



A Communal Approach to Retention:

BIRMINGHAM SOUTHERN COLLEGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In attempts to understand and then maximize its student success rates, Birmingham Southern College (BSC) has asked a team of Vanderbilt doctoral candidates to conduct a study of retention on its campus. The Vanderbilt team created a mixed methodology study that aims to empirically answer two questions: (1) what characteristics distinguish BSC students as likely to persist, and (2) how do students' perceptions about their degree of social integration affect their likelihood to persist or leave?

Guided by Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's (2004) Revised Theory of Student Retention at Residential Colleges and Universities, we used three methodologies: a trend analysis, a quantitative survey, and qualitative interviews. The trend analysis utilized data that BSC already collects on its students in order to derive a collection of student characteristics, or profiles, that illustrate which students persist and which departs. The trend analysis provided a preliminary understanding of BSC's retention patterns that informed the quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative study surveyed BSC's entire fall 2015 student body in order to assess the policies and practices that shape students' campus experience. Utilizing Braxton et. al. (2014) survey, we were not only able to capture students' experiences at, and perspectives of, BSC, but we also able to assess the relevancy and accuracy of Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's (2004) model on a small, residential, liberal art college in the Southeast. Finally, the qualitative study used purposeful sampling to further examine the experiences and perspectives of BSC students; additionally, it collected the experiences and perspectives of BSC faculty and staff as they pertain to students' experiences at BSC.

The trend analysis and quantitative survey addressed our first study question. First, the trend analysis found that retention rates decline as students move into their second, then third, and fourth year. Retention and four-year graduation rates are highest among female students, when compared to their male counterparts. White students have higher retention and four-year graduation rates over Black/African American students. Further, students with higher high school academic achievements, such as high school GPA and ACT scores, have higher retention and graduation rates. There seems to be little sizable trend difference in retention and graduation rates among athletes and non-athletes; however, women athletes have higher retention and graduation rates than male athletes and non-athletes. Finally, students who do not participate in Greek organization have lower retention and graduation rates; and females in Greek organization have higher retention rates than males in Greek organizations and those not in Greek organizations at all. Then, our quantitative study found that students' race and gender are significant factors in the likelihood that BSC will retain them.

The quantitative and qualitative studies addressed our second study question. Both studies found that communal potential, "or the degree to which a student perceives that a subgroup of students exists within the college community with which that student could share similar values, beliefs, and goals" (Yorke & Longden, 2004, p. 95), is a significant factor of students' social integration, which influences their decision to persist. At BSC, communal opportunities could be found in the classrooms, student organizations and clubs.

Informed by these findings, several recommendations are offered to the BSC staff and faculty. These recommendations discuss the policies and practices of Institutional Research, Academics and academic support services, academic advising, and the Office of Student Development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We find it fitting to express our gratitude for the opportunity to explore an increasingly important and pressing issue within the higher education landscape. Our client, Birmingham Southern College, is clearly a special place striving to fulfill its mission and best serve its current and future students while living into its potential. Our BSC colleagues have walked alongside us through this process pushing us to dig deep into the fabric of their culture and discover its unique character and challenges while offering us grace, understanding, and hospitality. Guided by David Eberhardt, Kent Anderson, and Michelle Behr, our experience and exploration has mimicked the real world challenges of aiding an institution in addressing issues of adversity while ensuring the daily work of the College continues. Each was invested in the project and our success, and for that we are very grateful. We are additionally indebted to President Ed Leonard for allowing us to help inform the unfolding strategic direction of Birmingham Southern College. We eagerly await seeing where the College is headed under your leadership.

This capstone process has afforded us each the opportunity to put the parts of our Vanderbilt experience in conversation with a real educational leadership problem and our own professional identities. It is through the guidance and support of our Peabody faculty that we can say we have learned a lot about who we are, how we want to lead, and where we see the future of higher education headed. We are especially grateful to Professor John M. Braxton and Professor Will Doyle for counsel, wisdom, and advice. It was a gift to be able to build upon your work in the area of retention to offer a helpful project to Birmingham Southern College. Over the past three years, you and the entire LPO faculty of Peabody College have pushed us to think and reconsider the emerging realities of higher education. We are better practitioners who are striving to be scholars as we face an ever-evolving world of educational policy and practice.

To our families, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to pursue this degree. Your unending love and support has been the wind in our sails throughout these three years. We are so excited to rejoin you in the life we share. We look forward to lazy Saturdays and being a part of your everyday once again.

From the beginning of this process, our goal was to offer a useful project to Birmingham Southern College that may aid them in improving their institutional support of students and increase the number of students who reap the benefits of graduating with a BSC degree. From examining their internal data to surveying the student body and spending focused time with students, faculty, and staff, we have gained a deep appreciation for the work BSC. Indeed, it is a special place trying to live out its mission and create a community on the hilltop on the edge of Birmingham. We sincerely hope BSC and its leaders will find our study and recommendations useful as they strive to more fully live into who they are and what type of institution they aspire to be.

INTRODUCTION

Like at many higher education institutions, student retention is a concern at Birmingham Southern College. Retention is a crucial sign of institutional and educational success, and it has far-reaching implications on an institution's stability and perceived commitment to students. Currently, Birmingham Southern College (BSC), a small private liberal art institution, has a self-reported 83 percent first-year retention rate and a 58 percent four year graduation rate. In an effort to maximize those success measures, BSC has asked us to conduct a study on student persistence and institutional retention.

Most literature on persistence and retention focuses on the role of student characteristics or the role of students' on-campus experiences. The studies on student characteristics often focus on precollege qualities, such as demographics, academic preparation, socioeconomic status, and parents' educational background (Tinto, 2006-2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Hu & St. John, 2001; Stoecker, Pascarella, & Wolfe, 1988; Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1987). Such research often advocates that strategies for improving retention and graduation rates must start during the admissions process. Studies that focus on the student experience often examine students' interactions in academic and social environments as contributing factors of persistence and retention (Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Upcraft, 1987; Astin, 1973, 1977; Chickering, 1974; Pascarella, 1985; Braxton, Jones, Hirschy & Hartley, 2008). These studies imply that institutions have the most opportunity to improve persistence and retention by managing students' academic and social experiences on campus. In addition, this branch of research examines the effects of specific academic and social programs and policies, such as residential living, learning communities, academic advising, and mentorship. This range of research studies will be discussed in our literature review and frame our initial understanding of the issues affecting retention and persistence at BSC.

Drawing on the literature, we aim to create a study that empirically examines how BSC's student persistence is influenced by students' characteristics and college experiences. Specifically, our study questions are:

1. What characteristics distinguish BSC students as likely to persist or leave?
2. How do students' perceptions about their degree of social integration affect their likelihood to persist or leave?

Besides answering these questions, it is our goal to give BSC recommendations that allow the College to continually understand and maximize their retention rates after the study is complete. Therefore, we aim to use the results of our study to answer the following, non-empirical, questions:

- What student information should BSC collect in order to continue to identify students at risk of leaving and in need of additional support? How should such information be best used?
- What areas of student and academic services should BSC focus on to influence student persistence and retention?

These last two questions will not be addressed through empirical analysis; however, the results of our study will inform them and shape our recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Birmingham Southern College perseveres in urban Birmingham, Alabama during a time when many liberal arts colleges struggle. The Methodist affiliated, four year, private college was established in 1918 as the result of a merger between Southern University and Birmingham College. Today BSC aims to instill a value of community, integrity, and service in all its students by fostering intellectual and personal development (BSC, n.d.(c)).

Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), BSC offers baccalaureate degrees in over twenty-five majors, twenty-five minors, and ten special programs (BSC, n.d.(a)). The College boasts an innovative academic calendar, termed 4-1-4 (BSC, n.d.(a)), in which students study full-time for two semesters, and then enroll in an exploration term where students can pursue academic or personal interests.

According to data reported to NCES (2016), in fall 2014, BSC enrolled 1,185 students, of which 54 percent are male and 46 percent are female. The College is highly residential: over 95 percent of the student body lives on campus, and students in their first and second year at BSC are required to live on campus (BSC, n.d. (c)). Students originate from 38 states and 21 countries (BSC, n.d.(a)); however, many students are from the surrounding southern states where BSC's prestigious reputation is the strongest, such as Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana. The majority of the student body identified as white (80 percent); approximately 5 percent identified as Asian, 11 percent as Black, and 2 percent as Hispanic (NCES, 2016). The majority of the student body (98 percent) is of the traditional college age of 18-24 (NCES, 2016). Students arrived from secondary school with high school GPAs averaging at 3.2 and an average ACT score of 26 (BSC, n.d.(a)). Upon graduation, over fifty percent of its graduates enroll in graduate or professional schools. With the cost of attendance rounding at \$48,510, over 95 percent of students receive some form of financial aid (BSC, n.d.(a)).

The campus offers over eighty student organizations that exercise students' academic, religious, cultural, and recreational interests. Over sixty percent of the student body participates in a Greek organization. In addition, forty percent of the student body is an athlete on one of the College's twenty-two NCAA Division III varsity sports teams (BSC, n.d.(a)).

The College's faculty are highly educated and very involved in the educational process of students. Ninety-six percent of the faculty holds a doctorate or the highest degree in their field. There is a 13:1 student to faculty ratio (BSC, n.d.(a)), and many faculty members act as student's academic advisor. As academic advisors, faculty helps students develop and plan education and personal goals, evaluate major academic decisions, and discuss the College's resources and offerings. Students are assigned their advisor at first-year orientation. Purposely, most students and faculty advisor are paired based on shared academic interests. Additionally, the advisor assignment process aims to have the faculty members teach their advisees at some point within the students' first year.

In light of all of these institutional and student characteristics, we consulted extant literature to review how these characteristics may play a role in institutional retention and student persistence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before discussing extant literature on persistence and retention, it is important to define these terms. Simply, students persist, institutions retain (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2009; Hagedorn, 2005). Research on retention allows us to examine how the institutions' characteristics, behaviors, and decisions influence students' decision to persist or leave the institution. Further, studies on persistence focus on the students' characteristics, behaviors, and decisions, before and after arriving on campus, as it pertains to their decision to stay or leave their institution. Both of these terms are used throughout this study, depending on which point of view we are discussing as both affect the problem at hand.

Nonetheless, studies on student persistence and institutional retention both examine the interplay of student and institutional characteristics and behaviors. Scholars organize and examine these characteristics and behaviors through theoretical perspectives, including the economic, organizational, psychological, and sociological perspectives. Despite this variety, there seems to be a consensus among such perspectives that retention is likely to occur when the characteristics and behaviors of students are supported by the characteristics and behaviors of the institution. We will discuss these perspectives, and the corresponding characteristics and behaviors, because they not only encompass our understanding of institutional retention and student persistence, but they also illustrate the constructs used in our conceptual framework.

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

The economic perspective posits that students are more likely to persist at an institution when they perceive that the benefits of attending the institution outweigh the costs and benefits of not attending (Braxton, 2003). Studies from this perspective rely heavily upon price response and cost-benefit theories in order to identify and examine the financial costs and benefits of attending college and how students weigh them. A major component of these theories is students' perception of their ability, or inability, to pay for college (Becker, 1964). Ability to pay is a precollege student characteristic that is a "composite variable that usually includes measures of such factors as students' socioeconomic status, their perceptions of their and their family's ability to finance college, and satisfaction with the cost" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 413). It affects how students academically and socially integrate into the college environment. Also, in the cost-benefit theory, ability to pay increases the benefits students derive from attending college (Bowen, 1977; Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990).

Understanding students' ability to pay has led to the studies on the use of financial aid, how it equalizes students' ability to pay, and its effect on persistence. Specifically, this line of research explores "the overall effect of financial aid on persistence (e.g., Astin, 1975; Murdock, 1987; Stampen & Cabrera, 1986, 1988); the sensitivity of persistence decisions to charges along with tuition reduction, grants, loans, and work-study awards (e.g., Astin, 1975; Nora, 1990; St. John, 1990, 1994; St. John, Kirshstein, & Noell, 1991; Voorhees, 1985); and the effectiveness of particular student aid packages in the retention of minorities (e.g., Astin, 1975; Olivas, 1985; Nora, 1990; Nora & Horvath, 1989; St. John, 1990)."

The economic perspective has also resulted in integrative models that aim to combine economic theories, such as price response and cost-benefit theories, with persistence theory. One commonly cited model is the *Ability to Pay Model* (Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990). It illustrates the

“complex longitudinal process involving the interaction between the student and institution,” and specifically, how ability to pay could moderate students’ relationship with the institution. Cabrera, Stampen, and Hansen (1990) tested their model using a sample of college students from the National Center for Educational Statistics High School and Beyond 1980 Senior Cohort. The study revealed that students who were satisfied with their ability to pay for college had higher chances to persist in college than their less-satisfied classmates.

The economic perspective asserts that retention and persistence depends on the financial characteristics and behaviors of the students being supported by the financial characteristics and behaviors of the institution. This means that the institution must consider their applicants’ and students’ ability to pay when making decisions about tuition and fees. It means that financial aid and bursar offices must be aware of their students’ financial capabilities and be willing to make programs and policies that accommodate them. Finally, it means ensuring that financial aid packages for students with lesser means equalizes their ability to socially and academically integrate into the college environment.

The economic perspective encourages us to examine how students’ satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, with their financial status affects their decision to stay. Accordingly, it guides us to inquire about students’ participation in financial aid programs, students’ perceived ability to pay for school, and students’ perceived benefits and costs of attending BSC. These are examined in our qualitative and quantitative methodologies but were not able to be analyzed within our trend analysis due to limited data.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The organizational perspective examines the role that institution’s organizational structures and processes play on student’s decision to persist or leave an institution. An institution’s organizational structure is comprised of its size (Kamens, 1971; Pike & Kuh, 2005), curricular mission (Pike & Kuh, 2005), funding source (Pike & Kuh, 2005), selectivity (Pike & Kuh, 2005), leadership (Bensimon, 1989; Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Cohen & March, 1974), and location (Pike & Kuh, 2005). The organizational processes include how decisions are made and how the faculty and staff respond to students (Kuh, et. al., 2006). Overall, this perspective advocates that students are likely to persist when they feel that the institution’s structure and processes are supportive to their college experience.

A commonly cited model that explains this relationship is Bean’s (1983) student attrition model. At the heart of his theory, Bean argues that a student’s intent to persist at an institution depends on the student’s experience at the institution; and the institution’s organizational structure and processes play a major role in shaping such experience. As the model illustrates, the institution’s structure and processes shape students’ beliefs about the institution. Those beliefs then form attitudes. More specifically, the beliefs form attitudes that reflect the student’s feeling of belong, or fit, at the institution. Those attitudes, or feeling of belonging, are then expressed by the student’s behavior at the institution, such as their involvement in social and academic activities at the institution. These behaviors signal the student’s intent to persist or leave an institution.

Bean’s model, like other studies from the organizational perspective, identifies the institution as a major piece in the retention puzzle. It also places great responsibility on the institution to consider how their structure and processes affect students’ persistence. For example, it implies that

admissions departments should take stock of their institutional structure in order to recruit students with the characteristics and behaviors that would thrive or “fit” within the institution. It also implies that institutional leadership should consider student’s satisfaction and perception of institutional policies and decision-making processes. Overall, it urges institutions to consider how decisions about structure and processes affect student satisfaction.

The organizational perspective asserts that students persist at an institution when they feel that they fit at the institution. This feeling of fit is greatly influenced by the institution’s physical location, leadership, academics, and funding structure. Therefore, we are guided to examine how BSC’s size, location, mission, selectivity, leadership, decision-making process, location, affect students’ feeling of belonging. These questions are examined in our qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Next, the psychological perspective emphasizes the role students’ psychological characteristics and processes play in their decision to persist. Unlike the other perspectives, research in this area specifically examines students’ individual characteristics and behaviors and how they influence students’ decision to persist or depart.

Psychological characteristics include academic aptitude and skills, motivational states and personality traits (Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002). A commonly discussed psychological trait is self-efficacy. In Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1997), self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s perception of his or her ability to perform in a certain way to achieve a desired outcome. This perception is developed through the individual’s observation and past experiences. According to Bandura, when students believe they are competent, they gain in self-confidence and develop higher levels of persistence and achievement.

A commonly researched psychological process is the way students respond, or specifically adjust and adapt, to their new environments at college. Adjustment is a process by which individuals fit into a new situation, and adaptation is a process by which individuals learn to cope with a situation whether the individual fits in or not (French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974). According to behavioral theory, student can develop coping behaviors that allow them to adapt to school; and through adaptation, the student becomes integrated into the new college environment. A student that is integrated into their college environment is more likely to persist at the institution (Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002).

Another psychological process that is commonly cited is how students develop a locus of control, or “the extent to which a student views their past outcomes and experiences to be caused by internal or external forces” (Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002, p.77). A student can have an internal or external locus of control. Students with an internal locus of control believe that his or her behaviors and actions cause his or her own successes and failures. Meanwhile, a student with an external locus of control believes that his or her successes and failures are the result of fate or destiny. Having an internal or external locus of control is believed to affect a student’s academic and social integration. For example, students with external locus of control are less motivated to study or take notes because they believe academic success results from luck or the teacher’s favor. On the other hand, students who have an internal locus of control believe that their academic achievement is the product of their own actions, such as studying, forming study groups, attending class, and taking

notes. Therefore, they are more motivated to continue using those behaviors in order to perform well in school. These behaviors are thought to foster the students' academic and social integration, which influences students' decision to persist at the institution.

The psychological perspective offers three lessons for a college campus. First college students arrive to college with preexisting psychological conditions. Second, these conditions influence students' decision to persist or depart from an institution. Third, the institution can address these conditions, and therefore students' decision to persist, by creating programs and policies. Bean and Eaton (2001) recommend that colleges provide programming that foster psychological growth; specifically, they recommend, "service-learning programs, freshman interest groups and other learning communities, freshman orientation seminars, and mentoring programs" (p. 85).

Findings from the psychological perspective led us to account for and examine students' psychological characteristics, such as motivation to attend BSC and graduate, adjustment and adaption to their new social environments and academic requirements, and self-efficacy. Students are asked to describe these elements in our qualitative and quantitative instruments. It also led us to examine how BSC addresses these psychological characteristics through their programming and services. Specifically, we are led to inquire about the effects of their orientation program, academic advising, and residential program.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The sociological perspective of retention focuses on the social structures and forces that influence students' decision to persist. There are scholars who focus on social structures and forces that influence students before they arrive on campus. For example, Spady (1970) model focused on parents' education background as an influencer of persistence. Bourdieu (1973, 1977) social reproduction theory, which describes cultural and social capital, argues that a student's social network and social class is a major factor of retention. However, there are also scholars who examine social factors that happen once students are on campus—which is helpful because it empowers and equips college leaders and administrators to manage social forces and environments for optimal retention. Tinto's Interactionist Theory (1975) is one of the most cited theories on social. Though several scholars have revised Tinto's theory to improve its relevance, it is still highly cited and referenced in frameworks.

Tinto's theory posits that persistence is result of the values that a student places on their social and academic integration at a given college or university. In Tinto's words, persistence is a longitudinal process that begins with student's precollege characteristics, such as age, gender, parent's educational background, and academic achievement. These characteristics influence the student's commitment to the institution and to graduation. These commitments, in turn, influence the student's level of integration into social and academic systems at his institution. Next, the student's academic and social integrations influence the student's subsequent commitments to the institution and to graduation. Finally, these subsequent commitments influence the student's decision to persist.

Testing this theory, Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) derived thirteen propositions from Tinto's theory, and then assessed each of them for empirical support.

1. Student entry characteristics affect the level of initial commitment to the institution.

2. Student entry characteristics affect the level of initial commitment to the goal of graduation from college.
3. Student entry characteristics directly affect the student's likelihood of persistence in college.
4. Initial commitment to the goal of graduation from college affects the level of academic integration.
5. Initial commitment to the goal of graduation from college affects the level of social integration.
6. Initial commitment to the institution affects the level of social integration.
7. Initial commitment to the institution affects the level of academic integration.
8. The greater the degree of academic integration, the greater the level of subsequent commitment to the goal of graduation from college.
9. The greater the degree of social integration, the greater the level of subsequent commitment to the institution.
10. The initial level of institutional commitment affects the subsequent level of institutional commitment.
11. The initial level of commitment to the goal of graduation from college affects the subsequent level of commitment to the goal of college graduation.
12. The greater the level of subsequent commitment to the goal of graduation from college, the greater the likelihood of student persistence in college.
13. The greater the level of subsequent commitment to the institution, the greater the likelihood of student persistence in college.

Their assessment revealed that empirical support for the propositions vary by institutional type; “the validity of Tinto’s theory remains an open empirical question in both liberal arts and two-year colleges given that they found that no tests of the 13 propositions were conducted in liberal arts colleges and only one proposition received strong empirical support in two-year colleges” (Braxton, et. al., 2014, p.78). The assessment only found partial support for residential colleges and universities propositions 8 and 12 did not garner empirical support. Because Tinto’s model was problematic for explaining persistence at liberal art, residential, and commuter institutions, Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004) elected to revise Tinto’s theory.

The sociological perspective describes student persistence and institutional retention as a longitudinal process, in which students assess their interactions in academic and social environments of the college. Satisfaction in these areas is influenced by students’ precollege academic, demographic, and familial characteristics. Therefore, we are inspired to ask BSC students’ about their gender, age, parental education background, and high school academic achievement. We also want to ask about their initial commitment to BSC and to graduating. Finally, because Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997), found partial empirical support for academic integration at residential colleges, we will focus only on students’ social integration at BSC.

Inspired by the extant literature on student persistence and institutional retention, we aim to use a theoretical framework that considers findings from the economic, organizational, psychological, and sociological perspective. While Tinto’s Interactionist Model (1975) is frequently used as a theoretical framework, Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) found that his model is inappropriate for residential colleges and universities, like BSC. Therefore we decided to use a model that builds upon the work of Tinto, yet focuses on residential institutions and still considers the economic, organizational, psychological, and sociological perspectives.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY QUESTION I & II

We approach both of our empirical study questions by using Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's (2004) Revised Theory of Student Retention at Residential Colleges and Universities. Their model, a revision of Tinto's Interactionalist Model (1975), provides empirically supported concepts and variables that explain retention at residential institutions. Such a model is appropriate for BSC's highly residential campus, where not only 95 percent of the student body lives on campus, but also, residency is required for students in their first and second year.

Revisions to Tinto's Model

Social integration plays a pivotal role in Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's revised model. As defined by Durkheim (1951) and Tinto (1975), social integration is "the student's perception of the degree of social affiliation with others and their degree of congruency with the attitudes, beliefs, norms, and values of the social communities of a college or university" (Braxton, et al., 2014, p. 64). Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon (2004) delineated six factors that influence and precede social integration: commitment of the institution to student welfare, institutional integrity, psychosocial engagement, proactive social adjustment, communal potential, and ability to pay.

The first factor, commitment of the institution to the welfare of its students, represents the student's perception about the amount the institution cares about the success and safety of its students (Braxton, et. al, 2014). Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon, through research, found thirteen forces that may influence this factor: "academic advising (Voorhees, 1990); first-year orientation (Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfe, 1986; Dunphy, Miller, Woodruff, & Nelson, 1987; Fidler & Hunter, 1989); organizational behaviors involving communication, justice, and participation in decision-making (Bean, 1980, 1983; Braxton and Brier, 1989; Berger and Braxton, 1998; Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004); student perception of prejudice and racial discrimination at their institution (Cabrera et al., 1999); faculty interest in students, good teaching, and faculty active learning practices (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Braxton, Jones, Hirschy, & Hartley, 2008); and student observations of faculty violations of teaching norms (Braxton & Bayer, 1999)" (Braxton, et. al, 2014, pp. 101-102).

Institutional integrity "pertains to the degree of congruency between the espoused mission and goals of the college or university and the actions of its administrators, faculty and staff" (Braxton, et. al, 2014, 88). Braxton and Hirschy (2004) state that institutional integrity is displayed through institutional policies, and how fairly those policies are administered. Berger & Braxton (1998) found that institutional integrity positively influences social integration.

Echoing Astin's theory of student involvement (1984), psychosocial engagement is "the amount of psychological energy students invest in their social interactions with peers and in their participation in extracurricular activities (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004)" (p. 90). These interactions and activities include dating, participating in Greek life, attending parties, and partaking in campus leadership (Braxton, et. al., 2014). The more the psychosocial engagement, the more the social integration.

Proactive social adjustment represents the student's recognition that she needs to proactively respond, or adjust, to social changes and challenges. Students who demonstrate this participate in orientation, learn how to deal with stress, and reconcile differing values, norms, and attitudes (Braxton, et. al, 2014).

Communal potential is the “degree to which a student perceives that a subgroup of students exists within the college community with which that student could share similar values, beliefs, and goals;” it is especially important for students “whose cultures of origin are different from the predominate culture of a given college or university” (Yorke & Longden, 2004, P .95). Such communities could be found in the residence halls (Berger, 1997), classrooms, (Tinto, 1997, 2000), and in student peer groups (Newcomb, 1966), like student organizations and clubs.

Through the process of inductive theory construction, Braxton and Hirschy (2004) report that they derived commitment of the institution to student welfare, communal potential, and institutional integrity from the findings of 62 empirical test of factors influencing social integration in a statistically significant way. These tests were conducted using traditional-aged college students in residential colleges and universities. Social integration of proactive social adjustment and psychosocial engagement, were derived from Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon (2004)’s process of inductive theory construction.

Ability to pay, the sixth antecedent of social integration, was derived directly from research findings. Studies that examine the economic factors that influence students’ decision to persist often find that a student’s ability to pay and the student’s perceptions of the costs of their education influence persistence (Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1993; Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990; St. John, 1994; St. John, Paulsen, and Starkey, 1996; Stampen & Cabrera, 1988). Heeding to the research, it was important to add this factor to the persistence model—especially when considering the rising cost of attending a (residential) college or university.

These six factors form the core of this revised theory for residential colleges and universities given their hypothesized role as antecedent of social integration. Finally, these six antecedents are not arrayed in any hierarchical, conditional, or temporal order.

THE REVISED THEORY-A NARRATIVE

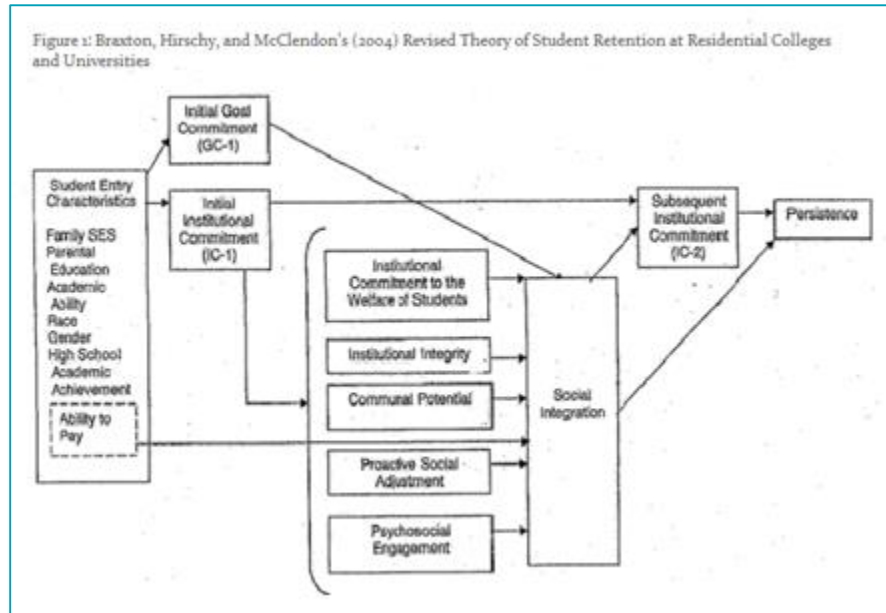
The revised model begins with a student’s entry characteristics, such as family socioeconomic status, parental education, academic ability, race, gender, high school academic achievement, and ability to pay. These characteristics shape the student’s initial commitment to the goal of graduation and the institution.

Next, the student’s initial commitment to the institution influences the student’s perceptions of 1) the institution’s commitment to the welfare of its students, 2) the integrity of the institution, 3) the potential for social community with peers, or communal potential, 4) proactive social adjustment, and 5) psychosocial engagement. The student’s initial commitment to the institution has a positive relationship with these five factors; the greater the student’s level of initial commitment to the institution, the more favorable their perception of the commitment of the institution to the welfare of its students, institutional integrity, communal potential, levels of proactive social adjustment and psychosocial engagement (Braxton & Hirschy, 2005). These five factors positively influence the student’s social integration.

Additionally, the student’s initial commitment to the goal of graduation also positively influences social integration. The more the student is committed to graduation, then the more likely the student will integrate herself into the social systems of the residential institution.

Next, the student's social integration and initial commitment to the institution affect her subsequent institutional commitment. The greater the level of initial commitment to the institution, the greater the level of subsequent commitment to the institution.

Finally, the student's subsequent commitment to the institution influences the student's decision to persist. Specifically, the greater the levels of subsequent commitment to the institution, the greater the likelihood a student will persist. Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of our conceptual framework.

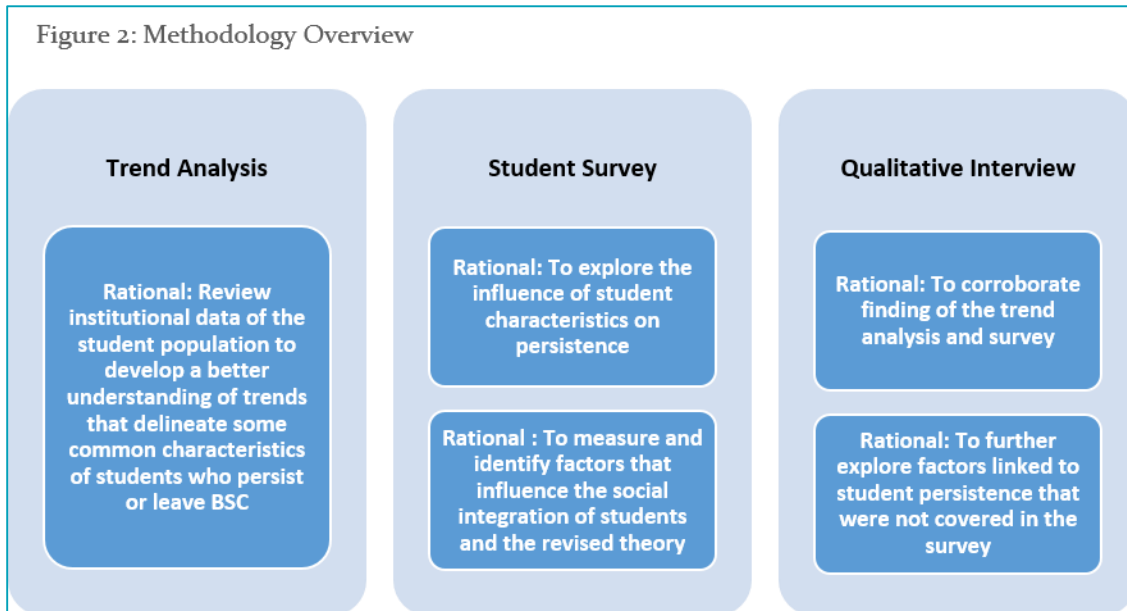


METHODOLOGIES FOR STUDY QUESTION I & II

Guided by this conceptual framework, we approach our study questions using three methodologies, a trend analysis, a quantitative survey, and qualitative interviews (See Figure 2). The trend analysis is used to address the first study question; the quantitative survey is used for both study questions; and finally, the qualitative interviews are used only for the second study question.

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY FOR STUDY QUESTION I & II

Drawing from our conceptual framework, we approach both study questions using Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's (2004) revised theory of student persistence and Braxton et al. (2014) testing of that revised theory at residential colleges and university. A quantitative analysis resulted from this approach and included the execution of a student survey of the BSC student body. Below is a description of our quantitative methodology used to address both study questions. The sampling, survey development, and responses were used to explore the influence of student characteristics on persistence and social integration on student retention. Such findings are reflected in our discussion of Study Questions I and Study Questions II.



Sampling

We surveyed the entire BSC student body to ensure that all students' opinions and experiences had an equal opportunity to be included in the study. In total, our sample population is comprised of the 1,346 BSC students who enrolled in the fall 2015 semester. BSC's student body is 54 percent male and 46 percent female. The majority of students self-identify as white (82 percent), but 4.1 percent identified as Asian, 8.2 percent as Black, and 2.6 percent as Hispanic. Overall, students originate from 38 states and 21 countries; but many of the students are from Alabama and the surrounding southern states such as Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana.

BSC has a mostly traditional college student population where most students are between 18 and 22 years old. The majority of students (95 percent) are residential (BSC, n.d.(a)). The campus has a strong athletic and Greek involvement. Over sixty percent of the student body participate in a Greek organization, and forty percent participate in one of the College's twenty-two NCAA Division III varsity sports teams. Finally, over 95percent of students receive some form of financial aid BSC, n.d.(a)).

With the assistance of the BSC technology services, all students were invited to participate in the survey through their BSC email. Invitation emails were sent out on November 15, and five reminders followed until the survey closed on December 15. The invitation and reminder emails were written and emailed by the Vanderbilt team via REDcap. The emails explained the purpose of the survey, petitioned the students' voluntary participation, and offered incentives for submitting a completed the survey. Each student who submitted a completed survey would be entered into a drawing for \$50 and \$25 gift certificate to the BSC bookstore. Next, the email explained that the students' responses in the survey would be kept anonymous. Finally, the emails included a hyperlink that directed the students to the REDcap website, where they could complete the survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the email invitation). In addition, in the weeks following the invitation email, reminder emails were sent to students who had yet to complete the survey. The email reiterated the information from the initial email invitation, and reminded students about the time they had left to complete the survey and participate in the gift card drawings. The survey was

released on November 15, 2015 and remained active until December 15. Reminder emails were sent on November 20, November 24, November 30, December 10, and December 14th.

Survey Development

In an attempt to address both study questions, we developed a survey tool adopted from Braxton et al. (2014) two survey tools used for residential colleges. The survey's 137 items were constructed to gather information about the characteristics of the BSC student, their social and academic experiences, and the educational environment fostered on campus that affect student persistence and retention. Additionally, our survey instrument allowed us to test Braxton et al. (2014) proposed revisions to the revised model of student persistence for residential colleges and universities on a specific highly residential campus with the entire student population. Such adaptation of the existing surveys also provided us with an existing, valid, and reliable instrument yet afforded us the opportunity to test its constructs ability to measure and identify factors that influence the social integration of students and the revised theory beyond the first year of college on BSC's campus.

The survey was designed to draw from our conceptual framework and the revised theory of student persistence for residential colleges and universities. The tool was divided into several sections and collected student demographics, family background information, and measures of students' academic and social experiences. The survey took about 20 minutes to complete and included a variety of questions though most were on a Likert scale (see Appendix B to review the survey in its entirety).

We adjusted and added to Braxton et al. (2014) survey tool in attempt to test the revised theory of student persistence in residential colleges and universities on one campus with the entire student population, beyond just first-year students. We included the original measures of student entry characteristics, but because we were testing the theory beyond the first year experience, it was important to include additional student characteristics that define the BSC experience. We included measures of college GPA, Greek affiliation, student-athlete experience, and class year in an attempt to help us expand the revised theory to one campus context and investigate both of our study questions.

Sample: Characteristics of Respondents

The survey was distributed to 1346 students. We received 347 responses (260 complete responses and 87 partial responses), resulting in a 26 percent response rate. For analytical purposes our sample was 260 students. It is also important to note that students were not required to answer every questions, so the sample size throughout our analysis varies due to student responses to measures used within each analysis. 98.7 percent of the respondents were full time students. The sample was made up of 31.5 percent of first-year students, 18.7 percent sophomores, 26.5 percent juniors and 23.3 percent seniors. In addition, 64 percent were females, and 76.9 percent identified as white. 84.9 percent of the respondents lived on campus, and 68.5 percent were student athletes. 51.5 percent of the sample were Greek, and 78.4 percent reported having a college GPA of 3.0 or higher. 74.8 percent reported a family income of \$60,000 or more, and 59 percent reported living 100 miles or more away from BSC's campus. 52.7 percent of the sample claimed that BSC was their first choice when it came to selecting a college.

Assessing Non-Responder Bias Using Late Responders as Proxy

We used survey reminders as a way to encourage BSC students to participate in our survey, and the nature of our survey would likely result in the most engaged and likely to persist students to complete the survey. We attempted to get a representative sample of the BSC student body and employed both incentives and multiple survey reminders to encourage participation. Our resulting 26 percent response rate required us to assess the representative nature of our sample. Knowing that late responders may be used to understand non-responders, we used a wave analysis to compare early and late responders to check for bias within our sample. Such non-response bias remains a threat to validity and a limitation, but our response analysis allows us to assess the representative nature of the sample.

To compare the early and late responders, we divided our sample into two waves: 1) those who responded by November 30 or two weeks into data collection and 2) those who responded after November 30 or within the last two weeks of the survey being live. The resulting cohorts were 210 early responders and 50 late responders. We, then, measured the mean and standard deviation of each group on demographic characteristics and key constructs of the revised theory. We calculated the difference of mean and effect size, using Cohen's *d*. Comparing the two cohorts of responders found very small and thus not significant difference among the demographic or theory's main measures (Cohen's *d* ranged from -.02 to .47) (see Table 1). Through this comparison of early and late responders, we can assume that non-response bias may not be an issue within our sample. We proceeded with a collective pool of responses and have some confidence that our sample is representative of the BSC student body and our findings reflect a collective understanding of the BSC student experience.

Table 1
Comparing Early and Late Responders

Variable	Early Responders	Late Responders	Difference	Effect Size*
Gender	.624 (.486)	.708 (.459)	-0.084	-0.18
Race/ethnicity	.805 (.397)	.62 (.49)	0.185	0.42
Age	1.67 (.668)	1.58 (.71)	0.09	0.13
Parental Education	12.105 (3.447)	11.068 (4.113)	1.037	0.27
Family Income	10.86 (3.348)	10.79 (3.563)	0.07	0.02
Average high school grades	9.105 (1.188)	9.06 (1.707)	0.045	0.03
Ability to Pay	1.78	1.86	-0.08	-0.13

	(.595)	(.639)		
Cultural Capital	2.122	2.206	-0.084	-0.11
	(.698)	(.854)		
Enrollment status	1.01	1.02	-0.01	-0.08
	(.104)	(.147)		
Class year	2.5	2.06	0.44	0.39
	(1.153)	(1.132)		
First Year	.28	.46	-0.18	-0.38
	(.45)	(.504)		
Sophomore	.193	.16	0.033	0.09
	(.396)	(.37)		
Junior	.271	.24	0.031	0.07
	(.445)	(.431)		
Senior	.256	.14	0.116	0.29
	(.438)	(.351)		
Present College GPA	3.09	2.85	0.24	0.22
	(.953)	(1.176)		
Athlete	.31	.34	-0.03	-0.06
	(.463)	(.479)		
Greek	.52	.48	0.04	0.08
	(.501)	(.505)		
Initial institutional Commitment	3.292	3.313	-0.021	-0.02
	(.913)	(.879)		
Communal Potential	3.05	2.919	0.131	0.24
	(.369)	(.664)		
Institutional Commitment to the Welfare of Students	3.057	2.956	0.101	0.21
	(.461)	(.487)		
Institutional Integrity	3.117	3.07	0.047	0.07
	(.691)	(.693)		
Psychosocial Engagement	2.801	2.663	0.138	0.2
	(.605)	(.764)		
Social Integration	3.073	2.904	0.169	0.3
	(.564)	(.661)		

Subsequent Institutional Commitment	3.345 (.644)	3.01 (.773)	0.335	0.47
Student Persistence	.962 (.191)	.841 (.37)	0.121	0.41

Note: Standard deviations appear in parenthesis below the means.

*Effect size expressed as Cohen's *d*.

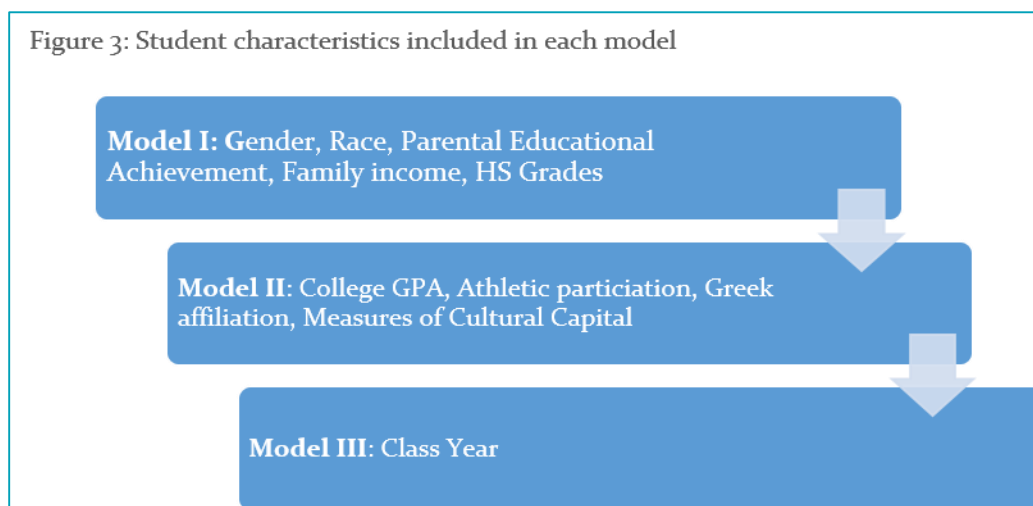
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS USED FOR STUDY QUESTION I AND II

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in our data analysis. Using Braxton et al. (2014) data analysis protocol, we recoded and constructed variables needed for our data analysis (see Appendix C, Table 1 for the operational definitions and descriptive statistics for variables used in our analysis). Once our data was prepared accordingly, we preformed multivariate analysis to test the revised theory and the main concepts of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, persistence, and other antecedents of these measures. Study Question I examined the influence of student characteristics of the revised theory's main concepts. Study Question II extends our exploration of the revised theory and focused on the various influences of measures of social integration.

As a way to examine Braxton et al. (2014) findings and expand our ability to test the revised theory on one campus with an entire student body, we developed three models used throughout our multiple linear regression analysis for both study questions. Model I was developed to examine the effects of Braxton et al. (2014) original measures on each dependent variable. Models II and III were developed to examine the specific nature of BSC and to account for the effects of testing the revised theory with an entire student population.

We developed Model II to allow us to examine the effects of students' college GPA, athletic and Greek status, and the influence of cultural capital on each dependent variable. These addition measures were added to capture an additional layer of understanding of students and the characteristics they may gain as a result of participating in the life of BSC that might affect their likelihood to persist. Just like high school grades may be indicators of student persistence in college, college grades must be considered when examining the entire student population at BSC. We felt it was important to account for the effects of being a student athlete. BSC utilizes athletics as a recruitment tool and student athletes make up 40 percent of the student population, so it was critical to test to see if the student athlete experience alter the BSC experience or influence a student's likelihood to persist. Much in the same vein, the Greek student experience may alter the student experiences and a student's likelihood to persist as seen in our trend analysis. Since 60 percent of the student population is Greek at BSC, it was essential that we understand how Greek affiliation may affect student persistence. Finally, we felt it was important to measure the effects of cultural capital among all measures of the revised theory. Berger (2000) notes that student persistence is linked to social reproduction theory, and as BSC has seen a shift in their student populations it is important to understand how measures of cultural capital may be affecting a student's ability to integrate and participate in all aspects of the college experience. The addition of Model III's measures of class years allows us to understand any variation among the student population at various stages of their college careers. Figure 3 summarizes these three models.

Figure 3: Student characteristics included in each model



Survey respondents were able to skip questions within the survey, which resulted in some incomplete responses. We excluded this missing data “pairwise” in the regression models rather than excluding all incomplete surveys. This allowed us the ability to include cases with complete data for variables being used in each regression rather than excluding such subjects within all regression. We have reported adjusted R^2 and both unstandardized coefficients and standard coefficients. We use a statistical significance level of $p < .05$ for all analysis. A detailed description on our regression analysis is provided in findings section of Study Question II, but we have provided findings as they relate to student demographic and Study Question I in that section’s findings.

STUDY QUESTION I: WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DISTINGUISH BSC STUDENTS AS LIKELY TO PERSIST OR LEAVE?

RATIONALE FOR STUDY QUESTION I

A major branch of research on student persistence and institutional retention focuses on student characteristics. Some of this research examines the role of students' entry characteristics, such as gender, age, ethnicity, SAT/ACT scores, high school grade point average, cultural capital, academic rigor of their high school, socioeconomic status, parents' educational background, and geographical location (the distance from their home and the institution). Other research examines student characteristics gained while on campus, such as participation in an athletic team, participation in a Greek organization, living on-campus, earned college grade point average, and employment status. Extant literature suggests that these characteristics influence students' likelihood to persist or leave an institution as well. Inspired by this research, we decided to investigate how student characteristics influence the BSC experience. Specifically, we aimed to discover which characteristics distinguish BSC students as likely to persist or leave. We first used the trend analysis described below to provide baseline information; then we used the quantitative survey.

METHODOLOGY 1 FOR STUDY QUESTION I: TREND ANALYSIS

Birmingham Southern College (BSC) finds it critical to its mission to understand what elements are essential to student retention. As one of the premier liberal colleges in the South, BSC deems it

important to uphold academic rigor while at the same time exemplify that its student retention is in line with comparable institutions. However, BSC finds itself with a lower retention than it would like and seeks to understand what is causing the lack of student persistence. BSC uses two types of institutional metrics to compare their retention against.

The first metric compares BSC to those in the Associated Colleges of the South (ASC), sixteen nationally recognized liberal arts education colleges and universities (ASC, 2016). Table 2 lists the ASC member institutions, locations, 2014 enrollments, first-year retention rates (2013-2014), and the rank among the 16 institutions for retention. Retention rates measure the percentage of first-time-in college (FTIC) students who began their studies in the fall of 2013 and returned in the fall of 2014. This data was pulled from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). As an example, BSC in the year 2014 had an enrollment of 1,185 students, and first-year retention was 84 percent. BSC is ranked number 11, so 10 institutions have a higher retention and five had a lower retention. This is the most current IPEDS data available.

Table 2

Enrollment and Retention of Associated Colleges of the South (2012- 2014) IPEDS Data

Name `	City	State	Enrollment ⁽¹⁾	1 st Year Retention	
				Percent	Rank
Washington and Lee University	Lexington	VA	2,264	97 percent	1
Davidson College	Davidson	NC	1,770	95 percent	2
University of Richmond	Richmond	VA	4,182	94 percent	3
Centre College	Lexington	KY	1,387	90 percent	4
Furman University	Greenville	SC	2,973	89 percent	5
Spelman College	Atlanta	GA	2,135	89 percent	6
Rhodes College	Memphis	TN	2,054	88 percent	7
University of the South (Sewanee)	Sewanee	TN	1,714	88 percent	8
Trinity University	San Antonio	TX	2,432	88 percent	9
Hendrix College	Conway	AR	1,358	87 percent	10
Birmingham Southern College	Birmingham	AL	1,185	84 percent	11
Morehouse College	Atlanta	GA	2,109	83 percent	12
Rollins College	Winter Park	FL	3,207	83 percent	13
Southwestern University	Georgetown	TX	1,538	82 percent	14
Centenary College of Louisiana	Shreveport	LA	619	80 percent	15
Millsaps College	Jackson	MS	842	80 percent	16

The second metric of comparison includes ten institutions that are similar liberal arts colleges in the Southeast U.S., according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Carnegie, 2016). Table 3 lists ten comparable institutions, their 2014 enrollments, first-year retention rates (2013-2014), and their rank for retention. Retention rates measure the percentage of

first-time-in college (FTIC) students who began their studies in the fall of 2013 and returned in the fall of 2014. This data was pulled from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). As an example, BSC in 2014 had an enrollment of 1,185 students, and first-year retention was 84 percent. BSC is ranked number 2 of these 10.

BSC has a more relevant retention comparison to the similar Carnegie Classification of Institutions (ranked 2nd out of 10) even though many at BSC would like to be compared with ASC institutions (ranked 11th out of 16). This type of comparison may also be useful for BSC to consider when thinking about schools they cross compete with for students during the admissions process.

This trend analysis seeks to review institutional data of the student population to develop a better understanding of trends that delineate some common characteristics of students who persist or leave BSC. Upon analysis of the IPED data presently available at BSC, there is a lack of retention data beyond the first year that includes information about student characteristics such as gender, race, high school background, athletics, and Greek participation. To determine some of the contributing demographics factors of retention at BSC, a trend analysis was prepared and the first step was to determine the overall and detailed characteristics of the BSC student population for the last seven years. The seven-year selection was based on the need for enough data to gauge a trend, and not to go too far back into the past so the data would no longer reflect the present college's environment.

Table 3

Enrollment and Retention of Similar Colleges to BSC - Southeast USA by (Carnegie Classification) (2012-2014) IPEDS Data

Name	City	State	Enrollment ⁽¹⁾	1 st Year Retention	
				Percent	Rank
Berry College	Mount Berry	GA	2,177	79 percent	6
Birmingham Southern College	Birmingham	AL	1,185	84 percent	2
Bridgewater College	Bridgewater	VA	1,785	74 percent	7
Eckerd College	Saint Petersburg	FL	2,083	81 percent	4
LaGrange	Lagrange	GA	964	61 percent	10
Maryville College	Maryville	TN	1,213	71 percent	8
Morehouse College	Atlanta	GA	2,109	83 percent	3
Oglethorpe University	Atlanta	GA	1,094	71 percent	9

Roanoke College	Salem	VA	2,050	80 percent	5
Wofford College	Spartanburg	SC	1,658	89 percent	1

The data presented below addresses the following questions:

1. Retention statistics for BSC undergraduate students
 - a. In what specific academic year do students leave BSC?
 - i. This figure refers to the percent of students leave in their first, second, and third year.
 - b. What is the retention of students for each year in cohorts and for four years, which is the necessary time to complete a baccalaureate degree?
 - i. Cohorts for retention are defined as First Time in College (FTIC) students who begin in the fall quarter and return the next fall. Cohorts for graduation are defined as FTIC students who begin in the fall quarter of their first year of attendance and complete their degree requirements by spring or summer of the fourth year.
 - c. Analyze retention rates for students completing their first, second, and third year at BSC, for multiple cohorts: 1st year fall to fall retention (2009 -2014), 2nd fall-to-fall second-year retention (2009 -2013), and 3rd fall-to-fall third-year retention (2009 -2012).
 - d. Are there any common characteristic of students who depart?
2. Graduation statistics for BSC undergraduate students
 - a. How many students complete their degree in a four-year period?
 - b. Graduation rates for FTIC cohorts for multiple years
 - c. What are the common characteristics for students who do graduate in four years?
 - d. Are there any common characteristics for those students do not graduate in four years?

DATA ANALYSIS

The project plan required that BSC student information be collected to formulate trends on student population persistence and graduation beyond what was presently available. The initial process consisted of constructing a single file for multiple years (2009-2015) on student characteristics to identify preliminary trends concerning students who persist at BSC or depart. BSC's Institutional Research provide data on student characteristics, students-parents/guardian, high school academic and testing results, academic tests/achievements, membership in associations, types of residences lived in, academic probations, sports participation, and Greek life participation. Data collected was generated mostly from the College's main database Colleague by Ellucian; other admission and counseling data came from a standalone application called Starfish. The initial approach consisted of one file of 9,328 records.

The final database creation consisted of six files with fall data for years 2009 to 2014 with characteristic data combined into one Excel spreadsheet. A file with limited data from 2015 was added. The spreadsheet data was uploaded into SPSS for analysis. One last file was merged showing

all graduation from fall 2009 to winter 2015. An academic year was defined as four quarters. For example, 2009-2010:

1. Fall 2009
2. Winter 2010
3. Spring 2010
4. Summer 2010

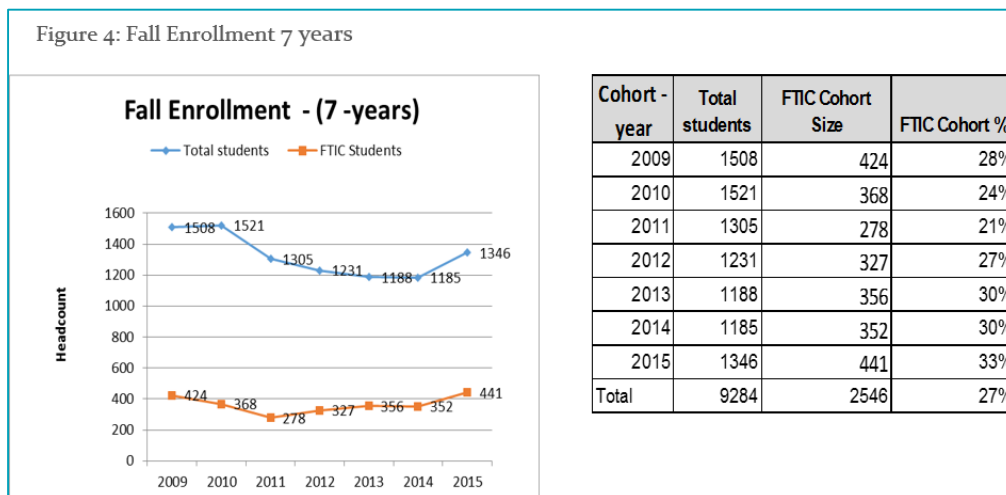
We created flags to establish what terms the student attended BSC. These flags are used to determine first, second, and third-year retention and are used to calculate retention rates. We also imported graduation (seven files) with graduation terms to determine if they graduated within four years. Trends were researched on student persistence attributes as well as student departures for quantifying institution retention.

TREND ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Student Enrollment at BSC

The statistical documentation of a college’s outcome performance of the student population begins at the time of enrollment. To make any conclusion about the student population at BSC, we need to know how many students are enrolled, when they start, leave, and/or graduate. To make an overarching statement or conclusion on a trend, a homogenous cohort is the best approach. We have chosen to analyze FTIC cohorts by first-year admission data as our standard since this data is available through IPEDS for BSC and, Associated Colleges of the South, ASC, or similar liberal arts colleges in the Southeast U.S., according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. As mentioned in the method section, FTIC student cohorts have been separated by year ranging from 2009 to 2015, inclusive of several characteristics.

The total student enrollment within the last seven years peaked in 2010 at 1,521 students. Total enrollment decreased from 2010 to 2014 by 22 percent (see Figure 4). At the same time, FTIC students decreased by 4 percent. FTIC numbers decreased from 2009 to 2011 by 34 percent and then increased 27 percent by 2014. By the fall of 2015, the overall enrollment had yet to reach the 2009 level of 1,508 students, but in 2015 BSC had the highest FTIC cohort of the last seven years with 441 students.

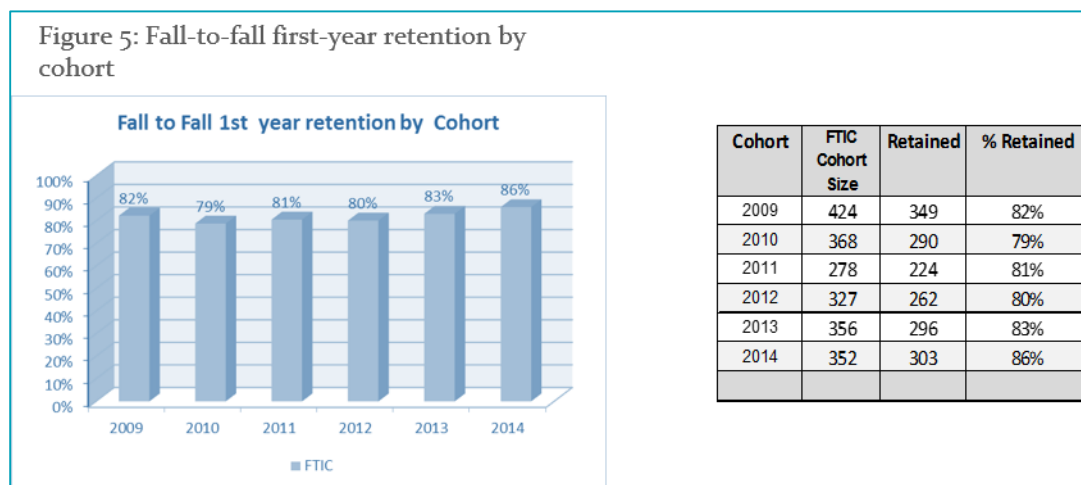


Retention

BSC is committed to student success and evaluates student achievement. It evaluates itself through the consistent enrollment of students through academic years, student retention rates, and student graduation (BSC Student Achievement, 2016). While BSC has published data on first-year retention (from first year to sophomore year) for FTIC full-time degree-seeking students, it lacks data on second-year and third-year retention. Retention for the first three years and four-year graduation are presented below. This information was derived from information provided by BSC according to our data process and file construction

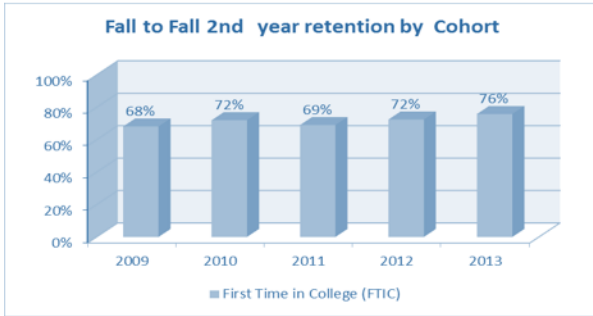
Fall-to-fall first-year retention rates by FTIC Cohort

Fall-to-fall retention from the first year to the second (freshman to sophomore) was analyzed for six cohorts beginning in the fall of 2009 through the fall of 2014. Of the original 2009 fall cohort (N=424), 349 students (82 percent) returned in fall 2010. First-year retention ranged from 79 percent in 2010 to 86 percent in 2014. It has been modestly increasing from 2010 to 2014 at a total of 4 percentage points. On average, approximately the fall-to-fall first year retention rate at BSC is approximately 8 out of 10 students (See Figure 5).



Fall-to-fall retention from the second year to the third (sophomore to junior) was analyzed for five cohorts beginning in fall 2009 through fall 2013. Of the original 2009 fall cohort (N=424), 289 students (68 percent) returned in fall 2011. Overall, second-year retention has ranged from 68 percent in 2009 to 76 percent in 2013, with an average retention of 71 percent. This indicates an increase of second-year retention of 8 percentage points from fall 2009 to fall 2013. All points above are covered in the graph or table in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Fall-to-fall Second-Year Retention by Cohort

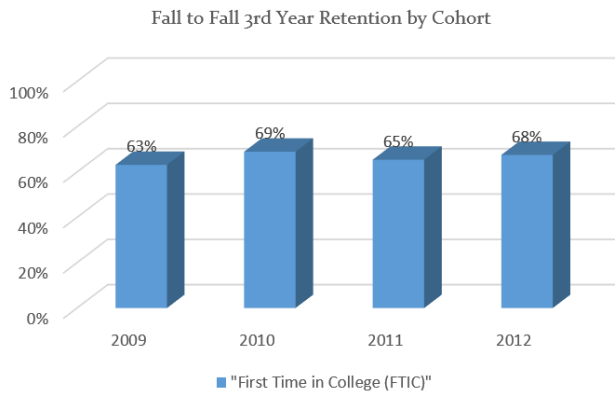


Cohort	FTIC Cohort Size	Retained	% Retained
2009	424	289	68%
2010	368	265	72%
2011	278	192	69%
2012	327	237	72%
2013	356	270	76%

Fall-to-Fall Third-year Retention Rates by FTIC Cohort

Figure 7 presents third-year retention. Of the original 2009 fall cohort (N=424), 268 students (63 percent) returned in fall 2012. Overall, third-year retention ranged from 63 percent in 2009 to 69 percent in 2010 with an average of 66 percent. This shows an increase in third-year retention rate of 8 percent.

Figure 7: Fall-to-Fall Third-Year Retention by Cohort



Cohort	FTIC Cohort Size	Retained	% Retained
2009	424	268	63%
2010	368	254	69%
2011	278	182	65%
2012	327	221	68%

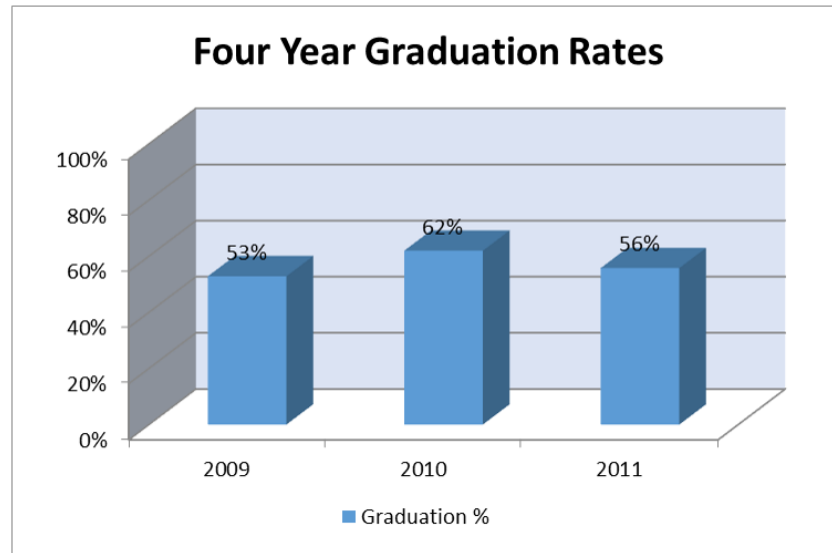
Undergraduate Graduation Rates at BSC

Of the original 2009 cohort (N=424), 224 students, or 53 percent of the cohort, graduated within four years. This means that FTIC students entering in fall 2009 graduated before fall 2013. The graduation rate was 62 percent in 2010, which was an increase of 9 percentage points compared to 2009, and to 56 percent in 2011, which was 11 percentage points less than the previous year. The average graduation for all cohorts is 57 percent. Four-year graduation rates are presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Four-year graduation rates by FTIC Cohort

Retention and Graduation Rates by Gender at BSC

While no single item on its own can determine student persistence or four-year graduation, many theorists believe gender has an effect on retention and



graduation of a student population. For example, in Braxton et al. (2014) Revised Model, gender, an entry characteristic, shapes students' initial commitment to the institution and goal of graduation, which in turn influences students' degree of social integration.

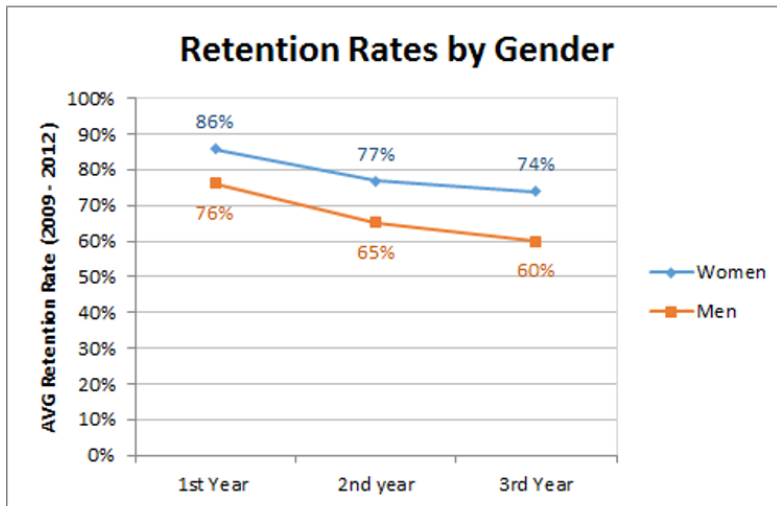
Retention rates by gender is presented for the years 2009 to 2012 for the FTIC cohort for both female and male students. The graduation rates are presented for the years 2009 to 2011 by both genders.

For female students in 2009, first-year retention was 88 percent. In 2010, it was 84 percent, 2011 was 81 percent and 2012 was 74 percent. The average (2009 to 2012) first-year retention (N=538) is 86 percent while the male retention rate is 76 percent. Women have a 10 percent higher first-year retention rate than did men.

The average 2009 to 2012 female second-year retention (N=581) rate is 77 percent while the male rate is 65 percent. Women had 12 percent higher second-year retention than did men. The average 2009 to 2012 female third-year retention (N=463) is 74 percent while the male rate is 60 percent. Women had a 10 percent higher third-year retention than did men.

The average four-year graduation rate for females for the years 2009 to 2011 FTIC cohort (N=318) is 65 percent while the four-year graduation rate for men is (N=289) 50 percent. Women have a 15 percent higher four-year average graduation rate than men. The difference between females and males gets larger over time. Average women and men retention and four-year graduation are presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Fall-to-Fall First, Second, and Third-year Female and Male Retention by Cohort & Four-Year graduation rates by FTIC Cohort for Women and Men.



Characteristics			Retention						Graduation	
Cohort	Gender	Cohort Size	1st -year		2nd -Year		3rd -Year		Within 4 -years	
2009	Female	205	181	88%	157	77%	150	73%	132	73%
	Male	219	168	77%	132	60%	118	54%	92	54%
2010	Female	171	144	84%	130	76%	128	75%	118	75%
	Male	197	146	74%	135	69%	126	64%	110	64%
2011	Female	116	94	81%	83	72%	78	67%	68	67%
	Male	162	130	80%	109	67%	104	64%	87	64%
2012	Female	135	119	88%	111	82%	107	79%		
	Male	192	143	74%	126	66%	114	59%		
Total	Female	627	538	86%	481	77%	463	74%	318	65%
	Male	770	587	76%	502	65%	462	60%	289	50%

Note: The four-year graduation includes a few students who graduated during their junior year. For example in the 2009 cohort, two students graduated in their junior year.

Retention and Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity at BSC

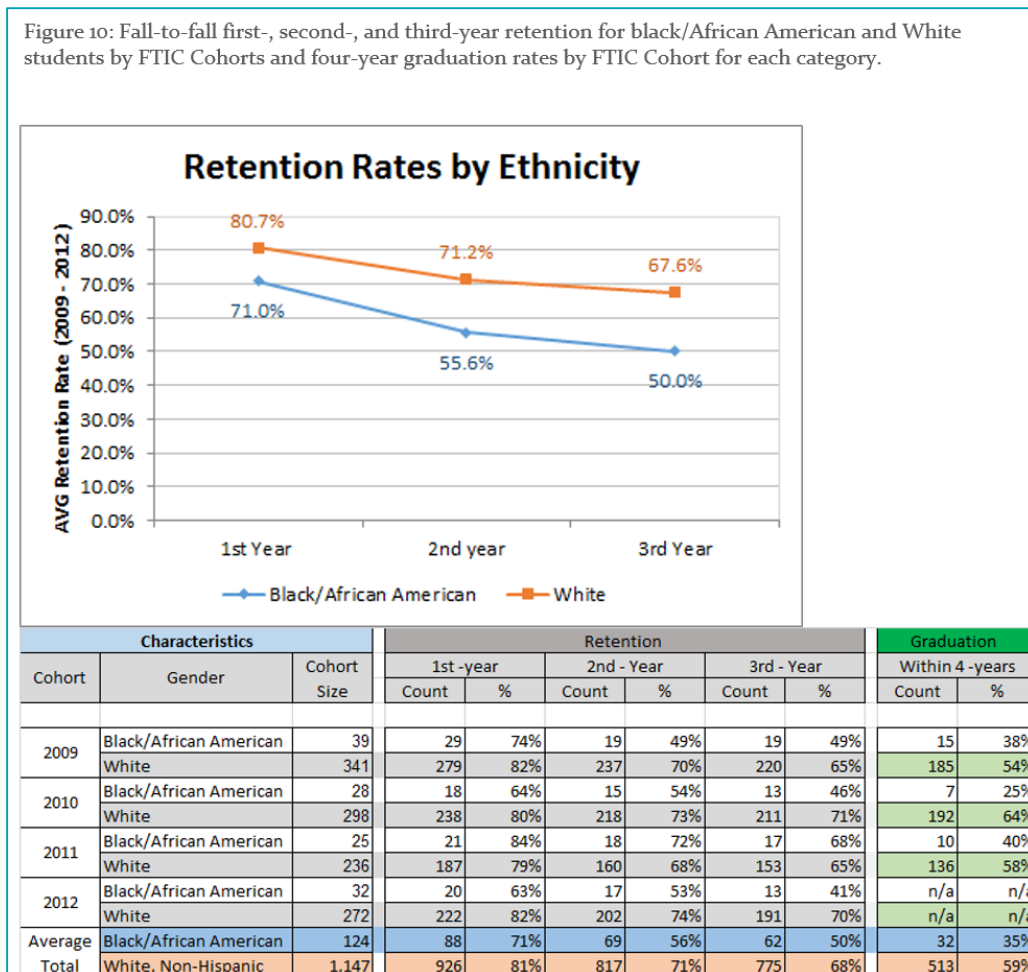
As illustrated in our conceptual framework, race or ethnicity is one of the student entry characteristics that shapes students' initial commitment to the institution and initial commitment to the goal of graduation, which in turn influences students' degree of social integration. Students attending BSC come from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, and this representation varies from year to year. The average BSC race/ethnic demographics for the year 2009 to 2014, approximately, are as follows: White 82 percent, Black/African American 9 percent, Asian 4 percent, Latino 2 percent, and non-reporting and other 3 percent.

Race/ethnicity is self-reported voluntary information that the student completes on an application. While race/ethnicity is an important characteristic, the reporting will not always be 100 percent accurate since this information is voluntary and students may not wish to report such information, be of multiple races, or report incorrectly. There is no way to authenticate the data.

For the most part, BSC students fall into the two major race/ethnicities—white and black/African American, which represent about 91 percent of the student population. Therefore, the retention

and graduation analysis is presented for these two racial categories. The small percentages of other populations tend to overstate or understate results for small populations of Asian, Hispanic, multiple races, and non-reported. These groups are just as important and should be further analyzed by BSC's Institutional Research department.

The retention rate by race/ethnicity for black/African American and white students is presented for the years 2009 to 2012 for the FTIC cohort. The graduation results are presented for the years 2009 to 2011 for such classifications of students also. Of the original 2009 fall black/African American students (N=39), 29 students (74 percent) returned in fall 2010. First-year retention for the black/African American student cohorts ranged from a low in 2012 (63 percent) to a high in 2011 (84 percent). The black/African American cohort (N=124) average retention from 2009 to 2012 was: first-year retention, 71 percent; second-year retention, 56 percent; third-year retention, 50 percent; and four-year graduation, 35 percent. When comparing the average FTIC retention and graduation for each race/ ethnicity cohorts, among first-year retention between black/African American and white student cohorts, white students are 10 percentage points higher than black/African American. For second-year retention, white students are 15 percent higher than black students. For third-year retention, white students are 18 percent higher than black/African American. Moreover, the average 2009 to 2011 FTIC four-year graduation was 24 percent higher for white students than black/African American. All information is included in Figure 10.



Retention and Graduation Rates by High School Academic Achievement

Our conceptual framework also identifies high school academic achievement as indirect influencer of social integration. High school achievement shapes initial commitment to the institution and the goal of graduation, which influences social integration. How high school academic achievement affects the retention and graduation of students is a subject greatly debated in higher education. For our study, we used two variables available to measure high school academic achievement: high school grade point averages and ACT test scores. The ACT is used by colleges and universities for admission, recruiting as an independent measure to compare student from all different types of secondary institutions (ACT, 2016).

High school grade point average (GPA) is specific student achievement information that most admissions counselors use in the college and university admission process. In the conceptual framework, we noted that both high school academic achievement and aptitude for college are student entry characteristics that need to be reviewed. For our study purposes, we will only consider a scale of three academic grades obtained by the enrolled FTIC cohorts who have post-secondary grades: A, B, and C, the specific grades and their scales are based on BSC's academic policy of grading (BSC Catalog – 2015-2016).

BSC Academic Policy Information - Grade Definition:

The system of grading, indicating the relative proficiency a student attains in various courses, is as follows:

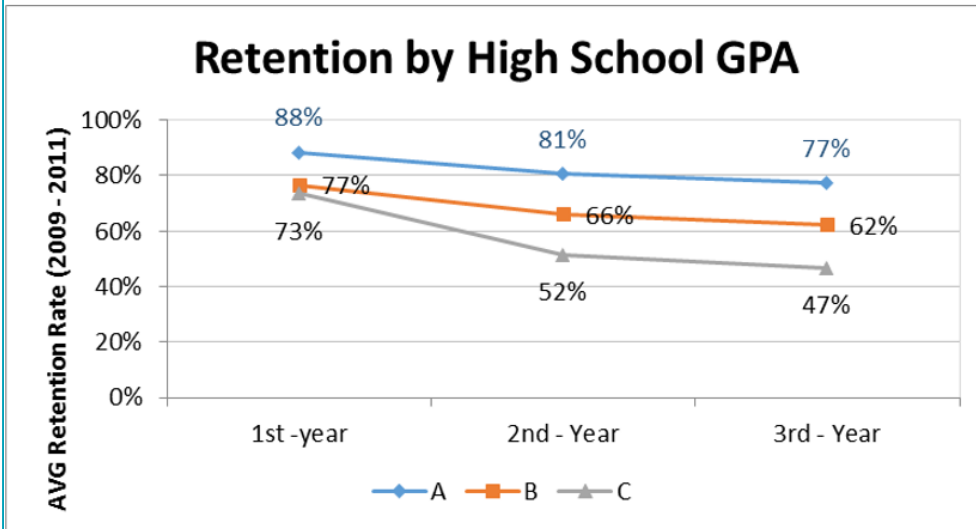
- A - distinctive
- B - very good
- C - satisfactory
- D - lowest passing grade
- F - failure

Grading Scale:

Grade	From	To
A	3.70	4.85
B	2.70	3.69
C	1.71	2.69
D/F	0.00	1.70

The retention by high school GPA (students achieving an A, B or C) is presented for the years 2009 to 2011 for the FTIC cohort. BSC students who completed their degrees in four years is presented by high school GPA (students achieving an A, B or C) for the years 2009 to 2011. An average is used for these three years for easier understanding.

Figure 11: Fall-to-fall first-, second-, and third-year retention for high school graduating GPA by FTIC Cohorts and four-year graduation rates by FTIC Cohort for students making an A, B or C.



Characteristics			Retention						Graduation	
Cohort	High School GPA	Cohort Size	1st - year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Within 4 - years	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2009	A	158	143	91%	125	79%	119	75%	113	72%
	B	210	161	77%	133	63%	123	59%	94	45%
	C	54	44	81%	30	56%	25	46%	16	30%
2010	A	143	125	87%	119	83%	118	83%	115	80%
	B	182	137	75%	125	69%	117	64%	100	55%
	C	37	24	65%	19	51%	18	49%	10	27%
2011	A	106	92	87%	84	79%	78	74%	75	71%
	B	135	106	79%	91	67%	87	64%	72	53%
	C	37	26	70%	17	46%	17	46%	8	22%
Average	A	407	360	88%	328	81%	315	77%	303	74%
	B	527	404	77%	349	66%	327	62%	266	50%
	C	128	94	73%	66	52%	60	47%	34	27%

Of the original fall 2009 high school GPA with an “A” grade cohort (N=158), 143 students (91 percent) returned in fall 2010. First-year retention for the “A” cohorts ranged from a low of 87 percent in both 2010 and 2011 to a high of 91 percent in 2009. The “A” cohort’s (N=407) average retention (years 2009 to 2011) was 88 percent in the first year, 79 percent in the second year, 75 percent in the third year, and the four-year graduation rate was 72 percent. When comparing the average FTIC retention and graduation rates for grades A, B and C, the first-year retention rates for A students are 11percent higher than B students, and 15 percent higher than C students. For second-year retention, A students are 15 percent higher than B students and 29 percent higher than C students. For third-year retention, A students are 15 percent higher than B students and 30 percent higher than C students. In the FTIC four-year graduation average for 2009 to 2011, A students are 24 percent higher than B students and 47 percent higher than C students. All information is included in Figure 11.

ACT scores typically are reported by quartiles. The BSC average admitted ACT composite score is 26. For our study, we will consider two quartiles: the 50th to 75th percentile, and the 75th and higher percentile given the average ACT score of admitted BSC students is within these ranges.

When comparing the average FTIC retention and graduation for grades in those two percentile cohorts, the first-year retention of students with ACT scores greater than the 75th percentile was 13 percent higher than the 50th-75th percentile scores. For second-year retention, students greater than the 75th percentile were 20 percent higher than 50th to 75th percentile students. Third-year retention is greater than the 75 percentile was 21 percent higher than the 50th-75th percentile. The FTIC four-year graduation average for 2009 to 2011 75th-percentile-and-greater students is 18 percent higher than 50th-75th percentile students. All information is included in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Fall-to-fall first-, second-, and third-year retention for high school graduating ACT Scores in the 50th Percentile or 75th Percentile by FTIC Cohorts and four-year graduation rates by FTIC Cohort for students scoring in the 50th Percentile or 75th Percentile on the ACT

Characteristics			Retention						Graduation	
Cohort	High School ACT student scores	Cohort Size	1st-year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Within 4 -years	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2009	50th to 75th Percentile	96	71	74%	53	55%	50	52%	38	40%
	>= 75 Percentile	261	229	88%	197	75%	185	71%	157	60%
2010	50th to 75th Percentile	59	40	68%	31	53%	29	49%	26	44%
	>= 75 Percentile	244	199	82%	187	77%	181	74%	162	66%
2011	50th to 75th Percentile	54	38	70%	32	59%	30	56%	21	39%
	>= 75 Percentile	176	147	84%	132	75%	129	73%	111	63%
Average Total	50th to 75th Percentile	209	149	71%	116	56%	109	52%	85	41%
	>= 75 Percentile	681	575	84%	516	76%	495	73%	430	63%

Retention and Graduation Results Based on Athletic Participation for Students at BSC

NCAA Division III schools have made it clear that athletics is secondary to academics. At BSC athletics plays a considerable role in recruiting and retaining students. For our study purposes, we will only consider three scenarios: no athletic participation, women athletes and male athletes to better understand athletic participation in retention.

The retention by student athletic participation is presented for the years 2009 to 2011 for the FTIC cohort. The statistics for BSC graduates are also presented for male/female athletic and non-athletic participation. Of the original fall 2009 cohort (N=424), 209 non-athletes (85 percent) returned in fall 2010, 48 female athletes (92 percent) and 92 male athletes (72 percent) also returned in 2010. First-year retention for non-athletes ranged from a low of 80 percent in 2011 to a high of 85 percent in 2009. For female athletes, the range was 82 percent to 90 percent and male athletes 72 percent to 80 percent. The female athletes' cohorts (N=117) average retention (2009 to 2011): first-year retention, 87 percent; second-year retention, 79 percent; third-year retention, 77 percent, and four-year graduation, 73 percent. When comparing the average FTIC retention and graduation for male to female athletes, the first-year retention among women is 11 percent higher than males and 5 percent higher than non-athletes. For second-year and third-year retention, the relationship remains the same. In the FTIC four-year graduation average for 2009 to 2011, female athletes is 73 percent, which is 17 percent higher than non-athletes and 21 percent higher than male athletes. All information is included in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Retention and Graduation Results Based on Athletic Participation for Students at BSC

Characteristics			Retention						Graduation	
Cohort	Athletics participation	Cohort Size	1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Within 4 -years	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2009	Not athlete	245	209	85.3%	178	72.7%	166	67.8%	133	54.3%
	Female - Athlete	52	48	92.3%	41	78.8%	39	75.0%	38	73.1%
	Male - Athlete	127	92	72.4%	70	55.1%	63	49.6%	53	41.7%
2010	Not athlete	232	185	79.7%	168	72.4%	160	69.0%	140	60.3%
	Female - Athlete	33	28	84.8%	27	81.8%	27	81.8%	26	78.8%
	Male - Athlete	103	77	74.8%	70	68.0%	67	65.0%	62	60.2%
2011	Not athlete	145	117	80.7%	99	68.3%	94	64.8%	78	53.8%
	Female - Athlete	32	26	81.3%	25	78.1%	24	75.0%	21	65.6%
	Male - Athlete	101	81	80.2%	68	67.3%	64	63.4%	56	55.4%
Average	Not athlete	622	511	82%	445	72%	420	68%	351	56%
	Female - Athlete	117	102	87%	93	79%	90	77%	85	73%
	Male - Athlete	331	250	76%	208	63%	194	59%	171	52%

Retention and Graduation Results Based on Student Greek Afliation at BSC

Greek participation has often been hailed as a supportive community for student engagement, and Greek affiliation plays an important role on BSC's campus. For our study purposes, we will only consider three scenarios: no Greek participation, female Greek participation and male Greek participation to better understand how Greek affiliation affects student retention.

The retention rate by Greek student is presented for the years 2009 to 2011 for the FTIC cohort. The statistics for BSC graduates are also presented for male/female Greek and non-Greek participation.

Of the original fall 2009 cohort (N=424), 179 non-Greeks (77 percent) returned in fall 2010 while 103 female athletes (90 percent) and 67 male athletes (87 percent) also returned in 2010. First-year retention for non-Greeks ranged from a low of 64 percent in 2010 to a high of 77 percent in 2009. For female Greeks, the range was 87 percent to 94 percent and male Greeks 87 percent to 93 percent. The female Greek cohort's (N=291) average retention (2009 to 2011): first-year retention, 91 percent; second-year retention, 85 percent; third-year retention, 80 percent, and four-year graduation, 73 percent. When comparing the average FTIC retention and graduation for male to female Greek, the first-year retention among females is 1 percent higher than males and 19 percent higher than non-Greek. For second-year and third-year retention, the relationship remains the same. In the FTIC four-year graduation average for 2009 to 2011, female Greek is 73 percent, which is 10 percent higher than male Greeks and 26 percent higher than non-Greek participation. All information is included in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Retention and Graduation Results Based on Student Greek Affiliation at BSC

Characteristics			Retention						Graduation	
Cohort	Greek participation	Cohort Size	1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Within 4 -years	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2009	Not Greek	233	179	77%	135	58%	123	53%	108	46%
	Female Greek	114	103	90%	98	86%	91	80%	80	70%
	Male Greek	77	67	87%	56	73%	54	70%	36	47%
2010	Not Greek	182	117	64%	105	58%	98	54%	88	48%
	Female Greek	107	101	94%	93	87%	91	85%	85	79%
	Male Greek	79	72	91%	67	85%	65	82%	55	70%
2011	Not Greek	152	111	73%	90	59%	83	55%	68	45%
	Female Greek	70	61	87%	55	79%	52	74%	46	66%
	Male Greek	56	52	93%	47	84%	47	84%	41	73%
Average	Not Greek	567	407	72%	330	58%	304	54%	264	47%
	Female Greek	291	265	91%	246	85%	234	80%	211	73%
	Male Greek	212	191	90%	170	80%	166	78%	132	62%

Summary of Findings for Trend Analysis for Student Characteristics

In summary, first-year average retention is about 82 percent, second-year is about 72 percent, third year 66 percent, and four-year graduation is about 57 percent.

Women have a higher retention than men, and this difference tends to get larger over time. White students have higher persistence and graduation results than black/African American students. There is about a 9-to-1 ratio of white students to black/African American students. High school academic achievement is a precursor to student success. The more academically prepared students are entering BSC, the better retention and graduation rates they achieve as evidenced by the data on high school grade point average and ACT results on persistence and graduation. The comparison of athletes (combination of women and men) to non-athletes tends to have the same retention and graduation for cohort year 2010, 2011 (figure 12). However when you compare women athletes to men athletes and non-athletes, they have higher persistence and graduation results. This same condition applies to Greeks and non-Greeks, who tended to be retained at nearly the same level. However, when you compare Greek participation (men plus women) to non-Greeks, non-Greeks had lower persistence and graduation. Women Greeks had higher retention than men Greeks and non-Greeks alike.

METHODOLOGY 2 FOR STUDY QUESTION I: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Having delineated no ordinal relationship between retention and student entry and on-campus characteristics, we now turn our attention to our use of quantitative methodology to discern the role student entry and on-campus characteristics play within the context of the revised theory of college student persistence in residential colleges and universities described in the conceptual framework used to guide both Study Questions I and II. We describe in the next section those aspects of this conceptual framework we used to address Study Question I.

ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK USED TO ADDRESS STUDY QUESTION I

Using the original list of student characteristics identified by Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's (2004) revised theory of student persistence and Braxton et al. (2014) testing of that revised theory at residential colleges and universities, we incorporated additional student on-campus characteristics into a model to conduct our research and explore students' decision to persist or

leave an institution. For the purpose of Study Question I, we pay particular attention to the main concepts of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence as these measures directly assess student retention and persistence.

Essential to Braxton et. al. (2014) model explores factors of social integration or “the student’s perception of the degree of social affiliation with others and their degree of congruency with the attitudes, beliefs, norms, and values of the social communities of a college or university” (Braxton et al., 2014, p. 64). Students’ degree of social integration is dependent upon the student’s perception of six factors: the institution’s commitment of the student welfare, communal potential, institutional integrity, proactive social adjustment, psychosocial engagement, and ability to pay. Braxton et al. (2014), argues that students’ perception of these six factors, and therefore social integration, is influenced by additional factors of the students’ initial commitment to the goal of graduation and the institution. Such commitments are shaped by student characteristics, such as family socioeconomic status, parental education, academic ability, race, gender, high school academic achievement, and ability to pay and later characteristics that are developed on campus. Therefore, germane to the model is student characteristics, initial commitment to the goal of graduation and the institution, and social integration, that is delineated by the institution’s commitment of the student welfare, communal potential, institutional integrity, proactive social adjustment, psychosocial engagement, and ability to pay.

Focusing on our first study question, we paid particular attention to student characteristics. We examined students’ entry characteristics, which Braxton et. al. (2014) describe as family socioeconomic status, parental education, academic ability, race, gender, high school academic achievement, and ability to pay. Then, we examined students’ on-campus characteristics, such as participation in Greek organizations, living on campus, or being a commuter. Such on-campus characteristics are categorized under construct of psychosocial engagement, which is defined as “the amount of psychological energy students invest in their social interactions with peers and in their participation in extracurricular activities” (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004, p. 90). Additional extracurricular activities such as participation in Greek Life, holding campus leadership, and interacting in the residence halls (Braxton et al., 2014) could affect the psychosocial engagement of a student and will fully explored in Study Question II, but important to note now as we examine such characteristics influence on social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence. While participation on an athletic team was not named as one of the extracurricular activities, we purposely decided to examine this on-campus characteristic because a significant portion of the BSC student body are athletes and athletics is an extracurricular activity that involves frequent and intense interactions with peers

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS STUDY QUESTION I

Following the preparation of our data as described previously, we performed multivariate analysis to test the influence of student entry characteristics of the revised theory on the main concepts of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence.

Figure 15: Main Constructs of the Revised Theory of Student Persistence in Residential Colleges and Universities

Social Integration: social affiliation with others; and congruency with social community on campus

- Measures
 - effect of interpersonal relationship with peers on intellectual and personal growth
 - the ability to develop close personal relationships with peers
- Regression:
 - Model I, II, and III student characteristics
 - Components of the Revised Theory of Student Persistence

Persistence: student's intent to reenroll at BSC

- Measures:
 - report of students who plan to remain enrolled at BSC for Fall 2016.
- Regression:
 - Model I, II, and III student characteristics
 - Components of the Revised Theory of Student Persistence

Subsequent Institutional Commitment: commitment of student to remain enrolled at BSC

- Measures:
 - It is important to graduate from BSC.
 - Belief that choosing to attend BSC was the right choice
- Regression:
 - Model I, II, and III student characteristics
 - Components of the Revised Theory of Student Persistence

For the purposes of Study Question I, we paid particular attention to the original student characteristics tested in Model I and then examined Model II and III that took into account the additional student characteristics we proposed using to examine the theory's ability to be used with an entire student population. Put differently, we formed three different models that included additional student on-campus characteristic to examine the application of the revised theory on BSC's campus.

First we performed three multiple linear regressions to examine the influence of student entry characteristics of gender, race, parental education, family income, and average grades in high school on the three later components (social integration, subsequent commitment to BSC and persistence) of the revised theory. We refer to these regressions as Model I, and it also included measures of campus residency, initial commitment to BSC, ability to pay, institute commitment to student welfare, communal potential, institutional integrity, and psychosocial engagement, which will be discussed in Study Questions II.

When then performed the same regression on a second model, known as Model II. Within this additional model, we added measures to account for the effects of testing the revised theory on one campus with an entire student population. Model II allowed us to examine the effects of students'

college GPA, athletic and Greek status, and the influence of cultural capital on the three later components (social integration, subsequent commitment to BSC and persistence) of the revised theory.

Finally we performed a third series of regressions on social integration, subsequent commitment to BSC and persistence known as Model III. This model added measures of class years to allow us to understand any variation among the student population at various stages of their college careers (see Figure 2).

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS FOR STUDY QUESTION I

Study Question I is concerned with contributing student characteristics that may affect persistence, and our quantitative analysis specifically examines how such student characteristics influence the main concepts of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence since these factors have been found to directly affect student persistence. Our findings for Study Question I are organized by each measure and examine our findings from our three models used in our multiple linear regressions.

Social Integration

When considering social integration as a factor of student persistence, Braxton et al. (2014) examined the effects of five student characteristics (gender, race, parents' educational level, family income, and high school GPA); and, in their regression of social integration they found a student's race has a significant influence on their degree of social integrations. In our Model I analysis, we failed to confirm this finding. As we attempted to expand the revised theory of student persistence at one specific residential college and examining more than just the first- year student experience, we developed Model II of the regression by adding college GPA, athletic and Greek status, and measures of cultural capital. When we added the additional characteristics to the regression focused on social integration, we found no additional significance of student characteristics on social integration. To further expand the theory to BSC's campus, we attempted to examine the difference of social integration by class year as we added class year to the regression. The addition found no additional significant relationships between student characteristics and social integration (See Appendix C, Table 2).

Subsequent Institutional Commitment

When considering a student's subsequent commitment to their institution as a factor of student persistence, Braxton et al. (2014) examined the effects of five student characteristics (gender, race, parents' educational level, family income, and high school GPA), on subsequent commitment. They found no significant relationship between any of the student entry characteristics and subsequent institutional commitment. In our Model I, we found that a student's race has a positive and significant influence (Standardized regression coefficient = .125; $p=.027$) on their subsequent commitment to BSC with white students being more likely to have a higher level of commitment to BSC than their non-white peers. As we tested Model II that included college GPA, athletic and Greek status, and measures of cultural capital, we observe that Model II found a positive and significant relationship between a student's gender (being female) and their sense of later commitment to BSC (Standardized regression coefficient = .130; $p=.045$). Model II confirmed that white students experience higher levels of subsequent institutional commitment (Standardized regression coefficient = .119; $p=.038$) than their non-white counterparts. Having a higher college

GPA, being a student athlete, or participating in a Greek organization fail to have statistically significant influences on subsequent institutional commitment to BSC. Model III failed to find any significant difference among class years and subsequent institutional commitment (see Appendix C, Table 3).

Persistence

Our regressions using persistence as the dependent variable found no significant demographic difference among the two models we were able to run. This finding was similar to that of Braxton et al. (2014) (see Appendix C, Table 4). It is important to note that Model I did find that subsequent institutional commitment positively and significantly influences student persistence (Standardized regression coefficient = 2.165; $p=.024$). In fact, it can be assumed that students with a higher level of subsequent institutional commitment to BSC are 8.691 percent more likely to persist.

Summary of Findings for Survey

In comparing our three regression models with the findings from Braxton et al. (2014), it is important to note that the student characteristics, whether they be entry or contingent on being a part of BSC, serve as mediators for how students make sense of their college experience and will be discussed in greater detail within our Study Question II. From our survey results testing the revised theory of student retention we can conclude that a student's race, gender, and subsequent commitment to BSC are significant factors in the likelihood they will persist at BSC.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANT FOR STUDY QUESTION I

From the start of this research project, BSC espoused that the two biggest predictors of student persistence on their campus was a student's ACT score and family income, and such claims are supported by the literature. Through our trend analysis and components of our survey, we intended to both test these claims and extend our understanding of what other student characteristics may affect student persistence on campus. The predictive nature of the ACT score was supported by our trend analysis. The additional lessons gleaned from both our trend analysis and survey will inform our recommendations for how BSC may seek to adjust their policies and practices to improve their ability to support the diversity of their student body. Our findings and understanding of how such student characteristics influence persistence are best categorized by how a student interacts with BSC at an organizational level and how a student psychologically and social adjust to being a part of BSC at the individual and communal level which will be discussed in Study Question II. Through our trend analysis, we did unearth how certain student experiences or on campus identities shape their rate of persistent and graduation. Both our trend analysis and survey suggest that student characteristics shape how a student experiences BSC and decide to continue be a part of its community or not.

Organizational Factors

When we consider subsequent institutional commitment as one of the core concepts of the revised theory, our trend analysis and survey results highlight the significance of students' gender and race. Our trend analysis showed that female students were retained and graduate at a higher rate; our survey's finding also corroborated this finding. Within the context of the revised theory, if we use subsequent commitment as a proxy for persistence and a product of social integration, these findings suggest that female students are experiencing BSC differently than their male peers. Later

institutional commitment also appears to be mediated by race. Our trend analysis found that white students are more likely to persist than their African-American student peers, and our survey showed the white students have a higher level of subsequent commitment to BSC than their non-white peers and thus are more likely to persist. These findings suggest gender and race are distinguishing factors in the likelihood that a student will persist; it should be considered by BSC when thinking about how best to encourage students to develop deeper commitment to the institution.

On Campus Identity of Students

Our discussion of our findings in Study Question II will reveal that different types of students experience varying levels of psychosocial engagement, and our trend analysis support three of our findings. We note that student athletes at BSC persist at different rates when compared to their non-athletic peers. Female athletes persist at a much higher rate, whereas male athletes have a slightly lower rate when compared to the general populations. Combined female and male athletes tend to persist at a similar rate as the entire population. The same findings extend to students who are affiliated with a Greek organization on campus. Greek students, both male and female, are retained at a higher rate than the general population. Such on campus identity will be discussed later in this report, but it is important to note that such markers affect student retention.

It is clear that student characteristics such as high school grades, ACT performance, gender, race, athletic participation, and Greek affiliation contribute to the student experience and ultimate success at BSC. Understanding that such factors mediate and shape how students interact with the institution and their peers will be discussed in Study Question II and will guide our recommendations. These understandings of how student characteristics shape interactions and success at BSC should not necessarily be considered in the admissions process but must be incorporated into providing better support and enhanced student experience once on campus to ensure all types of students have the same chance and support to graduate from BSC.

STUDY QUESTION II: HOW DO STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR DEGREE OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION AFFECT THEIR LIKELIHOOD TO PERSIST OR LEAVE?

RATIONALE FOR STUDY QUESTIONS II

As previously mentioned, most literature on student persistence and retention either focuses on the role of student characteristics or the role of students' on-campus experiences. Our first study question examined the role of students' entry characteristics on their likelihood to persist. Now, our second study question focuses on students' on-campus experiences. Specifically, it focuses on the social aspect of students' on-campus experience. We ask how students' perception of their degree of social integration influences their decision to persist or leave.

This question is informed by the existing literature on the sociological perspective of student retention and persistence. Scholars, like Upcraft (1987), Berger (1997), Astin (1993) and Tinto (1997) argue that students' degree of social involvement, whether in residence halls, student organizations and clubs, learning communities, or academic advising, influences students' on-campus

experiences, and ultimately students' decision to persist at an institution. Such an argument empowers and equips institutions to create social programs and policies that positively influences students' on-campus experience, and therefore decision to persist.

The goal of this study question is to measure students' perception of their social integration, and examine how these perceptions coordinate to the students' likelihood and decision to persist.

ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY PERTINENT TO STUDY QUESTION II

As in Study Question I, we also approach our second study question using Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon's (2004) revised theory of student persistence at residential colleges and universities. We re-stated the key aspects of this theory to further the clarity of our work.

Pivotal to their model is social integration, or "the student's perception of the degree of social affiliation with others and their degree of congruency with the attitudes, beliefs, norms, and values of the social communities of a college or university" (Braxton, et. al., 2014, p. 64). The authors posit that the greater the perception of social integration, the greater the likability of persistence. Social integration is influenced and preceded by six factors: commitment of the institution to student welfare, institutional integrity, psychosocial engagement, proactive social adjustment, communal potential, and ability to pay. These six factors form the core of this revised theory for residential colleges and universities given their hypothesized role as antecedent of social integration. Finally, these six antecedents are not arrayed in any hierarchical, conditional, or temporal order.

Commitment of the institution to the welfare of its students represents the student's perception about the amount the institution cares about the success and safety of its students (Braxton, et.al, 2014). Institutional integrity is the students' perception about "the degree of congruency between the espoused mission and goals of the college or university and the actions of its administrators, faculty and staff" (Braxton, et. al, 2014, p.88). This is displayed through the institutional policies, and how fairly those policies are administered.

Psychosocial engagement is "the amount of psychological energy students invest in their social interactions with peers and in their participation in extracurricular activities" (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004, p. 90). These interactions and activities include dating, participating in Greek Life, attending parties, and partaking in campus leadership (Braxton, et. al, 2014).

Next, proactive social adjustment represents the student's recognition that she needs to proactively respond, or adjust, to social changes and challenges. Students who demonstrate this participate in orientation, learn how to deal with stress, and reconcile differing values, norms, and attitudes (Braxton, et. al, 2014).

Communal potential is the "degree to which a student perceives that a subgroup of students exists within the college community with which that student could share similar values, beliefs, and goals;" it is especially important for students "whose cultures of origin are different from the predominate culture of a given college or university" (Yorke & Longden, 2004, P. 95). Such communities could be found in the residence halls (Berger, 1997), classrooms, (Tinto, 1997, 2000), and in student peer groups (Newcomb, 1966), like student organizations and clubs.

Last, ability to pay represents students' satisfaction with their ability to pay for the costs of attending their institution. Pertinent factors include the use of financial aid, the perceived benefits of attending, and the perceived costs of attending.

METHODOLOGY 1 FOR STUDY QUESTION II: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

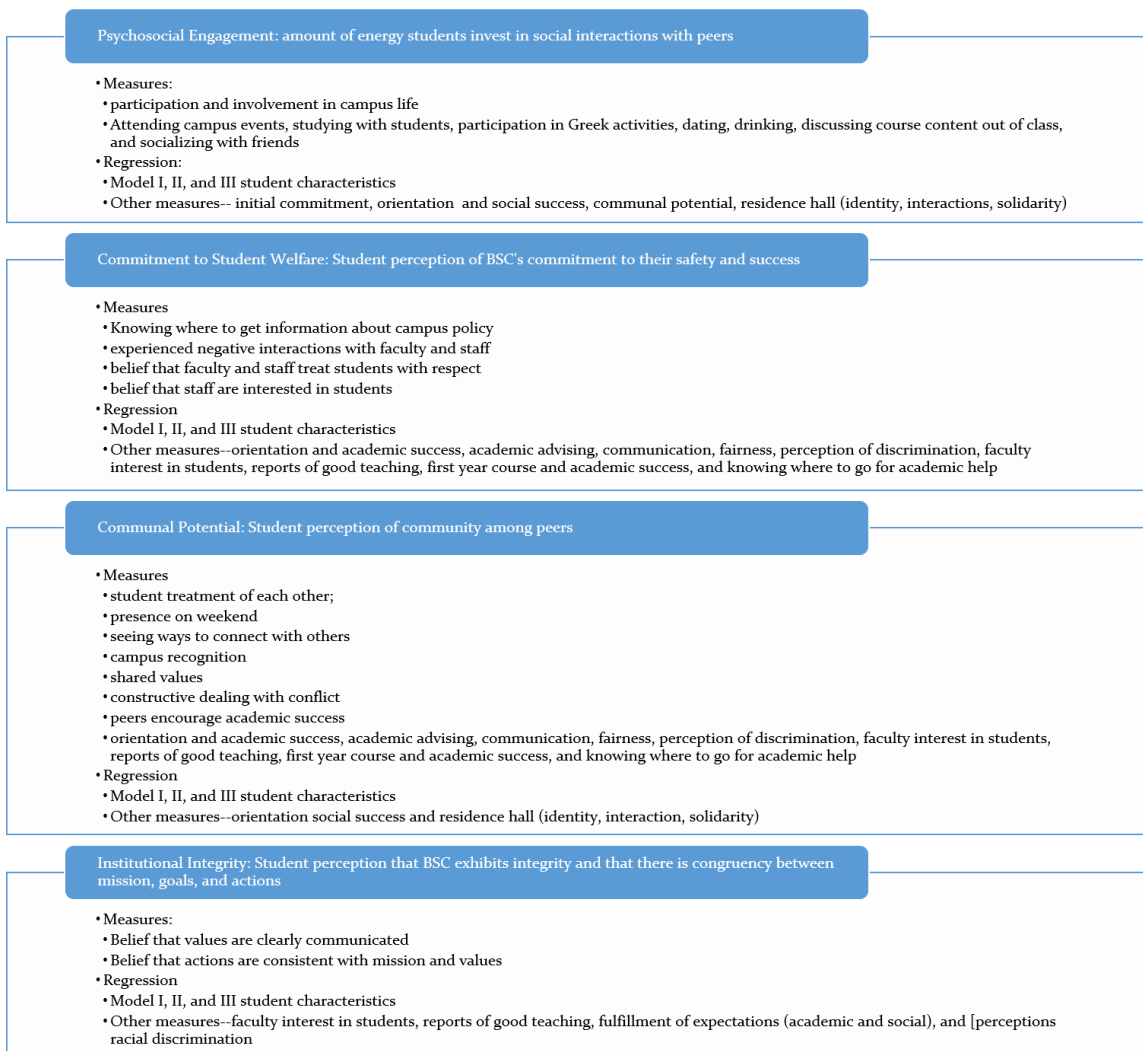
As described previously, we used data collected from our survey of the entire BSC student body that we distributed via email utilizing the REDcap collection tool. Our sample population total 1,345 BSC students who were enrolled in the fall of 2015 and resulted a 26 percent response rate of 347 responses (260 complete responses and 87 partial responses) which we determined to be a representative sample of the BSC student body by way of response wave analysis. The survey tool was developed and adopted from Braxton et al. (2014) two survey tools used for residential colleges and included 137 items designed to gather information about the characteristics of the BSC student, their social and academic experiences, and the educational environment fostered on campus that affects student persistence and retention. Additionally we adjusted and added to Braxton et al. (2014) survey tool as we tested the revised theory of student persistence in residential colleges and universities on one campus with the entire student population, beyond just first-year students. We included the original measures of student entry characteristics, but because we were testing the theory beyond the first year experience, it was important to include additional student characteristics that define the BSC experience. We included measures of college GPA, Greek affiliation, student-athlete experience, and class year in an attempt to help us expand the revised through to one campus context.

For Study Question II, we used our analysis approach that included three models as described previously. Model I was developed to examine the effects of Braxton et al. (2014) original measures on each dependent variable. Models II and III were developed to examine the specific nature of BSC and to account for the effects of testing the revised theory with an entire student population. Within Study Question II, we extend our analysis of the main concepts of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence beyond the effects of student characteristics. We examine the antecedents of the main measure of social integration and the revised theory.

Quantitative Data Analysis for Study Question II

Following the preparation of our data as described early within this report, we performed multivariate analysis to test the revised theory and the main concepts of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, persistence, and other antecedents of these measures (see Figure 16). Beyond further examining the concepts of social integration, subsequent commitment to BSC and persistence of the revised theory by way of multiple linear regression, we examined additional factors that may affect social integration. By way of analytical cascading as we sought to understand influences of such factors and performed additional regressions to examine factors that affect psychosocial engagement, BSC's commitment to student welfare, communal potential, and institutional integrity. For each regression we examined Braxton et al. (2014) original model as well as the two additional models that allowed us to test factors that may affect each dependent variable among the entire student body of a campus. The next section of this report includes a detailed description of our analysis process and our findings.

Figure 16: Additional Constructs of the Revised Theory of Student Persistence in Residential Colleges and Universities



FINDINGS

Social Integration (see Appendix C, Table 2)

Model I

To explore Braxton et al. (2014) findings on BSC's campus, we first we regressed social integration on their original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), living on campus, ability to pay, initial commitment to BSC, institutional commitment to student welfare, communal potential, BSC's institutional integrity, and psychosocial engagement. Our regression of social integration as the dependent variable found the model has a 47.6 percent model fit which is slightly higher than Braxton et al. (2014) percent model fit of 41.1 percent and our model found $F(12,219)=18.482$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.476$.

We found that psychosocial engagement (Standardized regression coefficient = .423; $p <.001$), communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .393; $p <.001$), BSC commitment to

student welfare (Standardized regression coefficient = .127; $p=.05$) each have a positive and significant influence on a student's social integration. The psychosocial engagement measure has the highest influence on social integration explaining that the higher level of the student's psychosocial engagement the more likely they will feel socially integrated at BSC. Further we found that perceived communal potential of a student positively influences their social integration which is opposite to Braxton et al. (2014) finding (Standardized regression coefficient = .001; not statistically significant). Communal potential has the second strongest influence on social integration within our Model I. Additionally we found that a student's perception of BSC's commitment to student welfare has a positive influence on their social integration but not as strongly as Braxton et al. (2014) originally found (Standardized regression coefficient = .276; $p < .001$). Our regression failed to prove their finding that race and living on campus, institutional integrity and ability to pay have statistically significant influences on social integration.

Model II

Since we are attempting to expand the revised theory of student persistence at a specific residential institution and examining more than just first year student persistence, we felt it was important to add additional independent variables to the regression to attempt to uncover additional student characteristics that might influence social integration. We added college GPA, athletic and Greek status, as well as cultural capital measures. The resulting regression is very similar to the original and yielded very similar results. Model II of social integrations found the model had a 47.6 percent and $F(16,215) = 14.122$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .476$. We confirmed our original findings that psychosocial engagement (Standardized regression coefficient = .438; $p < .001$), communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .391; $p < .001$), BSC's commitment to student welfare (Standardized regression coefficient = .127; $p = .05$) have a positive and significant influence on a student's social integration. College GPA, athletic participation, Greek affiliation, and cultural capital each failed to result in any statistically significant influences on social integration.

Model III

To further examine the effects of the revised theory on an entire population, we added first year, sophomore, and junior standing to the regression to see if class year influence social integration. Such addition created a slightly weaker model fit of 47.1 percent and $F(19,209) = 11.679$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .471$, but our findings remained. We confirmed our original findings that psychosocial engagement (Standardized regression coefficient = .435; $p < .001$), communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .395; $p < .001$), BSC commitment to student welfare (Standardized regression coefficient = .129; $p = .05$) have a positive and significant influence on a student's social integration. However, class membership did not have a statistically significant effect on a student's social integration.

Subsequent Commitment to the Institution (see Appendix C, Table 3)

Model I

Using Braxton et al. (2014)'s model to examine subsequent institutional commitment we regressed their original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), living on campus, ability to pay, initial commitment to BSC, institutional commitment to student welfare, communal potential, BSC's institutional integrity, psychosocial engagement, and social integration. Our regression found the model to have a 34.1

percent model fit which is significantly higher than Braxton et al. (2014) of 19 percent. Our model found $F(13, 218) = 10.195$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .341$.

We found that social integration (Standardized regression coefficient = .369; $p < .001$), communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .195; $p = .015$), and race (Standardized regression coefficient = .125; $p = .027$) have a positive and statistically significant influence on a student's later commitment to BSC. Social integration has the greatest degree of influence on subsequent institutional commitment and can be expounded to mean that more a student feels social integrated into BSC the more the student feels committed to BSC. Additionally we found that a student's perceived communal potential positively influences their subsequent commitment to BSC. This finding was not originally found in Braxton et al. (2014) finds. Communal potential is the second strongest source of influence on subsequent institutional commitment. Further we found that a student's race, meaning being a white student, has a positive effect on their subsequent commitment to BSC. Our regression failed to support Braxton et al. (2014)'s finding that initial institutional commitment and the institution's commitment to student welfare have a significantly influence on subsequent commitment to BSC.

Model II

Expanding the revised theory to an entire campus population, we regressed the original model and added College GPA, athletic and Greek status, as well as cultural capital measures. The resulting regression has a slightly better model fit ($F(17, 214) = 8.125$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .344$) and yielded very similar results. In addition to finding social integration (Standardized regression coefficient = .364; $p < .001$), communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .211; $p = .009$), and race (Standardized regression coefficient = .119; $p = .038$) as contributing factors to a student's subsequent commitment to BSC, the additional student characteristics showed that gender has a statistically significant affect (Standardized regression coefficient = .130; $p = .045$). College GPA, athletic participation, Greek affiliation, and cultural capital failed to result in any statistically significant influences on subsequent commitment to the institution.

Model III

Again to further examine the effects of the revised theory on an entire population, we added first year, sophomore, and junior standing to the regression to see if class year influences subsequent commitment to BSC. Such addition created a slightly weaker model fit ($F(20, 208) = 6.759$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .336$), but our findings remained. We confirmed social integration (Standardized regression coefficient = .370; $p < .001$), communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .203; $p = .015$), race (Standardized regression coefficient = .121; $p = .037$), and gender (Standardized regression coefficient = .128; $p = .05$) positively affect subsequent commitment to BSC. However, the addition of the class year resulted in BSC's commitment to student welfare to reach a positive statistically significant level (Standardized regression coefficient = .153; $p = .043$). The addition of class standing did not reveal any statistically significant change in later institutional commitment.

Persistence (see Appendix C, Table 4)

Due to the timing of our survey and our reporting deadline, we had to include to proxy measures for persistence in our survey. We asked respondents if they intended to reenroll in the spring 2016 semester as well as if they intended to return to BSC for the fall 2016 semester. Research supports

the use of this measure as a proxy for persistence as a strong relationship exists between intent to re-enroll and actual persistence (Bean, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983).

These two measures became proxies for student persistence and were recoded into a variable that measures the respondents' intent to return to BSC in the fall; they excluded seniors planning to return to BSC in the spring and graduate, but reported within the survey that they were planning to pursue an additional degree at another institutions. Respondents were coded with a 0 if they were not planning to reenroll and all students who were not graduating seniors who planned to return to BSC in the spring were code with a 1. The sample of students who reported planning on leaving BSC at the end of the fall semester was too small to use (N= 8). Though the number of students who planned to leave BSC at the end of spring semester was also small and highly skewed (N=13), we were able to perform a logistical regression for student persistence as the dependent variable. Within the logistical regression, we had a total of 203 respondents—13 non-seniors who were not planning to return in the fall and 190 including 5th year seniors who were planning to return to BSC in the fall.

We were able to use Braxton et al. (2014) model by regressing their original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), living on campus, ability to pay, initial commitment to BSC, institutional commitment to student welfare, communal potential, institutional integrity, psychosocial engagement, social integration, and subsequent institutional commitment on our measure of persistence. Our regression found the model to have a 68.6 percent fit, by way of an adjusted $R^2=.686$, which is significantly higher than Braxton et al. (2014) findings of 13.3 percent. We only found that students' subsequent commitment to BSC to have a significant influence on student persistence (Standardized regression coefficient = 2.165; $p=.024$). Put differently, it can be assumed that students with a higher level of subsequent institutional commitment to BSC are 8.691 percent more likely to persist. This confirms Braxton et al. (2014)'s finding, yet we failed to find that initial commitment to BSC has a significant impact on a student's likelihood to persist.

Model II

Expanding the revised theory to an entire campus population, we regressed the original model and added College GPA, athletic and Greek status, as well as cultural capital measures. The resulting regression had a larger model fit of 77 percent (adjusted $R^2=.770$) and yielded no statistically significant indicator of a student's likelihood to persist. The additions of college GPA, athletic participation, Greek affiliation, and cultural capital failed to result in any statistically significant influences on student persistence.

Model III

Due to the sample size, we were unable to test Model III on the measure of persistence.

Analytical Cascading

Building on Braxton et al. (2014) notion of analytical cascading used to explore additional factors in establishing social integration, we preformed additional regressions examining influences on psychosocial engagement, communal potential, institutional commitment to student welfare, and institutional integrity. This process allowed us to further explore our own findings and investigate the revised theory's application to BSC and their entire student body. We also explored our

additional student characteristics and effects of class year on each antecedent as outlined in Model II and III.

Psychosocial Engagement (see Appendix C, Table 5)

Model I

We regressed psychosocial engagement on Braxton et al. (2014)'s original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), living on campus, ability to pay, initial commitment to BSC, cultural capital, first-year orientation/move in weekend as preparation BSC's social environment, communal potential, and residential aspects of identity, solidarity, and interaction. Our regression found the model had a 27.3 percent model fit which lower than Braxton et al. (2014) of 34.4 percent. Our resulting regression was $F(13, 167)=6.191$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.273$.

We found that communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .291; $p<.001$), residence hall interaction (Standardized regression coefficient = .175; $p=.025$), residential identity (Standardized regression coefficient = .169; $p=.041$), and family income (Standardized regression coefficient = .154; $p=.048$) each have a positive and statistically significant effect on a student's psychosocial engagement. Communal potential has the strongest influence and suggests that the higher a student perceives community at BSC the more likely they are to engage in campus life. Our findings of communal potential, residence hall identity and interaction were also found in Braxton et. al (2014)'s work. We failed to identify cultural capital as a factor in psychosocial engagement as Braxton et. al (2014); however our finding that family income positively affects psychosocial engagement may note a similar effect.

Model II

To test the revised theory on one campus with the entire student population, we added the additional characteristics of College GPA, athletic and Greek status on the established model. The resulting regression has a better model fit ($F(16, 164)=9.445$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.429$) and yielded very similar results. In addition to finding communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .176; $p=.014$) and residential interaction (Standardized regression coefficient = .171; $p=.015$) as having a positive and significant effect on a student's psychosocial engagement. The additional characteristics showed that being a student athlete (Standardized regression coefficient = .212; $p=.001$) or a member of a Greek organizations (Standardized regression coefficient = .388; $p<.001$) strengthened a students' sense of psychosocial engagement. Further, we found that higher levels of cultural capital (Standardized regression coefficient = .175; $p=.01$) positively affect involvement on campus. This finding mimics the effects of cultural capital found by Braxton et al. (2014) similar regression.

Model III

To further examine the effects of psychosocial engagement on an entire student population, we added first year, sophomore, and junior class standing to the regression. We found strong model fit ($F(19, 158)=10.025$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.492$) and similar effects of communal potential (Standardized regression coefficient = .168; $p=.015$), residential hall interaction (Standardized regression coefficient = .155; $p=.02$), and cultural capital (Standardized regression coefficient = .211; $p=.001$) on psychosocial engagement. Beyond the positive effects of being an athlete (Standardized regression coefficient = .211; $p=.001$) or a Greek student (Standardized regression coefficient = .409;

$p < .001$) on psychosocial engagement, the addition of the class years revealed that being a first year student (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.382$; $p < .001$), a sophomore student (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.206$; $p = .004$), or a junior student (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.179$; $p = .014$) has a statistically significant negative effect on a student's engagement throughout campus. First year students more acutely feel this negative relationship than do sophomores or juniors.

Institutional Commitment to Student Welfare (see Appendix C, Table 6)

Model I

We regressed institutional commitment to student welfare on Braxton et al. (2014)'s original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), initial commitment to BSC, living on campus, academic advising, orientation as preparation for academic success, communication, fairness, perceptions of prejudice and racial discrimination, faculty interest in students, and reports of good teaching. It is important to note that we omitted participation in decision, active learning, violations of faculty norms from this test because of the nature of the survey and the context of BSC. We did probe for additional findings in these areas during our qualitative methods. Our regression found the model had a 48.7 percent model fit which lower than Braxton et al. (2014) of 56.5 percent. Our resulting regression was $F(14, 216) = 16.605$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .487$.

Our regression supported Braxton et al. (2014) finding that fairness (Standardized regression coefficient = $.348$; $p < .001$) and faculty interest in students (Standardized regression coefficient = $.203$; $p < .001$) positively influences a student's perception of the institutions commitment to their welfare at significant levels. Additionally, we can support the finding that a student's perception of prejudice and racism (Standardized regression coefficient = $.193$; $p < .001$) has a negative effect on their perception of institutional commitment to their welfare. Our test of the model revealed an additional finding that first year orientation as preparation for academic success (Standardized regression coefficient = $.187$; $p = .001$) has a significant and positive affect on a student's perception of BSC's commitment to student welfare. Further we found that race, specifically white students, (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.125$; $p = .017$) has a negative and statistically significant effect on such perceptions. We failed to find a significant influence of family education level and reports of good teaching that Braxton et al. (2014) found.

Expanding the measure of institutional commitment to student welfare to the context of BSC

Testing the revised theory and the measure of institutional commitment to student welfare offered us the opportunity to expand the measure to fit the institution, so we added additional factors that measure of the effectiveness of the first year curriculum and knowledge of where to turn for academic success. BSC offers two courses specifically designed to aid first year transition to college. One class centers on a topic of the students choice and focuses on skills need to be successful in college. The other class is a writing focused course that is designed prepare students for the type of writing required in college. By the end of a student's first year at BSC they would have completed both of these course and we felt it was important to measure their impact on a student's impression of BSC's commitment to their success and were thus include in our analysis as a measure of the effectiveness of such courses. The second additional measure was added to gauge students understanding of where to seek academic support. BSC provided extensive tutoring services so it

was important to understand if students view such services as an extension of BSC's support of their success. Utilizing these additional measures we tested their inclusion in our Model II and III regressions.

Model II with additional measures of Institutional Commitment to Student Welfare

With the additional measures, we expanded the model to measure the effects of college GPA, athletics, Greek Life, and cultural capital as described in Model II. The resulting regression has a slightly weaker model fit ($F(20, 209) = 11.613, p < .001, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .481$), but it yield very similar results to Model I. With the additional characteristics, race became statistically insignificant. The additional characteristics did not result in any additional significant finding.

Model III

As we further tested the measure of institutional commitment to student welfare with the additional measures, we added first year, sophomore, and junior standing to the regression to see what effect class standing has on student perceptions of BSC's commitment to student welfare as described in Model III. The resulting regression was the strongest of the three we ran ($F(22, 204) = 11.015, p < .001, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .491$). The regression yielded the same significant relationship between fairness (Standardized regression coefficient = $.320; p < .001$), perceptions of prejudice and racism (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.157; p = .007$), faculty interest in students (Standardized regression coefficient = $.182; p = .004$), and first year orientation (Standardized regression coefficient = $.162; p = .008$). Additionally, we found that the addition of class year resulted in a significant and positive relationship between knowing where to find academic assistance (Standardized regression coefficient = $.130; p = .038$) and perceptions of BSC's commitment to its students. Further this final regression found that first year (Standardized regression coefficient = $.168; p = .018$) and sophomore (Standardized regression coefficient = $.156; p = .009$) students are more likely to experience a higher feeling of institutional commitment to student welfare.

Communal Potential (see Appendix C, Table 7)

Model I

We regressed communal potential on Braxton et al. (2014)'s original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), ability to pay, initial institutional commitment, cultural capital, first year orientation/move in weekend as preparation for social success, and each dimensions of a sense of community in residence halls. It is important to note that we omitted measures of proactive social adjustment from this test because of the nature of the survey attempting to measure the BSC experience, not just that of first year students. Our regression of communal potential found a model fit of 27.6 percent and $F(12, 168) = 6.727, p < .001, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .276$ which is slightly lower than what Braxton et al. (2014) found of 35 percent.

Our communal potential regression found that first year orientation/move in weekend as preparation for social success (Standardized regression coefficient = $.335; p < .001$) is the most significant indicator of communal potential. This is stronger than the relationship found between these two measures which two measures in Braxton et al. (2014). Additionally we found that a sense of identity (Standardized regression coefficient = $.166; p = .042$) and solidarity (Standardized regression coefficient = $.189; p = .012$) in students' residence halls are significant and positive indicators of communal potential. We also found that a student's initial commitment to BSC

(Standardized regression coefficient = .134; $p=.048$) has a positive impact on their sense of community. Our regression failed to find the significance of cultural capital and interaction in the residence halls in a student's perceptions of communal potential found by Braxton et al. (2014).

Model II

Testing the revised theory at one campus with the entire student population required that we took additional student characteristics into account, so we regressed college GPA, athletic and Greek status on the established model. The resulting regression has a better model fit ($F(15,165)=6.560$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.317$) and yielded very similar results to Model I. In addition to finding first year orientation/move in (Standardized regression coefficient = .333; $p<.001$), solidarity in the residence halls (Standardized regression coefficient = .159; $p=.031$), and initial institutional commitment (Standardized regression coefficient = .135; $p=.045$) having a positive influence on students' perceptions of communal potential, we found that gender, specially being female, (Standardized regression coefficient = -.168; $p=.02$) negatively influences communal potential in a statistically significant way. The additional student characteristics highlighted the positive influence of cultural capital (Standardized regression coefficient = .146; $p=.047$) on communal potential and shows that being Greek (Standardized regression coefficient = .215; $p=.002$) positively influenced students' perceptions of community on campus in a statistically significant manner.

Model III

To further examine the effects of communal potential on an entire student population, we added first year, sophomore, and junior class standing to the regression. We found a slightly stronger model fit ($F(18,159) = 5.592$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.318$) and similar affects to that seen in Model II. We found no significant variation between classes

Institutional Integrity (see Appendix C, Table 8)

Model I

Testing Braxton et al. (2014) findings for institutional integrity, we regressed institutional integrity on the original five entry student characteristics (gender, race, parental education level, family income, and high school GPA), living on campus, faculty interest in students, reports of good teachings, fulfillment of social expectations, fulfillment of academic expectations, and perceptions of racial discriminations and prejudice. We found the model has a 32 percent model fit which is significantly higher than Braxton et al. (2014) of 25.4 percent. Our regression resulted in $F(12, 219)=10.072$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2=.320$.

We confirmed Braxton et al. (2014) finding that faculty interest in students (Standardized regression coefficient = .270; $p<.001$) has a positive and statistically significant influence on students' perceptions of BSC's institutional integrity. Similarly we found that perceptions of prejudice and racial discrimination (Standardized regression coefficient = -.272; $p<.001$) have a negative and statistically significant impact on measures of institutional integrity. Our regression failed to find the significant influence of students' fulfillment of academic expectations as seen in Braxton et al. (2014)'s work; however we did find that fulfillment of social expectations (Standardized regression coefficient = .244; $p<.001$) and gender, specifically being female, (Standardized regression coefficient = .221; $p<.001$) both have a positive and statistically significant role in a students' perceptions of BSC's institutional integrity.

Model II

When we added the additional student characteristics of college GPA, athletic and Greek status, and measures of cultural capital on the established model, the resulting regression has a better model fit ($F(16, 215) = 8.492, p < .001, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .342$) and yielded very similar results. In addition to finding faculty interest in students (Standardized regression coefficient = $.287; p < .001$), perceptions of prejudice and racial discrimination (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.294; p < .001$), fulfillment of social expectations (Standardized regression coefficient = $.222; p < .001$), and gender, specifically being female, (Standardized regression coefficient = $.193; p = .002$) play a significant role in a students' perception of BSC's institutional integrity, the additional student characteristics reveal that higher levels of cultural capital (Standardized regression coefficient = $.162; p = .015$) result in higher perceptions of institutional integrity. However, college GPA and being Greek do not wield a statistically significant degree of influence on students' interpretation of the college's institutional integrity.

Model III

To further examine the effects of institutional integrity on the entire student population, we added first year, sophomore, and junior class standing to the regression. We found the strongest model fit ($F(19, 209) = 7.458, p < .001, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .350$) and similar effects of faculty interest in students (Standardized regression coefficient = $.303; p < .001$), perceptions of prejudice and racial discrimination (Standardized regression coefficient = $-.234; p < .001$), fulfillment of social expectations (Standardized regression coefficient = $.238; p < .001$), gender, specifically being female (Standardized regression coefficient = $.177; p = .005$), and cultural capital (Standardized regression coefficient = $.133; p = .048$) on students' perceptions of institutional integrity. The additions of class standing highlights that sophomores (Standardized regression coefficient = $.143; p = .031$) have a higher and statistically significant impression of BSC's institutional integrity.

Summary of Findings for Survey

In comparing our regressions models with the findings from Braxton et al. (2014), it is important to note that we proved some of their findings while disproving others and finding additional factors that contribute to the measures of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, persistence, psychosocial engagement, commitment to student welfare, communal potential, and institutional integrity (See Figure 17). When we considered measures of social integration and subsequent institutional commitment, we found that student's perception of community on campus at BSC is a significant factor. The addition of other types of student characteristics and class years, also revealed variations among the measures of the revised theory. Our results suggest that gender, race, student-athletic status, Greek affiliation, levels of cultural capital, and class year serve to mediate some of the factors of the revised theory. Such findings suggest the revised theory of student retention may vary from campus to campus and amongst student populations. Both campus context and values and student characteristics must be considered when applying the revised theory to a specific campus.

Figure 17: Summary of Findings for Additional Measures of Social Integration

Psychosocial Engagement	Commitment to Student Welfare	Communal Potential	Institutional Integrity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communal Potential •Residence Hall: Interaction •Residence Hall: Identity •Family Income •Student Athlete •Greek Affiliation •Cultural Capital •Class Standing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fairness •Faculty Interest in Students •Perceptions of Racial Discrimination •Orientation and Academic Success •Race •Class years •Academic Help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Orientation and Social Success •Initial Commitment to BSC •Greek Affiliation •Residence Hall: Identity •Residence Hall: Solidarity •Gender •Cultural Capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Faculty Interest in Students •Fulfillment of Social Expectations •Perceptions of Racial Discrimination •Gender •Cultural Capital •Race •Sophomore standing

METHODOLOGY 2 FOR STUDY QUESTION II: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

We created a qualitative study to further examine and corroborate the initial findings from our quantitative analysis. In addition to documenting students’ perceptions and experiences, we wanted to collect the perceptions and experiences of other members of the BSC college community, such as staff and faculty. As our literature review and conceptual framework illustrates, their roles in students’ social integration is essential.

Data Collection

The primary data collection method for this part of our study was in-person interviews with BSC students, faculty and staff. Our interview protocol was designed to probe the topics discussed in our conceptual framework: students’ entry characteristics, students’ initial commitment to the institution, students’ initial commitment to the goal of graduation, institutional integrity, institutional commitment to student welfare, communal potential, proactive social adjustment, psychosocial engagement, ability to pay, students’ subsequent commitment to the institution, students’ subsequent commitment to the goal of graduation, and students’ decision to persist (see Appendix E for interview protocols).

Interviews took place on BSC’s campus. All of the student interviews, and many of the staff and faculty interviews, were held at the Norton Campus Center. With the help of the BSC Student Development Team, we purposely choose this location because it a hub for the campus. It houses the cafeteria, student lounges, conference rooms, and several student services departments, specifically the Student Development Office. It is an area is that is familiar and comfortable for students, faculty, and staff to meet. Our interviews with the Admissions team and Provost Office were held at their respective offices. This was a logistical decision, as it was convenient to for us to meet with the team in the conference room of their department.

The interviews were conducted over the course of three days. All three team members conducted interviews. Larger group interviews were conducted with two team members, and individual

interviews were conducted with one team member. Many of the staff and faculty interviews were conducted in groups. When student schedules would allow it, student interviews were conducted in friendship pairs. Each interview was scheduled for a forty-five minutes, but a few ranged to 60 minutes due to rich conversation.

Before beginning each interview, participants were given a verbal and written description of the research project, the research team, and how their participation in this interview would benefit the study. They were reminded that their comments would be kept anonymous. Finally, we received their verbal permission to audibly record the interview, so that it may be reviewed and transcribed for coding at a later date.

Sample Selection

Participants for the interview were selected using a stratified purposeful sampling method. This was helpful because we had two goals in our sample selection. First, we needed to interview BSC community members who are essential in shaping and influencing students' on-campus experience, such as students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, we wanted to ensure that our sample was representative of the BSC student, faculty, and staff populations; therefore, participants were purposefully chosen because of their role at the College, either as a student, staff, and faculty, and because of specific characteristics or qualities they possess (see Table 4); each of these characteristics a represented in our qualitative study. In total, fifteen students, thirty-two staff members, and nine faculty members were interviewed.

Faculty and staff characteristics were chosen to ensure that we included persons who shape the various aspects of the college student experience. Student characteristics were inspired by our conceptual framework, literature review, trend analysis findings, and existing data on student characteristics. The trend analysis revealed that specific groups of students are more likely than others to persist at BSC. Additionally, persistence and retention literature posits that certain student characteristics are correlated with persistence. BSC staff members helped us identify persons who met one or more of these criteria. These persons received an email invitation to participate in interviews.

Table 4: Characteristics of Interview Participants

Students Characteristics	Staff Characteristics	Faculty Characteristics
First year	Admissions officer	Tenured
Second year	Provost	Faculty advisor
Third year	Athletic coach	New faculty member
Fourth year	Finance Officer	Minority
Post fourth year	Student development personnel	Professor who teaches freshmen
Male athlete	Financial Aid/Bursar officers	Professor who teaches upperclassmen
Female athlete	Residence life officer	
At risk student	Student Activities officer	

International student	Student Support Services
Student not from the tri-state area	Institutional research officer
AL state resident	
Student who wants to transfer	
Minority student: African American/Latino	
Student employee	
Student leader	

Data Analysis

Coding

Upon completion, each interview went through a process of coding. This process began with a first listen, where each researcher listened to the interview, of which he or she conducted, for the first time. During this first listen, the researcher developed familiarity with the content of the interview. Following this first listen, the researcher allowed time for reflection on the content derived from the interview. Next, the researcher listened to the interview for a second time, with the intention of listening for emerging themes that relate to the concepts of the theoretical model. Finally, the researchers listened to the interview for a third time; this final listen was purposed with listening for quotes that best illustrate overarching themes raised in the interviews. The results of the second and third listens were used to code each interview using the matrices.

Matrix Development

Informed and guided by our theoretical framework, we created matrices that allowed us to record and organize our observations and themes by the constructs presented in our theoretical framework. There were twelve constructs, as shown in the theoretical framework: entry characteristics, initial commitment to the institution, initial commitment to the goal of graduation, commitment of the institution to student welfare, communal potential, institutional integrity, proactive social adjustment, psychosocial engagement, and ability to pay, subsequent commitment to the institution, subsequent commitment to the goal of graduation, and decision to persist. For each interview, the researcher completed the matrix by adding themes and quotes found in the interview. Upon completion of the matrices, we shared and discussed our findings. These matrices shaped our qualitative findings, discussion, and recommendations. A copy of a matrix is found in the Appendix F.

Data Triangulation

Upon completion of the matrices, we shared and discussed our findings. During these discussions we searched for themes that were present across multiple interviews. These overarching themes organized our qualitative findings.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Student Entry Characteristics

Gradually Changing Student Body

BSC faculty and staff agree that the student body has changed over the years. When meeting with several faculty members, one veteran professor commented that “our student body has become less drawn from Alabama. Now less than fifty percent of our students come from Alabama.” Another faculty member added that the student body has become more diversified “in terms of race and ethnicity;” and others nodded in agreement.

While there is demographic and geographical changes in the entering student bodies, college faculty and administrators could not ignore the homogeneity that persists on campus. The students are a “homogeneous group in every way” says one administrator; “age wise, background wise, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic wise. That is not to say that they are totally homogeneous, but taken as whole.”

A Bimodal Student Body

Then, when describing the academic and socioeconomic characteristics of the BSC student body, feelings of concern and disappointment were expressed in the faculty and staff’s comments. First, faculty members pointed out that the student body has taken on a “bimodal” pattern. “I think that we’re bimodal: we have students who are better off and worse off. Fewer students that are in the middle.” Additionally, an admissions staff member noted that “We have the polar ends of the socioeconomic statuses.”

A professor added, “I think it’s true also ...that we have similar distribution in terms of academics for entering students.” A colleague added, “We have a lot of great students who come from very strong academic backgrounds. Then we have students who come from rural areas whom might have done really well in their high school but then are very challenged when they get here.”

Themes Derived from Qualitative Interviews

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS: A Gradually Changing Student Body; A Bimodal Student Body

INITIAL COMMITMENT TO GRADUATION: Peer & Family Influence; Post-Baccalaureate Ambitions

INITIAL INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT: Size & Prestige Matters; Legacy Power; First Visits Make a Lasting Impression; Choosing the Sport or the School

ABILITY TO PAY: Reliance on Financial Aid; Moving off Campus to Study on Campus

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO STUDENT WELFARE: We Love our Faculty; Uneven Academic Advising; Training Needed; Expanding Student Support; Addressing Racism; Gated in Safety; Orientation: the Beginning of Community Building

This sentiment was corroborated with interviews with students. When discussing their high school and academic achievement, about half of the interviewed students felt that they were adequately prepared for the academic rigor at BSC. “[High School] was very academically challenging...It made coming here a lot easier. We did a ton of writing. I took seven AP courses, so I was very prepared to come to college.” Other students illustrated the rigor of their high school by counting the number of AP course offerings. On the other hand, the other half of students we interviewed felt that their high school did not prepare them enough for the academic climate at BSC. One student said, “I came from a very crappy public high school –to speak very truthfully. I made good grades just because it was easy for me.”

While some faculty expressed concern about the differences in students’ academic abilities and preparation, others have “voiced their disappointment in the quality of students that came in over the course of the financial crunch.” They feel that the College has “lowered our standards;” meanwhile, the admissions team admitted that “we’re not as selective as we would like to be”—in terms of ACT scores and grade point averages. The College is still recovering from its financial turmoil, and part of that is manifested in the academic characteristics of the entering student bodies.

Initial Commitment to the Goal of Graduation

Peer and Family Influence

BSC students are very committed to graduating. Pushing them towards that goal are their families and friends. For many students, attending college was not a choice given to them by their parents, but an expectation. A student, echoing the sentiments of others, recalled, “I was never given the option of if I wanted to go to college. It was you’re going to college.” In addition, many students have parents that earned a graduate or professional degree; therefore, many students feel the need to meet or exceed their parents’ educational achievements. Even students whose parents did not attend or complete college provide

Themes Derived from Qualitative Interviews (continued)

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY:

Admissions & Integrity; The Truth about Costs; Congruence between Athletics & Admissions; Academics & Integrity; Living Diversity; Student Voice

COMMUNAL POTENTIAL: Plenty of

Opportunities for Community; Greek, Athlete, or Stray; Community outside of Athletics

PROACTIVE SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT:

Finding Community is Harder for Minority, International, & Commuter Students; Delayed Reactions; Learning to Study is the Real Challenge; Females do it Better

PSYCHOSOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:

Work Hard, Play Hard; Overinvolved; Confronting Values

SUBSEQUENT INSTITUTIONAL

COMMITMENT: Perform or Perish; Play or Perish; Connect or Perish

DECISION TO PERSIST: The Trifecta

motivation for graduation. A student shared that she would be “the first college grad in the family;” and with that much pride and encouragement from her family, she is excited to graduate. She says, “[graduation is] important not just for me but for my family... they are very involved, they very supportive.”

Next, peer influence solidifies students’ commitment to graduation. One administrator noted, “A lot of our students may start out undecided. Very quickly being around their peers that are very focused, soon focus themselves.”

Post-Baccalaureate Ambitions

Finally, students’ desire and goal of attending graduate or professional school motivates students to not only graduate, but also graduate with respectable grades. A senior said, “I didn’t know that I wanted to be a doctor or go to medical school...but I had a feeling that I wanted to. At least do something that required some sort of post-secondary education. Because in high school I was always aware of the kind of jobs you can typically get with a high school education, the kinds you can get with college or graduate school.” The majority of the students we interviewed want to attend graduate or professional school, especially law or medical school. A senior explained that “After graduation, I want more experience in a law office in social justice. “ Another student explained that after he found his “academic niche”, he decided to attend law school.

Initial Commitment to the Institution

Size and Prestige Matters

We found several factors that influenced students’ initial commitment to the institution. First, but in no particular order of importance, students’ perceptions about the size and academic prestige of BSC plays a major role. In particular, students appreciate BSC’s small size because it allows them to receive individualized attention from staff and faculty. When asked about the features of the college that led them to apply and then enroll, a freshman shared that the, “individual relationship with professors is a big one. And that was one of the major reasons I came. Small class sizes, endless small communities, and a very outgoing and friendly community on campus.” A senior added, “All the professors know you on a first name basis. They know if you’re there or not. Something I think is really positive.” Agreeing, a staff member said, “I think that it has less to do with being a small school but more to do with the personal attention they are getting.”

Then, students believe that they are getting a great education at BSC. An admissions staff member shared, “My experience with the students, is first comes the academic reputation... they are getting a good education.”

Legacy Power

For many students, their commitment to the BSC began long before they applied. A first-year student said, “I was exposed to [BSC] young. Both my grandfather and my aunt went to BSC. So I was always around it when I was looking for college.” Several students are legacies; and their relatives, who are proud alumni of BSC, encouraged them to apply and attend. A senior shared that her family “was a little cultish” about BSC. “The choice was mine, but they said if I had the opportunity to attend, then I should.” A few other students reminisced about their first visit to BSC as a guest of a relative who was enrolled at BSC. Seeing the college through that lens really connected the students with the college. A student recalled, “I was enrolled at Sewanee but came to

visit my cousin and I loved it and decided to come here. I backed out of my deposit there.” A staff member said, “It is neat that their parents would think enough of this place and the experiences they had back then to even let their kids come... It is neat that their parents had a good enough experience to say, ‘At least look at BSC.’”

First Visits Make a Lasting Impression

For students who are not legacies, the first campus visit was crucial in connecting them to the college. For one student, visiting the campus quelled her fears of not belonging; “You don’t know you are going to belong somewhere until you meet the people and see what it feels like to be there.” Another student’s first visit helped her experience a small community feel. “I came here and the second people heard the word “recruit” they flocked to me. I remember walking to class and random people would be like, “Hey how are you?” And I was like, me are you talking to me. Literally, they would all say hi to me and they didn’t even know me. They were so excited about me and me being here.” For another student, her visit to campus was a taste of the community on campus.

This is what I first noticed when I first walked onto campus...There is a strong student body community going on...You recognize a lot of the people you’re passing. You recognize all your professors. They know your name. I think knowing that you’re not just one out of two hundred in a class is really nice and also holds students accountable.

A staff member explains that the admissions team really tries hard to give students a taste of the benefits of small college: community and individualized and personal attention. “The recruitment process was so personalized and was so pointed at them that they really felt that family feeling. Then they get here and feel that same thing... that small school feel is a lure for students that they can’t get at a state school.” Another staff member added, “The initial impression is the caring attitude and the small school feel. A large portion of the students would say it’s because of the care that was shown to me when I expressed interest.”

Choosing the Sport or the School

The role of athletics works for and against students’ initial commitment to the college. In describing the relationship between BSC’s Admissions team and Athletics, an admissions staff member said “we sort of consider each other an extension of one another’s staff...We don’t make our class if they [Athletics] don’t make their class.” An athletics staff member said, “Division III, especially at a small private school, is an enrollment engine. That is why we started football. We have 100 students who would have not come here without it. So our role now is to support and work closely with the Admissions staff to meet our enrollment goals every year.”

For many students, deciding to attend BSC depended on their ability and opportunity to play on a sports team; as a result, their commitment to the institution depended on their ability to play their sport. A student athlete said, “I was defiantly drawn because of volleyball...I would have loved to have stay here even if I had quit volleyball but I don’t know if I would have ended up here had I not had volleyball.” Another athlete said, “I was obviously looking to play soccer... So I kinda wanted to use soccer as a vector to get me into a good academic school that would set me up for whatever I wanted to do after school.”

Recognizing the role athletics play in enrollment, the athletic and admissions department work together to create a class that emphasizes both academics and athleticism. An athletic staff member said,

Our coaches are on all board about understanding the importance of recruiting high quality student athletes to the college who can do the work academically, afford to pay the bills, and graduate. And if they walk in and say they don't want to be an athlete anymore for whatever reason they let people know and we try to talk the student into staying.

The admissions team recognizes that, unfortunately, some students do not enroll at BSC for the college itself, but for the sport. "They commit to the sport, not the school," says an admissions counselor while her colleagues nod in agreement.

Ability to Pay

Overall, students' satisfaction or confidence in their ability to pay for BSC depends on the amount of financial help their families provide or scholarships. A student said, "My mom is also used to paying for private schools." And a staff member said, "You see families who are willing to take a second mortgage on the house because they believe in this place and they believe it is the best fit for their child." However, for students who parents can provided limited financial assistance, financial aid is an important factor in their ability to pay.

Reliance on Financial Aid

Many students rely on financial aid, especially loans and scholarships, to help cover the costs. "I got a good amount of academic scholarships. I think I am about half funded by academic scholarships which is pretty good." When scholarships aren't enough, students turn to loans, and many are not happy about that. A senior who is has loans, scholarships, and a part-time job, said, "The debt is something we try not to talk about." Another student said, "I didn't want to [take out loans] at first. I had to find opportunities. I wanted to avoid [loans] for as long and as much as I could."

Moving Off Campus to Study on Campus

Finally, when financial aid and employment is not enough, students found other ways to lessen their cost of attendance. Specifically, they moved off campus. "I had to move off campus because they increased tuition and couldn't support that financially. So the only reasons I am still going here is because I moved off campus" said one student. Another student shared, "They raised tuition and I applied to become an RA...but I didn't get the position...Then I made the choice that leaving off campus would be cheaper."

Commitment of the Institution to Student Welfare

We  our faculty

I think it is a sentiment that is shared across campus that we really do love our faculty because they genuinely care. From the first day you sit down in a classroom, your professor knows your face, knows your name, and they'll tell you again and again, that they are your number one resource.

Quite simply, BSC students love their faculty; and they loved talking about them. First, the faculty members are described as approachable. One student recalled a faculty member whom she "only

had her for a few classes, but I feel like I could go talk to her about anything.” Another student recalled that during her first year, “I expected to meet pretentious professors but everyone was welcoming and it felt like no matter who you were, you could do it.” Other students explained that the faculty care about students as person. “A junior explained that she “I had not had her for a semester and at the end of last year, she saw me walking outside and stopped me. She was like, “...how are you? How are your classes? How is volleyball going...She wanted to know about my life.”

Second, as one staff administrator put it, “faculty are partners in their education.” The students recognize and appreciate the active role the faculty plays in their educational success. A senior said, “This is a hands on faculty, and I needed that. That was really special to me.” Another senior recalled how his professors help him find his academic niche, which helped him improve his academic performance.

I came here my first year, and I didn't do so well academically. And I thought it was because I was a first year and I was getting used to the academic rigors. I came back my second semester and I didn't do well... Talked to my professors. Long story short, they helped me find a path along the lines of political science, pre-law. Then I made dean's list my first semester in political science. So I really found my niche.

Another student positively compared his experience with faculty at a state school and BSC.

I took Physics I and II this summer at Tennessee State University...and that really made me appreciate the faculty here, and the classes and everything. The environment was so much different, from the quality of the professors, to how they interacted with students, how willing they are to meet with the students.

The faculty is fond of its students' as well. They recognized their importance in students' experience at BSC. A staff member said, “I think the faculty at BSC are highly engaged with their students. I think faculty genuinely come here because they want to teach and work with students...I have heard this several times, I think faculty here punch above their weight.”

Next, students appreciate the atmosphere that faculty create in the classroom. Students describe their faculty member as using active learning techniques that keep them engaged and responsible for their education. A student said, “I think our faculty does a really good job of not letting students coast by. From our honor code, to the amount of work you have to do, they make sure you're involved. You're not just a number.” Another student added, “The College emphasizes discussion based classes.”

The students equally enjoy their interactions with faculty outside of the classroom. These interactions seem to show students that their faculty truly cares about them, because the faculty is going the extra mile to engage and build a relationship with them. A faculty member commented on his colleagues inviting students into their homes for dinner, movies or other socializing activities. For example, a faculty member recalled, “I have a colleague that had a few current students and a few graduates over to his house to watch the primaries for the election.” For one student, the support of faculty in a student led event was significant in proving their dedication to their students.

One of the biggest ways I saw professors get involved in student led groups was when it was suggested everyone get dressed in black in solidarity with Mizzou. And I swear I've never seen

the faculty get involved in something and it was heartwarming. One of my professors even wore a black watch that didn't work. He said I don't know what time it is but it's a black watch. They didn't have to do that. But they did.

Another reason that students love their faculty is because of how they faculty responds to course evaluations. At the end of each course, students are asked to complete an evaluation of their course and the faculty. A student said, "We always fill out evaluations at the end of the semester...and I frequently hear professors on the first couple of days of classes talking about what students said in their feedback last semester, and how they were going to implement that in the new semester. And you see it on the syllabus where they made changes from the last semester." The students appreciate their faculty's interest in improving the course and classroom atmosphere. It also makes the students feel like their input matters. In addition to the end of semester course evaluations, some faculty like to have mid-semester evaluations in order to apply necessary changes while the students are still with them. For example, a professor said, "I also have even used my own mid-semester evaluation. I just do two questions on a quiz. What can I do to improve your learning? And what can you do to improve your learning?"

Students, faculty, and staff agree that the majority of faculty at BSC are dedicated to good teaching habits and skills. The administration seems to create that culture. For example, an academic administrator said,

One thing that, I think, is different here than other places I worked is that faculty is asked to do a real critical evaluation about their teaching...they're really asked to examine, based on both student evaluations but also on their own kind of assessment, where they have been successful or struggled and what they want to do about that. How they evolved their practice over time. There really is a conscious effort to grow in terms of teaching practice and I have not seen that anywhere else I have worked.

Uneven Academic Advising

Aside from teaching, another major responsibility of faculty is academic advising. Faculty and academic staff explained that all faculty are asked to advise students. Overall, the faculty seems to enjoy this responsibility. One faculty advisor said "I think the academic advising relationship is really interesting because ...Its one on one. It's really gratifying to see students evolve." The faculty also understands the importance of it, and the importance of their role in it. Another faculty advisor said, "It would be great to have an advising office—in terms of time. Additional freedom for faculty members to get other stuff done. But it would be bad for our students."

Faculty and academic staff agree that academic advising is important to students' academic success and college experience. Therefore, it concerns them that students are receiving uneven advising experiences. One advisor said, "When you talk about advising, I think it's a key feature of what we got. It's hard for me to think that I don't have any sense of how uneven our advising process is."

One explanation of this unevenness is the faculty advisor. "All faculty are advisors. Some are better than others," said an academic administrator. Another staff member said, "a third [of advisors] are outstanding, a third are not, and another third is just ok. They will not lead their students astray, but two thirds are getting a pretty good experience." The students' accounts of their experiences with faculty advisors also show an uneven experience. One student said, "My advisor is top ten favorite men on this earth...He knows me personally. Asks about softball." Another student, who

aims to go to law school, praised the advising program; “I think the faculty advisor program is great...sometimes it’s hard trying to pick classes. If you’re a poli-sci major, it’s kind of hard knowing the prerequisites.” But this student’s advisor, not only helped him choose course to complete his degree, but “classes that she thought would be helpful for law school or the LSAT.” Still, another student praised the way that advisors hold students responsible for their education. “Even though you’re an adult, it really holds you responsible. Even if your parents don’t see your grades, your faculty advisor does. They’re going to get on you.” On the other hand, some students share an unfulfilling experience with their advisors. One student said,

I had a philosophy professor for my academic advisor. Because my major was so broad [a cross between English and pre-med], they didn’t know how to exactly place me. So I have an advisor who knows nothing about my discipline. And during our meetings he would ask, “Have you looked at what you need to take? Yea? Do you have the classes you need to take? Yea? Okay, I’m going to send you off.” And that’s how our advising sessions would go.

A second explanation for the uneven experience is the structure of the advising program. As the students, staff, and faculty explained, students are assigned faculty advisors at the start of their first year. “There are three times when first years are supposed to see their advisors,” says an academic administrator. “There are no classes and there aren’t supposed to be anything else going on. Time is set aside for first years to meet with their advisors.” During these meetings, students and their advisors discuss the students’ progress and performance in courses and registration for the following semester. Faculty advisors and staff describe the first year advising as a “structured” and “intentional” process; however, it seems that the advising process for subsequent years is not structured or intentional.

One administrator said, “I think we do the freshmen year really well...where I wish we could facilitate some intentionality in the following years.” He continued to explain that freshmen have support from their resident assistants and their faculty advisors. However, the amount of support “trails off after first year.” As one administrator described, after the first year, students “still have their advisors. They still have that relationship. They are supposed to see their advisor but it’s not structured.” Another administrator said, “We do a really good job with the first year students and then it’s not so much intentional once in their second year.” Even the upper-class students feel the effects of an unstructured advising process. One student said

We beat it into the freshmen’s brains but it the sophomores or juniors that need it. The freshmen are not retaining any of that information...I have no scientific ability and was in Bio 101 for my general education and I searched the internet and reached out to so many friends to figure out where I need to go to get tutored. And I am a senior. I feel like I am pretty involved and I was the one telling the orientees about this and I am struggling myself.

Another student warned that the advising experience could affect whether students graduate on time.

I guess it’s more on the advisor part: making sure people are in the right classes at the right time. Really because if you don’t play your cards right, you may be here for an extra semester and not graduate on time.

Training is Needed

Faculty and staff both agree that improvement can and should be made. First, they agree that there needs to be more training and professional development. One faculty advisor said, “I think most advisor training goes on informally.” Another advisor added, “I think that new faculty members rely on other faculty members in their department or in their building, and ask them questions about advising.” Still, another faculty advisor added, “They would tell us how important advising is, but never tell us how to do it.”

Currently, there is training for new faculty advisors. One faculty advisor explained,

There’s a workshop for second year faculty—first year faculty doesn’t get advisees. And then every year, every august, there’s a meeting for faculty, there to update them on changes. Seems like every few years we try out some sort of new...set meetings, new procedures, new directives, activities.

Another advisor commented that this “process has gotten better over the last years.” Another added that they “only recently had someone on point to speak to us about advising,” and they are pleased with the direction that she has led the program. Still, academic affair leaders “want to do more as with educating faculty, training faculty, do more in terms of thinking about how we structure the advising experience.” One faculty member recommends a “broader, data driven, more systematic approach.” He believes that such an approach would help faculty advisors care for students who are often overlooked.

What we don’t think about is those three advisees. That commuter who never really connected with campus because he wasn’t that involved and he left...That student who was struggling with some kind of difficulty. It’s those students that I worry about. Because you can’t reach every student individually. We have to have something more systematic that the faculty, staff, and administrations can use.

Expanding Student Support

Students are aware of the academic support services that the College offers. One student explained, “There are hundreds of resources on this campus...there’s tutoring in every subject, writing labs.” She further explained how helpful these resources are. “If I was writing a history paper, I would take it to a history student. And they would go over my paper with me. Not just looking for spelling or grammatical errors, but looking at my thesis, looking at my paper structure, my overall argument.”

Other students, faculty, and staff also described the academic labs, or Academic Resource Center (ARC) as a means of student support. However, some faculty members and academic support staff believe that these resources are not enough. As a faculty member explains,

For these students with the lower ACT scores and for the disadvantaged, we don’t have any developmental education for them. And that is something that...continues to be a huge concern for me. They are basically just thrown in and tutoring is supposed to help prop them up. But it is beyond tutoring. It needs to be remediation. Because the tutor can’t be expected to teach them what they already do not know.

In another interview, the topic of remediation came up again. One faculty member said that the students at BSC don't need remediation, but another professor was quick to add they many "could benefit from remedial education."

Addressing Racism

Most of the faculty and staff could not recall an incident of racism or discrimination on campus; however, students could. Most of the accounts of discrimination occurred within the student body. The most cited medium for discriminatory behavior was through social media, such as Yik-Yak. One student said, "Outside of a few social media posts, I really don't see a [discrimination] issue on campus." Another student added, "After events in Mizzou, our black student union wanted to host a black out where everyone wore all black to show solidarity and there were incredibly racist insensitive, uninformed press on Yik-Yak." Other students explained that Yik-Yak had been shut down a couple of occasions due to the racist comments that were being anonymously posted.

The minority students have a different perspective about the racial climate on campus. They feel that discrimination exist, and some even accept it. Racism and discrimination "exist everywhere" says one student. Another student feels that many of her classmates are uncomfortable with race. "When the Asian group does something, people will come. But when it's a black event, people wonder, "Oh can I come?" Then some students gave accounts of occasions when racial tensions threatened the safety of students. One African American student said, "We had a student black out... It was scary...I felt uncomfortable. There were some guys saying 'oh, you better be careful.'" A Caucasian student recalled the same student black out event. She said

After events in Mizzou, our black student union wanted to host a black out where everyone wore all black to show solidarity and there were incredibly racist insensitive, uninformed press on Yik-Yak. And there was a threat to security made...they were going to take a photo to show solidarity—and there was a threat to security made about the time and location of the time where they planned to do the photo... It was along the lines of hurting people that were in the photo.

When students usually feel safe on campus, the student Black Out event made a few feel unsafe. One African American student said, "That was the only time I felt unsafe. I felt like I was a target."

Since that event, and some of the comments on Yik-Yak, some students have begun to look at their classmates a little differently. A student explained her feelings:

The next day following the black out, my sociology professor said... 'There were a couple of white fraternity brothers, and they were like 'those ugly niggers think they can do whatever they want.' And my teacher stopped and said 'I don't know if ya'll think that's ok just because I'm white but ya'll say that...And you know, they never came and approached us, but I know it's in your character. The fact that people are having these thoughts outside—it makes you feel like, who are these people saying that. Am I sitting next to you in class and you're thinking I'm an ugly N word.

Gated in Safety

Aside from the student black out event, the students feel safe on campus. Most of them described the gate, which surrounds the BSC campus, as a symbol and tool of protection. One student explained,

There's a fence around the whole campus because the area outside of us isn't the best. But there is that one way in and out passed the guard shack. So you never feel like anything dangerous would be coming from any different direction on campus. But also our campus police do a pretty job of always being there when you need them but not being overbearing.

Orientation: The Beginning of Community Building

Overall, students love orientation, and they view it as “a way to ease into the social scene and how to connect with the people around you.” This is especially important when students are assessing their social fit at BSC. As one student says, “Everyone is looking for new friends,” and “during orientation week, you're forced to meet new people.” These views align with the goals that staff members have set for orientation. Though students emphasize the opportunity to make friends, staff members hope orientation will also

Help our students feel collectively at home in this environment, aid that transition from regimented high school life to independent college life where the majority of your working, living responsibilities are on you. It is about connecting them to key resources on campus, connecting them to each other. We spend a lot around community, talking about the community we are, facilitating, building and enhancing that community, connecting them to upperclass peers...mentors, faculty...I think that is important.

Institutional Integrity

Admissions and Integrity

The BSC community, including students, staff and faculty, agree that academic climate is challenging and rigorous. However, many are skeptical about how that academic rigor is interpreted in the admission process. One faculty member said, “We may not be as honest about the academic rigor.” In addition, there is concern about how well the College is maintaining its portrayed academic prestige. For example, an admissions staff member said,

I kind of had that impression when I was a student here that everyone was a really high achiever in high school. Recruiting students, I realized that was not the case at all. I think there has been a lot of pressure, especially in the last four years... A lot of pressure on the admissions staff to paint this super rosy picture. It was all about the numbers. All about getting enrollment up. I don't want to say admission standards were lowered, but they were. But academic standards stayed the same. And so students are getting here and they may not be as prepared. But as far as they know, they are the perfect fit BSC because that is what they were sold.

There is also concern about how well the College is admitting students who can manage BSC's academic rigor. Moreover, some wonder how well the academic rigor is articulated to applicants. An admissions staff member assures that “It's going to be rare that we have students come on campus and think academics is going to be a walk in the park—even students from very good high schools.” However, some faculty and staff feel different. They feel that students are being admitted to the College misinformed or underprepared about the academic rigor of the college. Consequently, this presents a student support problem. One academic support staff member said,

We do have a lot of students that come from high schools that are not really preparing them but they think they have been prepared. So they were 4.0 students, but they can't identify France on the map. No one ever told them... We need to figure out a way to help those

students out because they can success but we don't have the structure to help them at that level.

This raises a question about the integrity of the college in terms of its ability to help and support each of the students they admit. Another staff member said,

For these students with the lower ACT scores and for the disadvantaged, we don't have any developmental education for them. And that is something that is huge and continues to be a huge concern for me. They are basically just thrown in and tutoring is supposed to help prop them up. But it is beyond tutoring. It needs to be remediation. Because the tutor can't be expected to teach them what they already do not know.

The Truth about the Costs

Finally, many are concerned about the College's ability to wholly and accurately explain the cost of attendance. The College does post its tuition and net cost calculator; and the admissions team agrees that it tries its best to explain the costs, how tuition may change, and the financial assistance options available. A few admissions counselors even admitted to discouraging student from enrolling when it was obvious that the student and their family could not afford the College. Still, there are students who greatly struggle with the cost of attending BSC. Faculty and staff feel that admitting these students threatens the College's integrity. For example, a support staff member said,

I see the point with family income, I see it all the time. Kids who couldn't afford books. They had enough to get the tuition but that had no money for the books. How are you going to be successful? I know we don't refuse people on the basis of family income, but I don't know if that is a good model for success. Like if you know that you have only given them money and you can see that they can't buy books or they are not going to have anything to eat other than what is on their meal plan.—I almost think it is unethical to admit them.

Then there are students who are skeptical about the cost of attendance. One student said, "They increased tuition because they just changed presidents. And apparently the old president didn't get paid. And the tuition stayed the same. And the new president is getting paid. They raised tuition." Another student said,

My biggest complaint about this school is that I don't know where the money is going. I have no idea. It is sure not going to my room and the amount of ants that are crawling around my room right now...We had sat around to list every expense and come up with a cost and we still can't match the number that students are paying to be here. I don't know if it is still recovering from all the debt from way back.

Congruence between Athletics and Admissions

Another point of contention is the message that is being provided to student athletes. We were told that many students come to BSC hoping to play their sport. Some even hope to play at BSC, and then transfer to a Division I or II athletic institution. However, some of these students do not get the playing time they need or want, whether they want to transfer out or not. Then there is a concern about how the academic requirements are explained to athletes. While admissions say they consider athletics an extension of the admissions team, there seems to be some variance in the messages each gives to athletes. For example, a staff member said, "I know the male coaches tell

them you specifically can't do this. You cannot do that. Which makes it problematic from an admissions side of things because Admissions tells you, "You can do everything."

Finally, another admission policy that concerns faculty and staff is admitting students in the middle of the school year. Some students do not begin their first semester at BSC in the fall semester, but rather the spring semester; they may be transfer students or students who delayed attending college. Some of the staff and faculty are concerned about how well these students can assimilate into the campus community when they are joining the College later than others. One staff member explains

I really get concerned about those starting their college experience in February. I have expressed concern on a number of occasions. But you know those 8 students are replacing those that leave. It is a numbers game. Many of these are commuters. So you got the first time first year student commuter student starting their college experience at BSC in February. Everything is rolling and people have found their niche."

Academic and Integrity

Another set of concerns that students and faculty share is how well academic policies support student success. For example, a staff member explained:

I have a theory. We do the freshman a disservice when we bring them in because we only let them take 3 classes in the fall. Which means they have a lighter workload. So they manage their 3 course. Often they do poorly. But they are like I can make up for it in the spring. They convince their parents. They come back. They go from their 2.0, 1.5, and just over 2.0 and the come back and do ok in the spring. And then that is when the real classes start. The real major classes start... And I think for those students who are on the fringe financially, socially. On the fringe at all. They wash out

Another concern raised about BSC's academic policies is how the College responds to underperforming students. The lack of response has an effect on student's ability to graduate. One staff member explains,

We do not gate keep within our majors with grades. You can make Ds all the way through. You are passing. But guess what, going into that eighth semester, you will never get out of BSC...I have a folder of students who are well below the 2.0 GPA in their major. They might be hitting in their cumulative but in their major they are well below. A lot of those students don't finish. There is nothing in our process. Some majors are proactive. But we don't have a formal mechanism to identify those students. We cannot prohibit them from continuing in their major...We don't have academic policy or prerequisites.

This is an integrity issue because the staff and faculty assure parents that they will take care of their students, and that their student can be successful here. For example, a staff member said,

We stand up in front of parents. I adamantly believe that if you get into BSC, you can succeed and you can graduate. We joke and laugh that if you fail a class you had to try to fail it. Not because a professor is going to give you a grade, but because they are going work with you to a point where you are going to pass that class.

Staff and faculty tell parents and students that they will support students and they will be successful. However, it is difficult for the College to keep its word when the faculty is dubious about their ability to support the academic needs of the students.

Living Diversity

As previously mentioned, BSC student body has experienced gradual demographic change. There are more students of color and more students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. BSC boasts that it is an inclusive and welcoming community; it says that it values diversity. However, some feel that the College behaves in ways that undermines their value of diversity. One staff member says

There are times when we don't live our values. I'll give you the perfect example. Student say that they love that they can do all the different things, make a lot of friends across many different groups, and yet they all live, and they all sit according to their groups of race downstairs in the café. And they will acknowledge the hypocrisy of that but they have no clue on how to challenge the status quo.

The same staff member also found culpability in the staff and faculty.

Our campus design sends some messages that I'm uncomfortable with. They love that they can say 'we're safe. We're in a safe environment. There is only one entrance and it's always staffed with a campus police officer.' But I'm uncomfortable with the wall that surrounds our community. I feel like the unintended messages it sends about being scared of the surrounding environment. That poverty is something to be uncomfortable with and... the surrounding area is not like BSC students. And yet, I cringe when the statement...the joke people say 'don't turn right.' There are students that really wrangle with that. Don't turn right after campus because that takes you into the poor environment. ..But we have students who come from that neighborhood, and they are wonderful and they contribute so meaningfully.

These behaviors betray the community that BSC strives to build. As one academic official said, "One of the values of going to college is interacting with people who are not like yourself." However, getting students to interact and appreciate differences seems to be a challenge.

Also, the lack of diversity in the faculty and staff also undermines the value of diversity. As one student says, "There is one. One. And she was just hired. She used to be an adjunct. We don't have one tenured faculty of color." This lack of diversity affects minority students' college experience. A sophomore shared, "It bothered me a lot during my freshmen year." A senior explained,

You don't have someone who can talk from your perspective. You're already the minority in the classroom. You feel...viewed in a certain way. It bothers me a little bit that when we have discussions about civil rights, in my political science class, you're being taught from someone who is ...favored, from the other side.

Student Voice

Overall, students, faculty, and staff agree that students do have a voice on campus, and it is heard quite well. For example, one staff member said, "they really do and they use it well. Our student government has serious clout on campus. They have a way bigger budget than I have. That is

significant.” A student agreed that the student body has a voice: “Yes, I think they very much do...especially if you’re in a student club-these people in student development, they’re hear you. They don’t like displeased students.”

Communal Potential

Plenty of Opportunities to Community

Community is an important part of BSC life. As one student explains, community “makes people be here.” Students, staff, and faculty agree that there is a significant number of opportunities for students to find community on the BSC campus. A student says, “You can find your place. I believe there are different organizations and groups to get involved in if you are willing to look for them.” Still, another student said, “I think at this school it’s not required to get to know a large chunk of the student body but to be really involved in the campus, I think it’s a prerequisite.” Additionally, a faculty member explained, “If the student is interested in pursuing it, then there are lots of points of contacts outside the classroom: office hours ...athletics events...events, common hours...and most faculty are open to that.” Another faculty member said, “I would probably argue that the most growth that occurs in the relationships between the faculty and...the most knowledge that is gained often occur in those interactions outside of the classroom.”

There seems to be three types of communities: academic communities, athletic communities and social communities. Academic communities are those that gather students from a shared academic major. For example, a theatre major said, “All of my friends are in theater or music. You spend so much time with those people that it is not possible not to get close to them.” Then a faculty member described the science major community; “I have a few students who are just burning science majors and they are perfectly happy. I call them Steven-dwellers.” The Steven-dwellers provide social and academic support. As one faculty member describes, “Most of them will go to Stevens Science Center and all get into a room together...like 10 or 15 of them...they will take their food for the night, close the door, and study all night long. They use the boards. Teach each other.”

Next, there are athletic communities, which gather students who play the same sport. Finally, there are social communities, which include Greek organizations and other social organizations.

Greek, Athlete, or Stray

There are two major communities on campus, Greek and Athlete. One staff member explained,

We have 40 some odd percent that are Greek. 30 some odd percent are Athletes and about 10 percent of that overlaps. So you are talking about 70 percent of the campus is either Greek or and athlete. So 30 percent of campus is all over the place.

Some students who participate in fraternities explain that membership allows them to be successful in student leadership. For example, a student leader explained that “It would be very hard for me to be a part of all the things I’m in if I were not in the fraternity. Fraternities are an automatic social scene where you meet all these guys from all the fraternities and girls from the parties that they through.” Another student leaders said, “I know a lot of people who are in the SGA, just active on campus, and are like popular; and the [fraternity] has been a nice little help.” Students who are not a part of an athletic team or Greek organization struggle to find their place on campus. A staff member estimated that “you have the other 15 percent that just don’t find their home.” Another staff member explains,

Some people don't find their niche. If students do not find their place on this campus, be it with athletics, via Greek life, or with our more intensive centric organizations—i.e. theatre...if you are not affiliated, if you are not an athlete and do not find one of those other groups, you really struggle.

Other faculty members and staff agree with this statement. For example, another staff member said, “We have the Greek system and Athletics. So I do think people that fall outside that get lost sometimes.” Students who get lost are nicknamed “stray cats;” As one staff member explains, “The students call them cats...because we have the stray cats all over campus. They refer to those students who don't belong to anything as cats.”

Community Outside of Athletics

An athletic staff member explains, “We, in Division III, we try to encourage a well-rounded student athlete. We want you to participate in the Greek system, in SGA, in the Black Student Union, on the yearbook staff—whatever. All of that gives them a connection on campus so if they decide not to be an athlete they still have a group they can identify with and have support from.”

Another staff member admits, “Players would not come here if the sport did not exist.” Therefore, it is important to help the athletes “embrace the whole community and get involved;” this would help them build a connection to the College. Another athletic staff member explains that helping athletes find an additional community is important for student success.

We can identify sport by sport that maybe have some or a greater likelihood to have those at-risk students who maybe feel like they can achieve that BSC success story. But I think maybe because they are in particular sports there may be a community within a community that they feel more comfortable talking to but maybe not to those who are in that top percentage. They may feel comfortable speaking to their peers verse letting others know.

Psychosocial Engagement

Finding Community is Harder for Minorities, International, and Commuter Students

For several groups of students, becoming involved on campus takes more effort than that of their classmates. First, an African American student explained, “I think it may be more difficult for black people to make friends with other black people...because we don't come off as initially friendly.” She explained that African American students have to adjust their socialization patterns in order to find friends and community. After adjusting to the lack of diversity on campus, adjusting socialization norms is extra process. Another African American student said,

The biggest problem for African Americans at this school is pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone. It's easy to come to this school and feel lost because now you are the minority, not just in the world but in this school. It's a culture shock.

The faculty and students also point to the lack of minorities in faculty and leadership positions as problematic for minorities to find community with the faculty. A faculty member said, “We have one [slams hand on desk] African American faculty here. And ...we heard an African American student stand up and say ‘We need to diversify our faculty because I can't relate to anybody here.’” Another faculty member said, “I think that if we had more visible campus leaders of color that would really help our students of color feel more welcomed, more a part of the community.”

Without faculty and leadership of color, students have to find community with those who are different than them; something that white students don't have to struggle with.

Next, it is hard [for commuter and international students] "to find anything that actually roots me here." A staff member said, "I think some of the students who get lost in translation are commuter students. Because we are such a residential campus, I think it is hard for students who live off campus to get plugged in." A former commuter student agrees; she recalled, "It's weird to be a commuter on campus. I didn't meet any other commuters. And they try, they really do try, to make commuters feel included on campus. But they can't. It's harder to get to know people."

Work Hard, Play Hard

Students believe in the work hard, play hard mentality. A student says, "It is definitely a work hard, play hard mindset...I think students coming in it is a kind of understanding that we are academically challenging but we take the weekend off and we make up for it at that time." However, working hard and playing hard is difficult for some students, specifically those who of lesser financial means. A staff member explains that the

Social environment is very difficult for some. I would also say the socioeconomic piece. What some students are able to do and what some students can't participate in because financially they are here to go to school. They are giving every single bit, so are their families, to be here. So that is challenge for some."

Overinvolved

There is a concern shared among the faculty and staff that the students are overinvolved. "All of our students who are involved are over involved;" and their level of participation has psychological, social and academic consequences. One administrator shared that students develop "a level of competitiveness...And most of the times it doesn't turn ugly...but [the students] are very hard on themselves when they don't get it." Another staff member worries that the students' involved in student organizations fail to find a balance between their social and academic obligations. "They typically have a better party life than academic life or a better academic life than party of social life. There is no balance. And when one starts to become overwhelming they drift to focus on the other one until that one is too overwhelming and then they drift back. You will see waves with them."

Confronting Values

BSC students learn during orientation that they will be forced to meet with people are different from them. One student described that being a BSC student requires him to learn "about things that make you uncomfortable." As previously discussed, interacting with those of different races and ethnicities is a struggle for a few Caucasian students. However, some students adjust nicely. For example, a freshmen student explains how his social network has diversified at BSC.

I have a close group of friends that come from very different environment than from which I came from. One of my friends is very involved in architecture...the girl in my Chinese class, she's Japanese...she's lesbian. Things like that, I wasn't around.

Another student describes the progress of student who was uncomfortable with students who were different than she.

I have a friend. She is a freshman and she was raised to be that anyone different than [she] is weird. And she would always talk about them being so weird or have you met so and so, they did this and wasn't that so weird and stuff like that. And it would always bother me that she thought everything different than her was wrong. And in the last semester, I have noticed that when I talk to her she doesn't say that stuff anymore. I paid attention to it on purpose because I was curious to see what would happen. We are a fairly liberal campus for where we are and I think it does a lot of good for people to see other people.

Proactive Social Adjustment

Delayed Reactions

The second and third year seems to be the point of transition for many students. It is the time when they look at their behavior from high school and their freshmen year and start to discern what behavior is necessary to keep or modify in order to be successful at BSC. A student affairs officer explained,

Typically their first year they will find their friend groups. They will discover, possibly, alcohol for the first time and partying. When they start to get into their major course in their sophomore year, they don't understand they can't keep up with that workload and their party life that they have had since their first semester. And it just catches up to them eventually. Where their grades are too low and there is no point affording it."

Another staff member believed that the transition occurs in the junior year. He explained:

I think it goes back to the competitive drive. They are used to pushing, pushing, pushing in high school. Pushing, pushing, pushing, freshman and sophomore year and they hit that junior year and they think they are too busy that I have to get all this other stuff done that they deal with it later. Until they crack...I think they wait until they hit their breaking point and it is us trying to put pieces back together instead of helping as the pieces are coming apart.

Another staff member explained that during this time, students start to realize that they need help, which is something that they may have not needed in the past.

I think the one that are coming from a background where they needed help...they know who to turn to when they need help. The people who have been so strong and exceptional through high school that do so much their freshman and sophomore year and then they hit their junior year... They are juggling and they have never needed or known to reach out for emotional support.

The students corroborate the faculty and staff's beliefs. Many of them said that the behaviors that supported their academic achievement in high school did not support them in college. Many of them noticed this during their first year, but the need to change did not hit them until after the first year. This change is a frustrating and emotional one. A student explained:

It has been a learning process. Coming here I never had to study to get an A... And then coming here, I started to realize that that was not how it was going to be around here...I realized I couldn't just get the work done but I had to be actively involved. When they said do

the reading they did just want me to read to read but it was important to learn the information. I didn't learn it until second semester after I got my first C ever and cried a lot.

Learning to Study is the Real Challenge

During this time of transition, students realize that they must learn study habits and skills. They access the study habits that succeeded them in high school, and make the decision to change them. This is a stressful process because the students seem to have to learn these behaviors on their own. A student said:

Coming here... I got really stressed because I didn't know how to study. And I ... wasn't used to getting such bad grades. So it was really frustrating learning how to study. And I thought I wasn't prepared for this. Why didn't my high school prepare me for this? And then I realized it wasn't going to change... so I just had to learn how to study. Which was also frustrating because I couldn't just sit down one night and go "alright I'm going to learn how to study tonight" and the next day it was all better.

A senior looking back on her tenure at BSC added,

This was a drastic transition for me when it came to taking effective notes during a lecture, manage my time for study hours, and go work on my writing skills because like I said it's a writing heavy curriculum.

Besides learning study skills, students had to learn where and when to study. Many students found the library or academic labs as places for effective studying. One student athlete shared, "I am in the library on average seven hours a night out of season and about four hours in season every nights." A second semester freshmen shared, "It became impossible to study in my dorm room. And the social activities that arose during the day. I found that from 6-9 o'clock at night there is open rooms in our math labs. I could go to the library."

Finally, a female student athlete explained how she and friends formed an academic support group that helped them learn how to study:

We talk about everyone's classes. The thing is we are really good friends so we don't need a mentoring system because we hang out all the time... We are always in the library together. I have some of them come up and ask if I have taken this class. What did you do? During finals I have helped them study for psychology test. I was giving them mnemonics. I edited one of their papers last night. Just give them tips and stuff like that. The whole team does this.

Females Do it Better than Males

Female students seem to take steps to adjust their academic habits sooner than their male counterparts. For example, a female senior explained that she "spent a lot of time in the writing lab during my first semester." She sought help early on. On the other hand, a male senior explained that although he knew "there are a lot of support services available" he "unfortunately didn't explore those avenues" as early as he should have. "A student affairs staff member agrees that female students academically adjust sooner than the males. He explained,

Our women are much stronger about intervening when a student is struggling academically...our men just go when they're forced to. They know when they need to do, women just make it happen. That is led by them and their organization.

He also credits the sororities as agents of change. "Sororities do it much better. They use a value base recruitment where you look at this is what this organization is about. Students who find a home in that arena, I think, really resonates with them."

Subsequent Commitment to the Institution

The decision to persist at BSC seems to be reliant upon their satisfaction in three areas: academics, sports, and community. As one administrator puts it, "Just to put it simple: Expectations haven't been met. That they came here with a clear picture of what life here at BSC would look like. And academically, socially, something is not panning out."

Perform or Perish

For some students the lack of will or ability to adapt to the academic rigor of the college prevents them from committing to the college. For others, dissatisfaction with the academic programs leads them to decide to leave. For example, a staff member explained, "some students want something different than what is offered." Also, many students struggle to commit to the College when they are struggling academically. A faculty advisor recalls:

I had an academic advisee who told me he was transferring. And my first response was try and convince him to stay. But I asked him why he was transferring. And he said, 'This place is way too academic. So I was like, ok see ya. Ok, I can't argue with that.'

A student athlete noticed that

A lot of students come in here—and I think it's a bigger problem with athletes than it is with non-athletes, they come in here because they want to do a sport and they are offered an opportunity to play the sport here. But aren't willing to put in the work that a small liberal arts college requires. And they are the kind of student who is looking to skate by to play a sport. So you will see—especially on the bigger sports team like the football team—will transfer out after first semester because it's just not what they expected. It's not what they wanted.

Play or Perish

As previously mentioned, some students choose their sport over the school. This affects their initial commitment to the institution. These same students' subsequent commitment to the College is dependent upon their ability to play and excel in their sport. An academic administrator said, "We have student athletes who come to a D3 because they think they're going to get playing time. And they are not getting playing time. Then they go." An athletic staff member added, "They were recruited for the football team. They were promised they would get playing time and didn't. And they are not allowed to be involved in Greek Life [as the coaches discourage it]. And so it's like why stay here." Some other athletes "leave for better opportunities at a division one or division two school."

Sports are not just important for the athletes; it is important for the non-athletes as well. Sports, especially football is important in the South. And for some students, there just is “not enough football for them.”

Connect or Perish

Students, faculty and staff agree that community is important. Therefore, it is not surprising that students’ ability to find a community on campus is necessary for them to commit to the institution. A faculty advisor recalls a conversation with a student that explains the importance of community:

There was a student at our table and we were talking about interacting with faculty and she said...the [students] who are less likely to talk to [faculty], or go to their office, or talk to them when they see them on campus, or not get involved in activities on campus, the ones that keep to themselves and go home on the weekends, those are the ones who leave.

A staff member said, “People say they want to go to a big school... the reason you want to go to a big school is because you haven’t found your group of friends here.” Another staff member added, “And those who are can’t find a support group, or friends, or a club or something to associate with. They do struggle. They are the ones that are loners. And a lot of times they will wash out.”

Decision to Persist

The Trifecta

A staff member comments that the combination of these three expectations not being met solidifies a students’ decision to persist or depart from the institution. “If they are not doing well academically, if they are not playing, I can go to a stat school much cheaper and get an education. It is not comparable... The story is written.”

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Our findings reveal that students arrive to BSC with academic, social, and athletic expectations about their college experience. They expect to perform well in their classes and majors; and they expect to be prepared to enter graduate or professional schools. They expect to develop a rich social life that allows them to build and maintain relationships with their classmates and faculty members. Finally, they expect to continue playing the sport that carried them through high school, provided personal achievement, and offers recreational satisfaction.

When one of these expectations are not met, the student’s likelihood to leave BSC increases. When multiple expectations are not met, the student’s likelihood to leave is exacerbated. Finally, when one or more of these expectations is not met, and the student is not satisfied with their ability to finance their education at BSC, the student’s likelihood to leave BSC is almost imminent. However, when one or more of these expectations are met, the student’s likelihood to persist is at its greatest.

Next, our findings reveal that certain student populations are less likely to meet one or more of these expectations. Minority, international, and commuter students have greater difficulty in fulfilling their social expectations. Minority and international students have to overcome social and cultural differences; and, commuter students have less opportunities to socialize with students and faculty. Students from less academically rigorous high schools have more difficulty in fulfilling their academic expectations; they need extra academic support to learn study habits and skills to be

successful at BSC. Athletes are challenged to meet their athletic expectations simply because their playing time depends on their coaches and teammates.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANT FOR STUDY QUESTION II

Study Question II focused our attention on testing the revised theory of retention at a particular residential college with the entire student population. Through our survey and qualitative study, we examined the theory's applicability to draw out distinct features of the BSC experience that may aid the institution in improving student success. Our findings suggest that the revised theory may need to be adjusted to explain its power on a specific campus and should include additional defining characteristics that shape the entire student experience. Further our findings can be used to better understand how BSC, as an institution, supports and may hinder their students' ability to social integrate in the BSC at the social and academic levels.

Theory Revision

Our survey finding that communal potential plays a distinctive role on BSC campus as seen in its significant contribution to measures of social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and psychosocial engagement suggest that it should be reincorporated into the theory as an antecedent of social integration as originally proposed by Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004) but adjusted by Braxton et al. (2014). When we examined the central nature of communal potential within the regression model used by Braxton (2014) to examine the revised theory the finding suggest that in the case of BSC, communal potential must be considered as a major contributing factors to BSC's students' social integration and persistence. This finding is supported through much of the findings of our qualitative interviews. The movement of communal potential back in the central part of the theory highlights the essential need of students at BSC to experience community to persist on campus.

Building from our findings from Study Question I, our survey and interviews support the notation that student characteristics shape the BSC experience. Our survey found that race, gender, athletic status, Greek affiliation, class year, levels of cultural capital, family income, and initial commitment to BSC shape components of the revised theory. Our interviews pointed out the impact of the gradual change of the student body and a growing sense that students come from two different types of world highlighted by academic preparation and ability to pay. Beyond this divide, the interviews highlighted a shared sense of commitment to graduation and commonality that attracted students to BSC. These distinct features of the BSC student body clearly shape their experience and must be included in any analysis to understand what types of students are being successful and what types of students the institution must pay particular attention to aid their success, integrations, and graduation.

Institutional Support of Integration

To get the best sense of how BSC is supporting its students at an institutional level, it is best to look at the areas of the theory supported by the process of analytical cascading. Our survey and interviews found the measures of institutional commitment to student welfare and institutional integrity help to be articulate how BSC, as an institution, is commitment to their student success. As our survey found that the institution's commitment to student welfare significantly influences a student's social integration. That type of commitment is exhibited by a student's perceptions of fairness, faculty involvement, and student orientation which were also supported in our qualitative

interviews. Additionally, it is important to note that perceptions of discrimination and prejudice negatively affect the perception of commitment to student welfare, and this finding was expressed both through our survey and interviews. Further evidence of commitment to student welfare that did not surface in our survey were well document in our interviews through the role of advising and staff involvement in the feelings of commitment to student welfare. Through these findings, it is clear that BSC invests in its students in various ways, both socially and academically, that that commitment is felt and important to BSC students.

Extending such sense of investment in students, we found through our survey and interviews that institutional integrity serves a role in persistence though not directly. The survey revealed that faculty interest and the meeting of social expectations were both positively and significantly related to how a student perceives BSC's integrity. The survey again highlighted the negative and significant implications of perceive racism and discrimination on campus. Much of the interviews around this topic highlighted its direct link to institutional policy and practices, and directly cited admissions and academic policies that diminish the perceptions of institutional integrity. Further, the interviews tackled the issue of diversity and how it feels like a disconnected value of the institution. This finding could be directly related the finding about discrimination.

At the institutional level, BSC attempts to support its students by aiding their social integration and supporting their progress on campus. This institutional commitment appears to be serving some types of students better than others. BSC is situated to build on its ability to make students feel important and value through its mission and staff, faculty, and programs. It is clear that the institution is student centered, they just must work to continually prove that and show the exceptional type of care and investment they offer to all students, regardless of who they are.

Factors that influence social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence happen at every level of an institution and require constant negotiations of relationships between students, peers, faculty, staff, and the organization. Our survey and interview findings suggest that social integration is significantly influenced by students' psychosocial engagement and perceived communal potential. Both of these measures are mediated by student relationship and experience and seem to point to the significance of the student experience on BSC campus. The qualitative interviews also offered us the opportunity to explore the role of proactive social adjustment on campus and how that measure varies among class years.

We have already talked about our survey findings related to communal potential, but it is important to note that when communal potential was treated as an antecedent of psychosocial engagement as described in Braxton et al. (2014), significant factors of the measure highlight how students socially orient to campus and develop sense of communities by living on campus. Further, the interviews delineate the types of communities created on BSC campus through academics, athletics, and social outlets. Further our exploration of communal potential, we establish the critical importance of belonging and the successful way athletics and the Greek system offer students with a deep sense of community early in a student's college career.

When we considered factors that contribute to students' psychosocial engagement, our survey results identified distinctions among student characteristics while also highlighting the role of residential living in the areas of interaction and identity. The interviews elevated our understanding that students who are outside the majority need additional support to thrive on BSC's campus. The results of the interviews articulate the differences of experience and level of

investment from minority, international, and commuter students. This is surely exacerbated when you consider other factors such as family income and cultural capital that was noted as factors in the survey results. The interviews also articulated how student culture is shaped by involvement, academic and social balance, and the negotiations of learning the institutions values. There is a clear student culture on campus that is shaped by the academic and social experience. Such culture requires students to expend energy to invest in the community and learn the culture. Our findings suggest that this happens differently for students based on whom they are prior coming to BSC.

At the student level and through our interviews, we were able to probe the measure of proactive social adjustment. In addition, it is clear that this process of adjusting to the demands of college is an important feature of the BSC experience though not tested in our survey. As a measure, proactive social adjustment may account for the mystery of why BSC students decide to leave later in their college career. Seemingly, BSC has created a culture where students learn what it means to be a BSC throughout the first year of college in what could be considered a sheltered environment. Successful students learn how to maintain the expected level of social and academic balance, while developing the skills needed to do so. Those who do not may not realize it until after their first year and decided to leave.

Integration at the Student level

Our findings relating to Study Question II suggest that the revised theory of retention needs to be adjusted to include communal potential and additional student characteristics for it to hold at BSC. It is clear that there are components of the student experience that are supported and directed by BSC that aid social integration. Additionally there are components of social integration that happen at the student level that may be supported by the institution as well. What is clear from our research is that BSC has a distinct culture that affects student persistence and students must fit within that culture to be successful. If a student fails to perform academically, they will likely leave. If a student's expectations of playing sports are not fulfilled they may choose to leave, and if a student does not find a connection on campus, they will likely opt to leave. These are key understandings that should shape how BSC aims to support its students and improve or create practices and policies to help make this distinct campus community accessible to all students for their success.

LIMITATIONS

TREND ANALYSIS: STUDY QUESTION I

The major limitation for our trend analysis was that financial aid data was not available. This is a critical factor of student persistence; however, this data could not be compiled or analyzed as initially planned. The data provided had 30 percent repeated or blank records, rendering it unusable within the timeframe of our study. This type of data limitation highlights the need for a centralized Institutional Research Office that is equipped to aid BSC in doing this type of critical analysis.

Further data limitations were experienced when we were unable to obtain data concerning parents' demographic information. Data concerning parental education was optionally provided by students and thus resulted in inconsistencies within the data. This information would have been helpful in understanding student persistence at BSC.

In addition, some other variables that were thought to be potentially important were not available. Another shortcoming of our trend analysis was the fact data was coming from several sources rather than as one file centrally pulled from the various sources.

QUANTITATIVE STUDY: STUDY QUESTIONS I AND II

We recognize that the sample of our quantitative study may have some bias. Though all students enrolled in the fall 2015 semester were invited to participate in this survey, we recognized that several targeted students did not participate. For example, students who plan to leave BSC may have not taken the survey or did so in very small numbers. Additionally, students who are disconnected from the BSC community may have chosen not to participate in the survey. These students' input would have further enlightened our study.

Next, the timing of our survey conflicted with the events at the University of Missouri. In November 2015, University of Missouri had a series of protests against the acts of discrimination and racism present on their campus. Many other institutions around the country, BSC included, chose to show their support of the student protests. BSC decided to have a Black Out, an event in which the BSC community was asked to wear black attire to show support and solidarity of the University of Missouri. This event led to many students examining and expressing their thoughts about race. Ultimately, this event may have influenced students' survey responses about safety on campus, discrimination on campus, and institutional integrity.

Our survey tool offered two limitations that may have shaped our findings. Due to the time of our project and the distribution of the survey towards the end of the fall semester, we were not able to receive exact measures of student persistence. As a result, we asked respondents if they intended to reenroll in the spring as well as if they intended to return to BSC in the fall. These were used as proxies for student persistence. Further those who identified they would not return was very limited in number and required that we adjust our analysis accordingly.

The second limitation of our survey tool was our omission of measures of proactive social adjustment. We decided not to include this measure in our survey because such measures were originally used to understand first year student adjustment to college, and we intended to understand the entire BSC student experiences. Additionally, Braxton et al. (2014) failed to prove its significant effects within the revised theory. This change to the theory may have resulted in another measures becoming inflated significant factors. We wonder if the omission of proactive social adjustment may have increased the significance of the role of communal potential within our study. We did probe proactive social adjustment within our qualitative interview protocols to supplement its exclusion on the survey and found it did have a role in understanding retention at BSC. On a positive note, the omission of this measure may have allowed us to see how the process by which BSC students adjust to college is prolonged and may account for the later departure of some students. It certainly warrants further investigation and may have a role in constructing a revised theory of student retention beyond the first year.

QUALITATIVE STUDY FOR STUDY QUESTION II

The qualitative part of this study for Study Question II faced a few limitations. First, we were limited by time and resources. Ideally, we would have liked to strengthen our qualitative findings with observations. While we were able to make a few observations during our campus tour and

walks to our interviews, we would have liked to observe interactions in the classrooms, the Academic Resource Centers, and other areas frequented by students.

Second, our sampling had limitations. We decidedly used stratified purposive sampling in order to pull a sample that had qualities and roles that is representative of multiple populations in the student, staff, and faculty bodies. We then asked the BSC staff to help us find participants who had these desired qualities and roles. We recognized that it is possible that the students that the BSC staff recommended are those of which BSC staff has cultivated a relationship. It would have been enlightening to document the college experience of a student that does not have a relationship with BSC staff because it is signal of a lack of social integration. This limited is exacerbated by the fact that many of our student participants are student leaders; they are resident assistants, leaders in student clubs and organizations. These students are significantly involved on campus. Therefore, we did not have a student that is socially disconnected.

Finally, the events at the University of Missouri in November 2015 may have also influenced students' feelings about the racial climate on campus. The University of Missouri had a series of protests against the acts of discrimination and racism present on campus. Many other institutions, BSC included, chose to show their support of the student protests. BSC decided to have a Black Out, an event in which the BSC community was asked to wear black attire to show support and solidarity of the University of Missouri. This event led to many students examining and expressing their thoughts about race; and some experienced discriminatory and threatening remarks and behavior expressed by members of the student body. Ultimately, this event may have influenced students' responses about safety on campus, discrimination on campus, and institutional integrity.

Ultimately, it is our hope that this work will prove to be a start of a larger project that could dive into areas that were shown to be important to the student academic and social experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We propose the following recommendations based on the findings from our quantitative and qualitative studies. These recommendations are organized by the non-empirical questions that were discussed in our introduction: (1) What student information should BSC collect in order to continue to identify students at risk of leaving and in need of additional support? How should this information be utilized; and (2) what areas of student and academic services should BSC focus on to influence student persistence and retention? These recommendations aim to provide institutional and programmatic suggestions that may be used by BSC to plot their next steps in addressing student retention.

WHAT STUDENT INFORMATION SHOULD BSC COLLECT IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS AT RISK OF LEAVING AND IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT? HOW SHOULD THIS INFORMATION BE UTILIZED?

Role of Institutional Research

- Enhance the function of Institutional Research on campus and consider providing additional resources to ensure data collection and analysis are possible and able to be used to inform practice and policy throughout campus.

- Develop data management strategies and standards to allow data collected across campus to be streamlined and to aid in the ability to have access to data that should be analyzed to inform decisions and policies.
- Data concerning the profile of entering classes, student body demographics, and retention and graduation rates should be readily available and shared widely on campus.

Data Collection and Analysis

- BSC should continue to collect basic student demographics and would benefit from additional information about students' parents education and cultural and social experiences had before coming to BSC. Understanding what other schools a student applied to may also be helpful developing an understanding retention risk students.
- Develop an early warning system that draws information from the admissions process and student demographic into one marker for students likely at risk. Review those students with such markers at the beginning of the year with the Retention Team and periodically review those names throughout the first, second, and third year.
- Data collection should also be extended to include on campus activities and updated routinely to capture students who may not be connected on campus.
- Such data should be used to conduct more granular analysis of contributing factors of retention and graduation and could be used to compute a "likelihood to persist" score that could be used to support students and alert the college to potential issues as they persist at BSC.
- Promote the use of the Starfish engagement flag with all faculty and staff explaining its measures and why knowing if a student is not connect on campus is important. Periodically, just review those students who have such flag on their record with the Retention team.

WHAT AREAS OF STUDENT AND ACADEMIC SERVICES SHOULD BSC FOCUS ON TO INFLUENCE STUDENT PERSISTENCE AND RETENTION?

Student Development

- To develop a better understanding of the student experience and pinpoint exceptional areas of focus, we suggest implementing regular quality of student life surveys that could be analyzed and used to implement change.
- Leverage student leaders (Orientation leaders, Resident Advisors, and others) to alert staff when they suspect a student may be contemplating leaving. This would include noticing if a student seems to be having a difficult time connecting to the community. RAs of first year students could carry out resident interviews/peer review sessions during key times of the year and providing feedback to their RDs of student they worry about.
- We recognize that different types of students experience BSC very differently. Student Development should ensure that all types of students, including minorities, international and commuter students have access to the supports they needed to find community within BSC. This could be strengthened through programs and support staff and may include aiding students from at-risk populations in finding mentors/ coaches to aid in their transition to and life at BSC.
- Add supplement experiences for first-year students during Explore Term to assess their transition and provide additional information and education as they prepare to head into the last semester of their first year.
 - This could include a reunion of Orientation groups to have Orientation leaders to check in on their first-year students.

- Leadership skills and assessment opportunities
- Service learning experiences within the Birmingham community
- Workshops on school policies and resources
- Develop a sophomore and junior experience rooted in existing Student Development Offices that offer services that could be tailored for each class' need.
- Work/life balance seems to be a very big part of the BSC culture and students should be encourage to talk opening about the struggle the various forums. Adding this topic to the programing offered by Residential Life may aid in raising awareness and combating the stereotype of being a great all-round student.
- Develop a formal process by which student alert BSC that they intend to transfer. This could include a formal process by which health records and transcripts are requested. Additional it should be required that students have an exit interview.
- Strengthen partnership with Athletics to ensure student-athletes are afforded the full student experiences. This would include making all parts of orientation mandatory for student-athletes and tracking student-athletes participation in outside team activities.
- Promote the various forms of community found across campus and foster open discussion of what it means to belong to a diverse community.

Academics

- Improve the academic advising process by adding mandatory training that covers topics such as course and graduation requirements and basic skills needed to be effective. Academic advising should also be rewarded in the faculty promotion and tenure process.
- The degree audit process should be automated and include a process by which a student is counseling during their major selection. This component would include a conversation with the student's advisor and the chair of the major department.
- An examination of the course load policy for first-year students may warrant review and the 3-1-4 model along with course selection may be delaying students full adjustment to the BSC academic culture while allowing them time to establish harmful social habits.
- Policies about accepting transfer students should be reviewed and may need to be limited to the fall.
- When a student seeks to request a transcript, the academic advisor must sign the request. This would allow the advisor a chance to interact with the student and find out why they need a transcript. This would be helpful for all students, not just those seeking to transfer.
- BSC offers extensive tutoring services, but there needs to be greater understanding of what types of academic support is required by students. There needs to be a conversation about potential remediation and co-mediation needs. Additionally, providing services that help to teach study habits and skills may be helpful.
- Examining a prolonged orientation for students coming from weak academic backgrounds that focuses on academic skills and transition to college could aid in mitigating the influence of low academic preparation.
- Faculty development including the recruitment of faculty of color and those committed to student success and involvement will continue to be important for BSC.

Admissions

- Currently the Admissions Office is excelling in recruiting students to BSC and they are finding students with high levels of initial commitment to the institutions through their tailored approach and strong on-campus visit program. This work will continue to be important and information gathered in the admission process can help ensure student success. It is clear that students who know they want a small, liberal arts experience excel at

BSC. The Admissions Office could be used as a bridge to help aid students' transition to campus. Developing a way for Admission officers in passing on relevant and useful information to on campus faculty and staff could be helpful.

- Admission officers must be transparent with prospective students about all facets of the BSC experiences. This includes helping prospective students understand the academic rigor and expectations, social environment, and cost. Involving current students and faculty in the Admissions process can be leveraged to help paint an accurate picture of the BSC experience.
- The partnership with Athletics is a smart and strategic development. We caution that this relationship needs to ensure that students are selecting BSC because they want to be Division III athletes and they understand that the total experiences are open to them. Further Athletics needs to ensure that that is indeed the case.
- In recruiting international students, particular attention needs to be paid to their cost sensitivity. In particular, these students need to be handed off to International Student Development staff in ways that aid their transition and sustained BSC experience.

Joint Endeavors

- Across BSC there is great pride taken in their academic rigor and prestige. This is a defining feature of the school and offers an opportunity for the campus in fostering a community that supports student success.
 - Developing a summer reading experience for all students, faculty, and staff may aid in helping first year students begin to transition to college by exposing them to the types of readings and topics that they will encounter while in college. This book could be discussed across campus once classes start and would help returning students, faculty, and staff model the type of academic inquirer expected with the BSC community.
 - The current first-year course experiences would be best if it could be offered to all first-year students within their first semester. It could also benefit from being co-taught by a student who could serve as a peer advisor for students as they transition to campus life.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY AT BSC

EXAMINE IN GREATER DETAIL PROACTIVE SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR

Within our survey tool, we made a choice to exclude measures of proactive social adjustment due to our desire to examine the continuum of the entire BSC student experience and not only focus on the first-year student experience. Through our interviews, concerns about BSC students' ability to proactively adjust to the social and academic expectations of college within the BSC context were raised. Investigating how BSC students recognize and then adjust their behaviors to be successful would be useful as BSC continues to seek to understand how student persistence plays out as students mature as member of the BSC community. Our finding of the effectiveness of BSC orientation suggest that the College has a natural ability to inform and prepare students for what it takes to adjust to BSC, but understanding how to provide extended periods of orientation over the course of a student's career may be useful as BSC. Wrestling with how to continually education both students, faculty, and staff about what it means to be a BSC community member is important. As student demographics shift, a deeper understanding of how students deal with stress and what

supports and resources may be need to aid students in coping will only grow in importance. Developing a greater understanding of how BSC students adjust or do not throughout their career at BSC may prove to be essential tools in furthering improve student retention and providing better support to all students.

EXPLORE EMERGING RESEARCH ON IDENTITY-CONSCIOUS RETENTION

A new emerging field of research in student retention focuses on developing programmatic and policy supports that are built to address the needs of students as derived by their identities. Our findings suggest that student identities shape their BSC experience, especially along lines of race, gender, and family income. These types of student characteristics could be extending to understand that retention efforts of students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students must be different. Pendakur (2016) highlights this emerging field and suggest that such types of students require “retention and success services and programs that are designed with their identities in mind” (p. 6). Identity-conscious retention acknowledges the role of data in informing the construction of tailored retention efforts, and our study hopefully highlights how BSC can continue to use its resources and student data to track trends among students from different backgrounds to develop retention efforts that might consider how best to empower underrepresented students. Such empowerment and capacity building must consider measure of social, cultural, economic and academic capital and be concerned with aiding students in their pursuits while acknowledging there is no long a cookie-cutter BSC student identity. Such identity-conscious approach may aid BSC in embracing the new type of students it is welcoming onto campus while aligning its mission and practices to leverage its community of scholars in a way that helps every BSC student grow and graduate, not just those it has historically be able to support.

FURTHER INVESTIGATING STUDENT’S DELAYED EXIT

Our trend analysis, survey results, and interviews dimly highlighted the issue of timing of student departure. The untraditional nature of when students decided to leave is still perplexing to us, and we believe further investigation is needed in this area. Specifically examining academic and social practices that may be prolonging this process could be helpful. We have provided a few suggestions within our recommendations, but examining academic advising, the first year course structure and load alongside other academic requirements such as the senior project may allow BSC to adjust its policies and practices in a way that more fully embrace students through to graduation. Additionally, examining the student experience by class year will provide clarity about how best to support all students throughout their career and would inform how BSC goes about developing a model to extend social and psychological support throughout a student’s experience on campus. Uncovering more about when students leave and how they make such decisions will allow BSC to tackle the issue of student retention from all angles of the institutions and continue to shoulder and share the responsibility of helping all student be successful from matriculation to graduation and beyond.

CONCLUSION

BSC espouses to be an institution that strives to instill a value of community, integrity, and service in all its students by fostering intellectual and personal development (BSC, n.d.(c)). In such pursuit, like many small liberal arts institutions, BSC faces the conflict by being driven by such mission yet

externally focused to remain relevant in compressed and competitive enrollment market. In such a volatile landscape with far reaching institutional implications, student retention becomes a critical measure of stability and success. Understanding student departure and how best to address its challenges continues to be a hot topic within all of higher education, and within the BSC context the need to understand why students are leaving and how best to improve its support of student success is no different.

In an attempt to aid BSC in understanding its retention challenges and opportunities to improve such measures, we devised a project that was built upon a conceptual framework that values the integrative nature of the college experience that is shaped by student characteristics and on-campus experiences and the multiple institutional units and levers that influence and support student persistence. We examined existing data to find emerging trends of student retention among student demographics and show how and why data collection and analysis can be a useful tool in developing an institutional strategy of addressing retention issues and improving support for all admitted students. We approached this project striving to help BSC gain a better understanding of its current context and how students' experiences are lived out on campus by way of a student survey and campus interviews. These three approaches were put in conversation with relevant research and theory to aid BSC in understanding how their policies and practices shape widely held measures known to support and hinder student success and persistence.

Our examination of student characteristics show that such markers shape how a student experiences BSC and whether some students decide to continue be a part of its community or not. Such findings suggest high school academic achievement (grades and ACT scores), gender and race are distinguishing factors in the likelihood that a student will persist; each should be considered by BSC when thinking about how best to encourage students to develop deeper commitment to the institution. Our later investigation of the revised theory of student persistence found that social integration and its antecedents are factors that are helpful in understanding how students experience and make decisions to remain part of the BSC community. What is clear from our research is that BSC has a distinct culture and community that affects student persistence and students must fit within that culture to be successful. Such culture extends to the social and academic realms and involves faculty, staff, and institutional policy and practices. If a student fails to perform academically, they will likely leave. If a student's expectations of playing sports are not fulfilled they may choose to leave, and if a student does not find a connection on campus, they will likely opt to leave. These are key understandings that should shape how BSC aims to support its students and improve or create practices and policies to help make this distinct campus community accessible to all students for their success.

By way of inviting us into their community and asking us to help investigate the issue of student retention, Birmingham Southern College has shown a deep investment in improving the education it offers by way of supporting its students to the best of its ability. Further, the institutional investment across units, from the president's office down, highlights that BSC accepts the shared responsibility of improving student retention. It is our hope that such investment and concern continues as it seeks to live out its mission of building a community of scholars committed to integrity, service, and personal growth. Such shared responsibility and commitment to community is a defining feature of BSC and must continue to shape its policy, practice, and strategic direction by way of its exceptional faculty, dedicated staff, and tireless support of its students.

A FINAL THOUGHT

From the beginning of this process, our goal was to offer a useful project to Birmingham Southern that may aid them in improving their institutional support of students and increase the number of students who reap the benefits of graduating with a BSC degree. From examining their internal data to surveying the student body and spending focused time with students, faculty, and staff, we have gained a deep appreciation for the work BSC. Indeed, it is a special place trying to live out its mission and create a community on the hilltop on the edge of Birmingham. We sincerely hope BSC and its leaders will find our study and recommendations useful as they strive to more fully live into who they are and what type of institution they aspire to be.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Invitation

Draft: Revised 11/12/15; 11/6/15; 11/3/15; 10/18/15

Subject Line: You're Invited: Tell BSC about your student experience

Dear BSC student,

We are doctoral students at Vanderbilt University, and we are writing to you to request your participation in an online survey. Birmingham Southern College is interested in learning more about you and your experiences on campus. We are looking for your honest opinions, as your responses to this survey will help BSC evaluate the effectiveness of several of its policies and programs.

The survey will take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. When you submit your completed survey and provide your email address, you will be entered into a drawing for gift certificates to the BSC bookstore. If you complete your survey by November 25, you will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$50 gift certificate. If you complete your survey by December 15, you will be entered to win one of four \$25 gift certificates.

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary, and all of your responses will be kept confidential. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses to any reports of these data. Please click on the link below to go to the survey web site, or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser. By using your personal survey link, you will be able to complete the survey in multiple sessions if needed.

The Institutional Review Board at Vanderbilt University has approved this survey. Should you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact meagan.burton-krieger@vanderbilt.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Your participation is important and appreciated.

Sincerely,

The Vanderbilt Research Team



Appendix B: Student Survey

BSC Student Experience Survey

Dear Student,

We would like to invite you to participate in a survey about your student experience and the educational environment at Birmingham Southern College (BSC). This survey is a part of a larger study of student persistence at BSC and is being conducted by a team of researchers from Vanderbilt University.

In this survey, you will be asked questions about you, your student experience, and the academic and social environment at BSC. The information you provide will be used by the research team at Vanderbilt and by BSC to improve the student experience on campus. There is no risk or penalties for your participation and your responses will be held in confidence. Your participation is completely voluntary, and the survey should take you between 15 to 20 minutes to complete. You are free to decline to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable.

You may choose to provide your email address at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for 6 gift certificates to the BSC bookstore. If you complete your survey and provide your email by November 25, you will be entered to win one of two \$50 gift certificates. If you complete the survey and provide your email address by December 15, you will be entered to win one of four \$25 gift certificates. Your email address will be maintained separate from your survey responses to assure confidentiality.

If you should have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Meagan Burton-Krieger, Shellaná Henderson, or Mark McClendon, meagan.burton-krieger@vanderbilt.edu, shellana.henderson@vanderbilt.edu, or mark.e.mcclendon@vanderbilt.edu in the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations at Vanderbilt University. For additional information about this study, giving consent, or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board Office at (615) 322-2918 or toll free at (866) 224-8237.

Your participation is very important and greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer questions about your experiences at BSC.

Sincerely,

Meagan C. Burton-Krieger

Shellaná Henderson

Mark McClendon

CONSENT FORM

Date of Approval: 11/13/2015

11/07/2015 2:04pm



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board

www.projectredcap.org



Understanding your participation in this study:

Purpose of the Study: A team of researchers from Vanderbilt University is conducting a study that examines student persistence at Birmingham Southern College (BSC).

Purpose of the Survey: The survey is intended to gather information about the student experience and the educational environment at BSC.

Procedures: You must be 18 years old to complete this survey. Online completion of this survey should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes. By using your personal survey link provided in the invitation email, you will be able to complete the survey in multiple sessions; responses you have already entered will be saved. However, once you click "submit" at the very end of the survey, you will no longer be able to return.

Confidentiality: The team of researchers from Vanderbilt will keep all of the information you provide completely confidential, de-identified and will only use it for the purposes of the study. Responses will be statistically compiled into summaries and will never be presented in any way that would permit readers to identify you.

Participants: Surveys will be distributed to all BSC students who are at least 18 years old via email.

Benefits of Participation: Your completion of this survey gives you the opportunity to reflect on the on your college experience thus far. Your participation will provide valuable information that, when synthesized with other components of this research study may help to improve the student experience at BSC for others

Risks of Participation: There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this study.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to discontinue your participation at any time.

Incentives: If you provide your email address at the end of the survey, you will be entered in a drawing for 6 gift certificates to the BSC bookstore. If you complete your survey and provide your email by November 25, you will be entered to win one of two \$50 gift certificates. If you complete the survey and provide your email address by December 15, you will be entered to win one of four \$25 gift certificates. Your email address will be maintained separate from your survey responses to assure confidentiality.

Contact Information: If you should have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Meagan Burton-Krieger, Shellana Henderson, or Mark McClendon, meagan.burton-krieger@vanderbilt.edu, shellana.henderson@vanderbilt.edu, or mark.e.mcclendon@vanderbilt.edu in the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations at Vanderbilt University. For additional information about this study, giving consent, or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board Office at (615) 322-2918 or toll free at (866) 224-8237.

Informed Consent: By selecting YES below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the information provided to you about your participation in this survey. Have you read and understood the above information?

- Yes
 No



Please share some information about you. Please check the appropriate box to answer each question below.

1 What is your current enrollment status?

- Full time student
 Part time student

2 Are you:

- First year Sophomore
 Junior Senior

3 What was your average grade in high school?

- A +
 A
 A-
 B+
 B
 B-
 C+
 C
 C-
 D+
 D or lower

4 Have you attended college before enrolling at BSC?

- Yes while in high school
 Yes another institution
 No

5 How many semesters have you completed at BSC?

- 0
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8 or more

6 What is your current major(s)?

7 What value is closest to your present GPA in college?

- 4.0
 3.67
 3.33
 3.0
 2.67
 2.33
 2.0
 1.67
 1.33
 1.0 or lower
 NA (I am a first-year student)

8 Are you an intercollegiate athlete?

- Yes
 No

9 Do you plan to join or are you a member of a fraternity or sorority?

- Yes
 No

10 When I applied to college, BSC was my:

- first choice school
 second choice school
 third choice school
 fourth choice or more school



11

For each statement below please consider how satisfied you thought you would be when you decided to attend BSC compared to how satisfied you are now:

	Much worse than I thought	Worse than I thought	About as much as I thought	Better than I thought	Much better than I thought
a The day-to-day personal relationships I would have with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b My social life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c Overall, the degree to which I feel that I fit into the social environment here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d The quality of the faculty I would have for my courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e The number of students in my classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f The quality of courses in the fields I am interested in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12 What do you think you will be doing in Spring 2016?

- attending BSC
 attending another college or university
 not attending any college or university

13 What do you think you will be doing in Fall 2016?

- attending BSC
 attending another college or university
 not attending any college or university



14

During your last year of high school, how frequently did you engage in the following activities?

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
a Took private art or music lessons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b Participated in band, chorus, or orchestra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c Participated in dance at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d Participated in drama club	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e Participated in a school play or musical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f Visited art or history museums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g Attended a performing arts production (symphony concert, ballet, or opera)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h Took a dance class outside of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i Studied a foreign language outside regular school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j Borrowed books from the public library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k Read for pleasure outside of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l Traveled abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m Performed volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



15

Please indicate your parents' highest level of education.

	Father	Mother
Elementary school or less	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High school graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postsecondary school other than college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some graduate school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16 What is your best estimate of your household total income last year? Consider income from all sources before taxes.

- less than \$6,000
 \$6,000 to \$9,999
 \$10,000 to \$14,999
 \$15,000 to \$19,999
 \$20,000 to \$24,999
 \$25,000 to \$29,999
 \$30,000 to \$39,999
 \$40,000 to \$49,999
 \$50,000 to \$59,999
 \$60,000 to \$74,999
 \$75,000 to \$99,999
 \$100,000 to \$149,999
 \$150,000 to \$199,999
 \$200,000 or more
 I prefer not to answer this question.

17 What sources do you plan to use to cover your Spring semester's educational expenses (Room, Board, Tuition, and Fees)? Select all that apply.

- Parents, other relatives or friends
 Spouse
 Savings
 Pell Grant
 Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
 State Scholarship or Grant
 College Work-Study Grant
 College Grant/Scholarship (other than above)
 Other private grant or scholarship
 Other Government Aid (ROTC, BIA, GI/ military benefits, etc.)
 Stafford Loan (GSL)
 Perkins Loan
 Other Loan
 College Loan
 Other than above

18 Do you have any concerns about your ability to finance your college education?

- None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds)
 Some (but I probably will have enough funds)
 Major (not sure I will have enough funds to complete college)



19 Where do you currently reside?

- On campus, in a residence hall
- On campus in a fraternity or sorority house
- In other on campus housing
- Off campus with my parents
- Off campus with my spouse and/ or with my children
- Off campus by myself and/ or with my children
- Off campus with a roommate



20

The following is a list of statements characterizing various aspects of the academic and social life in the residence halls at BSC. You may skip this section if you do not currently live in a residence hall. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with each statement, as it applies to your experience of currently living in a residence hall:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a I think my residence hall floor is a good place to live.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b People on my residence hall floor do not share the same values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c My neighbor and I want the same type of community in our residence hall.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d I can recognize all of the people who live on my residence hall.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e I feel at home on my residence hall floor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f Very few of my neighbors on my residence hall floor know me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g I care about what my neighbors on my residence hall floor think about my actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h I have no influence over what my residence hall floor is like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i If there is a problem on my residence hall floor, people who live there can get it solved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j It is very important to me to live on my particular residence hall floor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k People on my residence hall floor generally don't get along with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21 How many miles is BSC from your permanent home?

- 5 or less
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 50
- 51 to 100
- 101 to 500
- Over 500



22

During your time at BSC, indicate how often you have engaged in the following activities:

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
a Discussed course content with other students outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b Met with a faculty during their office hours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c Attended campus movies, plays, concerts, and/or recitals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d Studied with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e Participated in social activities with members of the Greek system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f Gone out on a date with another student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g Drank beer, wine, or liquor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h Had lunch or dinner with a faculty member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i Socialized with friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j Talked with faculty outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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23

Please give us your level of agreement regarding each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a The religious affiliation/orientation of BSC was important in my choice to enroll here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b In general, I like the way students treat each other here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c In my view, students here leave campus for weekends just about the right amount.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d There are students on campus that I would like to know better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e I see several ways that I can make connections with students on campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f I recognize many students I see on campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g I'm confident that there are students on campus with whom I share important values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h In general, students here seem to deal with conflicts constructively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i In general, students here encourage academic success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j Academic advising is a strong component of the academic environment here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k First Year Orientation adequately prepared me for success in the academic environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l First Year Orientation adequately prepared me for success in the social environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m My First Year courses (ES and EH) adequately prepared me for success in the academic environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n I know where to go for help if I am having academic difficulties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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24

The following is a list of statements characterizing various aspects of BSC as an institution. Please indicate the level of your agreement with each statement, as it applies to your experiences.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a In general, I know where to go if I need more information about campus policy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b The values of BSC are communicated clearly to the campus community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c The actions of the administration are consistent with the stated mission and values of the institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



25

The following is a list of statements characterizing various aspects of academic life at BSC. Please indicate the level of your agreement with each statement, as it applies to your experiences.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a I have considered transferring to another school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b I am satisfied with my academic experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely outstanding or superior teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d Most faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f I have experienced negative interactions with faculty members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g In general, faculty members treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h I feel academically and intellectually challenged here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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The following is a list of statements characterizing various aspects of social life at BSC. Please indicate the level of your agreement with each statement, as it applies to your experiences.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a My interpersonal relationship with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b Since coming to BSC, I have developed close personal relationships with other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e Few of the students I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f Most student development staff (e.g. dean of students office, student activities, housing, etc.) I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g I have experienced negative interactions with student development staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h In general, student development staff treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i Most other college staff (e.g. registrar, student accounts, financial aid, etc.) I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j I have experienced negative interactions with other college/university staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



k In general, other college/university staff treat students with respect.



Indicate how well informed you are about each of the following. Please indicate only one response for each statement.

	Very poorly informed	Poorly informed	Neither well nor poorly informed	Well informed	Very well informed
a Honor Code	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b Social rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c Course requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d Graduation requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e Changes to academic rule/requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f Changes to social rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Are each of the following things done fairly at BSC (in your opinion)?

	Not at all	To a small extent	To some extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
a Enforcement of the honor code (e.g. against cheating)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b Enforcement of social rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c Grading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d Awarding scholarships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e Assigning student housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



29

Following is a list of more statements characterizing various aspects of academic and social life at BSC. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with each statement as it applies to your experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a I have observed discriminatory words, behaviors or gestures directed at minority students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b I feel that there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c I have encountered racism while attending this institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d I have heard negative words about people of my own race or ethnicity while attending classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among academic staff here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among nonacademic staff here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g I have been singled out in class or treated differently than other students because of my race.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h The intellectual atmosphere at BSC suits me fine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i The courses I am currently taking present the right amount of academic challenge for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j The major I want to pursue is available at BSC.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k It is important to me to earn a college degree.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l It is not important for me to graduate from BSC.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to attend BSC.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n My family encourages me to continue attending BSC.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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My family encourages me to get a college degree.



Please share some more information about yourself. Check the appropriate box to answer each question below.

30 Are you: (Select all that apply)

- African American/ Black
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian American/Asian
- Caucasian/White
- Mexican American/Chicano
- Middle Eastern
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Puerto Rican
- Other Latino
- Other
- I prefer not to respond to this question

31 Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Other
- I prefer not to respond to this question.

32 Your current age?

- 18-19
- 20-21
- 22-23
- 24 or older

33 Are you a US citizen?

- Yes
- No

34 Are you currently married?

- Yes
- No



Thank you for your participation!

Please enter your email address to be entered in a drawing for one of 6 gift certificates to the BSC bookstore. Please note that you are not required to enter your email address to complete the survey, but must do so in order to be eligible to win. Your email information will remain confidential and separate from your response.



Appendix C: Survey Analysis Result Tables

Table 1

Operational Definitions and Descriptive Statistics of Variables Used in Analysis

Variable	Survey Question	Operational Definition/ Coding	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender	31	Student gender (female =1, male/other=0)	253	0.64	0.481
Race/Ethnicity	30	Student race/ethnicity (caucasian/white =1, other=0)	260	0.769	0.422
Parental Education	15	Composite variable is the sum of each parent's educational attainment if there were two parents (elementary school or less for both parents = 2 to graduate degree for both parents =16)	260	12.023	3.58
Family Income	16	Self-reported estimate of the student's household income for the pervious year (less than\$6,000 = 1 to \$200,000 or more = 14, prefer not to Answer =15)	242	10.85	3.38
Average High School Grades	3	Self-reported avearge grades during high school (D or lower = 1 to A +=11)	259	9.097	1.301
Ability to Pay	18	Student concern about paying for college (no concerns about paying = 1 to major concerns = 3)	260	1.8	0.603
Cultural Capital	14 a-m	Composite variable of 13 items that gauges the frequency a student participated in cultural activities during their senior year of high school (never= 1 to very frequently= 5). Cronbach's alpha = .813	260	2.139	1.019
Class Year	2	Student class year used to create dummy variables for each class year	257	2.42	1.16
First Year		First year students (first-year =1, other=0)	257	0.3152	0.465
Sophomore		Sophomore students (sophomore =1, other=0)	257	0.187	0.391
Junior		Junior students (junior =1, other=0)	257	0.265	0.442
Senior		Senior students (senior =1, other=0)	257	0.234	0.424
Present College GPA	7	Self-reported current college GPA (NA for first year students=0 to 4.0=4)	259	3.05	1.002
Athlete	8	Student participation in Division III athletics (athlete =1, nonathlete=0)	260	0.32	0.466
Greek	9	Student participation in Greek system (Greek affiliation =1, non-Greek = 0)	260	0.52	0.501
Campus Residency	19	Living on campus in a resident hall, fraternity/ sorority house, or campus owned apartment=1, off campus=0	259	0.849	0.358
Initial Institutional Commitment	10	Rank of student's choice of BSC in college search process (4th or more choice=1 to first choice=4)	259	3.108	0.69
Communal Potential	23 b-i	Composite variable of 8 items that measure a student's perception of the potential for community among peers on campus (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4). Cronbach's alpha = .813	259	3.024	0.443
Institutional Commitment to the Welfare of Students	24 a; 25 f-g; 26 f-k	Composite variable of 9 items that measure a student's perception of the institution's commitment to the welfare of students (stongly disagree=1 to strongly agree =4). Items 25f, 26g, and 26j were reverse coded. Cronbach's alpha = .819	259	3.038	0.467
Institutional Integrity	24 b-c	Composite variable of 2 items that measure a student's perceptions that the institution exhibits integrity (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4). Cronbach's alpha = .768	259	3.108	0.69
Psychosocial Engagement	22 a, c-g, I	Composite variable of 7 items that gauges a student's active participation and involvement in various aspects of campus life (never=1 to very often=5). Cronbach's alpha = .765	260	2.775	0.639

Social Integration	26 a-e	Composite variable of 5 items that measures the extent to which a student feels integrated in the campus social system (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=4). Items 26 d-e were reverse coded. Cronbach's alpha = .79	558	3.04	0.61
Subsequent Institutional Commitment	29 l-m	Composite variable of 2 items that measure the degree to which a student remains committed to enrollment at BSC (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree= 1). Item 29 l was reverse coded. Cronbach's alpha = .498	259	3.28	0.682
Student Persistence	12, 13	Variable measuring the intent of a student to remain enrolled at BSC in the Fall 2016, excluding graduating seniors (Planning to be enrolled at BSC in Fall =1, Planning on not being enrolled at BSC in Fall (excluding graduating seniors)=0)	203	0.936	0.245
Academic Advising	23 j	Student response to "advising is a strong part of the academic environment her" (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4)	257	3.06	0.726
Communication	27 a-f	Composite variable of 6 items that measures a student's perceptions of being well informed about rules and policy (very poorly informed=1 to very well informed=5). Cronbach's alpha = .867	259	3.7784	0.757
Dimension of Community in Residence Hall: Identity	20 a, e, g, j	Composite variable of 4 items that measure a student's sense of communal identity in their residential hall (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4). Cronbach's alpha = .732	205	2.748	0.62
Dimension of Community in Residence Hall: Interaction	20 d, f, h, k	Composite variable of 4 items that measure a student's sense of communal interaction in their residential hall (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4). Items 20 f, h, and k were reverse coded. Cronbach's alpha = .729	203	2.748	0.652
Dimension of Community in Residence Hall: Solidarity	20 b, c, i	Composite variable of 3 items that measure a student's sense of communal solidarity in their residential hall (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4). Item 20 b was reverse coded. Cronbach's alpha = .441	204	2.8137	0.492
Faculty Interest in Students	25d	Student response to "most faculty are interested in students" (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4.	259	3.39	0.651
Fairness	28 a-e	Composite variable of 5 items that measure a student's sense fairness at BSC (not at all=1 to a very great extent=5). Cronbach's alpha = .792	259	3.6376	0.74
Orientation as Preparation for Academic Success	23 k	Student response to "first-year orientation adequately prepared me for success in the academic environment" (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4)	258	2.74	0.876
Move-In Weekend as Preparation for Social Success	23 l	Student response to "first-year orientation adequately prepared me for success in the social environment" (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4)	258	2.63	0.9
First Year Courses as Academic Preparation	23 m	Student response to ""my first-year courses (ES and EH)adequately prepared me for success in the academic environment" (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4)	258	2.73	0.787
Know Where to Go for Academic Help	23 n	Student response to "I know where to go for help if I am having academic difficulties" (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree = 4)	258	3.31	0.668
Fulfillment of Academic Expectations	11 d-f	Composite variable of 3 items that compares a student's academic satisfaction (much worse than expected=1 to much better than expected=5). Cronbach's alpha = .705	260	3.5923	0.715
Fulfillment of Social Expectations	11 a-c	Composite variable of 3 items that compares a student's social satisfaction (much worse than expected=1 to much better than expected=5). Cronbach's alpha = .855	260	3.4462	0.953

Student Perceptions of Prejudice and Racial Discrimination	29 a- g	Composite variable of 7 items that measure a students perception of discrimination at BSC (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=4) . Cronbach's alpha = .858	259	1.9512	0.623
Student Reports of Good Teaching	25 c, e	Composite variable of 2 reverse coded items that measures a student's belief that good teaching is happening at BSC (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=4). Cronbach's alpha = .685	257	2.7704	0.855

Table 2

Results from the Regression Analysis for Social Integration and the Revised Theory of Student

Standardized Regression Coefficients

Variables	DV: Social Integration (Original Model)	DV: Social Integration (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics)	DV: Social Integration (Model III: Additional Student Characteristics and Class Years)
Gender	.010 (.012)	.035(.045)	.044(.056)
Race	-.016(-.023)	-.019(-.028)	-.038(-.057)
Parental education	-.079(-.014)	-.064(-.011)	-.065(-.011)
Family income	.019(.003)	.005(.001)	.020(.003)
HS GPA	.051(.027)	.045(.023)	.031(.016)
Live on campus	.001(.001)	.006(.011)	.014(.024)
Initial commitment to institution	.004(.003)	-.009(-.007)	-.008(-.006)
Ability to pay	-.041(-.041)	-.032(-.033)	-.027(-.027)
Institutional commitment to student welfare	.127(.173)*	.127(.174)*	.129(.177)*
Communal potential	.393(.594)***	.391(.592)***	.395(.593)***
Institutional integrity	-.059(-.055)	-.045(-.042)	-.033(-.031)
Psychosocial engagement	.423(.404)***	.438(.418)***	.435(.413)***
College GPA	---	-.023(-.014)	.003(.002)
Athlete	---	-.058(-.076)	-.055(-.071)
Greek	---	.022(.026)	.008(.009)
Cultural capital	---	-.111(-.097)	-.110(-.096)
First year	---	---	-.002(-.002)
Sophomore	---	---	-.085(-.129)
Junior	---	---	-.067(-.091)
Constant	N.A. (-.265)	N.A. (-.065)	N.A. (-.061)
Adjusted R-Squared	0.476***	0.476***	0.471***
N	231	231	228

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

Table 3

Results from the Regression Analysis for Subsequent Institutional Commitment and the Revised Theory of Student Persistence

Standardized Regression Coefficients

Variables	DV: Subsequent Institutional Commitment (Original Model)	DV: Subsequent Institutional Commitment (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics)	DV: Subsequent Institutional Commitment (Model III: Additional Student Characteristics and Class Years)
Gender	.097 (.135)	.130 (.182)*	.128(.179)*
Race	.125(.205)*	.119(.195)*	.121(.200)*
Parental education	-.059(-.012)	-.045(-.009)	-.029(-.006)
Family income	-.019(-.004)	-.016(-.003)	-.022(-.004)
HS GPA	-.036(-.021)	-.062(-.036)	-.055(-.032)
Live on campus	-.039(-.072)	-.046(-.085)	-.046(-.085)
Initial commitment to institution	.076(.058)	.067(.051)	.065(.050)
Ability to pay	-.052(-.058)	-.038(-.043)	-.027(-.030)
Institutional commitment to student welfare	.131(.198)	.134(.202)	.153(.231)*
Communal potential	.195(.326)*	.211(.353)**	.203(.336)*
Institutional integrity	-.017(-.018)	-.015(-.016)	-.006(-.006)
Psychosocial engagement	-.051(-.054)	-.058(-.062)	-.095(-.100)
Social integration	.369(.408)***	.364(.403)***	.370(.409)***
College GPA	---	.078(.055)	.061(.043)
Athlete	---	.054(.079)	.073(.105)
Greek	---	-.002(-.003)	.015(.019)
Cultural capital	---	-.068(-.066)	-.054(-.052)
First year	---	---	-.081(-.119)
Sophomore	---	---	-.018(-.031)
Junior	---	---	-.073(-.111)
Constant	N.A. (.766)	N.A. (.730)	N.A. (.719)
Adjusted R-Squared	0.341***	0.344***	0.336***
N	231	231	228

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

Table 4

Results from the Regression Analysis for Persistence and the Revised Theory of Student Persistence

Variables	DV: Persistence(Original Model)	DV: Persistence (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics)	DV:Persistence(Model III: Additional Student Characteristics and Class Years)
Gender	1.191 (1.293)	-.422 (1.835)	---
Race	2.578 (1.729)	2.282 (2.575)	---
Parental education	.139 (.205)	.088 (.327)	---
Family income	-.002 (.213)	.226 (.291)	---
HS GPA	-.415 (.561)	-.789 (1.063)	---
Live on campus	-1.685 (2.620)	-3.130 (4.601)	---
Initial commitment to institution	.782 (.646)	1.903 (1.243)	---
Ability to pay	1.472 (1.385)	5.227 (3.234)	---
Institutional commitment to student welfare	.854 (2.039)	-.634 (2.574)	---
Communal potential	1.749 (2.420)	3.053 (3.759)	---
Institutional integrity	2.009 (1.492)	4.257 (3.015)	---
Psychosocial engagement	1.853 (1.255)	.395 (2.368)	---
Social integration	-1.822 (1.475)	-3.632 (3.019)	---
Subsequent institutional commitment	2.162* (.955)	4.173 (2.233)	---
College GPA	---	.563 (1.526)	---
Athlete	---	-1.911 (2.918)	---
Greek	---	2.947 (3.281)	---
Cultural capital	---	4.469 (3.319)	---
First year	---	---	---
Sophomore	---	---	---
Junior	---	---	---
Constant	-19.051 (13.010)	-36.678 (20.626)	---
Adjusted R-Squared	0.686	0.770	---
N	178	178	---

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 5

Results from the Regression Analysis to Identify Factors of Psychosocial Engagement

Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients		
	DV: Psychosocial Engagement (Original Model)	DV: Psychosocial Engagement (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics)	DV: Psychosocial Engagement (Model III: Additional Student Characteristics and Class Years)
Gender	-.022(-.027)	-.115(-.145)	-.124(-.157)
Race	.084(.128)	.001(.001)	.009(.015)
Parental education	-.083(-.015)	-.089(-.016)	-.039(-.007)
Family income	.154(.026)*	.125 (.021)	.097(.017)
HS GPA	.042(.022)	.041(.021)	.024(.013)
Ability to pay	-.011(-.011)	-.027(-.027)	.005(.005)
Cultural capital	.091(.077)	.175(.149)**	.211(.181)***
Initial commitment to institution	.025(.017)	.038(.027)	.040(.057)
First-year orientation/move in weekend--social success	-.039(-.027)	.018(.012)	.040(.028)
Communal potential	.291(.440)***	.176(.267)*	.168(.253)*
Identity-residence hall	.169(.169)*	.081(.081)	.069(.069)
Interaction-residence hall	.175(.164)*	.171(.160)*	.155(.147)*
Solidarity-residence hall	.074(.091)	.056(.069)	.051(.062)
College GPA	---	.111(.069)	.039(.024)
Athlete	---	.212(.275)***	.211(.274)***
Greek	---	.388(.468)***	.409(.493)***
First year	---	---	-.382(-.483)***
Sophomore	---	---	-.206(-.294)**
Junior	---	---	-.179(-.256)*
Constant	N.A. (-.241)	N.A. (.055)	N.A. (.410)
Adjusted R-Squared	0.273***	.429***	.492***
N	180	180	177

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

Table 6

Results from the Regression Analysis to Identify Factors of Institutional Commitment to Student Welfare

Standardized Regression Coefficients

Variables	DV: Commitment of the Institution to Student Welfare (Original Model)	DV: Commitment of the Institution to Student Welfare (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics and Measures)	DV: Commitment of the Institution to Student Welfare (Model III: Additional Student Characteristics, Measures, and Class Year)
Gender	.037(.034)	.055(.051)	.050(.046)
Race	-.125(-.135)*	-.103(-.111)	-.086(-.093)
Parental education	-.050(-.006)	-.035(-.005)	-.057(-.007)
Family income	-.013(-.002)	-.009(-.001)	.003(.000)
HS GPA	-.043(-.016)	-.045(-.017)	-.035(-.013)
Initial commitment to institution	.050(.025)	.059(.030)	.058(.029)
Live on campus	-.030(-.036)	-.039(-.047)	-.051(-.061)
First-year orientation--academic success	.187(.098)***	.190(.099)**	.162(.085)**
Academic advising	.003(.002)	-.012(-.007)	-.018(-.011)
Communication	.076(.049)	.081(.052)	.106(.068)
Fairness	.348(.223)***	.337(.217)***	.320(.207)***
Racial discrimination and prejudice	-.193(-.138)***	-.197(-.141)***	-.157(-.112)**
Faculty interest in students	.203(.147)***	.174(.126)**	.182(.131)**
Good teaching	.050(.026)	.036(.019)	.035(.018)
First-year courses--academic success	---	-.060(-.035)	-.069(-.039)
Academic help	---	.109(.080)	.130(.094)*
College GPA	---	-.042(-.019)	-.010(-.005)
Athlete	---	-.005(-.004)	-.015(-.014)
Greek	---	-.054(-.048)	-.047(-.041)
Cultural capital	---	.017(.011)	-.003(-.002)
First year	---	---	.168(.161)*
Sophomore	---	---	.156(.176)**
Junior	---	---	.084(.084)
Constant	N.A. (1.741)***	N.A. (1.711)***	N.A. (1.495)***
Adjusted R-Squared	.487***	.481***	.491***
N	230	229	226

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

Table 7

Results from the Regression Analysis to Identify Factors of Communal Potential

Standardized Regression Coefficients

Variables	DV: Communal Potential (Original Model)	DV: Communal Potential (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics)	DV: Communal Potential (Model III: Additional Student Characteristics and Class Year)
Gender	-.138(-.116)	-.168(-.141)*	-.180(-.153)*
Race	.019(.019)	-.025(-.025)	-.024(-.024)
Parental education	.103(.012)	.102(.012)	.105(.013)
Family income	-.022(-.002)	-.054(-.006)	-.053(-.006)
HS GPA	-.053(-.018)	-.029(-.010)	-.005(-.002)
Ability to pay	-.108(-.072)	-.138(-.092)	-.131(-.088)
Initial commitment to institution	.134(.062)*	.135(.062)*	.131(.062)*
Cultural capital	.115(.065)	.146(.082)*	.166(.095)*
First-year orientation/move in weekend--social success	.335(.152)***	.333(.151)***	.335(.163)***
Identity-residence hall	.166(.110)*	.119(.079)	.177(.077)
Interaction-residence hall	-.007(-.005)	.013(.008)	.009(.005)
Solidarity-residence hall	.189(.153)*	.159(.129)*	.150(.122)*
College GPA	---	-.063(-.026)	-.087(-.036)
Athlete	---	.109(.093)	.120(.103)
Greek	---	.215(.172)**	.217(.174)**
First year	---	---	.014(.012)
Sophomore	---	---	.098(.093)
Junior	---	---	.103(.098)
Constant	N.A. (1.804)***	N.A. (1.900)***	N.A. (1.771)***
Adjusted R-Squared	0.276***	.317***	.318***
N	180	180	177

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

Table 8

Results from the Regression Analysis to Identify Factors of Institutional Integrity

Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients		
	DV: Institutional Integrity (Original Model)	DV: Institutional Integrity (Model II: Additional Student Characteristics)	DV: Institutional Integrity (Model III: Additional Student Characteristics and Class Year)
Gender	.221(.300)***	.193(.262)**	.177(.235)**
Race	-.125(-.200)*	-.109(-.174)	-.089(-.140)
Parental education	.084(.016)	.064(.012)	.044(.008)
Family income	-.067(-.013)	-.043(-.008)	-.028(-.005)
HS GPA	-.047(-.026)	-.027(-.015)	-.027(-.015)
Initial commitment to institution	.052(.039)	.067(.050)	.050(.037)
Living on campus	-.042(-.076)	-.054(-.096)	-.060(-.105)
Faculty interest in students	.270(.288)***	.287(.306)***	.303(.308)***
Good teaching	.006(.004)	.003(.002)	-.017(-.013)
Fulfillment of expectations: academic	.105(.098)	.081(.076)	.107(.099)
Fulfillment of expectations: social	.244(.155)***	.222(.154)***	.238(.163)***
Racial discrimination and prejudice	-.272(-.287)***	-.294(-.310)***	-.234(-.243)***
College GPA	---	-.083(-.057)	-.058(-.038)
Athlete	---	.119(.167)	.106(.145)
Greek	---	-.066(-.085)	-.051(-.064)
Cultural capital	---	.162(.152)*	.133(.123)*
First year	---	---	.113(.157)
Sophomore	---	---	.143(.232)*
Junior	---	---	.041(.059)
Constant	N.A. (1.90)***	N.A. (1.702)***	N.A. (1.412)**
Adjusted R-Squared	.320***	.342***	.350***
N	231	231	228

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

Appendix D: Trend Analysis Tables

Birmingham Southern University
Retention and Graduation by Cohorts (Fall through Summer)
Retention (2009 - 2014) and Graduation (2009 - 2011)

Cohort 2009 = ("1st Year" for terms 09/FA + 09/SU)

Description		Total	Retention						Graduation	
			1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Total -4 Year	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Women	205	181	88.3%	157	76.6%	150	73.2%	132	64.4%
	Men	219	168	76.7%	132	60.3%	118	53.9%	92	42.0%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%
Ethnicity	Black/African American	39	29	74.4%	19	48.7%	19	48.7%	15	38.5%
	White	341	279	81.8%	237	69.5%	220	64.5%	185	54.3%
	Hispanic	12	10	83.3%	6	50.0%	6	50.0%	5	41.7%
	Asian or Pacific Is	19	19	100.0%	18	94.7%	16	84.2%	13	68.4%
	System Missing									
	No response									
	Other	13	12	92.3%	9	69.2%	7	53.8%	6	46.2%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%
ACT Scores	No record	58	44	75.9%	36	62.1%	30	51.7%	27	46.6%
	0 to 25th Percentile									
	25th to 50th Percentile	9	5	55.6%	3	33.3%	3	33.3%	2	22.2%
	50th to 75th Percentile	96	71	74.0%	53	55.2%	50	52.1%	38	39.6%
	Greater than 75th Percentile	261	229	87.7%	197	75.5%	185	70.9%	157	60.2%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%
High school G.P.A.	No record	2	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
	A	158	143	90.5%	125	79.1%	119	75.3%	113	71.5%
	B	210	161	76.7%	133	63.3%	123	58.6%	94	44.8%
	C	54	44	81.5%	30	55.6%	25	46.3%	16	29.6%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%
Student Home	Blank Data	6	5	83.3%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	3	50.0%
	Instate	245	205	83.7%	167	68.2%	155	63.3%	132	53.9%
	Out of state	173	139	80.3%	118	68.2%	111	64.2%	89	51.4%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%
Athletic Participation	Not athlete	245	209	85.3%	178	72.7%	166	67.8%	133	54.3%
	Women	52	48	92.3%	41	78.8%	39	75.0%	38	73.1%
	Male	127	92	72.4%	70	55.1%	63	49.6%	53	41.7%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%
Greek Participation	Not Greek	233	179	76.8%	135	57.9%	123	52.8%	108	46.4%
	Female Greek	114	103	90.4%	98	86.0%	91	79.8%	80	70.2%
	Male	77	67	87.0%	56	72.7%	54	70.1%	36	46.8%
	Total	424	349	82.3%	289	68.2%	268	63.2%	224	52.8%

Cohort 2010 = ("1st Year" for terms 10/FA + 10/SU)

Description		Total	Retention						Graduation	
			1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Total -4 Year	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Women	171	144	84.2%	130	76.0%	128	74.9%	118	69.0%
	Men	197	146	74.1%	135	68.5%	126	64.0%	110	55.8%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%
Ethnicity	Black/African American	28	18	64.3%	15	53.6%	13	46.4%	7	25.0%
	White	298	238	79.9%	218	73.2%	211	70.8%	192	64.4%
	Hispanic	19	16	84.2%	15	78.9%	14	73.7%	14	73.7%
	Asian or Pacific Is	14	13	92.9%	11	78.6%	10	71.4%	10	71.4%
	System Missing									
	No response	4	2	50.0%	3	75.0%	3	75.0%	2	50.0%
	Other	5	3	60.0%	3	60.0%	3	60.0%	3	60.0%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%
ACT Scores	No record	64	50	78.1%	46	71.9%	44	68.8%	40	62.5%
	0 to 25th Percentile									
	25th to 50th Percentile	1	1	100.0%	1	100.0%				
	50th to 75th Percentile	59	40	67.8%	31	52.5%	29	49.2%	26	44.1%
	Greater than 75th Percentile	244	199	81.6%	187	76.6%	181	74.2%	162	66.4%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%
High school G.P.A.	No record	6	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	3	50.0%
	A	143	125	87.4%	119	83.2%	118	82.5%	115	80.4%
	B	182	137	75.3%	125	68.7%	117	64.3%	100	54.9%
	C	37	24	64.9%	19	51.4%	18	48.6%	10	27.0%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%
Student Home	Blank Data	11	9	81.8%	7	63.6%	5	45.5%	7	63.6%
	Instate	205	167	81.5%	156	76.1%	148	72.2%	131	63.9%
	Out of state	152	114	75.0%	102	67.1%	101	66.4%	90	59.2%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%

Athletic Participation	Not athlete	232	185	79.7%	168	72.4%	160	69.0%	140	60.3%
	Women	33	28	84.8%	27	81.8%	27	81.8%	26	78.8%
	Male	103	77	74.8%	70	68.0%	67	65.0%	62	60.2%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%
Greek Participation	Not Greek	182	117	64.3%	105	57.7%	98	53.8%	88	48.4%
	Female Greek	107	101	94.4%	93	86.9%	91	85.0%	85	79.4%
	Male	79	72	91.1%	67	84.8%	65	82.3%	55	69.6%
	Total	368	290	78.8%	265	72.0%	254	69.0%	228	62.0%

Cohort 2011 = ("1st Year" for terms 11/FA + 11/SU)										
Description		Total	Retention						Graduation	
			1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Total -4 Year	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Women	116	94	81.0%	83	71.6%	78	67.2%	68	58.6%
	Men	162	130	80.2%	109	67.3%	104	64.2%	87	53.7%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%
Ethnicity	Black/African American	25	21	84.0%	18	72.0%	17	68.0%	10	40.0%
	White	236	187	79.2%	160	67.8%	153	64.8%	136	57.6%
	Hispanic	3	3	100.0%	2	66.7%	2	66.7%	2	66.7%
	Asian or Pacific Is	7	7	100.0%	6	85.7%	4	57.1%	3	42.9%
	System Missing									
	No response	2	2	100.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%		
	Other	5	4	80.0%	4	80.0%	4	80.0%	4	80.0%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%
ACT Scores	No record	42	33	78.6%	26	61.9%	21	50.0%	22	52.4%
	0 to 25th Percentile									
	25th to 50th Percentile	6	6	100.0%	2	33.3%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%
	50th to 75th Percentile	54	38	70.4%	32	59.3%	30	55.6%	21	38.9%
	Greater than 75th Percentile	176	147	83.5%	132	75.0%	129	73.3%	111	63.1%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%
High school G.P.A.	No record									
	A	106	92	86.8%	84	79.2%	78	73.6%	75	70.8%
	B	135	106	78.5%	91	67.4%	87	64.4%	72	53.3%
	C	37	26	70.3%	17	45.9%	17	45.9%	8	21.6%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%
Student Home	Blank Data	9	8	88.9%	4	44.4%	1	11.1%	4	44.4%
	Instate	157	131	83.4%	114	72.6%	112	71.3%	89	56.7%
	Out of state	112	85	75.9%	74	66.1%	69	61.6%	62	55.4%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%
Athletic Participation	Not athlete	145	117	80.7%	99	68.3%	94	64.8%	78	53.8%
	Women	32	26	81.3%	25	78.1%	24	75.0%	21	65.6%
	Male	101	81	80.2%	68	67.3%	64	63.4%	56	55.4%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%
Greek Participation	Not Greek	152	111	73.0%	90	59.2%	83	54.6%	68	44.7%
	Female Greek	70	61	87.1%	55	78.6%	52	74.3%	46	65.7%
	Male	56	52	92.9%	47	83.9%	47	83.9%	41	73.2%
	Total	278	224	80.6%	192	69.1%	182	65.5%	155	55.8%

Cohort 2012 = ("1st Year" for terms 12/FA + 12/SU)										
Description		Total	Retention - Only (4 years of Graduation have not occurred)						Graduation	
			1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year		Total -4 Year	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Women	135	119	88.1%	111	82.2%	107	79.3%	Data will only be available in the future	
	Men	192	143	74.5%	126	65.6%	114	59.4%		
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%		
Ethnicity	Black/African American	32	20	62.5%	17	53.1%	13	40.6%		
	White	272	222	81.6%	202	74.3%	191	70.2%		
	Hispanic	4	4	100.0%	4	100.0%	4	100.0%		
	Asian or Pacific Is	13	12	92.3%	12	92.3%	11	84.6%		
	System Missing									
	No response									
	Other	6	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	2	33.3%		
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%		
ACT Scores	No record	38	32	84.2%	27	71.1%	24	63.2%		
	0 to 25th Percentile	1	1	100.0%	1	100.0%				
	25th to 50th Percentile	4	3	75.0%	3	75.0%	3	75.0%		
	50th to 75th Percentile	75	50	66.7%	44	58.7%	40	53.3%		
	Greater than 75th Percentile	209	176	84.2%	162	77.5%	154	73.7%		
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%		
High school G.P.A.	No record									
	A	134	116	86.6%	106	79.1%	101	75.4%		
	B	157	123	78.3%	110	70.1%	102	65.0%		

	C	36	23	63.9%	21	58.3%	18	50.0%
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%
Student Home	Blank Data	4	3	75.0%				
	Instate	181	143	79.0%	133	73.5%	125	69.1%
	Out of state	142	116	81.7%	104	73.2%	96	67.6%
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%
Athletic Participation	Not athlete	214	151	70.6%	139	65.0%	131	61.2%
	Women	44	43	97.7%	39	88.6%	38	86.4%
	Male	69	68	98.6%	59	85.5%	52	75.4%
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%
Greek Participation	Not Greek	177	123	69.5%	108	61.0%	95	53.7%
	Female Greek	81	77	95.1%	71	87.7%	70	86.4%
	Male	69	62	89.9%	58	84.1%	56	81.2%
	Total	327	262	80.1%	237	72.5%	221	67.6%

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Cohort 2013 = ("Freshmen 1st Year" for terms 13/FA + 13/SU)								
Description		Total	Retention				Graduation	
			1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Women	154	135	87.7%	133	86.4%		
	Men	202	161	79.7%	137	67.8%		
	Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%		
Ethnicity	Black/African American	45	33	73.3%	29	64.4%		
	White	275	234	85.1%	216	78.5%		
	Hispanic	13	10	76.9%	8	61.5%		
	Asian or Pacific Is	13	10	76.9%	8	61.5%		
	System Missing							
	No response	2	2	100.0%	2	100.0%		
	Other	8	7	87.5%	7	87.5%		
Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%			
ACT Scores	No record	61	56	91.8%	46	75.4%		
	0 to 25th Percentile							
	25th to 50th Percentile	6	3	50.0%	3	50.0%		
	50th to 75th Percentile	74	53	71.6%	47	63.5%		
	Greater than 75th Percentile	215	184	85.6%	174	80.9%		
Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%			
High school G.P.A.	No record							
	A	146	129	88.4%	119	81.5%		
	B	177	145	81.9%	132	74.6%		
	C	33	22	66.7%	19	57.6%		
	Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%		
Student Home	Blank Data	1						
	Instate	188	155	82.4%	143	76.1%		
	Out of state	167	141	84.4%	127	76.0%		
	Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%		
Athletic Participation	Not athlete	162	139	85.8%	136	84.0%		
	Women	56	50	89.3%	48	85.7%		
	Male	138	107	77.5%	86	62.3%		
	Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%		
Greek Participation	Not Greek	186	141	75.8%	127	68.3%		
	Female Greek	98	91	92.9%	90	91.8%		
	Male	72	64	88.9%	53	73.6%		
	Total	356	296	83.1%	270	75.8%		

	Total -4 Year
	Data will only be available in the future

Cohort 2014 = ("1st Year" for terms 14/FA + 14/SU)								
Description		Total	Retention				Graduation	
			1st -year		2nd - Year		3rd - Year	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Women	169	153	90.5%				
	Men	183	150	82.0%				
	Total	352	303	86.1%				
Ethnicity	Black/African American	40	32	80.0%				
	White	273	233	85.3%				
	Hispanic	5	5	100.0%				
	Asian or Pacific Is	29	28	96.6%				
	System Missing							
	No response							
	Other	5	5	100.0%				
Total	352	303	86.1%					
ACT Scores	No record	54	46	85.2%				
	0 to 25th Percentile							
	25th to 50th Percentile	5	3	60.0%				
	50th to 75th Percentile	67	51	76.1%				

	Total -4 Year
	Data will only be available in the future

	Greater than 75th Percentile	226	203	89.8%				
	Total	352	303	86.1%				
High school G.P.A.	No record	15	12	80.0%				
	A	160	142	88.8%				
	B	143	123	86.0%				
	C	34	26	76.5%				
	Total	352	303	86.1%				
Student Home	Blank Data	1						
	Instate	204	178	87.3%				
	Out of state	147	125	85.0%				
	Total	352	303	86.1%				
Athletic Participation	Not athlete	197	175	88.8%				
	Women	44	40	90.9%				
	Male	111	88	79.3%				
	Total	352	303	86.1%				
Greek Participation	Not Greek	181	145	80.1%				
	Female Greek	94	88	93.6%				
	Male	77	70	90.9%				
	Total	352	303	86.1%				

Appendix E: Interview Protocols

I. Faculty/Academic Affairs Questions

A. Introductions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What department do you work in?
3. What is your role in that department?

B. Student's entry characteristics

1. Describe the students at BSC. What do you think about the diversity of the student population?
2. Describe the overall students' academic qualities.
3. Do you feel that the academic quality of students have changed over the years? Does the quality differ for students from different backgrounds?
4. Tell me about your best student. What characteristics made this student your best student?
5. Tell me about your worst student. What characteristics made this student your worst student? How difficult is it to assist student with initial academic weakness in major subjects?

C. Welfare of students

1. Describe the faculty at BSC.
2. Describe the relationship faculty has with their students.
3. Do faculty interact with students outside of the classroom? How often? In what capacity?
4. Do you attend student events, like athletic games or shows?
5. Do you know the names of most of your students?
6. Do you enjoy working with the students in your courses?
7. If a student is absent from your class frequently, what do you do?
8. If a student is academically struggling in class, what do you do?
9. What do you think is students' biggest academic challenge? Socially?
10. Tell me about your classes. Class activities? Assignments and exams?
11. Describe how you craft your classroom experience, assignments, and exams?
12. Is fostering active learning important to you?
13. Do you feel well trained to do that in your classroom?
14. How do you improve and assess your teaching?
15. What other means of active learning happens at BSC?



16. Does BSC use student evaluations?
 17. Do you review your evaluations?
 18. Have these reviews altered the way you manage your classes?
 19. Have you ever noticed prejudice or discrimination on campus towards anyone? If so, tell me about it.
 20. Do you academically advise students?
 21. Do you enjoy advising students?
 22. Have you ever received training in advising students?
 23. Do you want training in advising students?
 24. Do you speak to students about their plans after college? How often?
 25. Do you think that students are adequately supported academically?
 26. Besides help from the faculty, are there other methods of academic support for students?
 27. Do you, or your department, collaborate with the Student Development Office? In what capacity
1. Do you feel that the college keeps students well informed on its policies?
 2. Do you feel that students have a voice on campus?
 3. Do you think that the college cares about their opinions in its decision making? What types of things do students have a say in?
 4. Do you think the administration acts in a way that is consistent with BSC's mission?
 5. Do you think BSC clearly communicates its values?

D. Proactive Social Adjustment

1. What does it mean to be a BSC student?
2. Where do students learn what it means to be a BSC student? (norms, attitudes, values, behaviors)
3. In your opinion, how do students deal with stress at BSC?
4. Do they seek help when they are stressed?
5. Where?
6. From whom?
7. Is there a recognition from the students that college requires something more of them?



E. Persistence

1. Why do you think students' choose to leave BSC?
2. Do you think there is something faculty could do to encourage students to persist at BSC?
3. Do you think that retention is part of your responsibility at BSC? If no, whose is it? How aware are you of BSC's graduation rates and persistence rates from year to year?



I. Staff Questions

A. Introductions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What department do you work in?
3. What is your role in that department?
4. What role does your department play in the overall success of BSC? How do you support students?
5. Describe the staff at BSC.

B. Precollege characteristics (Admissions)

1. Describe the typically BSC applicant.
2. Describe BSC's ideal applicant.
3. What characteristics do you assess in order to make a decision about applicants' acceptance? Do those differ for different types of students?
4. How affordable is BSC? What percentage of students receive BSC scholarships, What percentage take out loans?
5. Can students from various economic groups afford to attend BSC?

C. Initial Commitment to Institution

1. Why do you think students choose to attend BSC?
2. What features about the college do you emphasize in order to attract students?
3. What features about the college do students are applicants most excited about/attracted to?
4. What features about the college are applicants least excited about?
5. Do you think that the majority of students who start at BSC intend to finish at BSC?

D. Initial Commitment to Graduation

1. What is the most popular majors at BSC?
2. Do you speak with students about their post-college plans?
3. How committed do you think students are to graduation?
4. What do students plan to do after graduation?
5. What does BSC do to keep students excited and anticipatory for graduation? Do you know how many students graduate in 4 years? Is this good, bad? What are your thoughts?

E. Proactive Social Adjustment

1. In your opinion, how do students deal with stress at BSC?
2. Do they seek help when they are stressed?



3. Where?
4. From whom?
5. Is there a recognition from the students that college requires something more of them?
6. Where do students learn what it means to be a BSC student? (norms, attitudes, values, behaviors)

F. Psychosocial engagement

1. Describe the students at BSC.
2. How frequently do you interact with students? In what capacity?
3. Do you interact with students outside of your role? In what capacity?
4. Do you attend student events, such as sport games, recitals?
5. What kind of student succeeds at BSC?
6. What kind of student doesn't succeed at BSC?
7. What does BSC do to help students who are not succeeding or performing well?
8. Do you ever speak to students about academic issues? How about non-academic issues?
9. In your opinion, why do students choose to leave BSC?
10. Have you ever spoken to students about leaving BSC? Describe the conversations?
11. Why do you think that some students don't graduate on time?

G. Welfare

1. Can you describe to me orientation and first year experience?
 - a) *What purpose does it have?*
2. How do you show students that you care about them?
3. Are students' opinions/satisfaction included in the decision making process in your department? At BSC at large?
4. Do you feel that BSC is a safe place for the students?
5. What does the BSC staff do to keep the students safe?
6. How is teaching evaluated here?
7. How do you measure teaching and active learning?
8. How do you foster active learning across campus?



H. Integrity

1. Do you feel that BSC treats its students fairly?
2. Are you aware of some of the policies at BSC? Which ones?
3. Do you feel that the policies are overall fair?
4. Have you ever noticed prejudice or discrimination on campus towards anyone? If so, tell me about it.
5. Do you feel that these policies consider students' welfare?
6. Do you feel that the policies benefit all students at BSC?



I. Student Questions

A. Student's entry characteristics:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What year are you in?
3. Where is home?
4. Describe your high school.
5. What kind of student were you in high school?
6. What grades did you earn in high school?
7. What type of extracurricular activities were you involved in during high school?
8. What did your parents do after high school?
9. How are you paying for college? Have you thought about financial costs? Do you have any concerns about paying for school?

B. Student's initial commitment to the goal of graduation

1. Why did you decide to attend college?
2. When do you plan to graduate? What is your major?
3. How important is graduating to you?
4. Considering your other priorities, where does graduation fall?
5. Is your family supportive of you and your college education?

C. Proactive Social Adjustment

1. What does it mean to be a BSC student?
2. How and where did you learn what it means to be a BSC student? (behaviors, values, attitudes)
3. Tell me about orientation. Did you find orientation helpful? How so?
4. Describe how you typically deal with stressful events.
5. What are your major stressors?
6. Did coming to college require you to change how you deal with stress?
7. Do you typically view such events as opportunities to grow?
8. Can you typically find something good or positive in the midst of the stressful situation?
9. When you are stressed, do you seek help?
10. Where?
11. From whom?

D. Student's initial commitment to the institution.

1. What characteristics were you looking for in a college?



2. What qualities about BSC led you to apply?
3. What qualities about BSC led you to enroll?
4. How do you like BSC?
5. Where do you see yourself next year?
6. Knowing what you know now, if you were to apply to college all over again, would you choose BSC again? Why or why not?

E. Potential for social community with peers, or communal potential

1. Tell me about your friends on campus.
6. Was it easy for you to make friends on campus?
7. Are you in a sorority or fraternity?
8. Why did you join?
9. How as joining affected your experience on campus?
10. Are you on an athletic team here? Which one?
11. Why did you join?
12. How as joining affected your experience on campus?
13. Do you have a best friend on campus?
14. How do you like your roommate?
15. Do you like the people in your residence halls? Why?
16. Are your friends returning to BSC next year?
17. Do you know any students who are transferring out of BSC?
18. Do you know why some students would want to transfer out of BSC?

B. Psychosocial engagement

1. What do you do when you are not in class?
2. Tell me about the on-campus activities?
3. Do you participate in the activities? How often? Which ones?
4. Do you participate in any clubs?

C. Institution's commitment to the welfare of its students

1. *FACULTY COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS*
 - a) *How would you describe the faculty of BSC?*
 - b) *Do you think that your professors know your name?*
 - c) *Do you feel that the faculty cares about you? How do you know?*
 - d) *Do you ever interact with them outside of the classroom? When? Where?*
 - e) *Tell me about your favorite faculty member.*
 - f) *Tell me about your least favorite professor.*
 - g) *Have you ever experienced a faculty member being negative, inappropriate, or showing favoritism? If so, tell me more.*



2. **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**
 - a) *Tell me about your classes? Class activities? Assignments and exams?*
 - b) *Are you enjoying them? Why or why not?*
 - c) *Do you find your classes challenging?*
 - d) *Do you participate in classroom discussions?*
3. **ACADEMIC SERVICES**
 - a) *If you need help studying for a course, who would you go see?*
 - b) *Do you seek advice for courses when it's time to register? Who? What do you talk about?*
 - c) *Who do you speak to when you are having trouble in a course?*
 - d) *Who do you speak to when you want to withdraw a course?*
 - e) *Do you have an academic advisor?*
4. **COMMUNICATION OF POLICIES, PROCEDURES**
 - a) *Do you feel that the college keeps you well informed on its policies?*
 - b) *Do you feel that students have a voice on campus?*
 - c) *Do you think that the college cares about your opinions in its decision making? What types of things do students have a say in?*
 - d) *Do you think the administration acts in a way that is consistent with BSC's mission?*
 - e) *Do you think BSC clearly communicates its values?*
5. **COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SAFETY**
 - a) *Have you ever witnessed prejudice or discrimination on campus? If so, tell me about it.*
 - b) *Do you feel safe on campus?*



Appendix F: Sample Interview Matrix

STUDENT INTERVIEW MATRIX

Pseudonym:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK		FINDINGS/CODINGS			EVIDENCE		
CONSTRUCTS	CONSTRUCT FACTORS	THEME	THEME	THEME	QUOTES	OBSERVATIONS	DOCUMENTS
Student Characteristics	Socioeconomic Status Parental Education Academic Skills/Abilities Race/Gender/Geography Academic achievement HS Rigor Cultural Capital Geography(dist. From BSC)						
Initial Commitment to the Goal of Graduation	Motivation Post-graduation goals Family Support						
Initial Commitment to the Institution	BSC's rank in student Choice Family Support of choice						
Ability to pay	Percieved costs of attendance Percieved benefits of attendance Use of financial aid/scholarships Employment Family financial contribution						
Commitment of the institution to student welfare (support from instittuions)	Academic Advisement Communication of policies commitment to safety on campus Orientation Evidence of Prejudice Evidence of Discrimination Use of Good Teaching Practices Use of active learning						
Institutional integrity	congruence b/n said and enacted missi actions faculty (move to student welfar actions staff (move to student welfare) Fair policies & decision making						
Communal potential (potential for community among peers)	Greek Life Residences Sports Campus Activities Academic Activities classmates/ peers Leadership Activities						
psychosocial engagement (active participation in campus)	Living on campus/roommates Dating Greek life Attend parties campus leadership interaction with peers interactions with faculty						
Social Adjustment (during with stress and adjusting to)	participate in orientation deal with stress reconciling differing values, norms reconciling differing attitudes Non - athletic, Greek Diversity Sexual Orientation						
Subsequent Commitment to the goal of graduations							
Subsequent Commitment to the institution							
Decision to Persist	intent to return for spring intern to return for fall						