Order Number 9204432

Evaluating the Black student peer mentoring program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991

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EVALUATING THE BLACK STUDENT PEER MENTORING PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

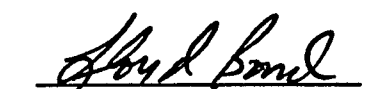
by

Robert Wayne Drakeford

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1991

Approved By



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Date of Acceptance by Committee

4/3/91
Date of Final Oral Examination

DRAKEFORD, ROBERT WAYNE, Ed.D. Evaluating the Black Student Peer Mentoring Program at The University Of North Carolina At Greensboro. (1991) Directed by Dr. Lloyd Bond. 88 pp.

This study evaluated the Black Peer Mentor Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) by assessing its effect on the grade point average and retention rates of African-American freshman students who participated in the program. The program at UNCG was initiated to assist in the retention of African-American Freshman students who were experiencing a high attrition rate. The extent to which the Mentor Program influenced students' propensity to participate in campus life as assessed by a variety of measures was also investigated.

The 360 African-American freshmen who entered UNCG in the fall of 1988 served as potential subjects in the study. Data for the study were obtained from university student records, surveys, and a series of interviews. The program at UNCG had 23 mentors and 93 mentees. Each mentor met with each of his or her mentees periodically to discuss any problems or concerns or to share campus news.

The most significant finding in this study is that the program had a dramatic effect on student retention. During the first academic year, no mentored student left school. This compares with a loss of 90 non-participating students (over one-fourth of the non-mentored African-American freshman class). Students in the Black Peer Mentor Program joined more campus organizations and participated in more

campus activities. Additionally the program fostered positive attitudes about the university and campus life. It would appear that the lack of coordination among all divisions of the university is a primary cause for the large number of African American students that left UNCG during the course of this study. While the Black Peer Mentor program appears to have had a positive effect on the students it touched, it reached only a quarter of the class. The expansion of the program would aid in the successful retention of more African-American students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother Elizabeth who gave me Life.

I would like to thank the following persons for their assistance. First, my dissertation advisor Dr. Lloyd Bond who spent countless hours helping with every phase of this study. He helped whenever it was needed. Dr. Edwin Bell who has been there from the start of this journey, and would lift my spirits when I thought all hope was dim.

The remaining members of my Committee: Dr. Brubaker who always greeted me with a smile and would give constructive feedback to my questions. Dr. Kieth Howell who always advised me on when I needed it. Dr. Hal Snyder who gave very insightful guidance during this project.

The people who helped me to finish this study. Ms. Bettina Shufford without whose belief, help and encouragement this study would not have been possible. The brothers of Rho Beta Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity who helped with the data collection process (Stephan Grey, Blake Maness, William Pennix, Tim Godfrey, Jonathan White, Vern Bolden, Reginald Ramseur, Keith Rush, Rod Rankin). Modgie Jeffers who helped with the interviews and my editor Violet Slade. My family who went through this process with me, sons Bobby & Rudy, my father Robert.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"A mind is terrible thing to waste" (UNCF, 1989).

Overview and Background

The number of African-American[1] college students in the United States has declined in the last ten years by 20% (McCauley, 1986). Nationally,the graduation rate is 77% for whites and 45% for African-Americans (White, Babco, & Fisher, 1981). There is a decline in the number of high school graduates (Center for Education Statistics 1988), and each college in the country is competing for a share of an increasingly smaller traditional freshmen class. The number of potential students of all races has dropped 26% over the last 20 years (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1984). Since there is a smaller number of African-American students in colleges across the country, a program that retains and assists the smaller pool of African-American students to graduate is of great importance to the country, the region, and the state. Regional trends in enrollments and attrition mirror those of the nation

[1] African-American is the preferred ethnic designation of Americans who are descendants of those persons that migrated from Africa (forcibly or voluntarily). Black will be used as an ethnic designation only if it is the official title of a program, book, journal, or group.

(James, 1988). North Carolina's trends are similar to those of the region and the nation (Office of Institutional Research UNCG, 1987).

Conceptual Base

Studies by Fleming (1984), Sedlacek and Brooks (1976), Tracy & Sedlacek (1984a.) have shown that the more involved a student is with college activities, the lower the attrition rates. McCauley (1986) also documented that the more involved African-American students were the greater their chances were of graduating.

The problem of retaining students who are admitted to college has been investigated, for over thirty years. The results of these studies have shown that high school grades, aptitude tests, gender, parental income and education were the leading factors in determining whether a student is academically successful or not (Austin, 1985). The issues of race and the racial composition of a campus were also important factors in academic success (Fleming, 1984; Sedlacek, 1987). The lack of African-American faculty, African-American staff, and ethnic sensitive programming were also significant issues at colleges across the country (Collison, 1987; Farrell, 1989; Appelgate, 1989). The official 1989 report of the UNCG Affirmative Action Committee detailed these same shortcomings at UNCG.

There are programs at many colleges to alleviate the problem of high African-American student attrition. These programs are diverse, varying from curriculum-based programs (Van Allen, 1988; Weeks, 1987), to multi-faceted approaches that involve all aspects of the student's college life (Cellucci, 1986). Some of these programs use peer mentoring, or peer counseling, targeted student counseling, intensive academic advising, extensive faculty or administrative involvement with the freshmen students, or a comprehensive approach that combines all of the above sometimes adding support staff to the team.

Peer mentoring has been shown to increase the level of involvement of incoming freshmen (Mack 1989; Boyd, Shueman, McMullan, & Fretz, 1979). Peer mentoring appears to be the easiest to integrate and most cost effective among the retention methods listed above.

Conceptual Model

Peer mentoring appears to be effective in the successful completion of academic studies. The program has been shown to increase the level of involvement on the part of incoming freshmen (Mack, 1989; Boyd, Shueman, McMullan, & Fretz, 1979). Mentoring also increases the academic success of students (Humm, 1984; Clifford, 1988; Shannon, 1988).

The literature, therefore, suggests that mentored students become more successful academically and are more involved in university life. This increased involvement enhances the likelihood of academic success of the student (Figure 1).

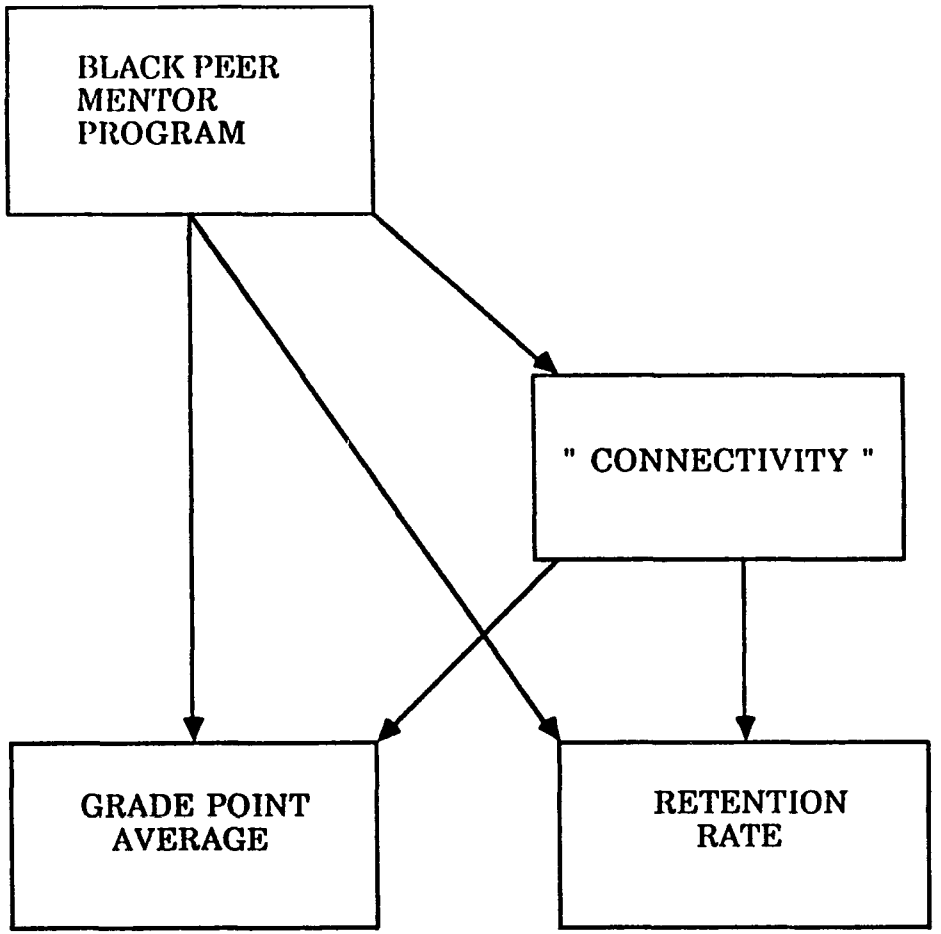


Figure 1

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Significance of the Study

This study will look at a program for African-American student retention on a predominantly white campus. Understanding retention programs is of paramount importance in the 1990's to prevent the loss of capable young men and women from the educational process.
The United States is in an increasingly competitive world environment and cannot afford to squander its most precious natural resource -- people. Large numbers of African-American students began to enter predominantly white colleges and universities during the 1970's, retention of these students has been identified as a problem (Thomas, 1981; Weise, 1985). Retention of African-American students aids the colleges the students attend, the states they will live and work in as more productive adults, and the nation as it competes in a more global economy.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Black Peer Mentor Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and to assess its effect on African American Freshmen students. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess the Black Peer Mentoring Program's effectiveness upon grade point average and retention and to explore several hypotheses about differences that may emerge.

Evaluation Questions

The principal questions of interest in this study relate to the impact of the UNCG Black Peer Mentoring program on academic success. However, as indicated earlier, this study was also concerned with the impact of the program on "non academic" factors that may, in turn, affect overall academic performance. The primary research questions follow:

1(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program have higher retention rates than African-American students who are not in the program?

1(b). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program have higher grade point averages (G.P.A.'s) than African-American students who are not in the program?

The following questions relate to the impact of the mentoring program on variables presumed to affect academic performance as discussed above:

2(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring program join more campus organizations and participate in more university activities than African-American students not in the program?

2(b). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program feel more involved in the university community than other African-American students not in the program?

3(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program report greater autonomy as measured by the Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI) than students not in the program?

3(b). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program report more career purpose as measured by the SDTI than African-American students not in the program?

3(c). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring program report development of mature relationships as measured by the SDTI more frequently than students not in the program?

Strengths

This study has several strong points: First, it is an analysis of an entire African-American freshmen class in a mid-size state university. Hence, problems of sampling and inference with respect to the freshmen class itself were obviated. Second, the ready availability of extensive

students records will allow the investigator to match "experimental" and "control" students on a variety of relevant prior variables (e.g., SAT scores, high school GPA). Additionally the class was almost entirely a "traditional"[2] freshmen class recently graduated from high school.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program were not randomly assigned to the program from the population of incoming freshmen. Rather, they were self-selected into the intervention program under investigation. Hence, they may differ in systematic but unknown ways from those not participating in the program. Such differences, in turn, may be related to the variables of interest in this study. With respect to high school GPA and SAT scores, any such differences may be examined from available data. However, since the Modified Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI) was administered only once (i.e., after the first year of college), there is no way to determine whether differences in SDTI scores were due to the mentoring program. In the Data Analysis section below, statistical procedures for mitigating the effects of self-selection are discussed in more detail. The results may not be generalizable to predominantly

[2] Traditional students are those students who enter college immediately after completing High school. Non-traditional students are those students that are older, married, seeking second careers, and in general are not recent high school graduates. Since they are older, they have usually acquired families, assets, debts, etc..

African-American institutions because the social dynamics are different on these campuses for African-American students (Fleming, 1984).

The study was necessarily restricted to summative, rather then formative, judgments. That is, it may be possible to conclude that the UNCG program, overall, was effective in increasing student "connectivity" and academic success, but not be possible at present to attribute such effects to specific aspects of the program. It is not possible logistically or statistically to isolate specific program aspects for analysis. Moreover, there are many influences (family, finances, etc.) that affect a given student's college life, and although it may be reasonable to assume that these influences are distributed equally across both participants and non-participants in the program, there is no way to know this.

Finally, the motivation level of the students may have influenced their decision to join the program. It should be noted that this potentially confounding factor plagues virtually all of the programs discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Review of literature

The review of the literature for this evaluation includes: the dimensions of the African-American attrition problem and enrollment trends, African-Americans on white campuses, retention theory, the UNCG picture. Each body of literature is related to an aspect of the UNCG Black Peer Mentor Program.

The Dimensions of the Attrition Problem and Enrollment Trends.

From the beginning of this century until the 1970's there has been a steadily increasing number of African-American students enrolled in college. From 1900 - 1910 there were fewer than a thousand African-American students enrolled in higher education (Crossland, 1971); by 1950 this number had grown to 100,000 and the continued growth was spurred on by the case of Brown v. Board of Education (Austin, 1985). From 1970-1975 the number of African-American students rose dramatically with the increased access of African-American students to all the institutions of higher education in this country. Then in 1976-82 enrollment leveled off (Hill, 1983; Marks, 1985). This leveling trend continued until 1988 when slight gains were reported from the 1986 student enrollments numbers (Mingle & Collison, 1987; Wilson & Carter,

1988; Evangelauf, 1990). In the 1980's, even with these slight gains and more African-American students graduating from high school, more young African-American males were in jail than in college (Cooper, 1990).

In spite of the fact that the number of African-American college students has leveled off in the last decade, in the 1980's, the percentage of eligible African-American students enrolling in college in the United States declined by 20% from the previous decade (McCauley, 1986). This decline in the percentage of African-American college students is occurring even though other minorities were going to college in record numbers (Evangelauf, 1988).

The number of potential students of all races has dropped 20% from 1963 to 1983 (Center for Education Statistics, 1988). Colleges in the country are competing for an increasingly smaller share of traditional college students (Cage, 1989). Additionally, since there is a smaller number of African-American students in colleges across the country the best of these students are heavily recruited (Best, 1989).

With the United States becoming an increasingly technological society most of the skilled jobs that will enable the United States to compete in a global society will require postsecondary or higher education. Choate (1982), Starr (1983), Justiz and Kameen (1986), Jones

(1988) and the Department of Labor (1989), have all highlighted the need for an educated work force. They have warned of the probability of serious shortfalls in critical labor areas now and in the future. The number of white males entering the work force is predicted to drop considerably during the 1990's from 47% today to 15% by the year 2000 (Sauer, 1990). The percentage of African-Americans, Native Americans and Latino-Americans will drastically increase (Pallas, 1989). The country will be forced to import skilled labor, shutdown key industries or recruit and train it's Minorities. These groups are now on the bottom of the educational and economic ladder and this gap between skilled graduates and available jobs will probably widen if educational policies and procedures do not change (Sauer, 1990).

Kunjufu (1985) and Hale (1982) have argued that the learning styles of African-American students and white students are different. Kunjufu posits the concept that African American males are culturally encouraged to develop gross motor skills and African American Females are encouraged to develop fine motor skills. The american educational system places increasingly greater emphasis on fine motor skills after the fourth grade and African American males as a group fall behind. These differences may partly cause the educational problems of African-American students. Hale (1982), Jones (1988), predicted dire

consequences if the educational system does not do a more effective job of educating African-American students. This is not a new problem. Woodson (1933) described it as "miseducation" almost fifty years ago. Bennet (1972) described education and "miseducation" as a "Question of Life or Death" for African-Americans. The postsecondary enrollments and graduation rates of African-Americans have been much lower than the rates for white students over the last half century with the gap narrowing during a brief period, 1966-1976.

African-Americans on white Campuses

As predominately white universities began to accept more African-American students to their campuses during the late 60's and early seventies, several problems became apparent. This period (1965-1975) was marked by African-American students taking control over university buildings and demanding a more relevant curriculum, a friendlier campus atmosphere, and more African-American faculty (Holman, 1975; Cangemi, 1977; Knock, 1978; Cowley; 1966). Many of these demands were met and the campuses quieted down (Smith, 1980). During the period from 1975 to 1984, the number of African-American students on predominately white campuses leveled off and started a downward trend (Marks, 1985). The predominately white universities were assailed once again during the late 1980's as African-American students took over

buildings, demonstrated (Vance, 1987), and demanded more African-American faculty (Jaschik, 1987).

In addition, the gender ratio became more severely skewed among African-American college students on predominantly white campuses (Center for Education Statistics, 1988), with many more African-American females than males on college campuses (Evangelauf, 1990). Patten (1988) indicates that in metropolitan Atlanta 's 12 colleges the number of African-American males receiving degrees dropped by 16% between 1978 and 1985, and of all the gender and ethnic groups African-American males were the only group that experienced a decline in enrollment during the period 1978-1985. For example during the 1989-1990 school year UNCG started with 1200 African-American students, of this number approximately 200 were male a 5 to 1 ratio. This numerical gender difference is not unusual at predominantly white universities (Center for Education Statistics, 1988). This gender imbalance impedes "connectedness" (Fleming, 1985) and leads to "matriarchal" behavior for females (Fleming, 1983). This will lead to long term negative social, and economic consequences in the African-American community. These behavior patterns indicate that African-American males have the highest attrition rate of any racial /gender group (Patten, 1988).

The African-American male on these campuses was often an

athlete who was viewed by the university community as a gladiator prepping for a career in professional sports. This often led to tragedy as the athlete-student did not become a professional athlete and was left with nothing (Sailes, 1986).

This has led to the African-American athlete-student accepting money before graduation (Spivey, 1983), fixing games (Spivey, 1983) and embarrassing his university and himself (Spivey, 1983, Svalvanod, 1990). The African-American student has experienced racial slurs (Magner, 1989; Farrell, 1988), feelings of isolation (Lederman, 1988), and hostility (Collison, 1987; Farrell, 1989; Appelgate, 1989) and often was not successful at these universities (Fleming, 1985). The African-American male was not as developed educationally and socially after four years at a predominately white university as he was when he entered the university (Fleming, 1985).

Cultural differences between African-American and white university students range from language (Gay & Baber, 1987) to roles of fraternities (Collison, 1987), to feelings about African-American studies (Davidson, 1985; Baber & Gay, 1987). Members of the dominant culture frequently know little about minority cultures, while minorities know a great deal about the dominant culture (Bell, 1990). Bell stated that minority group members have three options: reject majority group

culture, make accommodations and be bicultural, or attempt to assimilate and reject their own culture. Predominantly white American universities have traditionally encouraged African-American students to exercise option 2 or 3. Ogbu (1983) suggested that perceptions of artificial ceilings for jobs or advancement may have discouraged large segments of the African-American population from using school success as a cultural goal.

These cultural differences and the comfort level of the African-American students with campus life influence their success at the university they attend (Sedlacek, 1987; Fleming, 1985). African-American students experience conflicting values from family and friends and the university faculty and staff (Maynard, 1980). The university emphasizes conformity and adherence to its rules and culture, no matter how inappropriate they may be for African-American students. These conflicts cause African-American students to feel lost on white campuses (Stikes, 1984; Sedlacek, 1987; Fleming, 1985). Stikes (1984) pointed out that even though most African-American students go to predominantly white universities most African-American graduates are from historically African-American universities. The historically African-American universities with 3% of the nation's university resources produced 40% ofthe African-American college graduates (Center for Education Statistics, 1988).

Even though 80% of the African-American students attending colleges do not go to one of the historically African-American universities. Fleming (1984), Lang (1987), and Collison (1987), have noted that when the differences in culture are not an integral part of the retention strategy at predominantly white universities, the results are high attrition rates and failing students. The component parts of these universities (student services, faculty, administration, and residential life) often work at cross purposes and discount or ignore the cultural identity of African-American students (Stikes, 1984). This causes confrontations (Collison, 1987) and the university is forced to attempt to address the problems of insensitivity to cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of hostility, extreme pressure, and outside scrutiny.

The labor shortages, the enrollment declines, the racial polarization on campuses have led to the realization that strategies to alleviate the campus tensions and to foster higher retention rates of African-American students are needed (Collison, 1987) for the continued well being of our nation and the tranquillity of our colleges.

Retention Theory

The problem of retaining students in college until they graduate has been studied since the 1900's. However, since 1950 the problem of retention has become more serious and its study more systematic (Cope, 1980).

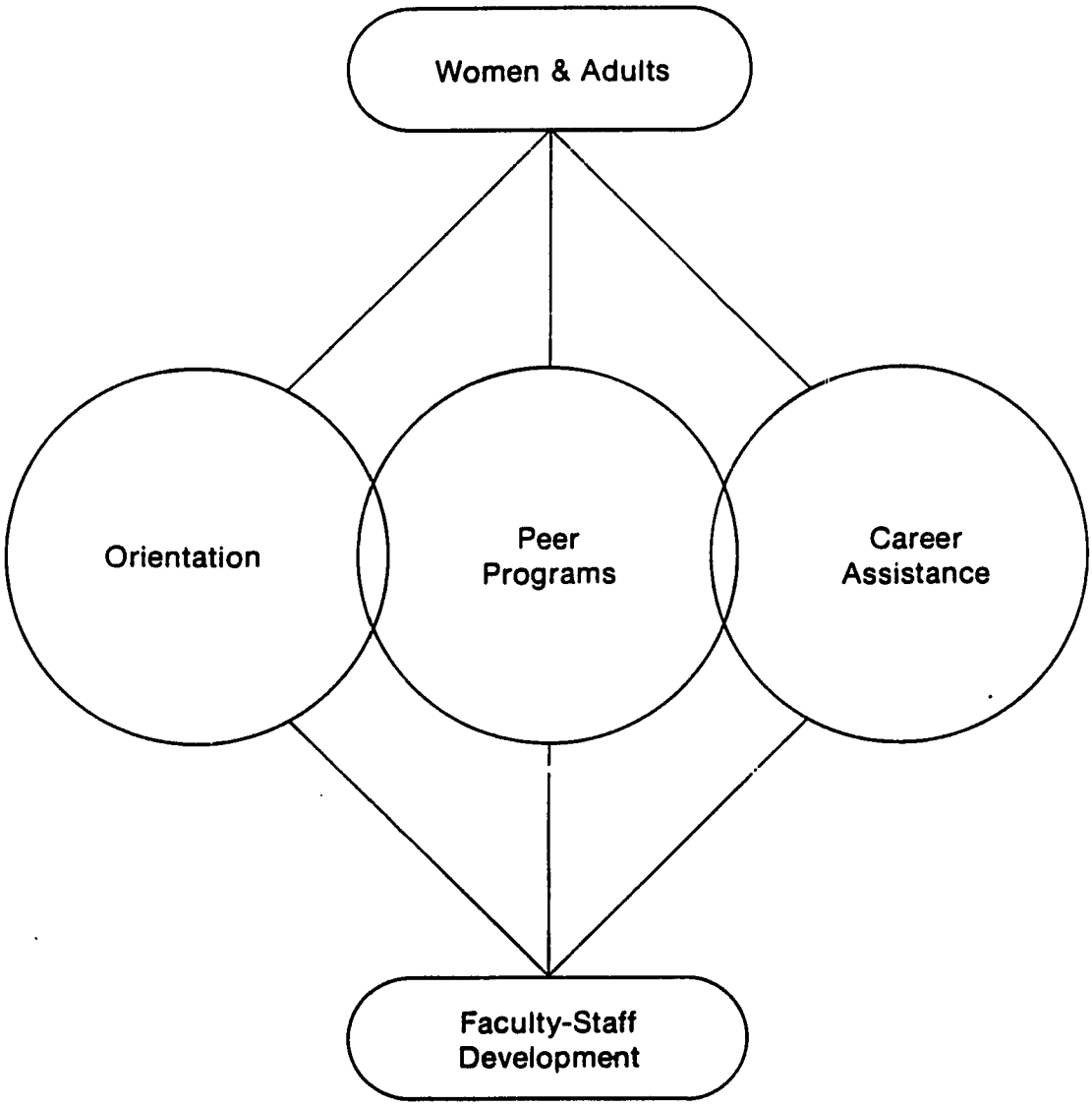
The research literature has often emphasized why students leave college, i.e., attrition (Freedman, 1969; Pitcher & Blaushild, 1970; and Kesselman, 1976). Beal & Noel (1980) were the first to emphasize the positive factors that could lead to retaining students. Lenning, Beal & Sauer (1980) suggested that there are four major types of students: the persister who stays in college until graduation, the stop-out who stops college after starting and comes back later, the attainer who leaves after reaching a certain goal, and the drop out who leaves before completion and does not come back .

Beal & Noel (1980) presented a different categorization of students: women and adults, new students, undecided students, and high-risk and low-performance students. They argue that developing a suitable intervention strategy for each group was the most effective method for a successful program. Beal & Noel (1980) described a sample intervention strategy for each group. The strategy for "women and adults" addresses the needs of the students through a thorough orientation, peer support programs, career assistance programs, and staff development programs for faculty and staff (see Figure 2). This emphasizes the point that the faculty and staff of a college or university must be prepared to deal with students who do not fit traditional expectations (Beal & Noel, 1980). The core of the strategy for new students would be advising (see Figure

3). Which would be complemented by learning support programs and orientation programs to ease the transition to college life. The program for undecided students would involve equal portions of advising, career assistance, and orientation (see Figure 4). Early warning would be the key element of the intervention strategy for high-risk and low-performance students (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 2

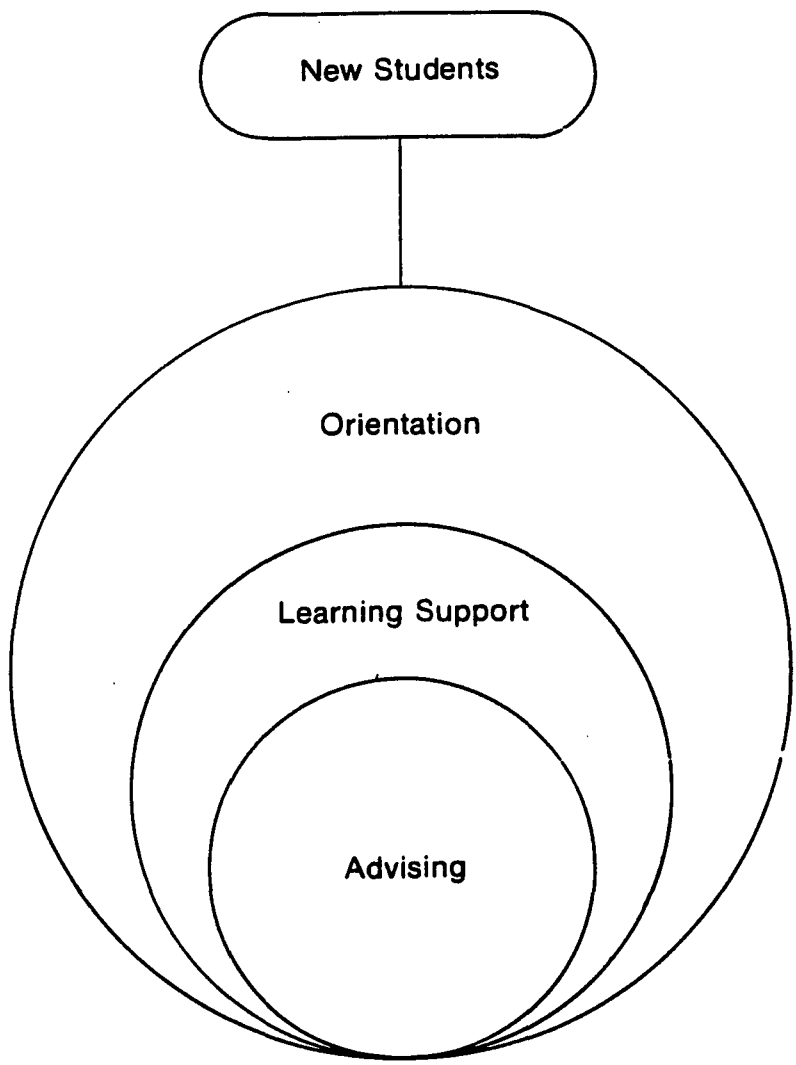
Women and Adults



From What Works in Student Retention (p, 102) by Beal and Noel, 1980, Iowa City: American College Testing Program

FIGURE 3

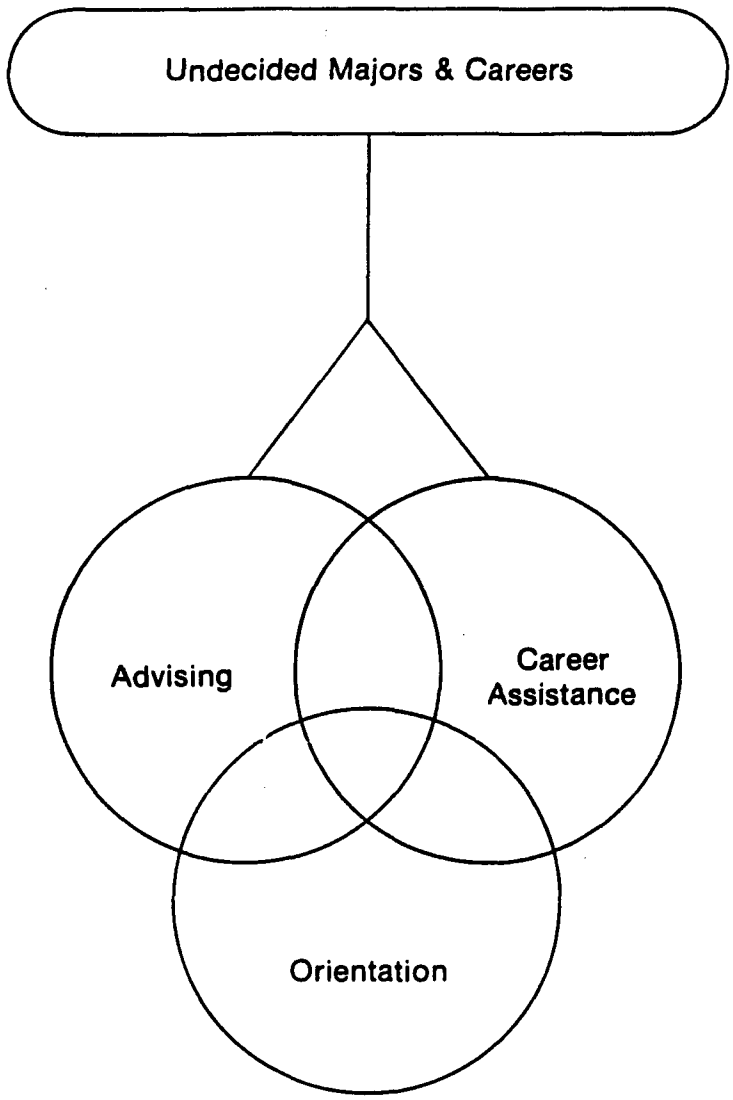
Retention Strategy for New Students



From What Works in Student Retention (p, 102) by Beal and Noel, 1980, Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

FIGURE 4

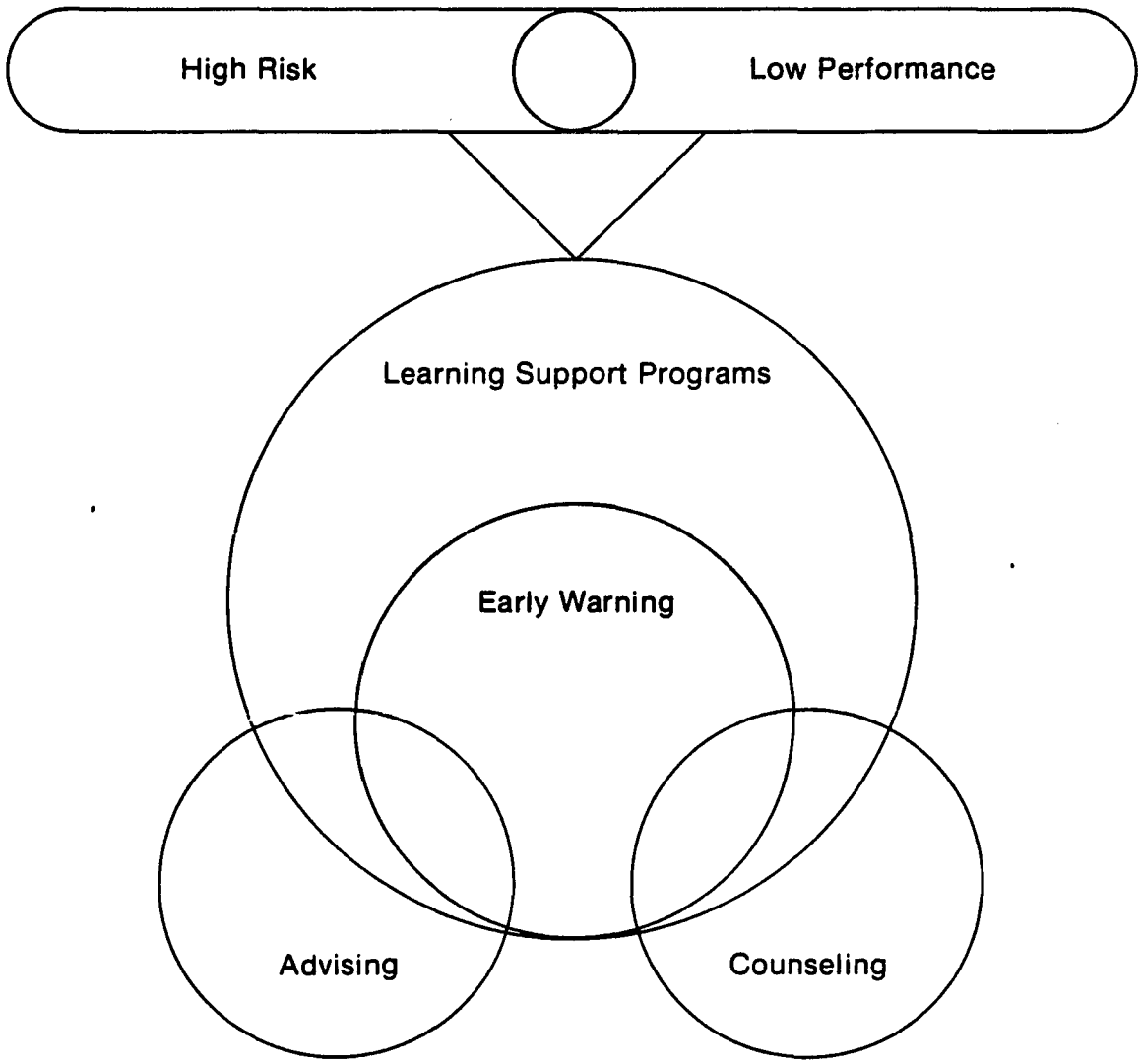
Retention Strategy for Undecided Majors & Careers



From What Works in Student Retention (p, 101) by Beal and Noel, 1980, Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

FIGURE 5

Retention Strategy for High Risk and Low Performance Students



From What Works in Student Retention (p, 99) by Beal and Noel, 1980, Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

The early warning program elements would be embedded in a learning support system and complemented by advising and counseling.

Sedlacek (1987) and Fleming (1985) identified some of the factors that aided African-American students in successful college completion. These are " connectedness" (a sense of belonging to the institution); non cognitive variables such as student government, fraternities and sororities, and social activities. Contemporary retention strategies are usually influenced by one or more of the student categories or interventions mentioned above. These theories have helped identify the when, who, why, and how of retention programs.

Strategies

The problem of retaining students who are admitted to college has been investigated, studied, and researched for a number of years. During this period of time many different approaches have been tried to alleviate attrition, with varying success. Hofman & Grande (1985) described a freshman program at Notre Dame which included a comprehensive program that had each freshman assigned a guidance team. An advisor monitored each student's progress with his faculty members, residence hall staff, and undergraduate senior advisors. A dean and an assistant dean were assigned to the freshman class. The assistant dean primarily worked with minority and handicapped students. The dean went to lunch

with a different student almost every day of the school year. A freshman newsletter was circulated to both the student and their parents. Group outings were planned several times a year to promote the social development of the student. This comprehensive approach and the resulting interaction resulted in a retention rate of 99%.

Davis (1985) described a program at Harvard College that resulted in a 2% attrition rate after the freshmen year. The Freshmen were assigned to a housing unit of 375 students with live in faculty and advisors. Each freshman has an advisor who works closely with each student during the freshmen year. This advisor helps plan the academic coursework, gives support during the year and helps prepare the student for the sophomore year when the student's field of concentration is selected. A major activity during the freshman year is the exploration for choosing a major. The freshmen advisor assists the student in meeting representatives of the prospective department. The advisor, the major department faculty, and the student meet to ease this transition. Once a field is selected, another advisor is chosen who generally serves for the next three years.

Nathans (1985) described the program at Duke University which has 5,800 students in its Trinity College. The program focuses on early identification of students that may have problems adjusting to Duke. The

advising staff meets with each student three times a semester, midterm grades were monitored. Early intervention by the advisors and the faculty is done as soon as a problem is detected. The academic attrition rate never exceeds 1.5% for the Freshmen class.

Glennon and Baxley (1985) characterized the program at Western New Mexico University as one that begins by assigning the freshmen students tutors or remedial aids at the start of the fall semester. The university shows each student that it cares and is there to assist them in completing their education. Western New Mexico University is 48% minorities, mostly Hispanic. After initiating this program the number of advisor interviews doubled, career counseling sessions tripled, and the attrition rate dropped from 66% to 23% in three years.

Menning (1985) described the program at South Dakota State University as centered around the Career Placement Center. The majority of Freshmen who were undecided about a college major were assigned into general registration which has a number of activities to allow each student to explore the various fields offered at the college. Each student receives extensive career advising at the Career Placement Center during the freshmen year, with the result of this increased career advising, the students generally chooses a major by the end of their Freshmen year. This major is not changed in 99% of the program

participants. This program has reduced the attrition rate of these undecided Freshmen from 29% to 12.8%.

Eaglin (1985) described the program at the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg, a commuter college of 2,700 students, decentralized approach to retention, with faculty taking the lead in advising students, and calling those students who miss two consecutive classes to find out why they were absent. The faculty is divided into smaller "local" retention units, which are in each school or division of the university and initiate most retention activity. The faculty coordinates its retention activities with support staff and student services. This retention activity has resulted in reducing the attrition rate from 42% to 32%.

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring is generally the process wherein a more experienced person guides a less experienced person through the process of learning about life, school, or a profession This process is supposed to ease the transition into a new environment, university setting, or profession. Mentoring is one of the most widely used tools for intellectual and interpersonal development. The Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) in 1990 listed 489 educational citations of mentoring in just the preceding five years (1985-1990). Mentoring is one of the larger

topic areas in the data base.

Mentoring, the art of acclimating a person into a new profession, company, organization or skill, is as old as the ancient Greeks (Daresh And Playko, 1989) and is used in a wide variety of settings. Education (Evanoski, 1988) minority student recruiting (Cooper, & Dennis, 1988) increasing minority faculty (Blackwell, 1989) developing gifted minority language students (Cohan, 1988); mathematics and science (Griffin, 1988; Hedin, 1988) public relations officers (Rice, 1989) psychology professionals (American Psychological Association, 1986) corporate America (Smith, 1987) and medicine (Lewin, 1987) are just a few areas in which this technique is presently used.

This mentoring process has historically helped white males get into an "old boy network" and to rise in an organization faster (Bickel, 1981; Merriam, 1987). In higher education this process has often meant a place in a more prestigious university for a new professor (Cameron, 1978) or has eased the transition into academia (Bova & Phillips, 1984). Recently this process has been used to assist minorities and women in higher education to increase educational success and to lower attrition rates (Daresh and Playko 1989; Mosser, 1987; Ashburn, 1987; Bova & Phillips, 1984; Arellano-Romero, & Eggler, 1987; Norton, 1988; Trueba & Gaitan, 1988; Oestereicher, 1987).

The necessity of a close relationship between mentor and mentee and the occurrence of homogeneity between mentor and mentee have led to fewer opportunities for these relationships to occur for minorities and women (Haring-Hidore, 1987a; Meirriam at al., 1987). Haring-Hidore (1987a) has suggested that because of fewer opportunities and the chance of sexual exploitation in a white male/ younger female mentor - mentee relationship traditional mentoring relationships may not be ideal for women (Haring-Hidore & Pauldi, 1987). Grey (1986) said that women and minorities are the groups that need mentoring the most but are the least likely to receive it. For these groups an appropriate model is Network-Mentoring (NM) a system where two or more people meet and share their experiences, "trading off" the roles of mentors and mentees as the time and need arise. Shapiro, Haseltine and Rowe (1978) have termed the members of these groups "peer pals", while Kram & Isebella (1985) call them simply "peers". This system while less exploitative, does not advance a person as fast as the traditional mentoring method (Haring-Hidore, 1987). Mosser (1987) posits another model that he calls "Co-Mentoring". The system is similar to NM in that it includes trading roles, but its relationship is more intense and goes through a seven-step process to achieve results.

Student mentoring programs generally are of two types: faculty to

student mentoring and student to student mentoring, which has a number of names, peer-counseling, and peer-mentoring being the most common.

This student to student "peer mentoring " leads to better grades and better feelings about the university (Oestereicher, 1987; Arellano-Romero & Eggler, 1987); additionally students feel "connected" to the main stream of the university more quickly (Congrove, 1986). Students who have been involved in peer mentoring programs are positive about the benefits that are derived (Smith, 1987; Payne, 1987). The mentoring counseling skills needed can be easily taught to students with low interpersonal skills (Stamnes, 1990) and thus this approach lends itself to college campuses (Arellano-Romero & Eggler, 1987; Norton, 1988; Trubeba & Gaitan, 1988; Oestereicher, 1987; Kwalick et al., 1988).

Conversely, Flaherty (1985) found the mentoring process had no effect on grades but that attitudes are sensitive to mentoring. Boyd (1989) found no differences between mentored and non-mentored groups of freshmen students. However, the mentored students enjoyed the additional activities and interaction that they experienced during their Freshmen year.

Summary

Enrollment trends have until recently led to a steadily increasing number of African-American students enrolling in colleges and universities. This trend leveled off and declined during the early eighties even as other minority groups were experiencing record growth in student enrollment. This decline was most pronounced among African-American males. This trend has serious consequences in a highly technological society.

As predominantly white universities admitted increasing numbers of African-American students several problems appeared, leading to low retention rates among African-American students at these universities. Some of these problems was cultural differences, skewed gender ratios, and lack of "connectedness". As a result, strategies was formulated to raise the retention rates of African-American students.

The successful strategies involved "connecting" the student to the university by showing interest, caring, sensitivity and early attention to problem areas. Mentoring programs represent one widely used approach to help connect the African-American student to the university. Mentoring is also used successfully in a wide variety of other settings to acclimate persons into a profession, field, or job.

The retention strategies of these diverse universities stress one or more of the following attributes: intensive academic advising (Notre Dame, Duke, Harvard, and South Dakota State University); intensive counseling to spot and solve problems before they become severe inhibitors of academic progress (Notre Dame, Duke, Harvard, Western New Mexico University); extensive faculty involvement (University of South Carolina Spartanburg, Notre Dame, Duke, Harvard); or a comprehensive approach that combines all of the above adding support staff to the team (Notre Dame, Duke, Harvard). The most successful of these programs also added a social component which appears to boost the retention rate (Harvard, Notre Dame). This social component seems to foster "connectedness" (Fleming, 1985; Sedlacek, 1987) for freshmen.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Program Description

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) is one of the 16 universities in the University of North Carolina system. UNCG has approximately 11,000 students of which 10 percent are African-American. The African-American students have a higher attrition rate than any other group of students (72% for African-Americans, 67% for whites). At UNCG, almost twice as many African-American students have been suspended for academic reasons after four years than white students (19% compared to 10%). The graduation rate at UNCG is 28% for African-Americans and 33% for whites after four years (Office of Institutional Research UNCG, 1986).

In the fall of 1987, UNCG's Office of Minority Affairs (in the Office of Student Affairs) initiated a Black Peer Mentoring Program to reduce this high attrition and suspension rate. It was hoped this program would increase the graduation rates and lower the suspension rates of African-American students.

According to the Office of Minority Affairs description of the program, the objectives of the Black Peer Mentor Program (Office of Minority Affairs, 1988) are:

(1) To provide opportunities for interaction with positive role models;

(2) to aid in the minority student's personal and social development;

(3) to encourage academic excellence and co-curricular involvement;

(4) to orient first year African-American students to the culture of the university; and

(5) to serve as a liaison between the Assistant to the Vice Chancellor who coordinates minority affairs and other support services on campus.

The program took place during the 1988-89 academic year and had 23 mentors and 93 mentees. Both mentors and the mentees volunteered for the program. The mentors had a minimum G.P.A. of 2.5. The program's activities included each mentor meeting with each of his or her mentees once a month to discuss any problems or concerns or to share campus news. These meetings were more numerous if a problem arose.

The responsibilities of the peer mentor consist of participating in a one-day training session in August, meeting formally with his or her group of mentees at least once a month, and meeting twice a semester with the Assistant to the Vice Chancellor who coordinates minority affairs to discuss the program. Informal visits by the mentor with his or

her students are encouraged. These visits can include eating dinner together, telephone calls, recreation activities.

Sample

The sample selected for this study consists of the 93 African-American Freshmen in the Black Peer Mentoring program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the 267 African-American Freshmen who were not in the program. These students enrolled in the fall of 1988. The students in the Black Peer Mentor program volunteered to become mentees. Descriptive statistics on the African-American freshmen students are provided and discussed in chapter 4.

Instrumentation

The Modified Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI)) was administered to the African-American students in the freshmen class (N=291). The Standard SDTI was modified by adding 28 items about campus security, student involvement, and utilization of campus services See Appendix b. The SDTI has been used since 1979 (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1979) in several studies of college student maturity and development. The standard SDTI has 140 true or false questions and three scales were obtained from the instrument, Developing Autonomy (AUT), Developing Purpose (PUR), and Developing Mature Interpersonal

Relationships (MIR). Each scale is composed of three subscales.

The AUT Scale includes subscales Emotional Autonomy (EA), Instrumental Autonomy (IA), and Interdependence (ID). The AUT scale purports to measure the degree to which an individual is self sufficient and does not need continual reassurance, affection, and approval from parents and friends. Autonomous students score higher on this scale. Autonomous students tend to be self-directed and manage time, money and their environment effectively.

The PUR scale includes: Appropriate Educational Plans (EP), Mature Career Plans (CP), and Mature Life Style Plans (LP). The PUR purports to measure the amount of purpose a student has achieved. Students who score higher on this scale tend to have formulated clear and realistic educational goals. Higher scorers on this task are future oriented, and have plans and goals that are specific enough to form a purpose for academic and social activities.

The Mature Interpersonal Relationships (MIR) scale includes Intimate Relationships with the Opposite Sex (IRS), Mature Relationships with Peers (MRP), and Tolerance (TOL). MIR purports to measure the extent to which a student forms relationships with peers and authority figures who may be described as open, honest, and trusting. Higher scorers on this task also tend to more readily form

personal and working relationships with persons from different backgrounds. Higher scorers respond to persons as individuals and not as stereotypes.

Reliability

Winston and Polkosnik (1986) have summarized the steadily accumulating body of reliability and validity evidence for the SDTI. Based upon a large sample (N = 1153) of students enrolled in 25 colleges and universities throughout the United States, the internal consistency reliability of the SDTI total battery as estimated by Cronbach's alpha is 0.90. Independent estimates by Winston, Miller, & Prince (1979) and Stonewater, Daniels, & Heischmidt (1986) yielded similar results. Estimates of task and internal consistency reliability range from .73 (MIR) to .84 (PUR). Subtask internal consistency estimates are slightly lower, ranging from .48 (Tolerance) to .79 (Intimate Relationships with the Opposite Sex).

The temporal stability of the SDTI (i.e., test-retest reliability) has been estimated for both short-term intervals (two weeks) and for long-term stability (eight months). Based upon a small sample of 15 students, Winston, et al. (1979) estimated the two-week test-retest reliability of the total battery to be 0.92. These same investigators reported a range from 0.68 (MIR) to 0.78 (AUT) for eight month retest reliability estimates for

the three major tasks.

Validity

Validity investigations of the SDTI have been undertaken by several researchers (Winston et al., 1979; Winston & Polkosnik, 1986; Sargent, 1983; Burig 1984; Lang, 1984). Winston & Polkosnik have investigated the internal structure of the SDTI by examining the intercorrelations of the SDTI tasks and subtasks.

To summarize briefly, AUT is rather highly correlated with both PUR (.67) and MIR (.57), but PUR and MIR are only moderately correlated (.36). Thus, PUR and MIR appear to be measuring relatively independent constructs, and AUT may be an important ingredient in both. When these subtask intercorrelations are corrected for item overlap (i.e., when items composing that subtask are not included in the computation of subtask score), all are more highly correlated with subtasks to which they belong than with any other subtask score. This is a generally desirable psychometric property of an instrument.

Using a sample of 86 college students, Burig (1984) investigated the relationship of the SDTI tasks to selected subscales of the Personality Research Form (PRF) (Jackson, 1974), a highly regarded and technically excellent personality inventory designed for use with "normal" populations. Briefly, the pattern of intercorrelations he found provided strong evidence for the convergent validity of the SDTI. Table 1

summarizes the correlations of the SDTI tasks with 12 PRF subscales. The correlations are all in the theoretically consistent direction and most are statistically significant.

TABLE 1

SDTI-2 Tasks

PRF Scales	AUT	PUR	MIR
Achievement (AC)	.52**	.54**	.28**
Affiliation (AF)	.22*	.15	.16
Aggression (AG)	-.40**	-.27**	-.21*
Autonomy (AU)	-.16	-.14	-.24*
Defendance (DE)	-.32**	-.25**	-.21*
Dominance (Do)	.42**	.37**	.20*
Endurance (En)	.50**	.43**	.21*
Impulsivity (IM)	-.46**	-.37**	-.01
Nuturance (NU)	.41**	.28**	.37**
Order (OR)	.24*	.17	.17
Social Recognition (SR)	-.15	-.13	-.22*
Understanding (UN)	.33**	.29	.11

Note. Source: Burig, 1984.
*p<.05. **P<.01.

Data Collection

This evaluation included: (1) administering the Modified Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI), (2) interviews with peer mentee students, and (3) reviewing student records. Administration of the SDTI began spring 1988. Forty students responded to the questionnaire during the Spring. In August the students who had not responded to the questionnaire in the spring were contacted at the first meeting of the Neo-Black Society (the African-American student organization). The students were asked to respond to the questionnaire after the meeting. This was followed up with each non-respondent who lived on campus being contacted at his or her residence hall. The off-campus non-respondent's questionnaires were placed in their on campus mail boxes. They were called if they did not return the questionnaires within seven days. Additional questionnaires were sent out as needed.

Ten percent of the mentees were randomly selected for interviews after the SDTI results were analyzed. The interviews were conducted by the same interviewer and explored the student's responses on the questionnaire. These interviews were conducted to obtain the student's reactions and opinions about the preliminary findings of this study.

Data Analysis

One condition that militates against a straightforward comparison of the grade point average and retention rates of the mentored and non-mentored students is the possibility that the two groups differed on relevant academic variables upon entering the university. Examination of the students high school GPA and SAT scores (see below) revealed that this was not the case. Hence, questions 1(a) and 1(b) were answered via simple t-tests.

Questions 2(a) and 2(b), the students's sense of involvement in campus life and the number of organizations joined, were analyzed by a simple t-test and the chi-square test of association, respectively. Questions 3(a), 3(b), and 3(c) involved the students differential levels of developing autonomy, career purpose, and developing maturity. Since these variables were highly correlated with each other, a multivariate t-test (Hotellings T^2) was first computed. The resulting t-square was less than one and was hence non-significant. Univaraiate comparisons are given in the results section.

Descriptive statistics (SAT scores, high school GPA, first year UNCG GPA, etc.) have been reported on all students in the sample in order to set appropriate constraints on the extent to which the results of this study can be generalized to other settings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the African-American Peer Mentor Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro by assessing its effect on the grade point average and retention rates of African-American freshman students who participated in the program. The extent to which the Mentor Program influenced students' propensity to participate in campus life as assessed by a variety of measure was also investigated. The 360 African-American Freshmen entering UNCG in the Fall of 1988 served as potential subjects. Data for the study were obtained from three sources. First, university student records were examined to obtain information on incoming student characteristics (high school grade point average, SAT scores) and first year grade point average. Second, 166 of the 267 African-American freshman students who were enrolled in the spring of 1989 were surveyed to obtain additional information. Third, a series of interviews were conducted with ten program mentees and ten non-mentees to gather more detailed information about their life on campus and their first year experience at UNCG. The data thus combines information about this class from the three data sources. The Evaluation Crosswalk that follows illustrates the source of the data for each research question.

Table 2

EVALUATION CROSSWALK

	STUDENT RECORDS	SDTI	INTERVIEWS
Question #1(a)	X		
Question #1(b)	X		
Question #2(a)		X	X
Question #2(b)		X	X
Question #3(a)		X	
Question #3(b)		X	
Question #3(c)		X	

The principal questions of interest in this study concern the impact of the UNCG Black Peer Mentoring program on academic success. However, as indicated earlier, the study is also concerned with the impact of the program on "non academic" factors that may, in turn, affect overall academic performance.

Before discussing the results of the investigation, it should be noted that, when assessing a program's effects upon measurable student outcomes where students have not been randomly assigned to "experimental" and "control" groups (as is the case here), it is necessary to insure that experimental and control students did not differ on relevant variables before the program began. That is, in order to attribute differences in outcome variables to the program, it is important to rule out the plausible rival hypothesis that mentees and non-mentees differed on relevant academic variables such as SAT scores and high school grade point average.

The mean high school grade point averages for program participants and non-participants were 2.78 and 2.80, respectively. This difference was not significant [$t(289) = -0.28$, ns]. The mean SAT score (Verbal plus Mathematics) for program participants was 805, and the mean SAT score for non-participants was 809. Again, this difference was not significant [$t(289) = -.27$, ns]. It can therefore be concluded that significant program effects on academic outcomes such as first year grade point average and retention rates were not due to pre-existing academic differences between

the two groups.

Evaluation Question 1(a). The first Evaluation Questions was: Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program have higher retention rates than African-American students who are not in the program?

Of the 360 freshmen students enrolled in the fall of 1988, 79 students withdrew by the start of the spring semester of 1989, and an additional 11 withdrew by the end of the spring semester. None of the students in the peer mentor group withdrew during the first two semesters. A chi-square test of association between participation in the program and retention was performed to answer question 1(a). The Chi Square was highly significant ($\underline{X^2}$ = 41.2, p <.0001), indicating that retention and program participation are significantly related.

Evaluation Question 1(b). The second evaluation question was, Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program have a higher grade point average than African-American students who are not in the program?

A simple post-hoc comparison of mean GPA's was undertaken to answer this question. The cumulative G.P.A.'s for the mentored and non-mentored groups (excluding those who dropped out) were 2.04 and 1.90, respectively. Although in the anticipated direction, this difference was not statistically significant [t(289) = 1.27, ns].

Questions 2(a) through 2(b) relate to the impact of the mentoring program on variables that are presumed to affect academic performance.

Evaluation Question 2(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring program join more campus organizations and participate in more university activities than African-American students not in the program?

In answering the first part this question, student responses were trichotomized by mentee/non-mentee group into those students joining no campus organizations, those joining from one (1) to three (3) organizations, and those joining four (4) or more organizations. The resulting 2 x 3 contingency table (Table 7) was analyzed using the chi-square test of association. Students in the mentoring program were significantly more likely to join organizations than were non-participating students (X^2 = 38.96, $p < .001$).

To gauge the extent to which students participated in campus activities (not including membership in specific organizations), the survey also asked students to indicate which of the following university activities they attended or participated in: varsity sporting events, intramural, CAB movies, Black History celebration, Women' History Month, homecoming, spring fling, and fall kickoff. Student responses were categorized into those participating in no activities, those participating in one (1) to three (3) activities, and those participating in four (4) or more activities. (No student

indicated participation in more than eight activities.) Students in the mentoring program were significantly more likely to participate in university activities than were non-participating students ($X^2 = 33.85$, $p < .001$).

Table 3

Number of Organizations Joined

	Mentored	Non-Mentored
0	27	64
1 to 3	3	15
over 4	69	21

$X^2 = 38.96$, $p < .001$

Number of Activities Participated in

	Mentored	Non-Mentored
0	3	9
1 to 3	19	60
over 4	77	31

$X^2 = 33.85$, $p < .001$

> Evaluation question 2(b) asked, Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program feel more involved in the university community than other African-American students not in the program?

To answer this question, mean scores of the two groups on the Connectivity scale of the STDI (question 141) were compared. The means of the mentees and non-mentees were, respectively, 1.03 and 1.07, on the 1 to 5 Likert scale (1 indicating little or no feeling of involvement and 5 indicating significant involvement). The difference was not significant [$t(147) = .83$, ns], suggesting that despite the greater participation in university activities by the mentored students noted above, overall, mentored students did not feel that they were involved in the life of the university.

> Evaluation Questions 3(a), 3(b), and 3(c) were concerned with the effects of the mentoring program on participants' personal growth as maturing adults. In particular, does the Mentoring program affect (a) students' sense of personal autonomy, (b) their sense of "career purpose," and (c) the extent to which they develop mature relationships, as measured by the SDTI?

These questions were answered by comparing the mean scores of participants and non-participants on the corresponding SDTI scale. Table eight gives the results of these comparisons. As can be seen from the table, the mentoring program does not appear to have measurable effects upon

these attributes.

Mean Scores for Evaluation Questions 3a, 3b, 3c

Question 3(a).

Autonomy

Group

	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Non-Mentored	25.55	6.76	-.02	ns
Mentored	25.57	5.14		

Question III(b).

Career Purpose

Group

	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Non-Mentored	28.76	7.77	1.53	ns
Mentored	27.00	6.11		

Table 4 Cont.

Question 3(c).

Mature Relationships

Group

	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Non-Mentored	25.81	7.72	.48	ns
Mentored	25.26	5.86		

Interviews

Twenty students were interviewed, ten from the mentored group and ten from the non-mentored group (Interview questions are in Appendix C). The mentored students felt that the Neo Black Society was helpful in finding out about campus. Most enjoyed Spring Fling. Half of this group liked the mentors and liked meeting new friends and being independent. The mentored group felt the University needed to communicate with them more frequently. The office of Minority Affairs (particularly it's director Bettina Shufford) was mentioned as a very positive force in acclimating students to the university. The mentored group wanted a more unified effort by the administration to make them comfortable.

The non-mentored group also felt that the Neo Black Society was helpful to their adjustment to campus. Spring Fling was the most enjoyable event of the year for the non-mentored group, although half felt "lost" most of the first year. Some of this group felt that the University only communicated with them if they owed a bill. Half of the non-mentored group worked during their freshmen year and felt they had little time for campus activities. These students wanted easier access to campus information and a more relevant course schedule.

Both groups cited faculty members, dorm counselors, family members, African-American Staff members, in no particular pattern and no group more then twice, as the most important reasons for staying at UNCG. Both groups

cited the lack of social life on campus as a serious drawback to campus adjustment.

The mentored group was asked three additional questions about their perceptions of the peer mentoring program and how they would improve it. Most of the students felt that a more frequent interaction with their mentor would have resulted in greater impact. The mentored students felt very positive about the program they all thought the program was a good thing for freshman students. Most wanted to be mentors themselves. The weaknesses that half of the mentees interviewed mentioned was that if the freshman and their mentor did not mesh, the experience while not unpleasant had no effect on grade performance. The common theme that respondents stated was a better matching of mentors and the need for more group activities.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Black Peer Mentor Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and to assess its effect on African-American freshman students. The findings of this study are related to many other studies on mentoring, student retention, and African-Americans on a predominantly white campus. The related literature will be discussed with the data from the three sources.

Easily the most significant finding in this study is that during the first academic year, no mentored student left school. This compares with a loss of 90 non-participating students (over one-fourth of the entire African-

American freshman class).

Like virtually all of the successful programs reviewed in Chapter II, the UNCG program had as one of its central elements an identifiable person on campus whom the student could contact if he or she had problems. It would appear that programs lacking this element are less likely to be successful. The freshman year of college represents for the vast majority of students, African-American or otherwise, the first time they have spent an extended period of time "on their own," separated geographically and even psychologically from home, neighbors, and childhood friends. The adjustment is difficult for most students, but is especially acute for African-American students on predominantly white campuses.

It is interesting to note that the program was very successful despite the fact that African-American students had little official contact with the university during the first year. The interview comments of the non-mentored students concerning their feeling that the university only contacted them when the student owed a bill, and their feelings of being "lost" their freshman year may, in fact, be typical of white students as well. But being in the minority to begin with, the feeling of isolation that this lack of official contact engenders in African-American students has an even greater effect on them. This concurs with the conclusions of Stikes (1984); Sedlacek (1987) and Fleming (1985) who noted a similar lack of official

contact with minority students by university personnel. The lack of organized university contact is in sharp contrast to the successful programs as reported by Nathans (1985) and Glennon & Baxley (1985). These programs used organized university contacts and, consequently, lowered attrition rates as a result. The central element of the UNCG program was the mentor, a student like the mentees themselves, who (unlike the mentees) had gone through the same experiences that the mentees were faced with. The success of the UNCG program suggests that involvement of students with whom entering freshmen could identify, even in the absence of regular contact with university personnel, acted as a powerful force for adjustment for these students.

The significantly higher attrition rates of the non-mentored students could be the result of the haphazard contacts these freshmen experienced from the university. Beal & Noel (1980) pointed out that for students to stay in college, the faculty, staff, and student services must work closely together with retention as the primary goal. If this is not done, contacts with the student will be fragmented and uneven.

It will be recalled that the Peer Mentoring Program had negligible effects upon student GPA. One possible reason for this is the absence of an explicit faculty component in the program. While many students may have informally contacted faculty for help with problems, a specific faculty component was not included. Davis (1985); Eagin (1985); Nathans (1985) all

reported significant effects upon academic performance which they attributed to close and continuous contact on the part of the faculty with students.

The African-American students perceptions of their lack of involvement in campus life concurs with the findings of Fleming (1985) and Lederman (1988) who specifically wrote about the feelings of isolation that is felt by African-American students on white campuses.

Sedlacek (1987) and Fleming (1985) have written extensively about the importance of student involvement in campus life and student "connectedness" to student retention. The Black Peer Mentor Program appears to be an effective one in involving African-American students in campus life. The mentored students joined more campus organizations and participated in more university activities than the non-mentored students. The larger number of activities and more involvement in campus activities of the mentored group concurs with the need for African-American students to have a "social component" to their lives (Davis, 1985; Hofman & Grande, 1985; Tracy & Sedlecek, 1987).

The depth of positive feelings about the mentoring program from participants and some non-participants was wide-spread. This good feeling concurs with the findings of Arellano-Romero, & Eggler (1987); Oestereicher (1987); Boyd (1989).

Like many other programs, the UNCG mentoring program does not

seem to affect the sense of isolation that many African-American students feel on campus. Fleming (1985), Collison (1988), and Lederman (1988) found that even with successful programs where African-American students were doing well academically, the students still tended to feel a sense of isolation from the life of the university. The same finding was obtained in this study. Interestingly, those programs where the feeling of isolation was not present (e.g., Oberlin) had integrated academic and curricular programs as well. That is, academic courses in the Black Studies department were well attended by the entire study body, were well integrated into the academic course of study of many students, and were on a professional par with other courses at the college. Although it will require further study, the integration of the black experience into the academic curriculum of the university apparently has a powerful affect upon African-American students sense of identity and involvement in university life.

Conclusions

The UNCG Peer Mentoring Program, as presently conceived and implemented, appears to be an effective one that significantly reduces African-American students' likelihood of dropping out. Students who participate in the program tend to join more campus organizations and participate in more campus activities than students who do not participate in the program.

The mentoring program does not appear to have discernible effects

upon students GPA. While the reasons for this are not entirely clear, one possible hypothesis that requires further study is that the program does not have an explicit faculty component. Relevant faculty to monitor the performance of African-American students in their classes and who confer with those having difficulty would be, it is speculated, be a desirable addition to the current program.

The mentoring program does not appear to affect the "perception" of isolation on the part of participating, despite the fact that they join more organizations, participate in more activities, and are less likely to drop out during the first year. Unfortunately, the program reaches less then a third of the entering class of African-American students. The program needs to be expanded with more university assistance and support.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Black Peer Mentor Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and to assess its effectiveness in retaining African-American freshman students.

Information for this evaluation was provided by of data from Student records, the SDTI student survey, and student interviews. Student records provided enrollment figures, G.P.A., and pre-enrollment data. The survey provided information on student attitudes, student involvement, student autonomy, maturity, and career planning. The interview data gave insights into student perceptions about the mentor program, campus life and what affected them most during their freshman year.

The principal questions of interest in this study relate to the impact of the UNCG Black Peer Mentoring program on academic success. However, as indicated earlier, this study was also concerned with the impact of the program on "non academic" factors that may, in turn, affect overall academic performance.

Evaluation Questions

The principal questions of interest in this study relate to the impact of the UNCG Black Peer Mentoring program on academic success. However, as indicated earlier, this study was also concerned with the impact of the program on "non academic" factors that may, in turn, affect overall academic performance. The primary research questions follow:

1(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program have higher retention rates than African-American students who are not in the program?

1(b). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program have higher grade point averages (G.P.A.'s) than African-American students who are not in the program?

The following questions related to the impact of the mentoring program on variables that are presumed to affect academic performance.

2(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring program join more campus organizations and participate in more university activities than African-American students not in the program?

2(b). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program feel more involved in the university community than other African-American students not in the program?

3(a). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program report greater autonomy as measured by the Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI) than students not in the program?

3(b). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program report more career purpose as measured by the SDTI than African-American students not in the program?

3(c). Do African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring program report development of mature relationships as measured by the SDTI more frequently than students not in the program?

Summary of Findings

1A. Retention Rates were significantly higher among students in the Black Peer mentor Program.

1B. Students in the Black Peer Mentor program had higher G.P.A.'s but not significantly higher G.P.A. than students not in the program.

2A. Students in the Black Peer mentor Program joined significantly more campus organizations and participated in significantly more campus activities.

2B. African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring

Program were not significantly more involved in the university community than other African-American students not in the program.

3A. African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program did not report greater autonomy as measured by the Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI) than students not in the program.

3B. African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring Program did not report more career purpose as measured by the SDTI than African-American students not in the program.

3C. African-American students in the Black Peer Mentoring program did not report development of mature relationships as measured by the SDTI more frequently than students not in the program.

Implications for Future Research

There are several possibilities for improvements in programs designed to keep African-American students from dropping of school at predominantly white campuses. Students should be followed and resurveyed periodically, for example at the end of four years of college, six years after enrollment, and ten years after enrollment. These follow-up surveys could begin to address the questions of what lasting effects the mentoring program had, whether mentees graduate sooner than the students who were not mentored, and other long term effects of the program.

Retention studies of white students on predominantly black campuses

should be undertaken. Such studies could go far in answering the question: Is the higher black student attrition on white majority campuses due to isolation or other factors, such as academic preparation? African-American campuses have better retention rates for African - American students than predominantly white campuses (Noel, 1985), but not much work has been done on the retention rates of the white students that are enrolled on these campuses. How do white students fare academically on predominantly black campuses? Which group are the white students on black campuses academic performance comparable to: the black students on white campuses, or white students on white campuses? Answering these questions would provide further information on the academic performance of campus minorities, and the dimensions of the problem of attrition. Replicating the study by studying white students on predominantly black campuses could also begin to address the question of what beside race may be factors contributing to the high attrition rates experienced by blacks on white campuses. Additionally the question of whether mentoring is as effective for white students as with African-American students could be explored.

Methodological Recommendations

In future programs of this type, pre- and post-test measures of relevant dependent variables (excluding, of course, retention itself) would give a more precise picture of the growth of the students over the course of the school year.

Making the survey part of the yearly registration would also assist in the data collection process. The method in use for this survey has been effective and has ended up with 60% of the target population being surveyed, but it has been very time consuming, and had it been done at registration, virtually all students would have been surveyed. A 100% census would increase the power of the statistical analyses considerably.

Before undertaking a survey like this in the future, an understanding must be reached with the college administration to not only cooperate with the study but to endeavor to insure the study's success and to implement positive changes suggested by the results.

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APPENDIX A

Program Description

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) is one of the 16 universities in the University of North Carolina system. UNCG has approximately 11,000 students of which 10 percent are African-American. The African-American students have a higher attrition rate than other students (i.e. 72% for African-Americans, 67% for whites). At UNCG, almost twice as many African-American students have been suspended for academic reasons after four years than white students (19% compared to 10%). The graduation rate at UNCG is 28% for African-Americans and 33% for whites after four years (Office of Institutional Research UNCG, 1986). In the fall of 1987, UNCG's Office of Minority Affairs (in the Office of Student Affairs) initiated a Black Peer Mentoring Program to reduce this high attrition and suspension rate. It was hoped this program would increase the graduation rates and lower the suspension rates of African-American students.

The program at UNCG had 23 mentors and 93 mentees during the 1988-89 academic year. The program's activities included each mentor meeting with each of his or her mentees once a month to discuss any problems or concerns or to share campus news. These meetings were more numerous if a problem arose.

According to the Office of Minority Affairs description of the program, the objectives of the Black Peer Mentor Program (Office of Minority Affairs, 1988) are:

(1) To provide opportunities for interaction with positive role models;

(2) to aid in the minority student's personal and social development;

(3) to encourage academic excellence and co-curricular involvement;

(4) to orient first year African-American students to the culture of the university;

(5) to serve as a liaison between the Assistant to the Vice Chancellor who coordinates Minority Affairs and other support services on campus.

The responsibilities of the peer mentor consist of participating in a one day training session in August, meeting formally with his or her group of students at least once a month, and meeting twice a semester with the Assistant to the Vice Chancellor who coordinates minority affairs to discuss the program. Informal visits by the mentor with his or her students are encouraged. These visits can include eating dinner together, telephone calls or other recreation activities).

APPENDIX B

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

QUESTIONS

Please place the answers to questions 141-156 on the answer sheet

141. How much are you involved in the UNCG campus life

1 not involved 2 a little involved 3 moderately involved

4 involved a lot 5 very involved

142. If you were in the Black Peer Mentoring Program were you:

1 very active 2 active

3 a little active 4 not very active

143. I feel safe in my residence hall? YES(1) NO(2)

144. I think my RA does a good job YES(1) NO(2)

145. I Have participated in at least one activity in my residence hall this semester? YES(1) NO(2)

146. If I have a problem, I could talk to my RA or Hall Director about it. YES(1) NO(2

147. I think the greatest advantage of living on campus is:

a. convenience to class

b. social opportunities

c. less expensive than off campus

d. friends live on campus

e. parents require that I live on campus

148 On campus outside the dorm I feel :

a. very safe

b. moderately safe

c. average feeling of safety

d. a little unsafe

e. very unsafe

Below is a list of some of the activities that were held on campus this year which ones did you participate in ?

149. VARSITY SPORTING EVENTS	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**
150. INTRAMURALS	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**
151. C A B MOVIES	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**
152. BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION	**YES(2)**	**NO(2)**
153. WOMENS HISTORY MONTH	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**
154. HOMECOMING	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**
155. SPRING FLING	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**
156. FALL KICKOFF	**YES(1)**	**NO(2)**

Below is a list of Campus Organizations please put a number by the ones you participated with and indicate, by writing the number on this page how many times you participated with the group .

157. Student government ____

158. Campus Activity Board ____

159 Resident Hall Association ___

160. University Media ___

161. Fraternity or Sorority ___

162. N B S ___

163. Special interest Student Organizations

(example Association for Women Students)___

164. Academic related organizations

(example the history club)___

165 Club sports___

166. Choral organizations ___

167. Honorary/Professional organizations ___

168. Religious organization ___

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. What's gone well at UNCG? What's worked for you?
2. Who were the most important persons that helped you in your first year at UNCG ?
3. What activities did you participate in the most at UNCG ?
4. What should UNCG do to help Black freshmen adjust to the campus?
5. Did you join any groups while a freshmen?
   If you did what were they ?
6. What did you like the least about your freshmen year at UNCG ?

The Folowing Questions were also asked of the mentored students

7. If you were in the Peer Mentoring Program what were it's strengths and it's weaknesses ?
8. What would you do to improve it?
9. Do you think the peer mentoring program had an impact on your grades?