollment. The higher the grade point average, the more likely the students think they would reenroll for their sophomore year.

Other than these three variables, gender, satisfaction with academic experience, and college grade point average, no other variables showed a significant relationship on students' intention to reenroll at the university. It is worth noting that none of the Hawk Link involvement variables were significant predictors of intended college reenrollment. Although from the previous descriptive finding, it is clear that involvement in various Hawk Link programs does not make a difference in terms of reenrollment, it is still the case even after controlling for all other individual background and college experience variables.

Table 17 presents the model summary for the regression analysis. Overall, the independent variables in the regression model explain nearly 34% of the total variance of the dependent variable, indicating that 34% of the variability in student intention to reenroll for the following semester is explained by the independent variables entered in the regression analysis. The F value ($p < .000$) suggests that the group of independent variables in the regression model reliably predicts the dependent variable.

Table 17

Model Summary for the Regression on the Likelihood of Reenrollment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
3	.582	.339	.243	.64030	3.509	.000

Table 18

Results of Linear Regression Model on the Likelihood of Reenrollment

Variables	Beta	T	Significance
Mother's education	.082	.774	.441
Father's education	-.124	-1.116	.268
Pell grant eligibility	-.029	-.294	.770
Gender	.226*	2.318	.023
PRE101	.093	.872	.386
S.O.A. R. involvement	.070	.633	.528
MSP involvement	.071	.674	.502
Admin average	-.058	-.538	.592
Non classroom interactions	-.153	-1.340	.184
Satisfied academic experience	.492**	3.969	.000
Academic performance	-.115	-.893	.375
Cumulative college GPA	.331**	2.781	.007

** . Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas?

Based on the F statistic, which is not statistically significant at the .05 level, the independent variables in the regression model, as a whole, are not effective in predicting the dependent variable (see Table 19). However, the results of the beta analysis do indicate that gender and academic satisfaction are significant predictors. Specifically, male students are more likely to have higher likelihood of intention of graduating from KU than their female counterparts, even after controlling for parental education, college involvement, and other academic and non-academic satisfaction variables. Further, the more the students are satisfied with their academic experience at the University of Kansas, the more likely the students' report that they are likely to graduate from KU. Table 19 provides the summary results and Table 20 outlines the remaining results.

Table 19

Model Summary for the Regression on the Likelihood of Graduating from KU

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
3	.433	.187	.067	.74265	1.557	.121

Table 20

Results of Linear Regression Model on the Likelihood of Graduating from KU

Variables	Beta	T	Significance
Mother's education	.068	.584	.561
Father's education	-.215	-1.758	.082
Pell grant eligibility	-.056	.511	.611
Gender	.234*	2.135	.036
PRE101	-.055	-.457	.649
S.O.A. R. involvement	.158	1.290	.201
MSP involvement	.125	1.068	.289
Admin average	.152	1.268	.209
Non classroom interactions	-.120	-.942	.349
Satisfied academic experience	.350**	2.528	.013
Academic performance	-.001	-.010	.992
Cumulative college GPA	.094	.711	.479

** . Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

What variables predict intention to graduate from the University of Kansas in four years? Based on the F statistic, which is not statistically significant at the .05 level, the independent variables in the regression model as a whole is not effective in predicting the dependent variable. However, non-classroom interaction with their faculty members and student perceptions about their academic performance are independent significant predictors of perception that a student will graduate from KU in four years. In other

words, the more the students believe their non-classroom interactions with faculty positively influenced their personal growth, values, and attitudes, the more likely the students would say they would graduate from KU in 4-years. The more the students believe their academic performance has met their expectations, the more likely the students believed they graduate in 4-years. Table 22 presents the results.

The model summary presented in Table 21 indicates that about 20% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. The F statistics (1.805) was significant at .1 level, indicating that the independent variables as a group in the model has a modest statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable.

Table 21

Model Summary for the Regression on the Likelihood of Graduating KU in 4-years

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
3	.457	.209	.093	.99839	1.805	.061

Table 22

Results of Linear Regression Model on the Likelihood of Graduating in 4-Years

Variables	Beta	T	Significance
Mother's education	.169	1.469	.146
Father's education	-.140	-1.156	.251
Pell grant eligibility	.140	1.314	.192
Gender	-.053	-.500	.618
PRE101	.042	.356	.723
S.O.A. R. involvement	-.084	-.697	.488
MSP involvement	-.064	-.559	.578
Admin average	.010	.082	.935
Non classroom interactions	-.255*	-2.042	.044
Satisfied academic experience	-.013	-.096	.923
Academic performance	.381**	2.704	.008
Cumulative college GPA	-.004	-.027	.978

** . Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Post Hoc Analysis: Actual Enrollment Comparisons

The primary dependent variable, the intention of reenrollment at KU was asked of participants during the spring semester in 2008. Using institutional data, I was able to collect information about whether the students who responded to the questionnaire had actually enrolled in fall, 2008 and the following spring semester, 2010. Of the 101 students in the sample, only 7 students did not enroll in the Fall 2008 semester. In the Spring 2010 semester there were 27 respondents who were no longer enrolled at the University of Kansas. There are significant correlations between student intention to reenroll and their actual reenrollment. However, the correlation coefficient is bigger for the fall, 2008 than that of spring 2010, indicating that larger number of students who intended to reenroll at KU during the spring semester in 2008 were not currently enroll in the spring semester, 2010. The same is true for the different measures of student aspirations, graduating from KU and graduating from KU in 4-years. Table 23 presents the significant results.

Table 23

Actual Enrollment to Aspiration of Reenroll and Graduation Correlation

		Enrolled for Fall 2008	Enrolled for Spring 2010
How likely are you to reenroll for the fall semester	Pearson Correlation	.716**	.448**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	101	101
How likely are you to graduate from the university	Pearson Correlation	.541**	.231*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.021
	N	100	100
How likely are you to graduate in four years	Pearson Correlation	.343**	.218**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.028
	N	101	101

**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Given that the purpose of this study was to look at the relationship between type and level of involvement and retention at the institution, I also ran t-tests to look at differences in students level of involvement (as measured by the administrators ranking) and their enrollment in 2008 and 2010 (coded as enrolled or not). There was no significant difference found. Further, I ran chi-square tests to determine if there was a relationship between actual enrollment in 2008 and 2010 and participating in Hawk Link PRE101, participating in an MSP, and participating in the SOAR tutoring program. None of these relationships were significant. The tables are provided in Appendix D and E.

Summary

This chapter provided the results of this research based on the nine research questions. The level and type of involvement analysis failed to be significant predictors of the aspirations of the students to reenroll, graduate and graduate in four years. The analysis of student satisfaction and student aspirations did indicate significant findings. Students who were satisfied with their educational experience were more likely to

reenroll for their sophomore year and to believe they would graduate from KU. The predictors to reenroll for the sophomore year revealed that male students are more likely to reenroll than the females. The items controlled for included parental education, college involvement and other academic and non-academic satisfaction variables. Finally, significant relationships were found between intention to reenroll and actual reenrollment. There was no relationship found between actual enrollment and type and level of involvement in Hawk Link.

Chapter VI

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between the level and type of involvement of freshman students in the Hawk Link Retention Program, a first-year program at the University of Kansas, and on retention at the university. The Hawk Link Program at the University of Kansas (KU) in Lawrence was developed in 1998 as a program to help students of color with their transition to college, thereby providing a higher probability for retention to graduation. This is one of several retention programs at KU, yet is one that is open to all students of color regardless of academic ability or degree program. College student retention studies show that college and universities implement retention programs in response to lagging retention rates for students of color (Braxton, Brier & Steele 2007-2008; Burr, Burr & Novak, 2000). Studies on retention programs show that increased contact with students and confidence of students improves the likelihood that a student will return to the university (Museus, 2008; Strauss & Volkwein, 2004). Hawk Link is one of those retention programs. The main question asked in this study was whether or not greater involvement in the Hawk Link program was related to students' aspirations of reenrolling, graduating, and graduating in four years.

Summary of Method

Participants in the Hawk Link program were questioned in spring 2008 about type and level of involvement in the program. Students were asked to provide demographic information, respond to questions about their involvement in the S.O.A.R.

tutoring/mentoring program, PRE101 Hawk Link section, Multicultural Scholar Program, respond to their aspirations of reenrollment, graduating from the university and graduating from the university in four years, and answer questions about their non-classroom interactions with faculty, satisfaction with their academic experiences and satisfaction with their academic performance. The aspiration and satisfaction information were measured on Likert scales. The involvement in S.O.A.R., PRE101, and Multicultural Scholars Program were dichotomous measures. Participants' attendance at S.O.A.R. was also measured on a continuum as they were asked to indicate how many times they attended the tutor/mentor sessions. The information is provided in Appendices F, G, and H.

Upon collecting the data, descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were run to determine the relationships among the variables. The first four questions of who participates in Hawk Link, student aspirations (reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four), student academic satisfaction (non-classroom interactions, academic experience, and satisfaction with academic performance), and what ways are the participants are involved in the program were answered with descriptive analysis. The question regarding the relationship between level and type of involvement with the student aspirations (reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four) was run with mean tests and correlation. Regression analysis was used to answer the relationship between the student academic satisfaction (non-classroom interactions, academic experience, and satisfaction with academic performance) and student aspirations (reenroll, graduate and graduate in four). When non-significant findings were revealed between type and level of involvement and the

student aspirations (reenroll, graduate and graduate in four), a post hoc analysis was done with actual enrollment data for Fall 2008 and Spring 2010 semesters.

Discussion of Findings

The Hawk Link Retention Program at the University of Kansas is important to the retention outcomes for the university. It is known, from this study, that the students who are involved in the program have higher first year and second year retention rates than the institutional average. Out of the 101 students in the sample, only 7 did not return to KU their sophomore year. This represents a retention rate of 93% compared to the institutional retention rate of 78%. While the results of this study indicate that the students' involvement in the selected measures of involvement does not significantly correlate to their aspirations of reenrolling, graduating, and graduating in four years, the program as a whole works well together as a complete program. This means that the Hawk Link Retention Program does have an impact on students' retention as a whole is more influential on the participants than the individual curriculum components. Therefore, this is important to remember throughout the discussion of the findings.

Involvement and Aspirations

The results of the study provided insight on the Hawk Link retention program for first year students of color. The main research question in this study was whether participants involvement, level and type, was related to the aspirations of reenrolling, graduating from the university, and graduating from the university in four years. Based on the data in this study, there was no relationship found between level and type of involvement in Hawk Link and aspirations. Further, while there was a significant correlation between aspirations and actual enrollment (in fall 2008 and spring 2010),

there was no significant relationship found between level and type of involvement and actual enrollment data.

In contrast to past studies relating to involvement and persistence (Burr, Burr & Novak, 2000; Leppel 2002), the results of this study demonstrated no relationship between the level and type of involvement and aspirations of reenrolling, graduating and graduating in four years. These results were surprising, as they differ from past studies that indicated the more involved, academically and socially, the students are the more likely they are to persist. The reasons for this finding will now be considered.

It may be possible that the results are accurate – that in this case there is no relationship between greater involvement in Hawk Link and retention. Maybe the act of enrolling in Hawk Link is sufficient in and of itself with relationship to retention and that more or less involvement doesn't make a difference. Further, the measures used in this study might be inaccurate. For example, maybe the administrators are not in the best position to judge the level of involvement of the students. Maybe their rating doesn't capture the actual level of involvement of the students. The author had initially planned on using attendance records for Hawk Link events to determine level of involvement – unfortunately, these were not available. If they had been, maybe this would have been a better measure of involvement and perhaps the study would have uncovered a relationship between involvement and retention.

In addition, it is possible that the self-perception of aspirations was not accurate – maybe the students didn't know whether they would actually return and just offered an optimistic assessment. To check this hypothesis out, the author found and used actual enrollment data. This study concluded that there was, in fact, a pretty high correlation

between students' aspirations and their actual enrollment. However, this study also found that there was a very high level of reenrollment for the sample – only 7 students from the sample did not return for the Fall 2008 semester and fewer than 30 were no longer enrolled by the Spring 2010 semester. The retention rate for the Hawk Link participants for this study were relatively high; perhaps this is the explanation as to why there was no statistically significant findings in this study.

Further, another reason for a lack of significance may be due to the familial factors of the parents' expectations for attending college and the student's desire to obtain a degree, variables that were not considered in this study. Research has shown that family support is a factor affecting students persistence in a university setting (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005; Walker and Satterwhite, 2002). The students participating in the Hawk Link Program may well have strong family support systems in place to help them make a successful transition to university life and perhaps this is the reason for this finding.

The timing of the data collection may also be a reason for lack of a significant finding. The data were collected mid spring 2008 semester when some of the participants of the Hawk Link program may have dropped out of the retention program or withdrawn from the university already. Changing the data collection time frame would likely yield a better n, therefore providing an opportunity for statistical power and better analyses. Another explanation could be that the individuals who filled out the questionnaire (101 out of 250) were not representative of the population of participants. It is possible that if the entire population completed the questionnaire the results might have been different.

Finally, the participants of the Hawk Link Program are recruited by Hawk Link Guides to sign up for the program during the Summer Enrollment at New Student Orientation. Through this process the participants are sought out by the guides during the two-day orientation and are given information about the Hawk Link Program. There is a specific session, held on day one of orientation, where students and parents are given early access to the guides, program administrators and information about available resources thereby providing a comfort level of an existing support system. Students who may be the last in their family to go to college or have parents who have attended college may be well aware of the available academic resources and therefore may not feel the need to take full advantage of the planned curriculum of the Hawk Link Program. The recruitment process while informative may not stress all the benefits of the program and students feel it is optional to participate since there is no cost involved to register for the program. Students may not see the benefits of free services and therefore not fully participate after being recruited to the program. The success sessions covering academic advising, resources in the university career center, reapplying for financial aid, and possible leadership opportunities are setup specifically for staff to talk to the Hawk Link participants. Those students registered for the program may very well seek those resources on their own and not attend any of the sessions that are a part of the curriculum. Some may already have sought out those sources and choose not to attend the established sessions. The participants' previous knowledge of programs may be the explanation as to why there was no statistically significant finding in this study.

Mean Test: Involvement and Aspirations

Additionally, mean tests were conducted to determine the relationship between student aspirations (reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four years) and involvement in PRE101, S.O.A.R., and Multicultural Scholars Program. While there were a few points difference in the mean scores, the analysis revealed there were no statistically significant differences between those who participated in these activities and those who did not. This is likely due to the lack of variance in the responses from the Hawk Link participants. It is important to understand that while there is ethnic diversity among the respondents, they are rather homogeneous in that the vast majority of them believe they will reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four years from the university. All of the students in the retention program likely have entered the university with high level of confidence in their ability to be successful at the university. When there is such a level of homogeneity there will be little difference in the responses thereby lacking significant findings. Discussion of why the mean findings may have not been significant follows.

The S.O.A.R. program is a free service that provides academic support through weekly tutoring and mentoring for freshmen and sophomore level courses. While this program is not specifically for students admitted on academic probation, some students may feel the need to get assistance with their first year of college coursework. The few point difference between the mean scores of those who participate in S.O.A.R. and those who do not were not significant. Perhaps students participate in the S.O.A.R. program because they feel they need assistance and that the tutoring sessions with S.O.A.R. could benefit them academically. They may have chosen to do so because they entered college with a lower ACT score or felt less prepared for college coursework. The students know

their academic ability and may have anticipated not doing well, thereby influencing the results of the study. This study did not collect any data on student motivations to participate in Hawk Link activities nor did it collect information on pre-college academic preparation (e.g., ACT score or High School GPA).

The PRE101 orientation seminar helps students transition to university life. The Hawk Link specific section has additional components that include a midterm grade check, attending Hawk Link Success Sessions, attending the multicultural student success fair and writing a family diversity paper which allows the student to investigate their family and influence on their lives. The participants of PRE101 also receive weekly contact with their instructor, get academic advising for the next semester and work on a graduation plan while in the orientation seminar. This supports why their means are slightly higher for reenrolling and graduating in four years because during their PRE101 class they have purposefully planned for these aspirations. Even though there was no significant relationship between type of involvement and outcome measures, this reveals that students are responding to the PRE101 curriculum in that the academic advising prepares them for reenrollment and the preparing a degree plan gives them confidence they are going to complete their degree. The lack of significant relationships could be attributed to the homogeneity of the responses and their confidence of obtaining their college degree. The curriculum of the Hawk Link specific PRE101 course is working in some way to support the participants of the program because their confidence is unwavering for their aspirations. If data from participants in non Hawk Link PRE101 sections were included in the study for a comparison, there may have been a different outcome. It is important to note that separate analyses conducted by the Office of

Minority Affairs using institutional data have found a significant difference in retention rates for students who participate in Hawk Link sections of PRE101 and a matched group of students who do not. This institutional finding lends credence to the idea that this current study may suffer a selection bias.

Satisfaction Variables

Participants were asked about their satisfaction with their academic experiences, academic performance, and non-classroom interactions with faculty. More than 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their non-classroom interactions with faculty had a positive influence on their experience at the university. Participants (82%) indicated that they were satisfied with their academic experiences. Participants (45%) believed they performed academically as well as they anticipated. The considerably lower percentage for academic performance may be an indicator that students likely had a better high school grade point average and were not doing as well during their first year of college as they had anticipated. Students who may have graduated within the top 10% of their high school class believed they would do well academically and found differently after their first semester of college, thereby influencing their confidence in their academic performance. The data were collected after their first semester and in the middle of their second where they were likely getting the feel for the expectations of university professors, which possibly influenced the outcome of the study.

The fact that the data were collected in the middle of their second semester shows that the respondents were comfortable in their academic setting as a first-time college freshman. These findings are consistent with previous studies that indicate when students are satisfied with their academic experiences they are more likely to complete their

degree (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Beil, Reisen, Zea, & Caplan, 2000; Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). These findings also support the post hoc analysis completed with the actual enrollment information from the Fall 2008 and Spring 2010 semesters. The participants of the Hawk Link program believed they were doing well academically and were satisfied with their experiences thus the reason for only 7 students did not enroll for the Fall 2008 semester. For the Spring 2008 semester only 27 were not enrolled at the university. The respondents for this study were certain of their ability to be successful during their first year of college. There needed to be more respondents to determine any significant differences in satisfaction. The students' high level of satisfaction with the university possibly influenced them to reenroll and be confident in completing their degree program. The students who chose to go to the university and be in the retention program were likely to be successful at any similar research university. Finally, a factor not considered for those 7 who were not enrolled in the Fall and the 27 who were not enrolled for the spring were concerns relating to ability to meet the financial requirements of going to college. This was one variable that regardless of how satisfied you are, if you are not financially able to manage the cost of an education, you will adjust your completion date until you are able to handle the financial obligation.

Predictors of Aspirations

The aspirations measured in this study include reenrollment for the sophomore year, graduation, and graduation in four years. The study demonstrates that gender is a main predictor for two of the aspirations, for reenrolling and graduating from the university, of the participants of the Hawk Link program. When reviewing the regression analysis, gender and academic satisfaction were the two predictors that had a significant

relationship with both aspirations for reenrollment and aspirations to graduate. The surprising finding of this study was that it uncovered a relationship between males and intention to reenroll for the sophomore year and intention to graduate from KU. These findings indicate that male students are more likely to plan to reenroll and graduate than were females, controlling for all other variables. This contradicts the findings of a previous study whereby women statistically have higher reenrollment rates than men (Leppel, 2000). It is unclear why men were found to have higher aspirations. Perhaps there are intervening variables involved that were not measured. Specifically, perhaps the males enrolled in the Hawk Link program have more familial support for their academic pursuits, which provides them encouragement to continue their education as compared to the women. Familial support was not a variable included in this study. Studies have shown when students who have the support of their families are more likely to succeed at college (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005; Walker and Satterwhite, 2002). The pre-existing factors of how well the males did in high school and their ACT scores were also not considered and therefore could be influencing the results as well. This particular group of men may have had rigorous college preparatory courses, preparation course that provided them with higher ACT scores, and detailed guidance in college preparation that set them apart from their female counterparts. It is possible that those men who would have benefitted from the retention program curriculum were one not signed up for the program and were not included in this particular study or were a part of this program did not respond to the questionnaire.

Future Research Suggestions

The impact of student retention will always be of concern to university administrators as they seek ways to improve the retention rates of their students. Obtaining more information about the participants of the retention program may be key to improving the reason why the program works. The addition of a qualitative question could gather information from the participants who were registered for the program. What factors were influential in their returning to the university and attributed to their success. Further qualitative analyses could be conducted through an exit interview to find out what curriculum program components were most helpful to them and what they felt would be helpful with their transition to university life. The qualitative results would give greater insight to each student and allows for themes to form thereby providing background information for program changes and to meet the students' academic and social needs thereby improving retention. The personal aspect of each student is revealed through qualitative analysis and would benefit future studies.

Conducting a longitudinal study would provide insight over a 4-5 year period of time. The time frame would follow an entire group of Hawk Link Participants from their freshman year through graduation. In this type of study, qualitative information could be collected from the participants along with comparing retention rates between Hawk Link and non Hawk Link participants. Participants should be asked questions seeking their satisfaction with their college experience, what resources they utilize and what motivates them to be successful. Answers to such questions would help provide insight as to what programs and resources they utilized while attending the university. While Hawk Link is a two-year program, most students are involved in the first year component; the

involvement of the students beyond the first year could be studied in relationship to their involvement with other university events (e.g. intramurals, organizations, honor groups, and campus work). Collecting information beyond the one-year program would show a trend with the students' involvement and possibly find what university programs and resources are related to the student's persistence at the university.

Students persist for different reasons. Thus a future study should include the consideration of pre-existing factors of high school grade point average, college preparation coursework, ACT, first-generation student, socioeconomic standing, and familial support. There are many reasons why students choose a particular university and these pre-existing factors could be a part of their decision making and therefore influence their persistence at the university. When these items are considered as a part of the research methods, then a clearer picture is given for the reason the student would return to the university and graduate with their degree.

Policy and Practical Implications

The Hawk Link Program as a whole works to retain students at the university and therefore should be kept as one of the university retention programs. While retaining the program will likely continue to reveal that participants have better retention rates and higher grade point averages than the non-Hawk Link counterparts, there are policy implications to consider.

The current study examined the relationship between type of involvement and student aspirations of reenrolling, graduating, and graduating in four years. The data captured from this study showed no significant relationship between level of involvement

and student aspirations. This is an indication of participants who are, as an aggregate, homogeneous in their intentions to be successful.

The program has been in existence since the 1997 pilot group. The program's founding retention model focuses on early identification of the academic and social needs of the students which is from Alan Seidman's (2007) model of student retention. This model uses early identification component as a basis. It is time to return to early identification of the needs of the students of the Hawk Link Program. The program has grown during the past 13 years and generalization of the students needs have taken precedent over the individual needs that were once the focus of the program. Through the recruitment process students should be assessed to determine what specific services they need to be successful through graduation. This assessment of needs should continue through their college career to enhance their chances of reaching both academic and personal goals.

One would imagine that in the early years of the program, more individualized attention was given to the 50-100 students who were registered for the program. Now that the program has grown to a cap of 250, and increased staff, there should be a refocusing on meeting the individual needs of the students. This could be done through increased contact throughout the academic year with the Hawk Link Guides, S.O.A.R. Tutor/Mentors, and Hawk Link administrators. Purposefully asking questions of the students would provide greater insight to the challenges they may incur that would keep them from returning to the university. Student guides and tutors would be able to relate on a peer level while the administrators could handle more pressing issues and finding appropriate resources and support systems when students are considering not returning.

Mentoring, peer-to-peer or otherwise, can be done informally or formally, the more frequent and purposeful contact with the participants provides them greater structure. Regular contact through mentoring is one type of support system.

Another support system is that of parent partnerships. Parents are already involved in the lives of their students and this should be an opportunity to get the parents involved and serve as a resource that benefits the program and the students. It may be useful to provide the Hawk Link parents with a newsletter that highlights the events and resources at the university and encourages the parents to talk to their students about the available opportunities for their students. This parent partnership is two-fold, it allows the parent to feel connected to their student and is another venue to share information about upcoming events and available resources.

In the area of assessment, there is the need to conduct more detailed assessment and sharing of the results. At first glance, the program administrators indicate that students in the Hawk Link Program have higher retention than those students who are not registered for the program. This is based upon enrollment from one semester to the next. Sharing this information with the parents and students is one way to show them the benefits of the program. For program administrators to share more than basic fall to spring or fall to fall retention rates, through an in depth assessment of how effective the program's curriculum can be will provide more credible information to all involved. Collecting information on what events and resources are beneficial to participants and how they affect their retention will help provide a better picture of the program's purpose. While a more in depth assessment will likely take more time and resources the results yielded will provide another perspective of the program.

The Hawk Link Retention Program is working for students who are registered and therefore should remain a part of the retention efforts at the university. The details on how the program specifically influences their retention at the university remains to be clearly defined and attributed to the actual components of the program curriculum. A combination of further research and consideration of how the program may be changed will provide university administrators an opportunity to improve a program that has potential to influence retention rates beyond the one-year review.

Summary

Research indicates that student retention will continue to present challenges to higher education administrators (Kuh, Cruce, et al, 2008; Reason 2009). This study provides an opportunity to build future research that will provide insight on where to begin with program changes. Providing more individualized assessment as to what students' specific academic and social needs are for success may provide further insight to the needs of students of color and the influence on involvement in the retention program and aspirations to reenroll, graduate, and graduate in four years. Retention programs that focus on students of color and their persistence are important as universities work to improve retention rates.

While the purpose of the retention program may be clear there should be further research on how the retention program may be successful in retaining students. This will require each university to focus on their students' needs to determine what program changes should be made. Programs should have a regular review of the curriculum to determine what is working and what could be improved. The important information lies within the participants; therefore they should be a part of the review process. After all

they are the reason the retention program came into being, they should be the reason changes and improvements are made.

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Appendix A

The Frequency Analysis of the Administrator Ratings

Admin1	Frequency	Valid Percent
Highly Involved	5	5.0
Involved	7	6.9
Slightly Involved	7	6.9
Not Involved	79	78.2
Total	101	100.0

Admin 2	Frequency	Valid Percent
Highly Involved	8	7.9
Involved	20	19.8
Slightly Involved	20	19.8
Not Involved	39	38.6
Total	101	100.0

Appendix B

The Number of S.O.A.R. Sessions Self-Reported by Participants

	Frequency	Percent
.00	79	78.2
2.00	2	2.0
3.00	2	2.0
4.00	2	2.0
5.00	3	3.0
6.00	1	1.0
7.00	1	1.0
8.00	4	4.0
10.00	2	2.0
19.00	1	1.0
20.00	1	1.0
25.00	2	2.0
39.00	1	1.0
Total	101	100.0

Appendix C

Frequency Analysis for Multicultural Scholars Program

Did you participate in a Multicultural Scholars Program?		
	Frequency	Percent
No	40	39.6
Yes	61	60.4
Total	101	100.0

Appendix D

Distribution of Participation in PRE101, S.O.A.R. and MSP by Fall 2008 Enrollment

		Enrollment 2008 yes	Enrollment 2008 no
PRE101	No	64 (93%)	5 (7%)
	Yes	30 (94%)	2 (6%)
S.O.A.R. Attend	No	74 (94%)	5 (6%)
	Yes	20 (91%)	2 (95)
MSP	No	37 (93%)	3 (8%)
	Yes	57 (93%)	4 (7%)
Admin Ave (scale is 1-4)		3.31	3.43

No statistically significant relationships exist for any of these relationships

Appendix E

Distribution of Participation in PRE101, S.O.A.R. and MSP by Spring 2010 Enrollment

		Enrollment 2010 yes	Enrollment 2010 no
PRE101	No	50 (73%)	19 (28%)
	Yes	24 (75%)	8 (25%)
S.O.A.R. Attend	No	57 (72%)	22 (28%)
	Yes	17 (77%)	5 (23%)
MSP	No	31 (78%)	9 (23%)
	Yes	43 (71%)	18 (30%)
Admin Ave (scale is 1-4)		3.28	3.43

No statistically significant relationships exist for any of these relationships

Appendix G

Dependent Variables

Circle the response that describes you:	Very Likely	Likely	Possibly	Not Likely
How likely are you to re-enroll for the fall 2008 Semester?	4	3	2	1
How likely are you to graduate from the University of Kansas?	4	3	2	1
How likely are you to graduate in four years from the University of Kansas?	4	3	2	1

Appendix H

Questionnaire

Choose the response that describes your feelings about the statement:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Since coming to this university, I have developed close personal relationships with other students.	5	4	3	2	1
The student friendships I have developed at this university have been personally satisfying.	5	4	3	2	1
My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values and attitudes.	5	4	3	2	1
It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students.	5	4	3	2	1
Few of the students I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem.	5	4	3	2	1
Most students at this university have values and attitudes different from my own.	5	4	3	2	1
My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.	5	4	3	2	1
My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations.	5	4	3	2	1

Since coming to this University, I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty member.	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members.	5	4	3	2	1
Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.	5	4	3	2	1
Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are generally outstanding or superior teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss the issues of interest and importance to students.	5	4	3	2	1
Choose the response that describes your feelings about the statement:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas.	5	4	3	2	1
Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with the extent of my intellectual development since enrolling at this university.	5	4	3	2	1
My academic experience has had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with my academic experiences at this university.	5	4	3	2	1
Few of my courses this year have been intellectually stimulating.	5	4	3	2	1
My interest in ideas and intellectual matters	5	4	3	2	1

has increased since coming to this university.

I am more likely to attend a cultural event (for example, a concert, lecture, or art show) now than I was before coming to this university.	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

I have performed academically as well as I anticipated I would.	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

It is important for me to graduate from college.	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---

I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to attend this university.	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---

It is likely that I will register at this university next fall.	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

It is not important to me to graduate from this university.	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

I have no idea at all what I want to major in.	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---

Getting good grades is not important to me.	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Choose the response that describes you:	Very Likely	Likely	Possibly	Not Likely
How likely are you to reenroll at KU for the Fall 2008 semester?	4	3	2	1
How likely are you to graduate from KU?	4	3	2	1
How likely are you to graduate from KU in four years?	4	3	2	1

What is your KU ID Number? _____

What is your KU Cumulative Grade Point Average? _____

What is your gender? Male Female

What is your racial/ethnic origin?
(Check all that apply)

- African American
- Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Caucasian American/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- American Indian/Alaskan Native

What was your High School Grade Point Average? _____

What was your **highest** ACT score? _____

What is your **Father's** highest level of education

- Elementary/Middle school
- High school
- some college/Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or higher

What is your **Mother's** highest level of education

- Elementary/Middle school
- High school
- some college/Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or higher

Do you qualify for a **Pell Grant**? Yes No

Appendix I

Involvement Questions for Orientation Seminar and Tutoring/Mentoring

PRE101 Orientation Seminar

Were you enrolled in a PRE101 Orientation Seminar? Hawk Link Sections taught by: Juan Izaguirre, Aida Garcia, Precious Porras, Pamela Scott, Joel Sweeney

Yes No

STUDENTS OBTAINING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

(S.O.A.R.)

Did you go to S.O.A.R. Tutoring/Mentoring?

Yes No

If yes, how often did you go during the academic year?

1. Did you do participate in a Multicultural Scholarship Program? (African/African American Studies, Applied Behavioral Sciences, Languages and Humanities, School of Business, School of Architecture, School of Education, School of Engineering, School of Journalism, School of Pharmacy, and School of Social Welfare)

Yes No

Spring 2008

Dear Retention Program Participant,

You have been selected to be a part of a research project involving students at the University of Kansas. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to complete the questionnaire and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

This research is being conducted as part of dissertation for completion of an Educational Doctorate. The questionnaire you are about to take will ask you about a number of questions related to your background, your experiences as a college student and participation on campus.

This questionnaire should take about 20 minutes to complete. Please be sure to answer every item, as it is crucial to the study. Because the questionnaires deal with issues of your first year college experience you will reflect upon your first semester of college.

This research will be used to better understand the reason why students who participate in a retention program are retained at a university. Your participation is solicited although strictly voluntary and there are no risks involved. I assure you that your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. By completing the questionnaire you give permission for the use and disclosure of information for purposes of this study at any time in the future. Please keep a copy of this for your own record.

Completion of the questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are over the age of eighteen. You understand that if you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, or by email at dhann@ku.edu.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is complete, please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail.

Sincerely,

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