

PERCEPTIONS OF RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS
OF THE TRANSFER PROCESS TO A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing the current literature base on rural community colleges, transfer student adjustment, academic advising and articulation issues, the purpose of this research study was to ascertain the adjustment issues and experiences of rural community college students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. The perceptions these rural community college students have regarding the transfer process are the focus of the study. Students from ten rural community colleges, who participated in the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps, a project of The University of Alabama and funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation were used in the study.

The survey instrument used in this study is a variation of Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ). Survey questions were reframed such that those regarding university experiences and the students' potential transfer to a four-year college/university were treated as reflections on the meditational transition, or transition that has not yet occurred. The study addressed the experiences of community college students, and offers policy recommendations and identifies practical ways that both two-year and four-year institutions can further support the rural community college student who has the goal of a four-year baccalaureate degree.

Basic descriptive statistics were used to answer the central research question and eight sub-research questions. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations for policy, practice, and future study are presented.

DEDICATION

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Dean Alan Mann

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has been a long journey with many personal and professional changes, challenges, joys, and sorrows. First and foremost, I give all praise and glory to God. Without Him, I would not have had the strength to continue and preserve. James 1:2-4 states, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” Thank you to all who have helped me to preserve.

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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Community colleges serve millions of students enrolled in U.S. post-secondary educational institutions annually (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Approximately four out of ten undergraduates enrolled in institutions of higher education are enrolled in community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The community college was typically referred to in the 1940s as a junior college. Junior colleges, according to Cohen and Brawer, offered two years of coursework that was beyond that of technical educational offerings. Moving into the 1950s and 1960s, the junior college definition changed to include “lower division” courses of private educational institutions and community college was used more so for public institutions. The community college name became commonly associated with all two-year institutions in the 1970s.

Transfer Mission

While the missions of individual community colleges many differ, it cannot be argued that most do serve students who wish to transfer and obtain a baccalaureate degree. Dougherty and Townsend (2006) asserted that the mission of community colleges is twofold: to provide academic programs for student transfer to a four-year college/university and/or to provide vocational or workforce development. Alternatively, Bailey and Morest (2004) have a three-prong approach to community college mission. They have stated that the mission includes the “vertical dimension” for the student who intends to transfer to a four-year degree granting

institution and the “horizontal dimension” of workforce development programs. Cohen and Brawer (2008) stated that the transfer mission of the community college is carried out when the college accepts students from high school, provides them with basic general education courses and then sends them to a “senior” institution to complete a baccalaureate degree.

Of students enrolled in U.S. community colleges, 34% are enrolled in rural community colleges (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007) and rural community colleges comprise 60% of all community colleges in the United States (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006a). In 2000-2001, rural community college enrollment totaled 59% of all community college enrollments (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). In the State of Alabama, 4.8% of the state population in the age range 18 - 44 attend community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 62). Rural community colleges often differ from urban and suburban institutions in that they may have fewer resources, smaller staffs and may provide cultural and educational access to rural populations that would otherwise not consider participating in postsecondary education (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007; Miller & Kissinger, 2007).

Adjustment Issues

Two-year, community college students who transfer to four-year colleges and universities experience a variety of adjustment issues. Calculating the successful rate of transfer is a daunting task due to the variety of structures of community college systems (Cohen & Brawer, 1998). Critics of the community college mission cited that students are not prepared and that the community college education is inadequate for transfer to a four-year institution (Alba & Lavin, 1981; Pascarella & Terezini, 2005). Community college students do typically demonstrate lower academic ability than freshman four-year students in terms of scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006).

Upon transferring to four-year colleges and universities, many community college students experience transfer shock. Knoell (1990) coined this phrase as early as in the 1940s and she cited that students may have trouble with the beginning of the adjustment process as they are admitted as transfer students with an open admissions policy to the four-year school and may not be as prepared as those who began their academic work at the four-year school. Inconsistencies in admissions standards for transfer students is one area of concern for Knoell, as is the need to measure success not solely on the post-transfer GPA, but rather a student's persistence to graduation.

Much of the current research supports the concept of transfer shock (Cejda, 1997; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998). This concept of a dip in grade point average (GPA) post-transfer has been the focus of studies on community college transfer students at large public, mid-size and private institutions. However some researchers have found that this is inconsistent and those GPAs for students do not drop and may actually increase during their first term (Diaz, 1992). This concept is referred to as transfer ecstasy; however, few studies suggest this trend.

Only studying the GPA of transfer students does not fully explain a students' transitional experience in moving from the two-year to four-year institution. Tinto's model of persistence (1987, 1993) suggested that students will separate from their prior environment, transition and incorporate into their new learning environment or institution. This model has been applied to first-year, freshman students. Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) examined those who persist and those who do not. This model was also applied to two-year students by Pascarella and Chapman (1983) and they found that for community college transfer students' academics is important to persistence. Pascarella, Smart and Ethington (1986) and Halpin (1990) have studied community

college student persistence utilizing Tinto's model and assert that community college student persistence and a successful transition go beyond the issues of GPA, transfer shock or ecstasy, and persistence to obtain the baccalaureate degree.

The transitions experienced by students may also be beyond what may be reflected in the first term GPA at a four-year institution. Flaga (2006) asserted that there is a void in the research of community college students, and that there was been too much of an emphasis on transfer shock. Researchers who have taken broader approaches to the transition of community college students include Flaga (2006), Davis & Casey (1999), Laanan (1996, 2007), and Townsend & Wilson (2006a). Social adjustment, academic programs and services and faculty interaction all play a role in the transition process of community college students.

Students' pre-transfer experiences may also have an impact on their adjustment and persistence. Berger and Malaney (2003) discovered in general how both the pre- and post-transfer experiences impact the adjustment of community college students including their interactions with faculty. Davis and Casey (1999) cited that faculty interaction and attention play a role in successful adjustment and ultimately persistence. Additionally, Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) studied faculty roles and the influence it has regarding transfer student adjustment and note that faculty interaction is important in facilitating students' successful adjustment.

Instrument

In order to measure the adjustment process, Laanan (2007) and Laanan and Ebbers (2008) have utilized the Laanan-Transfer Students' Questionnaire (L-TSQ[®]) to further study the adjustment process of community college students. Laanan (2004) asserted that a student's experience prior to transferring to a four-year institution can have influence on that student's

performance at the community college as well as the experiences at the transfer institution. The L-TSQ[®] is an instrument that “provides researchers important information about former community college students’ involvement activities prior to transferring to senior institutions as well as their perceptions of the four-year college or university” (Laanan, 2004, p. 343). The L-TSQ[®] has been administered at public institutions in California and more recently at the Iowa State University.

Academic Advising

Academic advising is an area related to the transfer process for both two-year and four-year institutions. Community college advising services are critical according to King (2003a). Advising services can help or hinder students’ persistence toward obtaining a four-year degree. Some college students enroll with an understanding of what their goals are. However, King (2003a) suggested that community college students may have less developed educational goals. Advising is a critical component in developing a student’s educational goals and further critical to the institution and students success (Berdahl, 1995; Lowe & Toney, 2000; King, 2003a).

There are several advising models and delivery methods than can be implemented at two- and four-year institutions. Prescriptive advising is basic, the student and advisor discuss class selection and registration (Crookston, 1972). Developmental advising represents efforts to use the advising meeting as a teaching tool (Crookston, 1972). Studies conflict on which style students prefer. Broadbridge (1996) found that students prefer developmental advising, whereas Smith (2002) discovered that first-year students prefer prescriptive advising. There are two main advising delivery models: centralized or decentralized (Gordon & Habley, 2000). Centralized advising is organized with a main office coordinating services for students. In decentralized models separate departments or colleges/ schools facilitate advising.

Studies have been conducted to determine the impact advising has on the two-year community college students (Davis & Casey, 1999; Rhine, Milligan & Nelson, 2000; King 1993a; McArthur, 2005). Flaga (2006) suggested collaborative approaches between community colleges and four-year university academic advisors. This collaboration would aid students in understanding degree requirements at the four-year institution and a better understanding of articulation agreements, if applicable for community college students.

Transfer Rates

Successful transfer for students is important for both the student and the institutions. Institutions of higher education are interested in measuring the rate of transfer of community college students and tracking their success or failures. Studies of transfer rates include Grubb (1991), who concluded that the decline in transfer rates could be due to factors that include changing demographics of the students entering community colleges, achievement levels and preparation in high school, increased short term students or “experimenters,” and a focus on vocational or technical programs.

Townsend (2007) criticized the notion of studying transfer rates because it is challenging to determine who to include in calculating rates and the length of time to use in the calculation. Students’ reasons for enrolling at community colleges change over time and students may want to transfer and will do so successfully. Others may take longer as they have career and family commitments or financial constraints. Some students may not have an interest in completing an associate’s degree, as it does not meet their transfer needs to a four-year institution. In some cases, articulation agreements are needed to ensure transferability of credits for students and, thus, to better address their needs. However, such agreements do not account for the admissions process or criteria, nor do they provide information related to major program requirements for

students (Knoell, 1990). Townsend and Wilson (2006a) supported the importance of agreements for “seamless” transfer for community college students; however, they do not replace effective academic advising.

Hagedorn, Moon, Cypers, Maxwell, and Lester (2006) and Hagedorn and Lester (2006) studied transfer readiness or preparedness and use the metaphor of “the all – American game of baseball” and refer to it as the “transfer game.” In this model, students move to along the bases upon completing modules of California’s Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC). These studies of California articulation agreements and how they aid students in transferring provide policy recommendations that include more actively involved advisors who can assist in coaching and moving students along for successful transfer and ultimately a baccalaureate degree.

It is clear from the literature that community college transfer students may experience significant adjustment issues upon transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Rural community college students in particular may have more specific issues related to transfer due to the unique nature of the rural community college and have special challenges “playing the All-American-game” (Hagedorn, Moon, Cypers, Maxwell, & Lester, 2006; Hagedorn & Lester, 2006). Academic advising and articulation agreements are two areas of practice that can enhance the transfer process for rural community college students. Furthermore, understanding the needs of community college students prior to transfer can assist both two and four-year student service practitioners in preparing students for the transfer process and adjustment that they will encounter.

Statement of the Problem

Much research is done on student satisfaction while at the two-year institution and assessment after students have made the transition to the university utilizing post-transfer grade point average. The majority of studies on transfer students have focused on post-transfer outcomes, specifically transfer shock (Cejda, 1997; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998). Laanan (1996, 2004, 2007) emphasized the importance of studying transfer student's experiences beyond that of the transfer GPA. The current study goes beyond understanding the post-transfer adjustment process and begins to provide an understanding of the perceptions community college students have *prior to transferring* to a four-year college/university. Developing this knowledge is imperative in order to provide more successful student services, specifically academic advising at both the community college and four-year institutions.

The current exploratory study provides a means to begin to understand the experiences of rural, community college students who wish to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution in the State of Alabama. This will aid both researchers and practitioners in understanding the unique needs of the rural community college student.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of the current study is to ascertain the adjustment issues and experiences of rural community college students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. Participants are enrolled only in one of ten rural community colleges that are currently participating in the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps, a project of The University of Alabama funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, as a part of the National College Advising Corps, which provides transfer advising assistance to rural community college

students. Students who have indicated to Advising Corps staff that they have the intent to transfer were contacted to be study participants. The mission and purpose of the Alabama Advising Corps (Hardy, 2006) program include the following:

1. To provide community college students with up-to-date, accurate, and useful information concerning the public and private 4-year colleges and universities within Alabama and beyond (p. 1);
2. To encourage the development of goals for baccalaureate degree completion among Alabama community college students (p. 1);
3. To assist interested Alabama community college students in transferring to upper division colleges and universities (p. 1);
4. To improve the university transfer application rate by 8% to 10% at participating partner community colleges (p. 1); and
5. To improve the actual community college-to-public university transfer rate by 5% to 7% over each prior year's rates during each of the 3 years of its implementation phase at each partner community college (p. 1).

Further, the purpose of the study is to determine what perceptions these rural community college students have regarding the transfer process to a four-year college/university prior to their transfer. This includes their thoughts and feelings concerning their current community college experience, advising services, four-year college/university selection and what they think will occur once they do transfer to a four-year institution. The study addressed the experiences of community college students, and offers policy recommendations and identifies practical ways that both two-year and four-year institutions can further support the rural community college

student who has the goal of a four-year baccalaureate degree. Thus, community college and four-year universities can benefit from the knowledge gained in this study.

Research Questions

This intent of the research study is to understand the perceptions of rural community college students at ten rural community colleges in the State of Alabama, prior to transferring to a four-year institution. The primary research question is as follows: What perceptions do rural community college students with the intent to obtain a bachelor's degree have in reference to the transfer process?

The following eight secondary research questions will be addressed. They include

1. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college coursework;
2. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college academic advising/counseling;
3. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their anticipated experiences at a four-year college/university;
4. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their selection of a four-year college/university to attend;
5. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the process of transferring to a four-year college/university;
6. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated academic rigor at a four-year college/university;

7. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated classroom experiences that they will have at a four-year college/university; and
8. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the social activities and networking with friends that they will experience at a four-year college/university?

Significance of the Study

There are many approaches to studying college student adjustment and attrition. Laanan (2001) grouped the many theories and perspectives into three themes: psychological approaches, educational environment, and the impact of the campus climate. “Psychological approaches” can include the construct that the transfer process or academic adjustment in general is distressful for students and is similar to “transitional trauma” (Bennett & Okinaka, 1990). Stress coping is another concept of student adjustment. Students may employ mechanisms to deal with the stress of adjusting to the collegiate world. Laanan cited Myers and Harrell (1993), who claimed that stressors come from both the demographic and social climate of a campus. The “educational environment” focus claims that faculty interaction is central of the successful adjustment of college students (Tinto, 1987; Astin, 1993; Volkwein, King, & Terenzini, 1986). The “campus climate” framework suggests that the type of institution, including its size, and demographics can impact a student’s feelings of being part of the campus community or being lonely and isolated. Also, the social aspect of adjustment is important when considering the approaches of studying student adjustment. Additionally, Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggested that students develop competence through interactions with peers and environment and this ultimately aids in adjustment to the learning environment.

Tinto provided three stages through which students move as matriculating members of an institution: separation, transition, and incorporation (1993). In the separation stage, students leave behind the familiarity and comfort of what they knew at home and in high school. If students successfully progress through the separation stage, they then enter into the transition stage, where they feel as though they may be pulled in two directions between the old environment and the new one of the college setting. They may have not yet found their place in the new college environment, but have discovered that the place they once had in their old home environment may no longer exist. Those students who make it through the transition stage move on to the incorporation stage, in which they feel a sense of membership in the campus community and its social and academic components.

According to Tinto (1993), many students will not persist at the institution due to an inability to develop connections within the intellectual and social life of the institution. Tinto suggested that students must separate themselves from their previous life, transition to the new environment and norms, and then incorporate into the college environment. It is here that the student must be a part of both the social and academic parts of campus. Campuses have to develop a sense of a learning community, whether through formal academic and co-curricular programs, but also by integrating the myriad components of college life into one salient experience for students (1993). Such an integration can serve to aid students in developing and understanding connections of their academic and co-curricular experiences and how they can come together to guide students toward their educational goals.

Community college students must first integrate and adjust at their community college campus or as online learners (Tinto, 1993). As they begin to think about transferring this may add stress or additional adjustment issues for the student. The two-year student again will

experience this adjustment upon transferring to the four-year institution in a new educational environment and on a new campus with its new and different campus climate.

Beach's (1999) consequential transitional theory offered a perspective of students who will begin this transition process again. This framework looks at the person and the "changing relations between individuals and social activities" (p. 113). Meditational transition specifically defines that transitions can take place prior to the actual event. In the current study, the impending transfer to a four-year institution is the meditational transition. Meditational transitions, according to Beach, take place in educational settings that have not yet occurred or have not yet been experience. Community college transfer students who are thinking of transferring to a four-year institution have navigated through the adjustment stages outlined above once, and are now preparing or mediating on the transition again.

This study is significant for several reasons. With the number of students enrolling at community colleges increasing (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), those with needs related to transferring to a four-year institution will have specific requirements that community colleges and four-year institutions will need to address. Kozeracki (2001) suggested that transfer student studies should be forward thinking so that both community colleges and four-year institutions can address potential issues that arise from research findings.

The literature shows that students who transfer from community colleges to four-year degree granting institutions may struggle, experience transfer shock, and may not meet their goal of a baccalaureate degree due to adjustment issues (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; Townsend & Wilson, 2006a). Diaz (1992) found, however, that transfer students do recover from transfer shock, although knowing some of the potential ways to aid a student through the process would help transfer students, community

colleges and receiving institutions. Flaga (2006) suggested that there is a void in the current literature regarding community college students over a period of time. Laanan (2001) stated that there is not adequate literature on non-academic adjustment issues related to community college transfer students, particularly emotional and psychological development upon arrival at the four-year institution. The current research study of understanding the transfer student perceptions of today's community college students prior to transferring has as its goal to improve understanding of the adjustment needs of two-year transfer students.

Definitions

For use in this study, the following definitions were utilized regarding the study of transfer student adjustment and community colleges.

Articulation - “. . . is the movement of students – or, more precisely, the students' academic credits—from one point to another. Articulation is not linear sequencing or progression” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 356).

Community college – “Any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 5).

Likert scale – “. . . is used to try to assess attitudes and related concepts (multidimensional underlying variables). Respondents are asked to read a statement or question and then rate their response on a scale of agreement (agree/disagree) or quality (good/bad). The scales usually have five or seven points, sometimes three or even number. While clearly ordinal in nature, these scales are often treated as equal interval and used with parametric techniques” (Gorard, 2001, p. 184).

Sample of convenience – “Composed of those cases chosen only because they are easily available” (Gorard, 2001, p. 24).

Transfer ecstasy - The concept that transfer students from two-year community colleges, upon transfer to four-year institutions, experience an increase in grade point average (Diaz, 1992).

Transfer shock - The concept that transfer students from two-year community colleges, upon transfer to four-year institutions, experience a drop in grade point average during the first semester (Hills, 1965).

Transfer swirl - The concept that students may move from high school to community colleges, to four-year institutions and back again (Kozeracki, 2001).

Transfer rate – “The ratio of students over the potential transfer students; however difficulties arise in defining the concept of a transfer student” (Banks, 1990, p. 47).

Assumptions

The current study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Respondents will be truthful about their intent to transfer to a four-year college/university;
2. Respondents will be honest and forthcoming in responding to survey questions;
3. Respondents will have basic knowledge regarding how to begin the transfer process to a four-year college/university;
4. The Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ[®]) appropriately addresses the problem of transfer student adjustment; and
5. Respondents recognize and can articulate what their perceptions may be.

Delimitations

The current study only includes students at ten, two-year public, rural community colleges in the State of Alabama who are currently participating in the Alabama College Transfer

Advising Corps, a project of The University of Alabama and funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, from the spring semester 2008 through the summer semester 2011, to provide transfer advising assistance to rural community college students. Survey respondents are limited to community college students enrolled at these ten participating institutions who have met with advisors working at each rural community college regarding their intent to transfer. The sample is not random, but rather, is a sample of convenience.

Limitations

Respondents reflected and responded on their current community college experience as well as their perceptions regarding the transfer process. Because of the nature of the study, respondents reported on experiences and expectations that are personal in nature, limited to their background and experience, and contain personal and/or emotional bias.

Another limitation of the study is that data collection relied upon email and an online survey instrument (versus paper and pencil data collection. An adapted version of Laanan's *Transfer Student Questionnaire* (L-TSQ) was used with permission of the author to gain an understanding of students' community college experiences and their perceptions of the transfer process (Laanan, 2004). Survey participants may not have the necessary computer skills to complete the survey, although most traditional aged community college students will have had both computer and internet experience in high school and at the community college. Access to the internet is another limitation of the study. Not all rural community college students may have access to the internet at home, or may have slower, dial-up connections, versus faster, DSL or cable connections. Participants could complete the web-based survey while on campus at the community college if they do not have Internet access at their place of residence. Paper copies of the survey instrument were available if for those respondents who requested it; however, none were requested.

Organization of the Study

This chapter has provided an introduction to the current study and the research question: What perceptions do community college students with the intent to obtain a bachelor's degree have in reference to the transfer process? It includes an overview of the community college transfer process, adjustment process, and research focus of prior literature or the statement of the problem of the current study. The purpose of the study was to discover the issues and experiences of rural community college students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year college/university. Chapter II presents the literature related to community college transfer and advising and is organized in the following way: rural community colleges, transfer student adjustment, academic advising, and articulation issues and transfer rates. Chapter III presents the methodology of the current study including data collection, instrumentation, adaptation of instrument for current study, site and participant selection, informed consent and data collection. Chapters IV and V present the research findings and discussion, recommendations and conclusion, respectively.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

While the literature has provided a good basis of the issues associated with transfer students, there has been a dearth in the literature as it relates to the transfer adjustment process for the rural community college student transferring to a four-year institution. Additionally, the majority of studies focus on the post-transfer experience of community college students. There are studies to specifically focus on the pre-transfer experiences and needs of rural community college students with baccalaureate aspirations.

The literature reviewed encompasses the following areas: the U.S. rural community college, transfer student adjustment, academic advising, academic issues and articulation of transfer credit. The literature review provides a framework for the current study regarding today's community college transfer student transferring from a community college to obtain a baccalaureate degree.

America's Community Colleges

U.S. community colleges serve thousands of students and communities each year with a variety of academic, vocational, and community programs. Cohen and Brawer defined the community college as "any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree" (Cohen and Brawer, 2008, p. 5). They included both

public and private colleges as well as technical institutes. Some two-year institutions have begun to grant bachelor's degrees, which is changing the mission of two-year institutions.

Baccalaureate Degrees at Community Colleges

Floyd (2006) discussed the model of achieving the baccalaureate degree via the community college. The trend of community colleges granting the bachelor's degree themselves is becoming more prevalent. The concept of community college baccalaureate attainment (CCB) began with the Fashion Institute of Technology in the 1970s. Critics including (Eaton) 2005, Mills (2003), and Townsend (2005) considered that this takes the mission of the community college away from what it should be, which is "bread-and-butter curricular offerings; developmental, transfer, community, and technical education-toward inappropriate priorities, such as upper-division baccalaureate courses that lead to four-year degrees" (Floyd, 2006, p. 60). Those in support of CCBs see them fulfilling a workforce need that may not be met by colleges and universities. The CCB movement included the development of the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) in 1999. Community colleges, for the most part, are providing bachelor's degrees not in liberal arts, as critics are concerned about, but rather in areas needed for workforce development that include, but are not limited to nursing, education, engineering and law enforcement.

Floyd (2006) identified four models of how community colleges assist students in achieving a bachelor's degree that include the articulation model, university centers or concurrent-use campus models, university extension models, and the community college baccalaureate model. The articulation model allows students to transfer credits between two- and four-year institutions based on pre-arranged inter-institutional agreements. This ensures the acceptance of lower division or freshman and sophomore credits. Some institutions even grant

preferential admission to students who participate in such a model to the four-year degree granting institution.

The university extension model is used when colleges or universities provide programs at the community college that will lead to a four-year degree. The university center model is where four-year institutions have onsite programs via partnership agreements (Floyd, 2006). Lorenzo (2005) identified six types for the university center model. They include the collocation model or shared campus spaces; enterprise or consortium to run a center for both institutions; the integrated model in which the four-year institution has a physical presence on the community college campus; the virtual model in which the upper division work is online; the sponsorship model in which the community college bears the responsibility of running the center for the four-year school; and, lastly, the hybrid model in which the community college offers bachelor's degrees in partnership with universities that may also grant graduate degrees in partnership with the community college (Lorenzo, 2005). Floyd (2006) pointed out that the four-year institution grants the bachelor's degree in most instances, with the hybrid as the exception. Another model referenced by Floyd was the embedded baccalaureate model that is used by Northwestern Michigan College, Macomb Community College, and Ferris State University. This model "emphasizes learning outcomes, curricular alignment, transparency for students, shared responsibilities for advising and leading student programs, and seamless transitions between terms and courses" (p. 63). The university extension model is where community colleges "merge their governance structures..." (Floyd, 2006. P. 63). This model similarly allows four-year institutions to grant associate degrees at a branch campus and, in all aspects, function as a community college granting associate's degrees.

The community college baccalaureate model as defined by Floyd (2006) as “a ‘pure’ CCB as one coming from public community colleges or two-year-institutions that are approved to confer baccalaureate degrees in one or more areas” (p. 64). Floyd did not include any form of partnership in the “pure” definition of CBCs. The State of Florida leads the nation with CBCs with a total of seven two-year institutions granting bachelor’s degrees. Other states including Vermont, Texas, New Mexico and Washington are following suit, and, like Florida’s CBCs, focus their baccalaureate efforts on degrees to enhance the workforce as previously discussed. Local workforce development is the leading reason for CBCs. According to Floyd (2006), “Community colleges are quite experienced in expeditiously conducting needs assessments and program reviews, and in developing relevant course and program offerings to meet identified community and workforce needs” (p. 69). With this in mind, community colleges may be the perfect agencies to aid communities in meeting workforce needs in both technical and baccalaureate educational programs.

Mission of Rural Community Colleges

The growth of America’s community colleges is in part due to the rise of tuition of four-year public institutions, population increase, financial aid, increased numbers of part-time students and recruitment efforts on behalf of community colleges (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006, Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Rural community colleges make up 60% of all community colleges (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006a). The missions of community colleges vary and are often a point of contention. Dougherty and Townsend (2006) argued that they are binary in nature: to provide academic programs so that students can transfer and obtain a four-year baccalaureate degree or to provide vocational and workforce development training for economic development. Dougherty and Townsend also asserted that the community

college's mission will shape the operation and procedures that govern the community college. They outlined several key ways that community colleges derive their guiding statements. The first is through statutory or other public statements of mission. Dougherty and Townsend further indicated that missions derived in this fashion are from state legislative statements, such as that used by the State of Texas or from national associations. The second method offered by Dougherty and Townsend is that of programmatic or operations of the community college.

Grubb (1991) identified three reasons for the importance of the transfer function of community colleges. They included the "symbolic" that statement a transfer program asserts that the community college is a viable institution of higher education. Grubb believed that by offering a general education, academic curriculum, the community college is made more acceptable. Second, the community college supports the educational goal of non-traditional students who wish to obtain a bachelor's degree. Grubb claimed that community colleges attract "experimenters" or students who are trying out higher education and may have lower commitment levels than those of traditional age who wish to transfer. This may lead to low transfer rates according to Grubb. Finally, Grubb claimed that community colleges are "egalitarian institutions" and "provide greater access to postsecondary education to students who would otherwise have little chance of going beyond high school, but without making any claims about completion, transfer, or subsequent attainment of the baccalaureate – what I have called the [weak] version of the of the egalitarian claim" (p. 196). Grubb defined the "strong" version of the egalitarian claim of the mission of the transfer function of the American community college. The strong version promotes the community college as an alternative route to a bachelor's degree and is a "second chance" for those who may not have the means or academic credentials to enter a four-year institution directly.

Bailey and Morest (2004) outlined three dimensions to consider regarding the community college mission. First is the core, which includes remedial education or an associate's degree. Second, the vertical dimension focuses on traditional aged college students with the intent to transfer to a four-year degree granting institution. The horizontal dimension is that of non-credit and business or workforce development programs. The outcomes of effects of the community college are yet another method to determine its mission. Dougherty and Townsend (2006) referenced the mission conflict that today's community colleges face. This conflict is often rooted within the conflicting goals of providing occupational and economic programs and academic/transfer curricula. The transfer function of today's community college is anticipated to grow with rising numbers of both high school graduates and four-year tuition rates (Morest, 2006).

The Characteristics of Rural Community Colleges

Rural community colleges differ significantly from their urban and suburban community colleges counterparts. *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's 2005 Classifications* outlined classifications for associate degree granting institutions. The *2005 Basic Classifications* provided three categories for two-year institutions of higher education: publicly controlled, privately controlled and special use (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006a). The public category contains urban and suburban, which can be further sub-classified into single and multi-campus categories, and rural institutions, which are further classified as small, medium or large (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006a). The community college classification system does not utilize full-time equivalent to classify two-year institutions, but rather utilizes unduplicated annual headcount. This provides a more accurate picture of the number of students being served by rural-serving community

colleges. This, according to Hardy and Katsinas (2007), has been more precise and can allow practitioners and administrators to plan for academic programs and services more accurately.

Hardy and Katsinas (2007) found that rural community college student enrollment is evenly distributed with approximately 30% of students enrolling in the three types of rural community colleges. It was discovered that most rural community colleges are located in the north central and southeastern regions for accreditation (Hardy, 2005). There are several types of rural community colleges that include small, medium, and large rural-serving community colleges.

Thirty-four percent of students enrolled in rural community colleges in 2000 - 2001 totaled the 59% of all community college enrollments (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Based on unduplicated headcount, the number of students at each type of rural community college is broken down between 206 small campuses enrolling 1,155 students, 499 medium rural campuses with 2,819 and 7,233 students at the 217 large rural community college campuses (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). To summarize, there are many more rural community colleges that each serve a smaller number of students than urban and suburban community colleges, who serve over 40% (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007).

Racial disparity is another difference of rural community colleges. Hardy and Katsinas (2007) discovered that “. . . white students account for 45% of all urban, 54% of all suburban and 74% of all rural community college enrollments “(Hardy & Katsinas, 2007, p. 9). Urban and suburban community college districts often have majority-minority based enrollments, whereas rural community colleges are less likely to be majority-minority. African American students compose the largest racial minority group of rural community colleges, particularly in the southeastern U.S. (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Hispanic students do not make up a large

population of community college students, 15% with 7% attending rural campuses. Student enrollment behavior is also a major variation amongst rural community college types with rural campuses serving more full-time students. Rural campuses served 41% of full-time students, whereas suburban serve 32% and urban 31% full-time students. Medium and small rural campuses enroll the most full-time students, 45% and 55% respectively. Large rural campuses seemed to follow full-time enrollment patterns of suburban and urban colleges (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007).

Approximately 55% of rural community college students are female. Additionally, female students account for the most associates degrees earned, at rural colleges, which is similar for all types of community colleges. Male students make up less of the part-time student population and account for more full-time students at small rural institutions which may be, in part, related to required full-time enrollment in some technical or vocational educational programs (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Medium and small rural community colleges have significantly lower mean enrollments than urban and suburban colleges, which impacts the types and numbers of programs offered, including workforce and economic development programs (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007).

Residential living facilities are available at some small- and medium-sized rural institutions, which may aid in the full-time student enrollment patterns. There is little research on residential community colleges to date. Moeck, Hardy, and Katsinas (2007) found in their study of rural residential community colleges that most residential facilities are in the southeastern United States. Out of the 232 public community colleges offering residential facilities, 93% of community colleges offering residential facilities are rural colleges with the largest number of facilities being located at medium-sized rural-serving community colleges.

Rural community colleges offer athletics as well, which may contribute to higher instances of full-time student enrollment. Eighty-one percent of large rural institutions have athletic programs. Urban and suburban community colleges have less participation in intercollegiate athletics. Rural community colleges which offer housing typically do so for specialized populations, the most common being student-athletes (Moeck, Hardy, & Katsinas, 2007). Castañeda (2004) found that 38% of community colleges have athletic departments with 54% of them being rural community colleges. Fewer housing facilities were academic specific or for students with families, married or single; 15 and 23 rural community colleges, respectively (Moeck, Hardy, & Katsinas, 2007). The students who live on campus at rural serving community colleges are mostly traditional-aged, single college students. This population is mostly male and 56% of students residing on campus at rural institutions, full-time, unmarried and between the ages of 18 – 24 (Moeck, Hardy, & Katsinas, 2007). The mission of the rural serving community college may support residential facilities and programming as living on campus will aid in student success and engagement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Large rural colleges also may offer recreational programs for the community at large. Ninety-two percent of large rural colleges offer some type of recreational or a vocational program for the community. Suburban and urban community colleges do not offer such community programs at such a large percentage: 76% and 73%, respectively (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Large rural community colleges are the type of rural institution providing such community programs and may even serve as a recreational or cultural center for the community by utilizing resources for the larger community (Miller & Kissinger, 2007). Medium and small rural community colleges more than likely do not have the resources to support such endeavors. Rural community colleges receive less financial support from agencies such as the National

Endowment for the Arts (NEA). It was found that the NEA only awarded \$3,200 to all of Alabama's 27 community colleges from 2000 to 2003 (Terry, Hardy, & Katsinas, 2006).

Fluharty and Scaggs (2007) addressed the issue of rural community resources by pointing out that rural community colleges only receive a small percentage of federal support. They pointed out that with poverty rates higher in rural areas that such support is needed to aid rural serving community college program development. Fluharty (2006) cited that there is a \$5.5 billion annual federal disadvantage to rural areas. Rural community colleges have smaller numbers of personnel to support grant writing efforts to aid in funding as well as fewer personnel to support the variety of missions of the rural community college. These included technical or vocational education, general education, transfer education and community programs. Fluharty and Scaggs (2007) claimed that over the past 20 years state funding for community colleges has declined or has been repositioned with students paying for more of the cost of their education. The community development programs described by Miller and Kissinger (2007) often received no funding and colleges must find ways to self-support these programs (Fluharty & Scaggs, 2007).

Rural community colleges may offer both occupational and academic programs; however, small rural colleges are unique in that they may only offer occupational and not academic programs (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). In addition to some small rural colleges not offering academic programs, almost all rural colleges offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) or General Education Development (GED) preparation programs (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). While rural colleges offer such programs, they are less likely to offer accelerated options, study abroad, or weekend courses (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Support to offer childcare and distance education is two programs noted by Hardy and Katsinas (2007) that need to be explored. Katsinas,

Alexander, and Opp (2003) have cited these services as those that can bridge the access gap for many rural students who may not have another means to receive an education without such services. Childcare is a rare service offered at rural community colleges and “. . . only 67% of small rural colleges offer comprehensive distance education programs” (Katsinas & Hardy, 2007, p. 14).

Rural community colleges have a far-reaching impact on their communities in a different way than urban and suburban institutions. Miller and Kissinger (2007) identified four ways that rural community colleges impact the identity of the rural community through non-academic or credit programs. These include leisure activities, cultural enrichment, economic development, and educational opportunities. Leisure activities provided by rural community colleges are sometimes the only opportunity for residents of such communities to have access to programs. Miller and Kissinger cited Beville State Community College in Alabama as an example of an institution offering programs to meet the needs of youth through such programs. This also exposed them to the educational offerings of the campus. Campuses also may partner with local parks and recreation departments who have limited funding. Such programs address the need for physical fitness programs, but also provide social networking and connections for residents of rural programs.

Miller and Kissinger (2007) asserted that rural community colleges are committed to providing cultural activities “. . . that expand the mind, challenge traditional thinking, and reflect the diversity, complexity, and beauty of the world and human nature (Miller & Kissinger, p. 30). North Arkansas Community College is an example in providing arts and lecture programs that are not part of the course curricula, but they are a service to the community that, according to the president, can place the institution as central to the community. Miller and Kissinger claimed

that such programs can enhance the rural community by bringing “. . . a sense of culture and exposure to different ways of thinking to rural community members who would not otherwise have access to such programs” (p. 31).

Economic or workforce development is another mission of the rural community college and has a profound impact on the rural communities in which these campuses are located. Rural community colleges provide programs from basic literacy to employee certification and displaced worker training (Miller & Kissinger, 2007). Business development and supporting such economic endeavors is yet another function of the rural community college that can cause difficulty when defining their missions (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). These institutions provided resources for the support of business development with office space and assisting with state or federal administrative functions (Miller & Kissinger, 2007). Miller and Kissinger provided East Mississippi Community College’s multi-campus system as an example of a rural community college that believes that economic development is central to its mission so that the region and community can benefit.

Such programs can impact the workforce of the community and may affect how individuals view their role in the community and their own personal quality of life (Miller and Kissinger, 2007). Workforce training programs expose rural laborers to the community college experience and may have an impact on their interest in pursuing academic programs at the community college and perhaps transfer to a baccalaureate institution (Miller and Kissinger, 2007). Miller and Kissinger (2007) asserted that the open access provided by all community colleges will produce cultural diversity and exposure to diverse populations that might not otherwise be experienced as in the case of rural racially segregated high schools in Decatur, Mississippi (Miller and Kissinger, 2007). Rural community colleges differ in many ways as

outlined by Hardy and Katsinas (2007) from urban and suburban community colleges including fewer academic and extracurricular program offerings and student services. Funding and increased state appropriations could aid in further developing the programs offered to rural community college student. Hardy and Katsinas (2007) argued that “More effective and equitable federal and state appropriations, as well as the development of special funding programs that address the needs of rural communities are sorely needed” (p. 15).

The literature presented here included the definition and varying missions of U.S. community colleges, the trend for community colleges to offer a bachelor’s degree, the varied missions of community colleges, and the trends and issues specific to rural community colleges today. Rural community colleges are very different from urban and suburban community colleges and must given additional attention to in the literature. Rural community colleges have a significant impact on rural communities, workforce education, and access to higher education for transfer students wishing to obtain a baccalaureate degree. While the literature has provided an overview of the community college, there is more regarding transfer mission of the rural community college that needs to be explored. The adjustment of community college students transferring to a four-year college or university is discussed next; however, it is not explored from the rural framework, which is an area of research that needs to be further developed.

Transfer Student Adjustment

Thousands of community college students transfer to four-year institutions of higher learning each year. The motivations for why these students transfer may differ, but they manage to navigate the process of transferring to another institution. The transfer mission of community colleges is to “accept students from secondary school, provide them with general education and introductory collegiate studies, and send them on to senior institutions for the baccalaureate”

(Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 369). Cohen and Brawer presented the fact that many students who transfer in and out of community colleges are not considered transfer students according to the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (NCES, 1989 in Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The center began collecting data in 1989 and defined transfer as,

All students entering the community college in a given year who have no prior college experience, and who complete at least twelve college credits within four years of entry, divided into the number of that group who take one or more classes at an in state, public university within four years. (p. 369)

Given this definition, there are many students “transferring” in and out of U.S. community colleges who do not meet this definition for the calculation of transfer rates. States with community college systems have a transfer rate of 25%, the national benchmark, with the wide range of 11 – 40%. This can be attributed to the varying state structures of community college systems (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Some community colleges are branch campuses of larger universities inflating the transfer rate while at those institutions where the college mission focus is vocational education, the rate is lower. “Transfer rates among colleges in the same state similarly show wide variations, undoubtedly because of local conditions community demographics, college proximity to a university campus, and employment or economic conditions in the district” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 67 in Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

In the following sections, the research and concepts of transfer readiness, transfer shock and behavior, student persistence, transition types, and academic adjustment will be discussed.

Transfer Readiness

Junior college transfer students as described by Knoell and Medsker (1965) include a variety of student types.

There are the high school under-achievers who are taking advantage of one more chance to demonstrate their ability to do satisfactory work; the late deciders about college attendance who have high school deficiencies; the immature who are emotionally and

intellectually unready to enter a four-year college; the insufficiently motivated and the uncertain; and the capable students who lack financial backing for college attendance away from home or who simply want to attend what may be a smaller, less formal college for their first two years. (p. 3)

Given these descriptions of junior college students, many question their readiness to attend a four-year college/university. Townsend and Wilson (2006b) and others asserted that there are critics of the transfer mission of community colleges and transfer student preparedness (Alba & Lavin, 1981; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These critics state that the education provided by community colleges is inadequate for transfer to a baccalaureate granting institution. Those with similar demographic and academic backgrounds who began at community colleges versus four-year institutions are 15% less likely to complete a bachelor's degree (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Townsend and Wilson (2006b) claimed that student's academic success or performance is less problematic for those who graduate with an associate's degree versus those who transfer prior to obtaining the two-year degree. For many students, obtaining a two-year degree is not their educational goal, but rather transfer preparation of general education requirements.

Students wishing to enter a community college versus a four-year institution typically have lower academic ability levels as referenced by Cohen and Brawer (2008). "The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) means for community colleges have been considerably lower than the norm for all college students" (p. 51). The National Center for Educational Statistics Digest (2006) stated that, in 2004 – 2005, the average SAT composite score was 841 (420 verbal, 421 math) for those who indicated a community college as their collegiate goal. Those indicating a four-year institution as their goal had a composite of 968 (481 verbal, 487

math). The preparation of community college students has been discussed in the literature and how this impacts their potential transfer to a baccalaureate granting institution.

Remedial education is part of the mission of U.S. community colleges and this impacts student's success academically at the receiving, four-year institution (Cohen and Brawer, 2008).

They stated,

Whether the community college picks up the seventeen-year olds who have left high school early and whether they serve as a bridge between schooling and work for their older students, developmental education fits within their mission of connecting people with opportunities. They will be involved in remedial studies in one form or another. (p. 311)

Such courses offered at community colleges are titled remedial, developmental, or basic skills courses and have the charge of teaching the basics. Cohen and Brawer (2008) listed these basics as reading, writing, arithmetic, and life skills such as time management and study skills. Cohen and Brawer indicated that all states offer remedial education at their community colleges. Students who take remedial courses prior to transfer may or may not have a disadvantage upon arrival at the four-year institution. Many of these courses are not eligible to be applied to a degree program at a community college or a baccalaureate granting institution (Cohen and Brawer, 2008).

Knoell (1990) recognized the challenge transfer students face when moving from a two-year to a four-year institution, particularly when transfer students are admitted under open admission policies and may not be as prepared as those who begun their work at the four-year college/university. Knoell, in discussing the inconsistencies in which transfer students are admitted to four-year universities, stated that the

Lack of understanding of the admission process used by campuses and specialized programs with limited access discourage some community college students from attempting to transfer and delay others in making the transition to a baccalaureate

institution and program if they cannot transfer in accordance with the articulated plan they have been following. (p. 64)

Admissions requirements, according to Knoell (1990), have been based more so on “philosophy and marketplace than on research to improve the prediction of who is likely to succeed” (p. 64). Many transfer admissions policies will admit transfer students with a C average or better while other institutions are more selective. Knoell’s studies in 1965 and 1989 both supported the need for academic advisors and counselors to be more informed about a student’s interest in transferring, and be more informed about baccalaureate programs of interest to the community college students contemplating transfer. Knoell found, in the 1990 study, that those who graduated from a community college and transferred had lower “academic abilities” than students who directly entered a four-year institution. Knoell asserted that it should not be expected that these transfer students have a GPA in line with native students for this reason and that their success and transition not be defined by GPA, but rather by their persistence to graduation. The use of GPA to measure student’s transition is currently the “yardstick” applied to transfer student’s success “with less attention to percentages of students earning satisfactory grades and rates of persistence to graduation” (p. 69).

Transfer Shock and Behavior

Transfer shock, as defined by Hills (1965), is the concept that transfer students from two-year community colleges, upon transfer to four-year institutions, experience a drop in GPA during the first semester. Much research supports the concept of transfer shock (Cejda, 1997; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998). However, some researchers have found that this is inconsistent and those GPAs for students do not drop (Diaz, 1992). It is common that most research on community college transfer students has focused solely on their academic adjustment, while other studies compare the performance of transfer students to that of native

students (Laanan, 2001). Upon transfer to a university, students may experience a period of adjustment and some experience academic difficulties upon transfer or transfer shock (Hills, 1965). Others, however, do not experience academic difficulty and may excel academically in the new environment without issue or a dip in grades.

Hills (1965) developed three conclusions regarding transfer student's academic performance: the students should expect a decline in their GPA the first semester after they transfer; their grades may improve the longer they have been in school; and native students at four-year institutions perform better than those who transfer. Some studies suggested something that contradicts Hills' assertion of transfer shock which finds that transfer students have an increase in GPA. This phenomenon is referred to as transfer ecstasy. Diaz (1992) found that of those who had lower GPAs, 79% of the students had a difference in GPA that was only one half a grade point.

Knoell and Medsker's (1965) study, *From Junior to Senior College –A National Study of the Transfer Student*, studied 7,243 junior college students in 1960 that transferred to 43 four-year colleges/universities in ten different states. In this study students were mostly Caucasian and of traditional age, with more female junior college students being represented. Knoell and Medsker (1965) found that overall, "The transfer students tended to give somewhat negative reasons for choosing a junior college, but they gave high ratings to the quality of the education they had received (p. 18)". Knoell and Medsker also reported evidence of transfer shock with most having a drop in grades post-transfer. "The first-term differential was only .03 for the entire group, but there was a wide range of differentials among the various two-and four-year colleges" (p. 19). In comparing the transfer students to native students

Regarding degree attainment, it was found that 62% obtained a bachelors degree after three years of transferring and 9% were still enrolled at the four-year institution, while 4% had transferred again to another baccalaureate degree granting institution. In summary, “Therefore, it is estimated that at least 75 percent and probably as high as 80 percent of the junior college transfer students achieved their degree objectives during the four year period which began with their transfer to a four-year college or university in 1960” (Knoell & Medsker, 1965, p. 25). Twenty-nine percent of students were not enrolled nor had graduated after four years, with one-third of those students being dismissed for academic reasons. Knoell and Medsker (1965) cite that economic factors are one of the foremost reasons for junior college student attrition.

The articulation of transfer credit of the study participants were, according to Knoell and Medsker, “liberal” in some cases almost half the degree requirements for the bachelors degree. However, as is the case in most transfer policies now, credits needed to be higher than a grade of “D”. Knoell and Medsker make the following statement regarding junior college transfer students: “Students who transfer from a two-year college with full junior standing have slightly less than two chances in three of completing their baccalaureate degree programs within a period of three years after transfer, if they enroll on a full-time basis (p. 26). ” They go on to state, based on their 1965 study, that degree probability is lower for those who do not transfer with junior standing and for those who are part-time students (Knoell & Medsker, 1965, p.26). Knoell and Medsker suggest to future researchers and practitioners the importance of the transfer process.

Planners need to know why mistakes are made in choosing transfer institutions and how they might be avoided. On a more philosophic plane, there is a need to evaluate the extent to which both society and the students themselves can afford such mistakes within the context of preserving maximum freedom of opportunity for higher education. (p. 90)

This statement holds true to today with more current literature that will be reviewed as a part of this study. Transfer behavior continues to be an area of interest to academic administrators and those who implement policy. An analysis was conducted from several studies including the National Center for Education Statistics, *Transfer Behavior Among Beginning Postsecondary Students: 1984-94* in 1990 and a follow up study in 1994, *Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal (BPS)*. The study involved a subset of the participants in the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and several things were found regarding the general behavior of transfer students from a national perspective (Laanan, 2001).

Most notably, one in four community college students indicated that he or she was working towards a bachelor's degree, and 65% of those that transferred did so without a degree from the community college. "On average, community college beginners who transferred to a four-year institution spent about twenty months at the first institution" (Laanan, 2001, p. 7). It was also found that the persistence rate among community college transfer students was similar to that of native students at four-year institutions, 70%. However, those who transferred without a degree from the community college were less likely to obtain a baccalaureate degree during the timeframe of the study. Indeed, only 17% who transferred without a degree had obtained a bachelor's degree in comparison to the 43% who had transferred with a degree.

Cejda and Kaylor (1997) studied transfer students who experienced transfer shock at two private, non-selective, liberal arts colleges, Benedictine College (Kansas) and Saint Vincent College (Pennsylvania) over a time frame of nine semesters. Students in the study had to have completed 24 hours at a community college and had full-time status at the private, liberal arts receiving institution. The cumulative GPAs were utilized at time of transfer and after the end of the first semester at the transfer institution. All of the students in the sample, 134 students at

Benedictine College and 82 from Saint Vincent experienced a mean GPA decline of 0.09 or transfer shock. There were not differences in the GPA at each institution with students at Benedictine College having a mean decline of 0.09 and Saint Vincent College with a mean decline of 0.08. In comparison with other transfer shock studies, Cejda and Kaylor cautioned comparing GPA declines because of the methodological differences in studies such as number of hours, sample selection, and pre-transfer GPA. When comparing their findings with both university and college systems and single institutions the GPA decline for the Benedictine and Saint Vincent students “was the third lowest of all investigations conducted since 1980” (p. 656). Cejda and Kaylor (1997) confirmed that transfer shock did indeed occur for these community college transfer students to private four-year institutions, and those private institutions should “carefully consider the research concerning the academic performance of community college transfer students” (p. 656).

Cejda (1997) also studied 100 transfer students across disciplines who had transferred from community colleges. This study provided a “discipline-based perspective” perspective to the body of literature on transfer shock. Cejda focused his study on 100 community college transfers who had completed 24 semester hours of transfer work to Benedictine College over eight semesters. Students were separated by major into the following groups: business, education, fine arts and humanities, math and science and social science. Cejda found that “there is no significant difference in the mean transfer shock of a homogenous group of students and the mean transfer shock of the total sample of students” (p. 284). Overall, it was discovered that transfer students had a mean decline in the post-transfer GPA of 0.076. Three discipline groups including education, fine arts, and humanities and social sciences had an increase, or transfer ecstasy, with mean increases of 0.024, 0.268 and 0.041 correspondingly. Declines in GPA or

transfer shock were found in mathematics and sciences with a decline of 0.246 and business with a decline of 0.342. Cejda determined that “there is strong evidence to suggest that reporting the transfer shock of a total sample or population does not accurately reflect the academic performance of community college transfer students in their respective disciplines” (p. 285). Cejda suggested that studies should expand beyond the overall mean post-transfer GPA and that it should not be assumed that transfer shock will be the result for transfer students, as three groups in this study experienced transfer ecstasy. Both two-year and four-year institutions have a responsibility to provide the necessary services to prepare students to transfer regarding academic preparation and post-transfer assistance regarding campus adjustment and time management, as well as other issues that impact the academic and social adjustment of transfer students on the four-year campus (Berger & Malaney, 2003).

Cejda, Kaylor and Rewey (1998) conducted a study of transfer students and transfer shock from private, liberal arts, institutional perspective that encompassed the student’s academic discipline. They examined transfer shock from a discipline-based perspective similar to that of Cejda (1998) but from a private, institutional perspective to see if statistical significance is present regarding transfer student’s academic performance in various disciplines. It was assumed that those with higher GPAs and upper division status prior to transfer would perform better or maintain higher marks than those transferring with lower division status and GPAs. Transfer students in the study had been enrolled in a state-wide community college system that defined an associate’s degree with 45 hours of general education credits or a “transfer degree.” Public four-year institutions in the state were required to accept the general education credit and most private institutions in the state did also. Limitations of the study included that it was limited to those students who completed an associate’s degree, were

traditional-aged, full-time, and would be pursuing the same major at the private four-year institution. Cejda, Kaylor, and Rewey (1998) hypothesized that there would not be a significant difference in the GPA of the transfers across the majors of the transfer students. Four hundred thirty-four students transferring from the public community college system to the private four-year institution were used in the study. After the limitations referenced above, the sample size was 250 students or 57.6% of the transfer population.

The private institution did not have separate schools or colleges so Cejda, Kaylor, and Rewey (1998) composed the following groupings of majors: fine arts and humanities (n=51) (arts, music theater, English, history, religion and foreign language); mathematics and sciences (n=54) (mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics); social sciences (n=66) (economics, government, psychology, and sociology); and professions (n=79) (business administration, elementary education and journalism). A 2 x 4 mixed model ANOVA was used to determine if there were differences between means for the following:

1. differences between the community college GPA means of the respective disciplines;
2. differences between the liberal arts college GPA means of the respective disciplines;
3. differences between the pre- and post transfer GPA of the total sample;
4. differences between the pre- and post transfer GPA means of the respective disciplines. (p. 6)

It was discovered that the “. . . student’s major did not significantly influence GPA at the community college” (Cejda, Kaylor and Rewey, 1998, p. 7). Some transfer shock was experienced overall, .048. Those in mathematics, sciences and professions had GPA declines of

.272 and .1489. This was the only statistically significant decline. Fine arts and humanities and social sciences had GPA increases of .158 and .097, or experienced transfer ecstasy, although neither was statistically significant. Cejda, Kaylor, and Rewey (1998) determined that their hypothesis was incorrect, and that there was a difference in the mean GPA of transfers across majors at a private institution. Cejda, Kaylor, and Rewey thus contend that, "Shock and ecstasy would better describe instances of decrease or increase that is statistically significant, yet these terms have been used to describe all instances of decrease and increase" (p. 9). Overall, this study indicated a strong relationship between a student's major or area of study and academic performance after transfer at the four-year institution, and in this case a private liberal arts college. Cejda, Kaylor and Rewey suggested research to include comparing four-year receiving institutions based on type as well as studying non-traditional and part-time students, which were excluded from this study.

Studies on the transfer shock experiences of community college transfer students cannot alone explain a student's transitional experience. Tinto (1987) offered a theoretical model to frame the experiences of students who are adjusting to college. This framework can be utilized when studying the transition community college students experience upon arrival at the four-year receiving institution.

Student Persistence

Tinto (1987, 1993) provided three stages through which students move through in matriculating as members of an institution: separation, transition, and incorporation (1993). In the separation stage, students leave behind the familiarity and comfort of what they knew at home and in high school or, in the case of community college transfer students, the familiarity of the community college environment. If students successfully progress through the separation

stage, they then enter into the transition stage where they feel as though they may be pulled in two directions between the old environment and the new one of the college setting. They may have not yet found their place in the new college environment, but have discovered that the place they once had in their old home environment may no longer exist. Those students who make it through the transition stage then move on to the incorporation stage in which they feel a sense of membership in the campus community and its social and academic components. It is imperative to understand student persistence and departure when discussing transfer student behavior and outcomes.

According to Tinto (1987, 1993), many students will not persist at the institution due to an inability to develop connections within the intellectual and social life of the institution. Tinto (1987) suggested that students must separate themselves from their previous life, transition to the new environment and norms, and then incorporate into the college environment. It is here that the student must be a part of both the social and academic parts of campus. Campuses have to develop a learning community, whether through formal academic and co-curricular programs, or by integrating the myriad of components of college life into one salient experience for students (Tinto, 1993). Such an integration can serve to aid students in developing and understanding connections of their academic and co-curricular experiences and how these experiences can come together to guide students toward their educational goals.

Academic integration includes academic success and development while social integration is focused on peer interactions, group involvement, and non-academic interactions with faculty. Tinto (1987) asserted that community college students in particular enter college with more loosely-defined goals than their four-year student counterparts which makes them more at risk for departing their institution. Additionally, it may be more difficult for community

college students to transition as they are, in many cases, still connected to their home and family as commuter students who do not leave their home environment as a residential student would.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) tested Tinto's model to measure validity between freshman students or "persisters" and those who willingly chose not to return, and their research findings supported Tinto's model of student departure (1987). Strong connections were found for those students who persisted with more frequent student-faculty relationships and interaction. Faculty student interaction is clearly a factor in student persistence for the freshman year (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). "Moreover, they underscore the potential importance of faculty, in both their formal teaching and informal roles nonteaching roles, as an influence on freshman students' decisions to persist or withdraw from a particular institution" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, p. 72).

Pascarella and Chapman (1983) went on to discover that Tinto's model is applicable to two-year commuter or community colleges; however, academic integration was more significant than social integration, particularly at four-year residential campuses. Four-year residential, four-year commuter, and two-year commuter institutions were used in the study. Tinto's (1987) concepts of academic and social integration were applied in the study. It was discovered that living on campus had a positive effect on student persistence at four-year institutions, and had a negative impact on the two-year students. The concept of commitment was also studied. It was found that "institutional commitment had a much stronger direct effect than goal commitment which had a somewhat stronger direct effect than institutional commitment in the two-year commuter sample" (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983, p. 96). It is noteworthy that Tinto's (1987) concepts of academic integration and social integration played out differently for the institution types.

For residential students, social integration had a direct impact on student persistence and “an indirect effect transmitted through its influence on institutional and goal commitment. Conversely, academic integration had neither a direct nor indirect effect on voluntary persistence” (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983, p. 96). For residential students, according to Pascarella and Chapman, institutional commitment was based on social integration, while both four-year and two-year community college students commitment was linked more strongly with academic integration. As suggested by Pascarella and Chapman (1983), this may be due to limited social opportunities at two-year institutions. The academic and social backgrounds of students were also noted. For residential students, “living on campus (versus off campus) was the only variable in the residential model with a direct impact on persistence” (p. 98). The background of commuter students, both four and two year, had an impact on their persistence. “Rather, high school achievement had a direct effect on persistence for the four-year commuter sample, and affiliation needs had a direct (negative) effect on the two-year sample” (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983, p. 98). In summary, Pascarella and Chapman asserted that the four-year residential student’s experience is “mediated” by their experience, while commuter students’ persistence may be influenced by their background traits with little intervention from the institutional college experience.

Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington (1986) also applied Tinto’s student withdrawal theory to two-year community college students. They pointed out that the limitations of past research on persistence assume that when a student leaves an institution that they are withdrawing from the system of higher education altogether, while in fact the student may be transferring to another institution (Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986). Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington (1986) utilized Tinto’s (1987) model to study the long-term persistence of two-year college students.

Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington (1986) defined persistence/withdrawal for the purpose of this study as “a measure of the student’s persistence in or withdrawal from the system of higher education. It was operationally defined in terms of completing or persisting in the pursuit of the bachelor’s degree” (p. 65). The use of Tinto’s model included the concepts of

person-environment fit are those of academic and social integration. It is through these two constructs, that the model assesses the nature of the student’s institutional experience and the relationship of this experience to subsequent commitments and to persistence/withdrawal behavior. (Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986, p. 49)

Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington (1986) utilized data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) from 1971 to 1980. A total of 10,326 students completed the initial survey at both the two-year and four-year institutions. Nine years later, a follow-up study was conducted yielding 825 students who were enrolled in two-year colleges in 1971 who had baccalaureate aspirations. Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington defined degree persistence as those who had completed a bachelor’s degree over the nine-year time frame or were “actively working toward the bachelor’s degree as of 1980 “ (p. 65). Degree completion was defined as “completing a bachelor’s degree within the nine-year period” (p. 65). Variables in the study included the following: family background with the following variables socioeconomic status, “degree of concern financing college” (p. 51), and work expectations. Additional variables were individual attributes and pre-college schooling that included the following: goal commitment and institutional commitment from the pre-enrollment survey, academic integration, social integration, and institutional commitment/satisfaction for the follow-up study. Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington measured persistence/withdrawal by degree persistence and degree completion. Significant findings related to background information included that, for male students, their secondary school experience was a positive impact in their degree completion, but commitment to the institution was negatively related to the initial institution of enrollment. Women were

positively impacted by their socioeconomic status related to degree persistence and secondary school experiences had an impact on their degree completion.

Consistent with Tinto's model (1975, 1987), academic and social integration had the most influence over both degree persistence and attainment. Those who became integrated at the four-year or "last institution attended" were more successful in pursuing the bachelor's degree. This is noteworthy as it is research over an extended period of time and included students who began their academic career at a two-year institution. "The present findings extend this work by suggesting the importance of these two core concepts [academic and social integration] in accounting for the long term postsecondary persistence of students initially enrolling in two-year institutions" (Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986, p. 66). Overall the student's college experience reached beyond other factors such as secondary preparation, family background, and other variables. Other findings included that males were more positively influenced by institutional commitment than women; however, secondary school social involvement had more of a positive impact for females than males. Men were more influenced positively by institutional commitment/satisfaction, as Tinto posited (1987, 1993). However, it was not significant for female students, which is not consistent with the persistence model. Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington (1986) stated,

Tentatively, what can be concluded from the present findings is that the long-term degree completion and persistence of women initially enrolling in two-year institutions are generally independent of their degree of commitment/satisfaction with the last undergraduate institution attended. (p. 67)

Males were influenced more by having a relationship with or "knowing a faculty member." This is significant as ". . . the frequency and quality of informal interaction with faculty have a unique, positive influence on student persistence" (p. 68). Women had a less of a correlation with

knowing a faculty member, and their persistence was more influenced with social integration factors including leadership activities.

Halpin (1990) utilized Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) study to examine student persistence at a non-residential, public, open-door comprehensive community college during the fall semester with first-time, full-time freshmen in academic degree programs. Three hundred eighty-one students were a part of the population studied. Seventy-five percent moved forward to the spring term, 14.7% were academically suspended and 9.4% withdrew. Halpin utilized a questionnaire developed by Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) that was administered three weeks prior to the end of the term in freshman English courses. Halpin's research question was to determine if Tinto's (1987) model of departure could be applied to a community college. Halpin (1990) stated that "These results indicate that the model, as operationalized in this study, indeed does have utility for researchers and administrators concerned about retention" (p. 6). The factors of greatest influence included faculty concern for teaching and student development, intellectual development, and interaction with faculty. The concept of academic integration was significant in this study. Halpin stated that the academic integration facet of the model cannot predict departure per se, but rather suggests that academic integration is similar for both two-year and four-year institutions. The social integration function of student attrition is different and may explain "the predictive power of the model and the importance of academic integration for this population (p. 6).

Types of Transitions

Flaga (2006) asserted that a void in the current literature exists and that "a comprehensive look at community college transfer student transition over time" (p. 4). Beach (1999) developed a framework of transition to be applied to all areas of educational experiences in life.

Consequential transitional theory looks at the person and the “changing relations between individuals and social activities” (p. 113). Consequential transition, according to Beach, is any change or adjustment that takes place for a person or activity. “Transitions are consequential when they are consciously reflected on, often struggled with, and the eventual outcome changes one’s sense of self and social positioning” (p. 114). Beach offered four types of consequential transitions that include lateral, collateral, encompassing, and meditational transition. Lateral transition can be summarized as having a sense of progress and a movement between activities, which may be developmental in nature. Beach offered the example of a student transitioning from school to the workforce. Collateral transitions “involve individuals relatively simultaneous participation in two or more historically related activities” (p. 115). An example of collateral transition is that of a student moving between school and home. This is true for many community college students who must juggle the hat of employee and student, coupled with preparing for transfer to a four-year institution. This can create multi-layer transitional issues. Encompassing transitions are those of social activity changing or the “rapid change relative to the lives of their participants” (p. 117). Those experiencing this type of transition “often experience the process of adapting to existing or changing circumstances in order to continue participation within the boundaries of the activity” (p. 118). Meditational transitions take place in educational settings that have not yet occurred or have not yet been experienced. Beach related this type of transition to adult or vocational educational experiences where participants are mediating where they will be going. For community college transfer students, their social position will change and their sense of self as they prepare to move towards obtaining a four-year degree. They also must identify themselves as a college/university student and not a community college student. All four types of consequential transitional theory can be applied to the

experiences to community college students preparing to transfer and for those who are experiencing the transition to the four-year institution.

Flaga (2006) interviewed 35 community college transfer students during their first semester and 30 during their second semester. This research has led to the identification of five dimensions of transition: learning resources, connecting, familiarity, negotiating, and integrating that occur in the academic, social, and physical environment. Learning resources as defined by Flaga are “a variety of tools that students utilized in order to gain information and learn about the campus environment and academic system” (p.6). Different types of learning resources such as formal include programs such as orientation and advisors. Informal resources were resources such as friends and alumni. Initiative and gathering their own information was also a contribution to a student’s success (Flaga, 2006).

Connecting as a dimension for students includes the development of relationships with others that cross the three environments (Flaga, 2006). Examples of connecting include group work, faculty contact, and class discussions. Social connecting with current students was a way Flaga (2006) identified students as expanding their social circles. The third dimension of familiarity, “developed as students internalized the information they gathered and felt more comfortable with their new environments” (p. 7). Social adjustment can differ for transfer students. Some have connections with other students and easily meet other university students and have a balance of academic and social lives. However, some can over-indulge in the social aspect of the university setting, as any student can, but the social atmosphere at the community college does not have the same level of social interaction (Davis & Casey, 1999). Social integration may be difficult for community college students, as noted by Pascarella and Chapman (1983). Transfer students may have a difficult time connecting socially with other students and

continuing relationships with high school or community college friends. The classes are larger at four-year institutions and it is hard to meet other students while enrolled at the university. The fourth dimension, negotiating, was when students were able to adjust their behavior so that they can succeed in their academic, social, and new physical environments (Flaga, 2006). Integrating was something that occurred for some students as they changed developmentally during their period of transition. Flaga's dimension of integration was similar to Tinto's (1987, 1993) theory, but for transfer students her dimension also considered the aspects of the physical environment. "Integrating often included a shift in perception of identity" (Flaga, 2006. p 8).

Davis and Casey (1999) explored the concept of transition to the physical environment as well. In general, students described their comfort level with the new institution as favorable. However, there were also negative references during the transition. Some community college transfers liked the spread-out nature of the university in comparison to the often-single building model of some smaller community colleges. Students often cited feeling more comfortable at the community college because it was relaxed and easy to navigate. Students who had a higher comfort level at the university referenced the vast resources and collegiate atmosphere and others who may still be in transfer shock referred to it as a "huge lumbering beast," and that faculty and staff were not as personal (Davis & Casey, 1999). Flaga's (2006) dimensions provided a lens to view transfer student development and adjustment. The dimensions can occur in any order with the exception of integration. Flaga asserted that integration cannot occur without familiarity.

Transfer Student Research

Student persistence theories such as Tinto's model (1975, 1987, 1993) were applied to the experience of transfer students, though they were designed with native students in mind. Laanan argued that there is very limited research in the area of post-transfer adjustment, which is

non-academic in nature. Research on transfer student adjustment has used the institutional or student characteristics and persistence at the four-year institution and relationships between demographics and academic performance to study transfer students and the transfer process in comparison with native students. Studies have used GPA, persistence rates, academic standing, warning and probation to study the successful transfer of these students (Laanan, 2001). Laanan framed three distinct approaches to understanding the transfer adjustment process: psychological, environmental, and climate approaches. Psychological adjustment, as defined by Chartrand (1992), is the absence of psychological distress and the student's ability to commit himself to the transfer institution and have feelings of adjustment. The educational environment includes the faculty and how often they interact with students and, in this case, community college transfer students. Campus climate includes the size of the transfer institution and whether or not the students feel that they are a part of the community can contribute to their successful adjustment.

Kozeracki (2001) classified general research questions that are found in the transfer student literature. Kozeracki (2001) offered three points to consider when studying transfer students. First, studies should be conducted so that institutions can address problems that may develop. Second, that questions posed in surveys, interview or focus group formats should be "specific enough to allow action to be taken in response to evidence of problems" (Kozeracki, 2001, p. 67). Third, Kozeracki offered that departments which are being evaluated should be involved in the research process from the beginning so that they are more likely to act on findings discovered from the research.

Townsend and Wilson (2006a) stated in their qualitative study of transfer community college students to a large research university that, in the past, it has been the responsibility of

community colleges to prepare students academically to transfer to the baccalaureate institution, but that four-year institutions are now bearing some of the responsibility for transfer student success. Townsend and Wilson studied the perceptions of current community college students about “institutional factors that influenced their fit within the receiving institution, including the transfer process, orientation to the university, and social and academic experiences there as compared to those in the community college” (p. 440). Townsend and Wilson further utilized Tinto’s (1993) theory of retention and the concepts of academic and social integration.

The orientation process for the transfer students included a formal program that 16 of the 19 students in Townsend and Wilson’s study (2006a) attended. Students reported wanting to hear from transfer students and how the academic requirements or study habits would be different for them at the university versus the community college. Students reported lack of information on basic services, including the fee structure (Townsend & Wilson, 2006a). “Some transfer students may need more hand holding during their initial weeks, particularly those accustomed to small campuses where it is easier to find what to do and how to do it” (Townsend & Wilson, 2006a, p. 452). Townsend and Wilson found that students had varied experiences with faculty. Attendance policies were not in effect for courses, and this was surprising for transfer students. Also, students reported that faculty was not as available and that they did not have as close of relationships with the faculty at the university. Negative responses were usually associated with the size of courses at the university versus the community college, as well as the perception that faculty cared less for students (Townsend & Wilson, 2006a).

Social integration was challenging for these students. “Some students expressed more difficulty in making friends at the university than at the community college” (Townsend & Wilson, 2006a, p. 448). Students reported not knowing friends from high school like they had at

the community college and that they did not find students like themselves who were working and going to school. "I haven't been able to find my niche or really fit in; it just really seems like I go to class and that's it . . ." (p. 448). Townsend and Wilson (2006a) claimed that receiving institutions may be hindering the social integration of transfer students with first-year programming targeted at socially integrating new freshman each fall.

University students who bonded together during the first year in school may have little interest in expanding their social groups and making new friends. Also, they may not be accustomed to finding friends in large lecture classes because they have developed friendships elsewhere. (p. 450)

Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) included other factors besides GPA when discussing the concept of transfer shock with two-year community college students who have transferred to a four-year college or university. Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) cited that both two-year and four-year institutions have a responsibility to aid in the success of two-year transfer students: "The failure of institutions to work together on transfer issues may result in students' failure to complete their degree plans in a timely manner" (p. 444). Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) cited that most first-year community college students plan to transfer to a four-year institution, but may later decide it is not for them or may not consistently take courses at the community college due to work or family issues. Many community college students take a great deal longer than two years to complete the associate's degree or equivalent amount of transfer work to transfer to a baccalaureate granting institution. Some students do not begin at the two-year school immediately after high school and may delay their enrollment, they often fluctuate between full-time and part-time status, and, thirdly, they may change their academic goals or career plans. Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) stated,

The first step in aiding students in the transition is to compare the differences between the community college and the 4-year college or university. If administrators, faculty

members, and counselors from both institutions may face in transitioning, appropriate changes and steps can be taken to ease the process. (p. 448)

Berger and Malaney (2003) studied 372 community college transfer students attending a large, four-year public institution to determine how students' "pre-transfer experiences and preparation, along with post-transfer experiences, influence the adjustment of community college transfer students (as measured by academic achievement and satisfaction with various aspects of the university experience) to live on a four-year university campus" (p. 2). Berger and Malaney referenced that past studies of two-year transfer students focus on academic achievement or GPA as how well students have made the transition or adjusted to their new campus. They argued that there is more to campus adjustment and the college experience than classroom performance. Berger and Malaney recognized that student's background may influence the successful transition to a four-year college or university, but so may student satisfaction, which is linked to student satisfaction (Bean, 1980, 1983).

Berger and Malaney (2003) focused their research on "the factors that influence community college students' level of success (in terms of student satisfaction and academic achievement)" (p. 5). The Cycles Survey was used in this study to understand satisfaction with the university experience. Questions included topics pertaining to social life, decision to transfer, community, ability to make friends, academic support, advising, and faculty accessibility (Berger & Malaney, 2003). Independent variables were grouped into four categories: precollege characteristics, levels of community college involvement, knowledge about the transfer process and preparation, and university involvement.

In general, the students in this study were overall satisfied with their decision to transfer to University of Massachusetts and with the academic and social aspects of campus life. Berger and Malaney (2003) found that "The ways in which students prepare to transfer seems to be as

much a factor in their high satisfaction rate as the actual levels of involvement with the university” (p. 15). Student satisfaction with academic support at the university level was lower than other areas. Berger and Malaney linked this finding with the fact that students may have difficulty in locating faculty and academic advising support at the university and that it is very different than their community college experience. The most prominent finding of Berger and Malaney’s study was that transfer student satisfaction and adjustment to a four-year institution was linked to how the student prepares for the transfer process itself. Those students who were more prepared and had used resources to “gain more knowledge about the transfer process clearly leads to greater satisfaction with aspects of the university and better academic performance” (p. 15). This suggested that administrators at both institutional types need to ensure that transfer students are able to seek information and advice about the process. Specifically, faculty and academic advisors are knowledgeable of requirements and pass this information along to students (Berger & Malaney, 2003).

Additionally, Berger, and Malaney (2003) suggested that two-year transfer students have the opportunity to meet with four-year faculty and staff to learn about the transfer process and requirements. This will lead to more successful and satisfied two-year transfer students. They also suggested that leaders and administrators at both types of institutions have current information regarding articulation readily accessible for students and that faculty and advisors need to “well versed with such documents and know where to find pertinent information as they counsel and guide students” (p. 16). Four-year colleges and universities have a responsibility to work with two-year colleges to provide information to prospective students while they are still enrolled in the two-year college. It is also suggested that four-year institutions visit the two-year campus in the classroom for those two-year students on the “transfer track.”

Berger and Malaney (2003) used transfer readiness variables for both process and outcome indicators. “Two of the items, the extent to which students sought advice from faculty and staff members and the extent to which student sought career counseling, measure aspects of preparing for transfer as a process” (p. 17). Two additional variables included “measuring student’s self-perceptions or preparedness for transfer and knowledge of graduation requirements are outcomes of the community college experience (p. 17). These variables again suggested that faculty and staff at the community college need to be “well versed in the transfer process and know where to send students seeking information about the transfer process or about specific four-year institutions” (p. 17).

Level of student involvement differed at the community college and four-year university (University of Massachusetts). Berger and Malaney (2003) found that students were more socially engaged with peers at the four-year university than while enrolled at the community college. They also found that community college students were more likely to work off campus while enrolled at the community college versus the four-year university. This supports assumptions that community college students have significant work and family commitments and less time for socialization than university students (Berger & Malaney, 2003). Four-year administrators can aid in identifying those students who are prepared and involved and perhaps intervene with those who are not and assist them in experiencing less “transfer shock,” as suggested by Berger and Malaney. It was also found that white students “are more likely to receive higher grades and are more likely to be satisfied with their overall university experience” (p. 18). Universities can provide a more supportive process and environment for students of color. Additionally, older or non-traditional students were found were more satisfied with advising services than traditional students, suggesting that non-traditional students may receive

such services more easily than traditional-aged students or that faculty and advisors spend more time with this population.

Berger and Malaney's (2003) most "surprising" finding was that the level of community college involvement had little to almost no impact on a transfer student's satisfaction and academic achievement at the four-year transfer institution. "Community college activities may be more likely to influence whether or not students transfer than they are likely to influence student satisfaction and academic achievement upon transfer to a four-year institution" (p. 18). Those students who are satisfied are those who are actively engaged at the university setting and this leads to satisfaction with the university experience. The academic outcomes were not influenced by involvement. Only socializing with peers had a negative association with academic outcomes, other types of university involvement did not have an impact on academic outcomes. "It appears that students who spend more time socializing with peers are more likely to be satisfied with their university experience, but may not be performing as well in the classroom" (p. 19). Four-year institutions may need to provide counseling for transfer students on how best to balance academic and social life on the four-year university.

Bauer and Bauer (1994) researched the academic and personal concerns of two-year students prior to transferring. The focus of the study was based on the following research questions, "what skills do students believe they acquired at the community college," which academic and personal concerns did they anticipate before matriculation to a four-year college," and "which academic and personal concerns did they actually perceive after transfer" (p. 117).

Respondents of the Bauer and Bauer study were originally enrolled in two Maryland community colleges and compared community college experiences to high school for both academic variables and their own achievements. There were 130 respondents with 92 who went

on to transfer to a four-year college/university. The survey population was traditional age with close to 70% being female and full-time students. Follow up surveys were conducted with this population.

It was found that students reported overall a higher level of instruction at the community college. Upon transfer to a four-year college university respondents reported that a four-year college university required more abstract thinking, reading, and written work. Bauer and Bauer assert that the largest difference between two and four-year institutions was the level of personal attention from faculty members, citing that two-year institutions gave students more personal attention (59.7%). Personal concerns cited by students prior to transfer included; “speaking during class, giving a speech before a group, and meeting new friends” (p. 117). Study skills were also a major concern students had after transferring to a four-year institution. “Thus it appears that these respondents exited their community colleges believing that their study skills were adequate only to discover after transferring that such skills were still their major academic concern” (p. 121). Bauer and Bauer uncover concerns of transfer students prior to and upon transferring to a four-year institution. Academic and personal concerns can be the same that students have while enrolled at the community college and also at the four-year institution as illustrated with study skills. Some respondents did report a decrease in concern for certain academic behaviors. Writing skills was a concern for almost 44% of community college students, but only close to 19% had this concern upon transfer.

Bauer and Bauer uncover some of the perceptions of community college students regarding academic and personal issues while enrolled at the community college and also while enrolled at a four-year college/university.

Laanan (1996) who emphasized the importance of studying transfer student's experiences beyond that of the transfer GPA conducted a study of students who had participated in the Transfer Alliance Program (TAP), a collaborative program at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) which had community college students participate in an honors program while preparing to transfer. This articulation agreement for UCLA also served as a way to further develop programs for students that included faculty support and academic advising and counseling. Over twenty community colleges participated in the TAP program and included general education courses that had enrollment limits of 25 students per course. TAP students have been studied in regards to their GPA upon transfer (Ackermann, 1989) and it was found that TAP versus non-TAP students had higher UCLA GPAs and also lower attrition rates. Lannan (1996) took these GPA studies further by exploring the overall adjustment of TAP students. Laanan studied students transferring from a California community college to UCLA in 1993 who were second-year transfer students. Both TAP participants and non-TAP students were identified and there were 90 TAP and 778 non-TAP students who were surveyed with 54% of TAP students participating and 26% of non-TAP students completing the survey. A questionnaire was administered to the TAP and non-TAP students that encompassed the following areas: background, community college experiences, and UCLA experiences. Of the participants most students were traditional-aged, college students (24 or under). Seventy-seven percent of the TAP students and 59% of non-TAP students were traditional-aged students. Males (32%) and females (68%) of the overall population with non-TAP students being 30% male and 70% female. The TAP student breakdown was 39% male and 61% female. Most of the students were white with 50% of TAP students being white and Asian Americans being the second largest group behind white students. It should be noted that there were no African

American, Mexican, Chicano(a), or American Indian students in the TAP program and TAP students overall came from higher socioeconomic groups than non-TAP students.

The community college experiences for the two groups of students revealed that TAP students had slightly higher GPAs than non-TAP students (3.53 for TAP and 3.52 for non-TAP). Laanan (1996) suggests that the GPAs may be close in range due the level of academic rigor the TAP students experienced by participating in the program. More TAP students (75%) indicated that they were developing critical and analytical skills than non-TAP students (72%). TAP students also reported that their courses were demanding in writing requirements (70%) versus non-TAP students (55%) and this finding was statistically significant. Additionally, TAP students were more comfortable interacting with faculty members outside of the classroom than non-TAP students. This could be due to the small class size in the TAP program as Lannan suggested. More non-TAP students (20%) sought out tutoring services at the community college versus TAP students (6%). Regarding academic advising or counseling, TAP students (94%) utilized this service more than non-TAP students (85%). This is more than likely due to the nature of the program supporting TAP students in utilizing this service. TAP students also found the services more helpful than non-TAP students. Only 68% of non-TAP students reported that their advisor assisted them in selecting appropriate courses for transfer articulation with TAP students reporting 81% this as a positive experience. This is concerning as the articulation of credits and prohibit degree progress upon transfer.

The students upon transferring to UCLA had GPAs that included the TAP (3.19) students having a lower UCLA GPA than non-TAP students (3.26). This difference can be attributed to the fact that 18% of the TAP students were enrolled in an honors program and may have had more difficult courses than non-TAP students (Laanan, 1996). More TAP students experienced

transfer shock and difficulty adjusting to student life at UCLA that included lower levels of academic and social involvement outside the classroom. Both TAP and non-TAP students participated in orientation at UCLA and some in the Transfer Summer Program (TSP). Laanan noted that participation in such programs suggests that TAP students may be more willing to utilize campus services. It also is worthy to note that TAP students were less involved socially than non-TAP students and were not as likely to join or participate in an organization. Laanan suggested that the TAP program could have been “protecting” these students as it provided a small community-based environment with special and enhanced student services that they did not experience upon transfer to UCLA. This study was significant as it looks at students transfer process after participation in a pre-transfer articulation program and goes beyond the cursory findings of post-transfer GPA only. Laanan (1996) concluded his findings by stating that “Although transfer students may perform academically well at the community college, they may not be prepared socially and psychologically for the change in environment from the community college to a four-year college or university” (p. 80).

Laanan’s (2007) study utilizing the *2007 Laanan-Transfer Students’ Questionnaire (L-TSQ®)* was employed to discover more about the transfer adjustment process of community college students. Laanan’s study investigated the “experiences and performance of community college transfer students at a research university” and moved ahead of only studying GPA or the concept of transfer shock, although it was a component of the study. Research questions included understanding what “social demographics, community college and university factors predicted a positive adjustment for students, both socially and academically” (p. 38). Laanan (2007) utilized three concepts for the theoretical framework of the study: Astin’s (1984) theory

of student development, and Pace's (1980, 1984) theory of quality of effort, and Oberg's concept of culture shock (1960).

Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement focused on what the student does rather than other psychological factors. A student contributes to his or her educational experience which was the focus of Astin's theory (1984). The theory of student involvement has five postulates: investment of physical and psychological energy, involvement occurs in varied degrees, can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively, student learning and development is proportional to the quality, and quantity of student involvement, and educational policy and practice should be related to increasing student involvement.

Astin (1984) described three principles related to student involvement. First, students have a finite amount of time and energy. The "zero-sum game" is the time and energy that students have to devote to jobs, family, friends and other outside influences that reduce the time they spend on educational activities. Second, a student's achievement of their educational goals was related to the time and level of effort exerted in achieving that goal. Third, Astin (1984) differentiated between motivation and involvement. Involvement is a step beyond the psychological state, and is the behavioral outcome of motivation. Transfer students who were invested and engaged in their learning and activities at their two-year institutions may expend the same level if not more at the four-year institution.

Quality is first based on the concept that "education is both process and product" (Laanan, 2004, p. 336). Pace argued that the educational outcome or product is important, but so is the process (Laanan, 2004). Second, according to Pace (1984), learning requires the investment of time from the student. Pace, in summary, asserted that students get out of college

what they put into it and that education is a process and a product and that learning and development requires an investment of time and effort from the student.

Oberg (1960) described culture shock or the “sojourner experience” as a mental illness related to persons who were “transplanted abroad” (Laanan, 2007, p. 40). Oberg summarized culture shock as moving from one place to a foreign environment. Those moving to a foreign environment in his example must adjust and adapt to the culture, “signs and symbols” (Laanan, 2007, p. 40) of the new environment. Ward and Kennedy (1993) also utilized the concept of culture shock in their work studying relocation. Two factors were of note related to the study of transfer students from a two-year to a four-year institution as described by Laanan (2007). The first concept was that of psychological adjustment and the person’s ability to cope with the stress created from moving to a new environment. The other concept was sociological and asks, does the individual have the “toolkit” of social skills to make the transition? Students most definitely must adjust and will experience stress and need to understand the signs and symbols of their new environment from the physical campus to the social and academic culture of the four-year transfer, receiving institution. Laanan’s study encompassed 2,369 community college students in California who transferred to a public university in southern California (SU) in fall 1994 and spring 1995.

The community college experience for these students included an average GPA of 3.41 (self-reported) with 40% earning an associate’s degree while at the community college. The university GPA was slightly lower (self-reported) of 3.17. Students at the university reported working with one third working 16 hours or more per week while at the university. 68% of the transfer students attended the orientation program for transfer students. Laanan (2007) discovered with the academic adjustment variable that “women were more likely to experience

difficulty in their academic adjustment at SU” (p. 50). Regarding the social adjustment variable, the most positive connection was with student’s involvement with organizations and activities prior to their transferring to SU.

Students who believed that faculty were not difficult to approach would experience a smoother transition and would take advantage of out of class opportunities for assistance and interaction. Academic counseling or advising had an opposite impact, for those who sought out such services were likely to experience academic or social adjustment difficulty (Laanan, 2007). This suggests that students who seek out such services are in need of it, but in the long run, may adjust well and can improve their experience at their new institution. Laanan reiterated that those who met with counselors at the two-year level have an increased chance of having academic difficulties upon transfer. Laanan suggested that overall, the two-year institutional factors that predict a students’ success or successful transition to the four-year institution are not as significant as the environment at the four-year institution. What the student does or does not do at the four-year institution has a greater impact on their success than what they did or did not do at the community college.

The social adjustment process for two-year students at SU was impacted mostly by the student’s involvement in clubs and organizations. These students experienced “less difficulty adjusting socially” (Laanan, 2007, p. 55). Additionally, socializing with classmates and friends provided a “positive social adjustment.” These factors were significant in student’s adjustment; however, social demographics such as age, race, and ethnicity were not a factor in adjusting socially to a four-year institution. Laanan pointed out that these factors are significant in who attends and may transfer to a four-year college or university, but not who adjusts well. Laanan (2007) stated,

. . . it is likely that what a student brings to the college environment will have an impact on their academic and social experiences. However, it is what the student does once he/she arrives that will determine the extent to which a successful adjustment experience will be achieved. (p. 55)

Overall Astin's student involvement theory and Pace's quality of effort concept were supported by the study of students transferring to SU and provide suggestions for practice to administrators as well as researchers. Laanan suggested that further research be conducted between academic advising and a student's preparation for transition to the four-year baccalaureate institution.

Most recently, Laanan and Ebbers (2008) published the results of the *Iowa Community College Transfer Students: Profiles, Experiences and Perceptions* study. This study also utilized the (L-TSQ[®]) that will be discussed further in the methodology section of this document. The L-TSQ[®] was administered to determine the quality of effort, student involvement, and academic and social adjustment of students who had transferred to Iowa State University (ISU) from the fifteen community colleges in Iowa. The sample size was 1,512 of students who enrolled in the fall 2005, spring 2006, and fall 2006 semesters. The response rate for this survey was 40.3%. The community colleges closest in proximity to Iowa State were represented proportionally in the study and were reflected as such. The age demographics included students between the ages of 21-24 with the majority being white (93%) with half of the students living off campus and 80% desiring to complete a bachelor's degree at ISU.

Upon transferring to ISU, transfer students indicated that they worked less hours while enrolled at ISU than they had while attending the community college (Laanan & Ebbers, 2008). Reasons offered by students for obtaining a bachelor's degree were focused on "developing skills that will ensure their placement in the job market when they graduate" (p. xiii). The satisfaction of personal interests or cultural or social activities was significantly less important

for transfer students with only 3% indicating this as a reason for attending ISU. Overall the transfer students were most influenced to attend ISU because of the academic reputation of ISU. Other factors included convenience, location, affordable tuition, and costs were other factors in their decision to transfer to ISU. Laanan and Ebbers, 2008) stated,

These findings suggest that community college transfer students are most concerned about their careers, the quality of their education, and the financial responsibility they incur as a result of making the decision to pursue an undergraduate degree. (p. xiii)

Over 70% had attended some formal orientation or transition program to the campus for transfer students and two-thirds of the respondents found it somewhat or very helpful. Students overall in the Iowa State study were satisfied with student services. However, they indicated that they must take initiative to receive the benefits of such services. Students were satisfied with their courses at ISU and 84% of students viewed the institution as “a stimulating and exciting place” (p. xiii). They also indicated that they would still attend ISU if starting the transfer process again and would recommend it to a friend. In regards to adjusting to the academic expectations and standards of the four-year campus students had differing opinions. More than three out of five indicated a smooth transition, but slightly less than 40% indicated otherwise.

Regarding social adjustment, many of the students had positive responses and did not feel alienated and were not intimidated by the larger campus or classes. Eighty percent were comfortable spending time with community college friends and 70% felt it was easy to make new friends at ISU (Laanan & Ebbers, 2008). Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they could find their way around campus easily upon transfer. It is noteworthy that the students' level of stress did increase upon transferring and attending ISU and 65% experienced transfer shock or had a dip in their GPA after their first term of enrollment. Overall the students who transferred to ISU had a high level of satisfaction of “satisfied” or very “satisfied” (70%) related

to the following: sense of belonging, career counseling and advising, financial aid services, contact with faculty, and class size (Laanan & Ebbers, 2008). “Eighty percent or more of the responses indicated satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction, a sense of community on campus, academic advising, interaction with other students, the ethnic/racial diversity of faculty, and leadership opportunities” (p. xiv). Overall students were satisfied with their experience and decision to transfer to ISU.

Laanan & Ebbers (2008) asked several open-ended questions as a part of the L-TSQ[®] and discovered that students relied on students they knew, who had also transferred to ISU in the past. Students were aware that successful transfer would be an adjustment, and that they would need to apply themselves and adjust how hard they worked. Students viewed faculty and staff at both the community colleges and the receiving institution as “supportive and encouraging.” The students also noted the use of campus resources and being involved with organizations as important factors of adjustment. The respondents were provided the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the community college’s role in their preparation to transfer to ISU. Some students felt that the two-year preparation was adequate, positive, and had equipped them well for transfer. Others, however, cited the need for advisors to be more knowledgeable about the transferability of course credits and that they could have been advised or “challenged to take more difficult classes” (p. xiv).

The literature on the adjustment of today’s two-year community college student has been focused on the concept of transfer shock (Hills, 1965) and the fact that these students are often under-prepared to succeed at four-year institutions and often require remedial education. Several studies cited the post-transfer experiences of two-year transfer students that include transfer shock (Cejda, 1997; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; & Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998; & Glass &

Harrington, 2002). Studies encompassed post-transfer analysis of student's GPAs at public, private, and from discipline specific perspectives.

Additionally, the adjustment of community college transfer students is typically studied from a four-year lens. Tinto's theory of student departure was developed from a four-year frame of reference and was applied to two-year community college students (Townsend, 2006). While helpful in understanding transfer students, Tinto, Pace and others developed theories with four-year students in mind. Application to community college transfer students provides to the body of literature on student persistence; however, more attention needs to be paid to the uniqueness of the two-year community college student.

Lannan (1996, 2001, 2007) and Laanan and Ebbbers (2008) offered a valuable perspective to the body of literature on transfer student adjustment. The post-transfer experience of community college students is expanded beyond the concept of transfer shock. The social and academic adjustment issues of transfer students are taken into account for transfer students utilizing Laanan's L-TSQ[®]. The experiences of transfer students are more than their first term GPA at the receiving institution and the literature summarized in this section illustrates that. However, none of the studies specifically focus on the unique issues of a rural community college student with the desire to transfer to obtain a bachelor's degree. The body of literature on transfer student adjustment primarily focuses on post-transfer experiences and how community college experiences impact a student's transition after arriving at the four-year receiving institution. There is a dearth in the literature as it relates to the study of a two-year community college students needs and perceptions of the transfer process and how to prepare for it. The focus of this study will be to fill the void in the literature regarding pre-transfer perceptions and experiences of rural community college students.

Academic Adjustment

While the literature regarding transfer student adjustment has focused on social adjustment, other researchers focus on academic adjustment issues. This is as equally important in understanding the adjustment transfer students must make. Harbin (1997) provided insight into how well one California community college prepared its students for transfer to a four-year institution. Overall the students that participated in the study were satisfied with their transfer experience although it was found that transfer shock was prevalent. Eighty-three percent of participants stated that they had intent to transfer when beginning at the community college and about half had earned an associate's degree. Upon transfer, grades at the four-year campus did drop for students, but it was also found that the students felt that the community college academically prepared them for enrollment at the university (Harbin, 1997). Regarding academic issues and concerns found in the literature, the role and level of interaction of faculty was significant in the review of literature. Students in many cases did not sense the same level of attention at the four-year institution as they did at the community college.

The benefits of faculty involvement are many for today's college student. Astin (1977) has consistently found that students who interact with faculty more frequently both in and out of the classroom are more satisfied with their college experience (Astin, 1977). Spady and Tinto were used as the conceptual framework for the Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) study and suggested the need for student faculty interaction and relationships. "Transfer students are conceptually distinct from students who attend only one institution. They have, for whatever reason given up one institutional affiliation for another" (Volkwein, King & Terenzini, 1986, p. 416). The question answered is the overall quality of student faculty interaction significantly and positively related to transfer student intellectual skill development and acquisition of knowledge.

Davis and Casey (1999) found that individual attention differences at a western, suburban university were an area of concern for students. Students found that there was more individual attention at the community college and this was an advantage of the being at a community college. One student referenced leaving the university to transfer back to the community college where more one-on-one interaction would be available in the learning environment. However, another student sought the attention and found that the faculty was open and wished that more students would seek interaction. Email was another method that students referenced as a way to interact with university faculty. Most students did reference the change in size and how this impacted their classroom and overall learning experience. They stated that they felt like a number and did not receive the attention that they had had at their previous institution.

Students also noted the difference in duties of the faculty at the university referencing that community college faculty do not have research demands and that they only have to teach (Davis & Casey, 1999). Students also cited more mature and professional instruction at the university and that community college faculty and advisors did not prepare them for the differences they would encounter at the four-year university. Students referenced feeling disillusioned about what would be offered at the university as it related to major and core curriculum requirements. Specific to coursework demand, Davis and Casey discovered that some students felt the community college as less challenging, after attending a university, and compared their community college experience to high school courses.

Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) conducted a study of transfer student faculty interaction to assess the level of faculty interaction outside of the classroom. Data was collected for the study from SUNY-Albany transfer students in 1980 with a survey being administered to 400 students in the fall. SUNY-Albany in 1980 enrolled approximately 3,000 new

undergraduates with a third being transfer students. A follow-up survey was administered to the same population in the spring of 1981 with 231 students from the original group responding. The study measured intellectual skill development, which included critically evaluating ideas, applying principles and analytical thought and academic content acquisition, which consisted of students reporting their progress, research methods and understanding the discipline. Independent variables included the frequency of informal contact and the quality of such contact. Comparisons were drawn between the two-year and four-year institution transfer students.

It was found that most transfer students lived off campus and had approximately eleven contacts with faculty outside of the classroom that lasted on average ten minutes. The discussions involved academic and intellectual matters and fewer discussed personal and social matters. In general, it was found that the two-year institutional transfer students were younger, had higher GPAs in high school and transferred less credits. Four-year transfer students had more contact with the faculty; however, this was not significant. The study found that overall faculty-student contact is positively related to the intellectual growth of transfer students at this institution (Volkwein, King, & Terenzini, 1986). Student's involvement and enjoyment of classroom experiences also contributed to intellectual growth, particularly for community college transfer students. Faculty who are perceived as involved and devoted teachers, contributed slightly to the overall intellectual development of students. Four-year transfer students were found to have more contact with advising and professional staff than the two-year community college counterparts, suggesting that they were more purposeful about finding assistance. Overall the quality of the contact mattered more so than the frequency of contact for the intellectual growth of both two-year and four-year transfer. It is suggested that transfer students have more direction than incoming freshman students and are not different in that they too benefit and

develop intellectually from quality faculty interaction that consists of genuine interest and concern, versus how often they interact.

Laanan (2007) asserted that academic adjustment is an area that produced noteworthy findings. As one would expect, a student's expectations of transfer and interaction with advisors or counselors were statistically significant and noteworthy for this study of pre-transfer perceptions. Those students with anxiety or negative perceptions of the four-year college experience were more likely to experience difficulty adjusting to the academic rigor of the institution (Laanan, 2007). It is unusual to also find that those community college students who spent time with academic counselors and advisors ". . . will likely find it more difficult to adjust. A possible explanation is that students are seeking assistance from counselors because they are experiencing difficulty in the transfer process" (p. 52). Also related to academic adjustment, it was discovered that a student's adjustment at the university would be more difficult if the student's intellectual self-confidence was low. Laanan pointed out those hours spent studying does not yield a positive GPA or smooth academic transition. "Students who spend many hours studying or doing homework will likely experience a more difficult adjustment" (p. 53). He asserted that this may be due to the fact that the quality the student is putting into course mastery does not produce successful transition or course mastery. "It is not the amount of studying that determines the adjustment. Rather, it is the quality of the effort that students devote to the process of learning that counts" (p. 54). Those who seek out assistance from workshops or tutoring may experience academic difficulty, but are navigating their way to a successful adjustment to their new environment. Laanan (2007) noted that those who notice and agree that there is a competitive nature to the four-year institution would experience academic adjustment difficulty.

In the Iowa post transfer study, transfer students did report that they took detailed notes in class and used “high order thinking skills” after arriving at Iowa State (Laanan & Ebbbers, 2008). Their level of faculty interaction differed from that at the community college: “Fewer than three out of 10 responded that they ‘often’ or ‘very often’ visited informally with the instructor after class, discussed career plans with faculty, and asked for comments and criticisms about their work” (p. xiii). More concerning is that the transfer students did not seek advice from faculty on projects nor did they feel that they could approach faculty outside of class or ask questions related to their coursework (Laanan & Ebbbers, 2008). The experiences with faculty were less frequent at the receiving institution than at the community college, but 70% of students did report that faculty was accessible and easy to approach, although they may not take advantage of the opportunity to do so. This leads us to the discussion of academic advising for transfer students.

Academic Advising

Berdahl (1995) suggested that effective academic advising can benefit both the student and the institution. Academic advising for the student can provide them with opportunities to explore and aid in their development and can benefit the institution by decreasing student attrition rates and ultimately retaining students from matriculation to graduation (Berdahl, 1995). Lowe and Toney (2000) found in their study of undergraduate education students enrolled in a teacher education program at a suburban institution that interactions with the academic advisor played a key role in retaining students. Academic advising has the potential of serving a critical need for students and institutions of higher education by providing the means for students to persist from matriculation to graduation.

King (2003a) asserted that for community colleges, academic advising is the most critical service offered by two-year institutions: “Academic advising is the only structured service on our campuses that guarantees students some kind of interaction with concerned representatives of the institutions” (p. 21). Students may leave their institution when they face difficulty in navigating their academic environment. Some students enter with clear goals of what they wish to achieve, while community college students, as suggested by King (2003a), have less developed educational goals. Student’s experiences with the academic and social experiences of the campus will impact their persistence towards their goals. Negative experiences may cause a student not to return for the following semester or year. The degree to which students persist and develop may be linked to the quality of or student satisfaction with academic advising. The advisor has a unique opportunity to aid the student with academic and personal decision-making, and with integration into the academic and social life of the institution (King, 2003a).

Despite limited programs that are geared toward promoting student success at two-year institutions, many do not transfer as indicated by Hagedorn, Moon, Cypers, Maxwell, & Lester (2006). Perhaps these students did not know how to navigate the academic policies and procedures related to transferring to obtain a baccalaureate degree. It is also possible that students failed to develop an understanding of the purpose of higher education and their place in it. Academic advising and counseling has profound impacts as to the readiness of two-year community college students.

Types of Academic Advising

Academic advising falls into one of two forms, prescriptive or developmental as outlined by Crookston (1972). These two advising models are used by Winston and Sandor (2002) in their assessment instrument of advising that is endorsed by the National Academic Advising

Association (NACADA) (Winston & Sandor, 2002; NACADA, 2006). Prescriptive advising characterizes advising in its most basic, functional, and administrative form. The student and advisor discuss immediate needs regarding class selection and scheduling (Crookston, 1972). This model is often criticized for not serving broader needs of students. These broader needs as outlined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Academic Advising Programs can include healthy behavior, spirituality, communication and interpersonal relationships (NACADA CAS, 2006). Developmental advising styles are discussed as the preferred style in the current literature and professional associations such as NACADA.

In contrast to prescriptive academic advising, developmental advising represents efforts to use the advising meeting as a teaching tool (Crookston, 1972). Such efforts represent a philosophy in which interactions between advisor and student are seen as potential teaching moments and opportunities for student growth and development, beyond just academic issues. This approach looks to the collegiate experience as a whole unit that can be used to facilitate holistic student learning, and often involves discussions about a student's out of the classroom experiences. Student development and career planning are a part of the collaborative learning experience for students experiencing this form of advising.

King (1993a) explained that advisors, particularly of at-risk populations such as minority populations and potentially all community college students with the intent to transfer, need additional support regarding external factors as described by King (1993a). These include financial issues, utilizing campus resources, understanding the difficulties such as balancing family, work and their educational goals.

Broadbridge (1996) conducted a study to learn what style of advising students preferred, traditional or prescriptive as defined in this study, versus developmental advising. It was found

in this study that the student participants preferred the developmental approach to academic advising. “Students believed academic advising should involve them in learning and exploring life career goals via academic planning” (p. 102).

Conversely, Smith (2002) found that first-year students at four-year institutions had preferences towards prescriptive advising instead of developmental. Participants indicated that they just wanted to be given their class schedule. This experience for them was similar to their interactions with high school guidance counselors who more than likely provided them with course schedules without their participation and input.

Broadbridge (1996) also discovered, as students move through their academic career, they did not fully explore professions and careers through academic advising. Students who recognized that they had a passive role with their advisor believed that the experience could be improved if they took on a more active role. Additionally, students indicated a desire for contact with their advisors to take place in informal settings, although students did distinguish the relationship to be academic in nature.

Professional center and departmental advisors are rated more positively than faculty advisors, and students have higher satisfaction with both types of professional advisors (Lynch, 2004). Lynch’s findings suggested that the professional advisors have a better understanding and knowledge of university policies, degree requirements, and are more willing to discuss long-term plans and facilitate career exploration. Advisors were more empathetic to students’ problems unrelated to advising and often refer students more frequently to other student service functions.

Advising is not typically a philosophical, life-altering experience for students where they discuss all facets of their experience and development. Smith (2002) found that students expressed that they were often surprised that advisors remembered their names and that they had

met before. In addition to these two styles of academic advising, there are several delivery models employed. While not all-inclusive, these models can provide an understanding of the system that students must navigate to receive advising at both two-year and four-year institutions. Advising services can be organized and delivered in a variety of ways and according to King (1993b) was influenced by institutional mission, role of faculty, and type of student population.

There are two clear advising delivery models: centralized or decentralized (Gordon & Habley, 2000). Centralized advising is organized with a main office coordinating services for students in the advising or counseling center. An example would be a center for advising at a smaller institution (Gordon & Habley, 2000). At larger institutions, like the one used in Broadbridge's study, one such office is not feasible to adequately advise a larger number of students.

Decentralized models are often more common at larger institutions. In decentralized models, separate departments and colleges or schools facilitate academic advising. Some collaboration may take place between departments and colleges, but each department is responsible for advising and the methods and styles will vary. Advising services are organized in a variety of ways, and King (1993b) contended that under-prepared students who may be at risk would benefit from a centralized model of advising.

To further expand on centralized or de-centralized advising, it is important to note who is conducting the advising sessions. King (1993b) outlined additional detailed models that include faculty only, supplementary, split, dual, total intake, satellite and self-contained. The "faculty only" model is when a student is assigned to a faculty advisor potentially for their entire academic career in a specific area of study or to a "faculty at large" for undeclared students.

King (1993b) cited that faculty advisors may have more knowledge regarding their specific disciplines regarding courses and career options however; they don't have a background in student development theory. Although, enhanced student faculty interaction can aid in student persistence. Habley (2004) cited that there is no advising office in this model. King (1993b) indicated that this model is popular at private two-year institutions. There may be an advising coordinator, but advising takes place in the academic units (King 1993b). The supplementary advising model employs utilizing both faculty as the advisor and an office of advising to provide referrals and "advising transactions" that are administrative in nature (King, 1993b; Habley, 2004). In this model, Habley (2004) emphasized that the faculty advisor must approve transactions and the office acts as a referral source.

The split model has specific populations of students advised in the advising office. For example, undeclared students with other students assigned to advisors in their academic unit to be advised by faculty advisors are one such population. This model increased on the two-year public campus from 23% to 28% between 1987 and 2004 and did not appear to be going away at community colleges (Habley, 2004). The 2004 ACT study on academic advising reports that the faculty model is decreasing for two-year public colleges. It has decreased to 18% of institutions reporting using this model in the 2004 ACT report from 1987, when it was reported as being utilized 26% of the time (Habley, 2004). Those two-year institutions utilizing faculty as advisors report that 83% use instructional faculty to advise in all academic departments. 99% of departments use faculty to advise in at least some departments (Habley, 2004). Two-year faculty reported spending 9.8 % of their advising, a decrease from 1998 when they spent 11.6% time advising. This is concerning, as faculty student interactions aid in student persistence (Tinto, 1987).

Dual model advising a student would have two advisors, faculty for the academic program of study and another to guide the student through the policies and procedures such as registration (King, 1993b). The total intake model is where advisors in the advising office, who are not faculty, advise students for lower division requirements (King, 1993b). Professional academic advisors may not have the discipline specific knowledge of faculty, but (King 1993b) devoted 100% of their job function to the advising of students whereas faculty has several roles including teaching, service and research depending on the institutional mission. Professional advisors are trained and have a working knowledge of student development theory and can support undecided students through the major selection process, however, that there is a high institutional cost to providing this additional staffing service for students (King 1993b). Habley (2004) cited an increase in using non-faculty advisors. “There has been a relatively steady trend in the use of full-time and part-time non-teaching advisors. In 2003, 28% of two-year public campuses utilized these advisors in all departments, and 63% utilized these advisors in at least some departments on campus (p. 29). Additionally, the full-time academic advisor at two-year schools is increasing “from 52% in 1987 to 68% in 2003” (p. 63).

King (1993b) asserted that the total-intake model with a centralized office and director with professional, full-time academic advisors is ideal with support from paraprofessionals and students. This model, as explained previously would advise students initially. Then, in their upper division courses, students would be connected to faculty advisors or mentors in their particular area of study. King backed up her claim that this is the best model as the resources employed support student retention; provide advisors who are well trained with a working knowledge of student development theory; provide faculty expertise to students once they have

chosen a field of study; ease the burden of larger student advisee loads; and assure coordinated advising services.

The satellite model allows for advising offices in academic units with undecided students in a separate office which may have oversight over all other offices (King, 1993b). Habley (2004) expanded on the definition of the satellite model, “Each school, college, or division within the institution has established its own approach to advising” (p. 18). Finally, the self-contained model offered advising in one area that has oversight for all advising functions campus-wide. King (1993b) cited that this is the most prevalent model for public two-year colleges. Habley (2004) reported this finding as well with this model being the most popular since the 1998 ACT survey on academic advising through the 2004 study. In some advising models, counselors were used, (King, 1993b) particularly at community colleges. This role is different than a full-time professional advisor as a counselor may spend more time providing psychological services to students and less time on curricular and transfer preparedness.

Less frequently, two-year institutions are found to use peer advisors to support the academic advising function. Paraprofessional staff is sometimes utilized for advising functions as well. These staff members may have an associate’s degree or at a minimum a high school education, but have a general interest in assisting students. King (1979) cited a community college model that included such staff spouses, retirees, and others employed in other occupations (King, 1993b). In utilizing peer and paraprofessional staff, enhanced staff selection and training is required to make these individuals a successful part of the academic advising process for students. Habley (2004) reported that 16% of two-year public campuses employed the use of clerical staff in academic advising. Two percent of these institutions used peer

advisors in all departments and 4% made use of paraprofessional staff to advise in all departments.

The findings from the sixth national ACT survey on academic advising provide a picture of the status of academic advising at two-year public institutions. Advisor or advisee load is an area of concern as students have reported not being satisfied with some community college advising services. Habley (2004) reported that for two-year public institutions the overall mean number of advisees assigned per full-time equivalent advisor rose from 357 to 375. Academic advising experiences, whether formal, through an advising center or informal interaction with faculty provide much insight into the transfer process for two-year students. This can range from how to balance school, work and credit hour load to understanding transfer articulation and how general education requirements will differ upon transfer to a four-year university. The overall effectiveness of advising at public, two-year colleges has a "...modest, but steady gain in the mean ratings for the effectiveness variables [from 2.9 in 1987 to 3.31 in 2003]. The greatest ratings of gains of individual effectiveness variables offered by two-year public colleges were realized for meeting student needs within limits of human and fiscal resources [up .88 from 1987] and implementing training programs [up .79 from 1987]" (p. 88).

The differences in advising practices among two-year and four-year campuses were noted in the Davis and Casey (1999) study. Students talked about their experience being advised at the community college and that their work schedule (full or part-time) was a part of the equation. Students had experiences at the four-year institution that led them to believe that school was their job and this did make them feel more like a student, but for those who financially need work to pay for school, this could be an issue. The overall picture of a student's life in this case was not as valued at the four-year university as it was at the community college.

Harbin (1997) found that most students did attend a formal orientation program of some kind at the four-year university. Such programs often incorporate academic advising for incoming students. It was reported that the course offerings were sufficient if not better than at their community college for the students in Harbin's study. Students were not satisfied with some aspects that included being uninformed of major and general education requirements at the four-year institution and not having general education requirements certified for transfer. The students also felt uneducated regarding the financial aid process and academic resources and had challenges adjusting to the social and physical aspects of their new campus (Harbin, 1997).

Faculty Advising and Interaction

Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC) attempted to study the impact of developmental faculty advising with students in the Arts and Humanities department. ACCC is a suburban community college with approximately 5,000 students and offers both career and transfer programs (McArthur, 2005). McArthur cited many barriers that community college students face academically: lower academic skills, socioeconomic status, first-generation student, and external pressures. McArthur referenced Cain's (1999) assertion that faculty are central to community college's work, beyond that of support staff and administrators. McArthur (2005) stated, "The faculty members represent the authority figure, the mentor, and the role model that may not appear anywhere else in the student's life. Because the faculty members are in such a position, their influence over students can be very significant" (p. 2).

Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) also emphasized the importance of faculty interaction and McArthur (2005) emphasized the importance of faculty and student interaction for the basis of his developmental advising approach and study at ACCC. McArthur's work asserted that to increase faculty student interaction in the form of developmental advising would

impact a student's level of persistence at ACCC. McArthur used Crockett's (1985) types of roles developmental advisors play that included "facilitator of communication, coordinator of a student's educational experience, frontline interpreter of the value and benefits of higher education, caring and concerned individual, and referral agent (McArthur, 2005, p. 3).

The Arts and Humanities (A & H) department at ACCC engaged in a more formal developmental advising process that was additional to that of the institutions advising/counseling center to personalize the process. Faculty had both a letter writing and phone call campaign to reach out to students as well as training for faculty advisors on the advisement process. Surveys were then conducted of those students in A & H who received the enhanced advising and 33 completed surveys were returned. Those in the general student population (GSP) were surveyed with 222 completed surveys to determine if there was an impact on the A & H student experience. McArthur (2005) discovered that, in comparing the two sets of data from the student populations, the enhanced developmental advising had a positive impact on student's advising experience. The low response rate in both populations is a limitation of this research.

Several themes developed from this research regarding the general student population or those students who did not receive the enhanced A & H advising. The first theme indicated that students did not know they had a faculty advisor, or that they had never been introduced to an advisor. Secondly, it was discovered that students were very dissatisfied with the knowledge advisors had regarding the transfer process (McArthur, 2005). Only 20.3% of students indicated that they believed their advisor "cared about their academic progress" (p. 5). Thirdly, students perceived faculty as "not caring" and did not return correspondence from students. The GSP students did not feel that their advisor was knowledgeable of academic programs or career

services with only 25.7% of respondents agreeing with this statement. The GSP students in McArthur's study wanted more interaction with their faculty advisor.

The A & H students according to McArthur (2005) had "a higher sense of awareness of faculty advising . . ." (p. 4). The A & H students provided less free form comments regarding advising, possibly because of their enhanced sense of who their assigned advisor was. Fifteen students provided comments and had positive responses regarding their faculty departmental advisor. The overall theme from the A & H students who received more contact from advisors that was considered developmental in nature by McArthur was that advisors were more caring and supportive with 75.8% of students agreeing that their advisor cared about their progress academically. The A & H students felt that their advisors were knowledgeable with 78.8% agreeing that their advisors were knowledgeable about academic programs and career services.

McArthur (2005) also compared retention rates of the A & H and GSP students tracked over four years to see if they returned for the spring semester. "The comparative data show that the retention in the Arts and Humanities department lagged behind the rest of the college (an average of 57% compared to 69% retention college-wide) during the period 1998-2001" (p. 6). However, after the departmental advising program to enhance developmental advising the Arts and Humanities was put in place, the retention rate was 3% higher than the overall ACCC figures.

King (1993a) reviewed the significance of academic advising on retention for all students, but in particular community college students. King cited Smith (1983) who found that for students who did not return that advising and/or counseling services were among the most significant factors in their not returning and that if the experience was more positive or "effective" it could have led to their persistence. King (1993a) stated that not only is academic

advising important to student retention but also the transfer process. Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) also suggested that community colleges need to identify those students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year college or university to begin advising and counseling students appropriately and to address the importance of their GPA.

Advising Role in the Transfer Process

Community college academic advisors, according to Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000), should prepare students for the possibility of a decline in the GPA after transfer. This may motivate a student to work harder and be more prepared for the possibility of a lower GPA. This method seems negative and perhaps informing students of the differences in study strategies and campus services may be a more positive strategy to advise and counsel the transfer student population for academic success. Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) further suggested that two-year advisors and counselors should have “connections” at four-year colleges and universities. This would aid in advisors communicating information to students about major specific requirements to avoid the loss of credit or additional required prerequisite courses at the time of transfer. Articulation agreements are important tools for local and state colleges and universities to aid in successful transfer of two-year students. The community college advisor should be assigned to students from the point of enrollment, and students should be required to meet with an advisor once per semester. Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) stated, “By staying in close contact with advisors, students can stay on the most beneficial path to transitioning into the university they are planning to attend” (p. 451).

More research on the role of faculty at the community college level and how it can influence and prepare a student to transfer to the baccalaureate level is an area of future research that this study will begin to uncover by assessing a student’s experience specifically with transfer

preparation in mind. Leaders at both two-year and four-year institutions should strive to improve the transfer process for students with the intent to transfer and obtain a four-year degree should review these considerations. Academic advising at two-year and four-year institutions can assist or impede the successful transition of transfer students. Much of the advising literature is focused on the whole advising process with little focus on the student's academic goal of the intent to transfer (Broadbridge, 1996; Crookston, 1972; Habley, 2004; King 1993b). Assessing the type of academic advising students receive at community colleges as they prepare to transfer to receive a baccalaureate degree will benefit administrators, faculty and students who plan to transfer to four- year institutions.

Flaga (2006) suggested collaborative approaches between community colleges and four-year university academic advisors, and application of her dimensions of transition. Students suggested information about university programs the transferability of credit while at the two-year institution would have been helpful. Flaga suggested joint programming with advisors that include meetings with community college advisors and an orientation course at the community college to prepare students for the transfer process. Students should also be encouraged to meet with university advisor before transferring to the four-year university to discuss the transferability of coursework and to begin developing a relationship with an advisor on campus.

Increased communication between the institutions is imperative according to Flaga (2006). "A culture needs to be established in which community college advisors feel comfortable calling university advisors for specific information when working with students" (Flaga, 2006, p. 10). Flaga's dimensions can offer advisors at four-year institutions a framework for working with community college transfer students. Transfer programs at two-year and four-year universities are another suggestion provided by Flaga. They included campus visit days for

transfer students to become familiar with the physical environment, learn about academic programs as well as connect with a university advisor. Much like freshman visit days, these could be offered for transfer students. Additionally, at their own campus prior to transfer, students could meet with university advisors at transfer days to promote earning a four year degree at the community college.

Orientation programs for transfer students at four-year universities should provide transfer students the opportunity to gain knowledge about their academic major and to develop a relationship with the physical campus as well as an advisor. Transfer seminar courses are usually not offered, but are suggested by Flaga (2006) to provide students with this option at the community college to prepare them as they begin to navigate the transfer process. Flaga's study of transfer students included students transferring from 35 community colleges who transferred to Michigan State University. Four-year institutions with feeder colleges could also offer such a course on campus to prepare the students still enrolled at the local community college. The university should consider providing on campus housing for transfer students. Many institutions limit this experience to first-time freshman and returning students. This practice limits the opportunities for transfer students to connect and become involved in extracurricular activities (Flaga, 2006).

There is much opportunity to continue research on the behavior of today's community college transfer student. Academic advising is critical for students to matriculate successfully to both two-year and four-year institutions of higher education. Student satisfaction and preference regarding the type of advising provided, prescriptive or developmental are reviewed. The models and delivery methods of advising are presented in the review of literature with data focusing on two-year public community colleges. Collaboration between two- and four-year

institutions is stressed regarding advising; however, more research is needed as it relates to the advising services provided to community college transfer students prior to transfer. McArthur's study (2005) of community college transfer advising was a positive contribution to the literature regarding community college advising. A focus of student's needs regarding transfer preparation is needed in the body of literature on academic advising as it relates to the pre-transfer services provided to community college students with baccalaureate aspirations.

With any transfer situation, the issues of articulation and transfer rates arise. In the next section, articulation in Alabama, specifically, will be discussed. In addition, an examination of articulation agreements and how this might affect transfer rates will be addressed.

Articulation Issues and Transfer Rates

Articulation, as defined by Cohen and Brawer (2008), "is the movement of students – or, more precisely, the students' academic credits – from one point to another. Articulation is not linear sequencing or progression" (p. 356). Articulation, according to Cohen and Brawer, (2008) is a state policy concern due to the numbers of students who may not qualify for admission to state institutions of higher education. These students are often minorities and economically disadvantaged students for whom the community college transfer opportunity is their door to receive a baccalaureate degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

In the beginning, articulation agreements were dictated by the four-year or senior, receiving institution. Cohen and Brawer cited Kintzer and Wattenbarger (1985) who "found that various senior institution policies discriminate against students who transfer even though transfer students usually perform in a manner similar to their past patterns of accomplishment. They noted that little progress had been made in smoother transfer relations in the years prior to 1985 (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 357). An associate's degree should, according to Cohen and Brawer,

(2008) qualify a student to move into a senior institution as a junior. Students face barriers to progressing in their degree programs. “. . . some university departments may require alternate courses, and transfer may not guarantee entry to the particular program a student desires” (p. 369). It is noted that today’s college student attends more than two or more institutions, transfer credit articulation is exceptionally important, maybe even more so than student’s background and abilities.

The importance and limitations of articulation agreements is emphasized by Knoell (1990):

...transfer students who are admitted to the institution and program to which they apply may benefit from state policies or agreements about transferring credit and fulfilling requirements, but the conditions under which they may be admitted and probability of such action remain unclear. (p. 71)

In other words, agreements are needed to ensure the transfer of credits, but the admissions process, criteria, as well as major program requirements may not be clear to students and can be a roadblock for students wishing to complete a four-year degree. Knoell (1990) referred to these agreements as “empty promises” to transfer students as they could be denied admission after completing requirements or learn of additional requirements for the major program of study. Knoell critiqued articulation agreements and their limitations as they typically have one method of entry to a four-year program (associate’s degree). This limits many types of students who may not pursue the associate’s degree path to the baccalaureate. “Some community college students are ready for transfer before completing their degree program and should not be penalized for doing so; others want preparation for both employment and transfer and should have such opportunities open to them without undue duplication of coursework” (p. 72). Knoell stressed the importance of collaboration in the success of articulation agreements. She defines collaboration as more than articulation, which is only one form of collaboration. Collaboration,

on the other hand, according to Knoell, is “the equal sharing of responsibility or cooperation between and among institutions carrying out their assigned missions” (p. 74). She offered examples of such collaboration that include; common admissions criteria, consistent entrance assessment for moving from lower to upper division standing in a program, utilizing the community college for remedial education, sharing of facilities and services, reduction of academic course duplication in requirements or “cross-registration” of students. Counselor and faculty involvement in articulation will enhance the effectiveness of agreements and aid students in understanding how to utilize such agreements and services.

Articulation in Alabama

The Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) was created in March of 1994 by the State Legislature through ACT 94-202. The function and role of AGSC is stated as:

The AGSC was created to simplify the transfer of course credit between public institutions of higher education. To accomplish this task, the AGSC has developed and has implemented a statewide general studies and articulation program that facilitates the transferability of coursework among all Alabama public colleges and universities. The AGSC continues to serve as a monitoring committee for the articulation program. They oversee and maintain the program on an on-going basis. Finally, the AGSC works to resolve any student appeals related to transfer of coursework as it relates to the articulation program (AGSC, 2008).

Alabama has a web service for students called the Statewide Transfer & Articulation Reporting System (STARS). This system provides online guidance or advising in way via the web regarding Alabama’s general education system requirements as it relates to major requirements for students. It allows students to obtain an agreement so that credit hours are not lost upon transfer between state institutions in the State of Alabama. Stars only covers 37 of the 60 credit hours students may transfer to a four-year institution. STARS outlines how the agreement can be used by students.

This guide/agreement, if used correctly, guides the student through their first two years of coursework and prevents loss of credit hours upon transfer to the appropriate public four-year university in Alabama. Although transfer guides/agreements can only be printed for two-year to four-year transfers, the STARS system can still provide guidance and direction to transfer students who have a different transfer situation, (STARS, 2008).

Articulation Agreements

Townsend and Wilson (2006a) cited the importance of articulation agreements that facilitate “seamless transfer” or the acceptance of credits (in Pitter, 1999).

Most of the studies have similar findings. Transfer students perceive both community colleges and the receiving institutions as needing to improve the transfer process by providing more information, which must be accurate, and aiding potential transfer students in understanding which community college will transfer. (p 443)

Townsend and Wilson (2006a) stressed that articulation agreements, while beneficial, cannot take the place of academic advising and high-quality transfer orientation programs. A qualitative approach was used and 19 students were interviewed who had transferred to a selective land grant research-university. The findings of the study included assistance from both the community college and university, orientation to the university, and a comparison of experiences both academic and social in nature (Townsend & Wilson, 2006b). The transfer process defined in the study included students navigating where to transfer, how to apply, the application process including transcripts, and how credits would apply to the degree program for which the student was admitted. The overall theme was that the community college did little to assist the students in this area.

Thirteen of the 19 students reported no assistance from the community college, with only four asking for assistance. Students reported that the online course equivalency tables and/or articulation websites were the most helpful to them during this process. Students did report meeting with an advisor in their program or area of study at the receiving institution that assisted them with this process (Townsend & Wilson, 2006b). It is imperative, according to Berger and

Malaney (2003), that online information and articulation agreements and equivalencies are kept current.

The community college transfer center is one suggestion offered by Townsend and Wilson (2006a) that was prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. The center would provide information and advising or counseling regarding the transfer process. While a transfer center is suggested, they did find some of the services available at advising or counseling centers. However, students reported that the community college did not assist them or have such information readily available (Townsend & Wilson, 2006b). It has been suggested that community college advisors and faculty have conversations with students wishing to transfer about institutional mission and fit, not just transfer credit articulation.

Barriers to transfer as cited by King (1993) included articulation issues and credits that students have may not transfer or not be accepted to their degree program at the four-year institution. Articulation agreements can assist in this process, but these are often difficult for students to navigate on their own and advising can play a key factor in assisting students in the transfer process.

Advisers need to identify, early in the process, those students who plan to transfer, ensuring that they follow the appropriate program for transfer and are aware of existing articulation agreements. Where appropriate, early referral to the campus transfer institution counselor or coordinator is an important step. Good academic advising is even more important in the absences of articulation agreements. (King, 1993a, p. 29)

Transfer Rates and Path to Transfer

Institutions of higher education are interested in measuring the rate of transfer of community college students and tracking their success or failures as outlined previously in this chapter. Defining and measuring transfer rates can be complex. Banks (1990) defined transfer rate as the ratio of students over the potential transfer students; however, difficulties arise in

defining the concept of a transfer student. She described the inconsistencies in the use of transfer ratios as well. States measure transfers in different ways that include, total headcount, full-time equivalent (FTE), or by entering high school students. It is difficult, according to Banks, to compare transfer rates because of these factors. Additionally, research on transfer students should be longitudinal or cover the time for a group or cohort to progress towards a bachelor's degree. The National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of the graduating class of 1972 utilized by Grubb (1991) was an example of such a study to study the transfer rates of community college students.

Townsend (2007) also cited the difficulty in who should be included in calculating transfer rates. Should dual enrolled high school students be included, those enrolled at both two- and four-year institutions simultaneously, four-year students enrolled at a community college in the summer, or early admission students to a four-year school who take basic courses prior to enrolling? One can see the difficulty in selecting a sample to narrowly define a transfer rate when the community college serves all of the above referenced transfer needs. Townsend summarized this point with her statement, "When the transfer function is narrowly defined to mean providing transfer education only to students who enter higher education through the community college and enroll in a transfer program, it devalues or ignores other kinds of community college transfers" (p. 19). This offers one reason why the study of transfer rates is difficult and controversial.

Grubb (1991) claimed that the most common or "conventional" route to transfer is the associate's degree or technical certificate and that students who complete said programs are more likely to transfer than those who do not. Grubb (1991) analyzed longitudinal data from a national perspective that utilized data from the National Longitudinal Study of the Class of 1972

(NLS72) and the High School and Beyond Study (HS&B). Specifically, Grubb's study utilized transcript data. The timeframe of analysis was four years for HS&B and seven for NLS72, which may not allow for those studied to have completed a bachelor's degree. Transfer rates are presented for the groups of students in the following way:

...graduates of the Class of 1980, within four years of high-school graduation; graduates of the Class of 1972, again within four years of high-school graduation for comparability with the HS&B cohort; and graduates of the Class of 1972 within *seven* years of high-school graduation to see how transfer and graduation rates change when we examine longer periods of time. (p.197)

The students studied in all groups were of traditional college age from 18 - 22 years of age and who were not "experimenters," or those who leave after only a short time of enrollment, less than twelve hours. The trends of transfer rates are presented by Grubb (1991), and results from this 1991 study indicate a decline in transfer rates for the groups, particularly for those enrolled in vocational or technical programs or institutions. For the 1972 cohort, 64% transferred without a degree or certificate. Those in the 1980 class, 73% transferred without a "credential," an associates or vocational degree, as defined by Grubb. Students who completed the associate's degree were 25% of the transfers for the 1972 group, 14% of the 1980 class transferred and students transferring in this cohort had both associate's or technical degrees. "The shift toward more vocational programs has been one of the dominant explanations of declining transfer as well as evidence for those who have attached the community college for restricting opportunity" (p. 202). Technical or vocational programs, according to Grubb's study, only accounted for 15% of an overall transfer rate decline. Grubb also addressed the type of student and the possible reasons for transfer rate decline. For NLS72 and HS&B longitudinal data overall, the student population was female, black and Hispanic and "were drawn less frequently from groups of high socioeconomic status and high ability measured in high school

and are often from general and vocational tracks” (p. 205). Given these demographic details, these students still had aspirations of obtaining a bachelor’s degree and some with the intent to pursue graduate degrees. It was discovered that overall the transfer rate was higher for males, white students, and for those from higher socioeconomic groups with higher ability in high school and on the “academic track” versus the technical or vocational track while enrolled in high school.

As expected, “...those with higher educational aspirations were substantially more likely to transfer. However, the major conclusion from these results is that transfer rates decreased for every group, even the most likely to transfer” (Grubb, 1991, p. 206). Overall the differences were not significant in that the decline of transfer rates were spread among the various population of students, but can explain small differences. “Based on these modest differences, perhaps one quarter to one third of the overall decline in the transfer rate could have been due to shifts in the composition of students entering community colleges” (p. 207). Grubb also analyzed those who did transfer, and whether or not they completed the bachelor’s degree. Of those analyzed by Grubb, the majority did not obtain a baccalaureate degree. Those of both the group tracked over four years and the cohort tracked over seven years did not have high rates of baccalaureate completion. All students who transferred without credentials, including those with an associate’s degree and vocational degrees had declines in completing the bachelor’s degree. In particular, for those who transferred after receiving an associate’s degree, the decline “fell from 60.7% to 12.1%, below the 20% of those transferring with vocational associate’s degrees” (p. 208). Grubb’s findings also indicated that those who transfer without credentials are much less likely to obtain a bachelor’s degree. Those in the Class of 1980 had an increase in vocational associate’s and technical degree, but a decline in the number completing an academic associate’s

degree or bachelor's degree. Grubb claimed that community colleges have a problem with a "weakening of academic associate's degrees," not the growth of technical or vocational programs. Grubb additionally reviewed those who completed bachelor's degrees and who began their academic career at community colleges and reported that those students from low income backgrounds and high ability levels completed a bachelor's degree and had transferred from a two-year institution were a high proportion of Hispanic students. These students had aspirations to attend four-year institutions and obtain a bachelor's degree. On the other hand, students who were on the technical or vocational track with lower aspirations than the students referenced above did not move forward in obtaining a bachelor's degree, and Grubb suggested that community colleges are "increasingly terminal institutions for those students who enter with limited aspirations – whereas for earlier cohorts the community college may have served to lift the aspirations of those who entered without much thought of ever attending a four-year college" (p. 211). When looking beyond the scope of seven years, Grubb recognized that many in the group who had completed a bachelor's degree did so and had begun in a community college with 10% to 12% of the 1980 group having completed a bachelor's degree. Grubb concluded that the decline in transfer rates for the populations studied are due to many factors that include the changing demographic of the students entering community colleges, achievement levels and preparation in high school, increased short term students or "experimenters" and a focus on vocational or technical programs. He stated that the "weakening" of the academic associate's degree and "milling around", or the concept that students take courses but that do not earn credit that is applicable towards degree programs lend to lower transfer rates based on the longitudinal data. Grubb (1991) asserted that transfer rates may be improving for students beginning at community and technical colleges as they began to leave behind the "laissez-faire practices that

prevailed during the 1970s” (p. 212). The creation of articulation agreements, student information systems and tracking, transfer centers and enhanced advising and counseling can improve transfer rates.

Townsend (2007) critiqued the statements of Dougherty (1994) and work of Grubb and similar work (Nora, 2000) because all of the work outlined a decline in transfer rates. Townsend claimed “so what” that transfer rates declined for the longitudinal group used by Grubb: “Is there a minimum transfer rate that community colleges are expected to have to justify their transfer programs? What is the ideal transfer rate supposed to be? To my knowledge, there have not been any governmental edicts or association stances on this question” (p. 14). Townsend’s statement was prudent in that there have not been any defining standards, and yet much of the research focus is on the rate of transfer of community college students (Grubb, 1991; Nora, 2000; Freidlander, 1980). Townsend explained that the difficulty in defining transfer rates lies in which students to include. Students’ reasons for enrolling at community colleges are varied and vary over time. Many may want to transfer and may do so successfully, but will have a lapse in time and may not have an interest in completing an associate’s degree as it does not meet their transfer needs to a four-year institution. Townsend cited the findings from Grubb (1991) that indicated that there was an increase in those who transferred before receiving an associate’s degree. Adelman (1999) studied transfer rates utilizing college attendance and began with students who began at the community college, as opposed to receiving an associate’ degree, and studied the transfer rate for those who transferred to a four year institution and determined a rate of 26%, a rate consistent with that of Cohen’s studies.

Often, student’s work is transferred; however, it may not apply to a degree program at a four-year university. Some reasons outlined from Arnold’s (2001) report included low grades

that are not accepted at the baccalaureate level, developmental or remedial courses are not accepted, professional and technical coursework is often not accepted, and that students exceeded the maximum number of credits that are permitted for transfer. Given these reasons Arnold (2001) highlighted the importance of the role of the academic advisor. Arnold includes all types of advisors as needing to be informed of transfer articulation policies, formal or informal for certain programs, dual enrollment policies and specifics about certain degree programs. The concept of electronic advising centers is promoted as a way to disseminate detailed information to both students and advisors at both types of campus.

The Transfer Game

Hagedorn et al. (2006) related the transfer process to the “all – American game “of baseball and refer to it as the “transfer game.” The metaphor of the game of baseball was used to outline the findings of the Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students (TRUCCS). The TRUCCS Project studied over 5,000 community college students from the Los Angeles Community College District. The study and explanation utilizing the baseball context explains the transfer process, student success and their advancement within the process as well as triumphs and obstacles.

The TRUCCS project utilized a 47-item questionnaire about the community college experience and was administered to over 5,000 students during 2001. Academic transcript data for all students completing the survey was also utilized in the study (Hagedorn et al., 2006). Hagedorn et al. found that the most valuable data came from the student transcripts. Hagedorn et al. described the baseball metaphor of the transfer process in this way, “The object of the Transfer Game is for students to become transfer ready by successfully progressing through modules of predetermined transfer-level courses (p. 225). Transfer courses that lead to

“readiness” in this context are the bases of which progress can be measured. “Students who score and who have proven themselves worthy players are more likely recruits to 4-year institutions...” (p. 225). They made the significant claim that the actual time of transfer is not as central to whether or not the student is transfer ready. Transfer readiness is the “score” for the college, not for the student transfers. It is noted that students can transfer at any time, and that it is not up to the college of transfer but the student. The transfer game metaphor symbolizes that the community colleges keep score of those who are ready to transfer. Enrolling and passing courses at community colleges puts students at bat and passing the courses moves the student forward on the path to transfer (Hagedorn et al., 2006). There is a baseball diamond outlined for the purpose of the study. Like Alabama, California has a common state core curriculum for general education. “The Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum, (IGETC) is a statewide articulation agreement between the California Community Colleges, California State Universities (CSU), and University of California (UC) schools. The IFETC transfer core curriculum fulfills the lower division general education requirements of both the UC and the CSU: 34 units for the UC and 37 units for the CSU.

With seven distinct areas, the IGETC is a complete description of the course requirements to transfer. CSU and UC schools have different requirement for each area” (Hagedorn et al., 2006, p. 226).

Enrolling and passing courses at community colleges puts students “at bat.” Passing the courses moves the student forward on the path to transfer (Hagedorn et al., 2006). Defining transfer is difficult as noted by Cohen and Brawer (2008) and Townsend (2002). There are students who are not participating in the strict definition of transfer that is linear in nature (Hagedorn, et al., 2006). Townsend found that students may “reverse transfer” and take

community college courses while enrolled at four-year institutions. High school dual enrollment programs offer another layer in defining what transfer is. They also found that “less than 1/5 of the sample directly entered the community college following high school graduation” (p. 228). As noted by Banks (1999) and Cohen and Brawer (2008), calculating a transfer ratio can be difficult. Hagedorn et al. (2006) considered students as potential transfers based on credit hours earned that met the transfer criteria. They asserted that some community college course work is better than none and that transfer rate formulas and definitions are limiting and may leave out students who do indeed have the intent to transfer.

Their methodology included 66% of the sample of students who “intended to transfer”(p. 228). The courses were coded based on the IGETC requirements into bases. A grade of C or better was required to meet state standards. Students progressed on the baseball diamond if they completed any of the following: (a) English requirement; (b)mathematical requirement; (c) completing any of the two remaining IGETC units that include the sciences, physical or biological, history, constitution and American ideals, arts and humanities, and social behavioral sciences; and (d) completing the last two sections (Hagedorn et al., 2006). Some sections of the IGETC allowed students choice in what course to take, while others were assigned. They used any possible combination of courses if it met the IGETC standards. Students who had not completed any modules were considered “on the deck.” Transfer readiness was determined after courses were analyzed and the following research questions were outlined. They include

1. Which bases are students reaching, and which seem to be most difficult and distant;
2. Is there a relationship between gender, age, ethnicity, native language, or other demographic and progress along the transfer baseline; and

3. What separates those students who have scored a run from those who are struggling to advance? (p. 229)

Hagedorn et al. (2006) examined the data in three groups: 1) the entire sample of students with the intent to transfer; 2) those students who had taken courses more recently within the last ten semesters; and 3) those students who had not yet attended another institution. The full sample for the study allowing for variance was utilized. Mathematics and English IGETC modules were the focus as they can hold students back and are the center of general education. The results indicated how many modules students had completed. The largest number of students (46.7%) being on deck had not yet completed an IGETC unit, leaving only half of the population on base. 24.6% students were at first base, 18.4% moved to second base, 6.6% of the students made it to third base, and a small percentage were defined as transfer ready by IGETC or had completed six modules that “certifies them for transfer” (Hagedorn et al., 2006).

Hagedorn et al. (2006) found that Asian students were the most likely to advance to second base, but did not “score” as often as Caucasians or Hispanics. However, they completed the mathematics requirements two times as frequently than other populations. African Americans were the largest demographic to remain on deck and less likely to complete arts and humanities and the sciences. Other interesting findings included that the language requirement was the module that was unlikely to be completed. Women were the most likely to complete the English requirement, but no gender difference was discovered for math. Women completed the science requirement at a higher rate than men as well. This could be due to allied health requirements such as nursing programs. It was also discovered that older students had little scoring success, particularly with the arts, humanities and science modules and less success with mathematics.

Hagedorn and Lester (2006) expanded on the TRUCCS project and baseball metaphor with a focus on Hispanic students in the State of California. At 13%, Hispanics are the largest minority group in the nation. Hagedorn and Lester cited the number of Caucasian traditional-aged college students (18 - 24) is declining, while the number of Hispanic students is rising with further growth anticipated. Hagedorn and Lester referred to the fact that Hispanics are held back with regard to preschool and other academic performance indicators that do not set them up to bat well for community college transferability for a bachelor's degree. They stated, "The acquisition of a bachelor's degree can be likened to an admission ticket allowing entrance to the middle class and beyond where economic and social mobility are possible" (p. 830). Hispanic students are more likely to attend two-year community colleges and may do so part-time more frequently. Hagedorn and Lester asserted that the cycle of poverty experienced by Latinos is perpetuated with educational barriers. Data was utilized from the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) "...that indicate the position of Hispanic students in the California Community College system" (p. 831). The three systems, University of California (UC), California Postsecondary (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCC) are "likened" to "right field," "left field," and "center field," respectively. Latino students are more likely to begin their baseball career at center field in the community college system. The conflicts of defining transfer rates (Townsend, 2002) contributed to the "uncertainty concerning which students should be included in the denominator of the equation" (Hagedorn & Lester, 2006, p. 833). Many students attend more than one community college or are dually enrolled in systems of higher education. It is difficult to define the transfer rates for California's students and Hispanic students in particular. Transfer readiness as defined previously is a "less error-prone way to measure student success" (p. 835). Hagedorn and Lester (2006) stated that transfer is

dichotomous: you either do or do not. Transfer readiness is “a continuous variable that can be monitored while the student is still at the community college” (p. 835). The timeframe of transfer is another problem in measuring transfer rates versus readiness. Hispanic students in particular take longer to transfer than other ethnic groups. Of those students who had the intent to transfer, Hagedorn and Lester analyzed Hispanic students and wanted to answer the following research questions:

1. How are Hispanic students progressing in the Transfer Game;
2. Which modules are Hispanics passing and which seem to be more difficult and distant; and
3. In light of large proportions of students enrolled in developmental (or remedial) English and mathematics, in which proportions are Hispanic student successfully climbing the developmental path to transfer level courses? (p. 838)

The focus of the analysis was on mathematics and English as these modules of courses have served as “gatekeepers” for students. The results found by Hagedorn and Lester (2006) included that students remained “on deck” even though they had been enrolled for over six semesters. One third of students moved ahead to first base and only a sixth of the students in this analysis that moved them ahead to second base. One twentieth of the students advanced to third base and only 8% “scored” or were transfer ready as defined by IGETC. There were few differences between Hispanic men and women, although “females were slightly more apt to complete several of the requirements. They stated, “Interestingly, women were more likely to complete the mathematics, physical, and behavioral science modules” (p. 840). This again, could be due to nursing and allied health programs at some campuses.

California's Hispanic students many who enter the "game" in center field or the community college system, these students "...are NOT academically achieving at appropriate levels beginning with the K-12 experience" (Hagedorn & Lester, 2006, p. 845). This population was at the back of the game in reference to other ethnic groups and present the community college system as "the only possible option if postsecondary training is desired" (Hagedorn & Lester, 2006, p. 845). The Hispanic students, over an average of six semesters, less than one third of the students had made it to any of the "bases" associated with transfer readiness. Hagedorn and Lester (2006) did point out that this is an improvement from previous studies. The overarching theme is that this population of students may need more time to round the bases and be transfer ready as developmental and remedial education are factors in their progress, particularly in English and mathematics. They stated, "It appears that once the intermediate course is passed, the advanced level is less of a barrier"(p. 846). Overall, Hagedorn and Lester (2006) found that there were not significant differences amongst Hispanic students in terms of demographics, but that, generally, progress to transfer readiness is too low.

It is evident by evaluating those students who have the intent to transfer that they are not rounding the bases or making progress. Half of the sample in the study had not made progress with the transfer modules. Hagedorn et al. (2006) also noted that community colleges are not, in actuality, two-year institutions, in that many students took over nine semesters to become transfer ready. The authors addressed the fact that community college students lack information or "cultural capital" to aid in their understanding of college and curricular issues. Some students in the study were under the impression that if they completed an English course, even if it was remedial and could not count towards IGETC requirements, they had met requirements. The main policy implication recommended by Hagedorn et al. (2006) was enhanced counseling or

academic advising services for community college students. It was found that the advisor student ratio is approximately 1,000:1. It is imperative that advising and counseling services be available to community college students to ensure that their advising needs are met and that they understand the requirements to transfer to four-year institutions.

Hagedorn and Lester (2006) offered several policy suggestions including intervention programs to assist Hispanic students and all students when they are behind in elementary and high school. Upon entering center field or the community college system, students will be behind and require developmental education, which will hurt their batting average to transfer readiness. They claimed, “When students lag in elementary and high school it is nothing short than praying for a miracle to suppose community colleges can turn students into academic athletes in a short time” (p. 846). Hagedorn and Lester asserted the importance of academic counseling and advising to move students along the bases. They claimed that not only should advisors monitor progress, but “must take steps to contact students when progress is not occurring, or if there appear to be barriers to success” (p. 847). It is also suggested that students need to be more informed that all courses, (remedial or developmental) may not count towards rounding the bases, so to speak, and that transfer to a four-year institution was not automatic. Hagedorn and Lester (2006) pointed out that some students do make it and have a grand slam. “Every student who scores and progresses to a university or four-year college, is a [grand slammer]” (p. 848). They also asserted the impressiveness of those students who had the additional barriers or challenges of remedial education while at bat.

Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) asserted that many community college transfer students shop for four-year transfer institutions based on how many of their credits will be accepted to see “which degree will provide the earliest graduation” (p. 449). They also cited that

students are frustrated by the individual major requirements or program of study for a particular college or university program. “Students may transfer in with all of his or her general education requirements completed, but if they have not completed a lower-level prerequisite course specific to their major it may delay graduation by one or more semesters” (Rhine, Milligan & Nelson, 2000 p. 449).

The importance of articulation agreements is outlined, as is the difficulty in the usage for some students related to the admission process and a full understanding of what really is required for the baccalaureate degree (Knoell, 1990). The literature measures student’s success by narrowly defined rates of transfer, which often excludes many students served by the community colleges transfer mission. Students wishing to obtain a four-year degree may enter the community college system at different points in time, drop out and even reverse transfer to achieve their goals. It is important for researchers and practitioners to understand this as well as the needs of students who ultimately want a four-year degree. They may just take a path that does not include a clean transfer with an associate’s degree.

In the preceding review of literature, today’s community colleges and their missions are presented as well as an understanding of the uniqueness of U.S. rural community college and the needs that they meet. The concept of transfer student adjustment, both social and academic, were presented as well as theoretical frameworks such as Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) and Pace (1980, 1984, 1992) as it relates to transfer student adjustment. The various models and structures of academic advising are presented, as well as a review of student satisfaction with such delivery methods and models. Finally, transfer rates and articulation agreements are reviewed in relation to community college students. This review of literature provides a comprehensive overview of each area, however, the rural community college student and how he or she prepares for the

adjustment process, including but not limited to academic advising and articulation agreements has not been studied. The greater part of the literature focuses on community college students post-transfer and their experiences upon arriving at a four-year college/university. Additionally, most of the studies reviewed did not take place in a rural setting, but urban, suburban and private liberal arts institutions in suburban areas. All of this taken together, the data overall is inconclusive related to a student's pre-transfer experiences.

Understanding the reasons student's want to transfer and what their needs and perceptions are prior to transfer is a dearth in the community college literature. Rural community college students in particular may drop in and out of the transfer process and may not calculate tremendously positive transfer rate, but this does not negate their goal of achieving a four-year degree. This study will provide an understanding of the perceptions of rural community college students and what their goals, needs prior to transfer and their perceptions of the transfer process to a four-year degree granting institution.

The current study will provide a means to begin to understand the experiences of rural, community college students who wish to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. This will aid both researchers and practitioners in understanding the unique needs of the rural community college student. The next chapter will deal with the methodology, materials and data collection, survey design, data extraction and procedures of the current study.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology, survey design, and procedures of the study. The methodological basis and instrumentation used in the current study is based upon earlier work of Frankie Santos Laanan (2004). The survey instrument was adapted and updated for the purpose of the current study, an exploratory pre-transfer study of community college students' experiences and perceptions prior to transferring to a four-year institution and will be further explained in this chapter.

Laanan's (2004) research involving community college transfer students went beyond the traditional studies of transfer shock (Cejda, 1997; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998) and the assessment of a student's academic achievement compared to that of native students and looks at the emotional and psychological development of students. Laanan (2004) asserted that a student's experience prior to transferring to a four-year institution can have influence on that student's performance at the baccalaureate institution.

The methods used in the current study are descriptive educational research as defined by Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999). In that, it "focuses on making careful, highly detailed observations or measurements of educational phenomena" (p. 526). This type of research "involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data in order to develop a precise description of a sample's behavior or personal characteristics" (p. 173). Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999) outlined that survey

research can be at one point in time (cross-sectional), or over time (longitudinal). Creswell (2005) defined the two types of basic survey research as such.

. . . there are still only two basic types of research surveys: cross sectional and longitudinal. Some survey researchers use cross-sectional designs to collect data about current attitudes, opinions, or beliefs from participants in different locations, of different demographic backgrounds, or who differ in other ways at a specific point in time. Longitudinal designs are used to study individuals over time. (p. 355)

Traditionally, survey research is “a form of descriptive investigation that involves collecting information about research participants’ beliefs, attitudes, interests, or behavior through questionnaires, interviews, or paper and pencil tests”(Creswell, 2005, p. 533). Creswell explained further about what the researcher does with survey research. Survey researchers utilize tools such as mailed questionnaires or interviews to test a research question and/or hypotheses. Researchers analyze data collected to interpret meaning from the data. Creswell pointed out that survey research designs differ from experimental research in that, "they cannot explain cause and effect as well as experimental researchers." Instead, "survey researchers often correlate variables, but their focus is directed more toward learning about a population and less on relating variables or predicting outcomes as is the focus in correlation research"(p. 354).

Research Questions

The primary purpose of the current study was to ascertain the perceptions of community college students regarding their intent to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. As referenced in Chapter I, the primary research question is, “What perceptions do rural community college students with the intent to obtain a bachelor’s degree have in reference to the transfer process?”

The following secondary research questions are also addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college coursework;

2. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college academic advising/counseling;
3. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their anticipated experiences at a four-year college/university;
4. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their selection of a four-year college/university to attend;
5. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the process of transferring to a four-year college/university;
6. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated academic rigor at a four-year college/university;
7. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated classroom experiences that they will have at a four-year college/university; and,
8. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the social activities and networking with friends that they will experience at a four-year college/university?

Data Collection

The web survey contains respondent demographic items, Likert scale questions, and four open-ended questions. A Likert scale is defined by Gorard,

This is used to try to assess attitudes and related concepts (multidimensional underlying variables). Respondents are asked to read a statement or question and then rate their response on a scale of agreement (agree/disagree) or quality (good/bad). The scales usually have five or seven points, sometimes three or even number. While clearly ordinal in nature, these scales are often treated as equal interval and used with parametric techniques. (p. 184)

The instrument is an adaptation of the Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ) that focuses on the experiences and perceptions of community college transfer students prior to their transfer to a four-year college/university (Laanan, 2004).

The methodological references to survey research designs above generally do not address the impact of the internet and web-based research. Creswell (2005) addressed electronic questionnaires and defined them as, "survey instrument[s] for collecting data that is available on the computer" (p. 361). He expanded this basic definition of web research by stating that electronic surveys allow for quick data collection, but use may be limited for those who do not have computer access or who are not comfortable with doing a survey in this manner.

Wortzman and Upcraft (2001) asserted that "Contrary to what might be common opinion, using the Internet to collect assessment data gives the investigator the ability to reach many more people than most other forms of data collection" (p. 101). Further, web-based data collection allows that information can be collected in a more user-friendly manner and take less time and effort for the respondents and allows them to complete surveys when and where it is convenient for them (Wortzman & Upcraft, 2001). Additionally, web-based surveys allow researchers to build logic or contingency questions into the survey design as will be used in some of the survey questions in this study. Paper surveys with contingency questions, as argued by Wortzman and Upcraft (2001), can be confusing for participants. Web-based instruments may eliminate these problems by electronically leading respondents to appropriate questions on the instrument. Web-based research has other benefits such as a greater return rate that is timelier for the researcher and lower costs through savings in paper and postage costs. However, there may be costs incurred in survey development or subscriptions to services such as Survey Monkey®. Additional benefits cited by Wortzman and Upcraft include the following: 1) data collection time may be reduced; 2) anonymity is managed and the respondent pool can be expanded data can be more efficiently managed; 3) duplicate responses can be identified; and 4) instruments can be piloted easily and altered if necessary.

There are, however, disadvantages of web-based research. Wortzman and Upcraft (2001)

acknowledged that no survey design is without drawbacks and disadvantages. One disadvantage cited by Wortsman and Upcraft is the fact that not all participants may have internet access readily available. However, they cited that 83% of first-year students have used the internet for homework or research. This drawback could have an impact on the current study as some rural community college students may not have internet connections (high speed or dial up) in their homes and may have to access the survey while on the community college campus. In this instance, a paper version of the survey will be offered to the respondent.

Another disadvantage of web-based surveys is that not all respondents may have the computer skills to complete the survey, although most traditional-aged community college students will have had internet experience in high school and at the community college, as cited above. Additional drawbacks of online research cited by Wortsman and Upcraft (2001) include the following:

1. Data collection may require more expertise of such methods on part of the researcher;
2. Respondents may not trust the anonymity of the survey because of the use of the computer;
3. The return rate may be inconsistent, as there are not many studies to compare web-based survey research to more traditional methods;
4. The cost for software, etc.; and
5. Technical malfunctions that can occur.

Overall, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of paper and telephone survey research because of the ability to reach a larger population and the students enrolled at ten different community colleges in Alabama. Groves (1989) outlined four sources of error in survey research that Dillman, Tortora and Bowker (1998) asserted that web-based research can overcome. The four errors as outlined by Groves first included coverage error or that some portion of a "population" may not qualify or be overlooked for participation in the survey, therefore the population is not represented. Second, sampling error or only capturing a small

portion of a potential survey population. Third, measurement error, or the outcome of an inadequate instrument that may have respondents' answers not reflect their true answers due to question wording, interviewing or survey mode effects, (Dillman, Tortora & Bowker, 1998, p. 2). Lastly, non-response error, or getting results from part of the sample that would have contributed to the results that potentially would provide a different results outcome.

"Respondent-friendly designed is aimed explicitly at reducing three of the four types of error that typically prevent accurate surveys from being done, i.e. non-response, measurement, and coverage of the survey population" (p. 14).

Respondent-friendly design as defined by Dillman, Tortora and Bowker (1998), "Aims to present a questionnaire to respondents in such a way that each person to whom it is sent has an equal chance of receiving and responding to it. The questions must be presented in a way that they can be understood and answered accurately by all recipients" (p. 3). They went on to say that the computer skills of participants should not prohibit participation and that reducing the errors of measurement, non-response and coverage create their criteria for effective web-based design.

Dillman, Tortora and Bowker (1998) offered three criteria for web survey design. The first criterion for successful web-based survey designs is the concept that web survey design should be simple and not complex with "advanced techniques" or programming. Dillman, Tortora and Bowker suggested that, "Instead of designing at the cutting edge of their evolving science, there is a need for them [survey researchers] to hold back on the incorporation of advanced features, creating simpler questionnaires that require less memory" (p. 4). This concept will prevent surveys that take longer to load and can increase the likelihood that respondents will complete the survey if the survey is "plain" versus "fancy" with more graphics, design elements and sophisticated HTML coding. Criterion two is that logic must be considered, for both the computer operation and the respondent. "The task of responding to a web-based questionnaire requires that the respondent think simultaneously about how to answer a questionnaire and how to operate their computer" (p. 5). Survey logic and design should aid in

this process so that respondents know when to click next, or scroll down, or click submit. The survey design should support the ease of operating the survey instrument while being able to obtain the survey data from the respondent. The third criterion is that web questionnaires should take into account the fact that the instrument may also need to be presented in another format if the participant does not have Internet access. It can be assumed for the current study that most community college students will have Internet access at their campus to complete the survey. However, if they do not, a paper version of the instrument will be offered. "For this reason it is important that that the construction of web surveys take into account how questions will be posed by other survey modes" (p. 6).

Dillman, Tortora and Bowker (1998) also presented 11 principles for designing web questionnaires. They include the following:

1. Introduce the web questionnaire with a welcome screen that is motivational, emphasizes the ease of responding, and instructs respondents on the action needed for proceeding to the next page (p. 7);
2. Begin the web questionnaire with a question that is fully visible on the first screen of the questionnaire, and will be easily comprehended and answered by all respondents (p. 8);
3. Present each question in a conventional format similar to that normally used on paper questionnaires (p. 8);
4. Limit line length to decrease the likelihood of a long line or prose being allowed to extend across the screen of the respondent's browser (p. 9);
5. Provide specific instructions on how to take each necessary computer action for responding to the questionnaire (p. 9);
6. "Provide computer operation instructions as a part of each question where the action is to be taken, not in a separate section prior to the beginning of the questionnaire (p. 10);
7. Do not require respondents to provide an answer to each question before being

- allowed to answer any subsequent ones (p. 11);
8. Construct web questionnaires so that they scroll from question to question unless order effects are a major concern, large numbers of questions must be skipped, and/or a mixed-mode survey is being done for which telephone interview and web results are combined (p. 11);
 9. When the number of answer choices exceeds the number that can be displayed on one screen, consider double-banking with appropriate navigational instructions being added (p. 11);
 10. Use graphical symbols or words that convey a sense of where the respondent is in the completion progress, but avoid ones that require advanced programming (p. 12); and
 11. Be cautious about using question structures that have known measurement problems on paper questionnaires, e.g., check-all-that-apply and open-ended questions (p. 13).

The adapted Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ), (Laanan, 2004) for the current study takes into account Dillman, Tortora and Bowker's (1998) suggested criteria and principles. It is imperative to have a respondent friendly survey design, especially when administered to respondents online with email as the primary method of communication.

Instrumentation

Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ)

Laanan's study (2004) provided a framework and development of the Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ), the psychometric properties of the instrument and, finally, the research and policy benefits of studying transfer student adjustment from the two-year community college students' perspective. The L-TSQ "provides researchers important information about former community college students' involvement activities *prior to*

transferring to senior institutions as well as their perceptions of the four-year college or university” (Laanan, 2004, p. 343).

Laanan employed two theories to situate the conceptual framework of the L-TSQ: Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement and Pace’s concept of quality of effort (QE). Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement focused on what the student does rather than other psychological factors. A student contributes to his or her educational experience. The theory of student involvement has five postulates: investment of physical and psychological energy; involvement occurs in varied degrees; outcomes that can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively; student learning and development that is proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement; and educational policy and practice that should be related to increasing student involvement.

Astin (1984) described three principles related to student involvement. First, students had a finite amount of time and energy. The “zero-sum game” is the time and energy that students have to devote to jobs, family, friends and other outside influences that reduce the time they spend on educational activities. Second, students’ achievement of their educational goals was related to the time and level of effort exerted in achieving that goal. Third, Astin differentiated between motivation and involvement. Involvement is a step beyond the psychological state and is the behavioral outcome of motivation. Transfer students who are invested and engaged in their learning and activities at their two-year institutions may expend the same level if not more at the four-year institution (Laanan, 2004).

Pace’s (1980, 1984, 1992) quality of effort (QE) is based on what the student does with the offerings at the institution. The principle of QE is that students will receive benefits of the college experience, not solely based on what the college offers, but also on the level of effort that

the student demonstrates. Using this principle, Pace developed the QE instrument, which measures developmental activities and where they occur as a way to measure student behavior. Specifically, Pace developed *the College Student Experiences Questionnaire* (CSEQ) to measure efforts to correlate with outcomes. The instrument has 14 quality-of-effort scales that overview a wide array of student involvement areas, both social and academic (Pace, 1980, 1984, 1992).

Quality is first based on the concept that “education is both process and product” (Pace, 1984, in Laanan, 2004, p. 336). Pace argued that the educational outcome or product is important, but so is the process (Laanan, 2004). Second, according to Pace, learning requires the investment of time from the student (Pace, 1984). Laanan adapted the CSEQ to assess the experiences of community college transfer students, and how their experience is different than that of a traditional four-year baccalaureate student. Laanan made the point that it is imperative to understand the uniqueness of the community college environment and how it differs from the four-year institution in adapting the use of Pace’s quality of effort (Laanan, 2004).

The *Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire* (L-TSQ) was tested at a large public urban campus in California with data collected from over 700 students who had transferred from 64 California community colleges during 1994 - 1995 (Laanan, 2004). The original L-TSQ was a 304-item instrument that “measures transfer students’ non-cognitive or affective traits [i.e., attitudes, values, and interests in different areas]” (p. 337).

The L-TSQ utilizes a series of Likert scale items to measure agreement levels (i.e., strongly agree to disagree strongly) as well as frequency of involvement in a particular activity (i.e., very often and never). Laanan’s L-TSQ is composed of three sections: *Social Demographics*, *Community College Experiences*, and *University Experiences*. Social demographics questions include community college transferred from, year, quarter, GPA,

educational background of parents and income, personal educational aspirations, as well as racial and ethnic background and gender (Laanan, 2004). The L-TSQ also measures students' non-cognitive and affective traits. The *Community College Experiences* sections of the instrument focuses on experiences at the community college and college activities that student may have participated in. *Community College Experiences* include items such as time spent on the campus, preparation for courses, student employment on or off campus, enrollment in courses, academic services or counseling, and the transfer process. The activity sub-section of the instrument focused on the quality of effort the student put into courses and interaction with faculty and extracurricular involvement. The *University Experiences* component of the L-TSQ is broken into two sections as well, experiences and activities. The *University Experiences* section includes major, GPA, reason for transferring or attending a baccalaureate institution, hours, attendance at a transfer orientation program, or transfer bridge programs. The activity sub-section includes five areas: faculty interaction or experiences, course learning, involvement, and academic counseling services, or advising. Additional sections of the instrument include items related to student perceptions of the university, the adjustment process, satisfaction, academic and leadership ability, and time spent on activities. Laanan included these items to provide a more complete understanding of the transfer student, the adjustment process post transfer and satisfaction with the university experience (2004).

Laanan's (2004) L-TSQ provided insight into the transfer experience which goes well beyond other literature on college choice. Still, further study is needed in this area. In particular, understanding the readiness and concerns of two-year students *prior to* the act of transferring to the four-year institution can aid community colleges in preparing students for transfer to a

baccalaureate institution and assist four-year institutions in preparing to receive these students and provide services to aid in their successful transition.

Laanan (2007) utilized the L-TSQ[®] to study approximately 700 students at an institution in California who had transferred from 64 California community colleges. The institution is described as multi-cultural in nature, different from the current study in the State of Alabama. The original L-TSQ[®] instrument of 304 items was administered to the transfer students with a return rate of 30%. The survey was sent in 1994 to students via the US mail. The dependent and independent variables were generated from responses based on academic and social adjustment issues. A four-point Likert scale was used for the study. Dependent variable factors related to academic adjustment included

adjusting to the academic standards has been difficult, I experienced a dip in grades during the first and second semester, my level of stress increased when I started SU, and it was difficult going from the semester to the 10 week quarter system and there is a sense of competition between and among students that is not found in community colleges. (Laanan, 2007, p. 43)

The social factors included “adjusting to the environment has been easy; I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like at SU, it is easy to make friends, and I am involved in social activities. Independent variables were in three groups, social demographics, community college and university environment “blocks.” Statistics were calculated and analyzed from the sample including an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), factor analysis (FA) and a linear multiple regression analysis. The “...variables were entered in specific blocks to determine which social demographic, community college, or university variables contributed to the outcome measures under investigation” (Laanan, 2007, p. 44). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted and nine factors were discovered at the community college and 11 at the four-year institution. Factors from the original L-TSQ[®] were grouped into the following categories for

community colleges: Quality of Effort (Course learning, experiences with faculty, Clubs and organizations and experience in writing) and General Perceptions (Experiences with courses, Experiences with academic counseling, Transfer center, Involvement activities prior to transferring, Perceptions of four-year prior to transferring). University Factors included Quality of Effort (Experiences with faculty, Clubs and Organizations, Course learning, and Experience with academic counseling), General Perceptions (Overall satisfaction at four-year institution, Perceptions of faculty, Stigma as a transfer student, Competition and survival cultures and Adjustment process (Psychological adjustment, Academic adjustment and Social adjustment) .

Adaptation of Instrument for Study

The L-TSQ[®] 2008 version (Laanan and Ebbers (2008) was altered for the current to study to gain understanding of community college student's perceptions *prior to* transfer. Creswell (2005) stated that the modification of an instrument "...means locating an existing instrument, obtaining permission to change it, and making changes in it to fit your requirements" (p. 160). For use in the current study, the L-TSQ Social Demographic section or has not been altered; however, information has been added to capture specifically where the respondent is currently enrolled and to which type of four-year degree granting institution the student has the intent to transfer; public, in-state, college/university, private, in-state college/university, or out-of-state institution. Participants who indicate that they do not have the intent to transfer will be directed within Survey Monkey[®] to a statement that they are not eligible to participate in the study, as it is for only those students with intent to transfer to a four-year college/university.

The survey instrument used in this study is a variation of Laanan's L-TSQ[®] and consists of nine sections with subsections and will take students 15-20 minutes to complete the online survey. For the purpose of the current study, the *Community College Experiences* section was not

altered, other than the verb tense of the questions, as they pertain to students' current experience. The original L-TSQ[®] asked students to reflect back on their experience post-transfer, which is not the intent of the current study. The intent is to determine community college students' perceptions regarding the transfer process in which they expect to engage.

In the current exploratory study, the questions have been reframed such that those regarding university experiences and the students' potential transfer to a four-year college/university will be treated as reflections and reflect on the meditational transition that the students experience. Meditational transitions, as defined by Beach (1999), take place in educational settings that have not yet occurred or have not yet been experienced. Meditational transitions are part of Beach's four types of consequential transitions that include lateral, collateral, encompassing, and meditational transition. Beach associates meditational transitions to adult or vocational educational experiences where participants are negotiating where they will be going. Taking the 2008 version of the L-TSQ[®] used by Laanan and Ebbers (2008), adaptations have been made to make survey items relevant to community college students who have not yet transferred. The original factors that emerged from the 2004 study are not used or referenced as the instrument has been resituated to reflect transitions that have yet to occur. The specific changes to the L-TSQ[®] can be seen in the accompanying instruments in appendix A and appendix B.

The adapted version of the instrument and study was approved by Dr. Frankie Santos Laanan on May 7, 2009. The adapted survey includes the following sections and subsections. A section titled *Community College Experiences: Transfer Process* was adapted from the original instrument to understand respondent's perceptions regarding the transfer process (i.e., "I have researched various aspects of the four-year transfer college/university to get a better

understanding of the environment and academic expectations”). There are six statements regarding the perceptions of the transfer process. Respondents are asked to respond with a four-point Likert scale (Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, and Agree Strongly). The *Community College Activities: Learning and Study Skills* sections have been adapted to determine the respondents beliefs regarding their community college experience and if this experience has prepared them for the “academic rigor” at the four-year college/university that they have the intent to transfer to. *Four-Year School Expectations* has been changed to reflect that the respondent may still be seeking a four-year college/university to transfer to, where the original L-TSQ[®] obtained information related to one, specific four-year college/university, post-transfer.

The following sections were also adapted from the original L-TSQ[®] to reflect the intent to transfer and can be seen in appendix B. The first section is, *Four-Year College/University Activities: Course Learning* and will ask respondents to imagine how they might change their learning activities. Respondents will be asked to rate items related to course learning with a three-point Likert scale (Less than at my Community College, Same as at my Community College or More than at my Community College). *Four-Year College/University Activities: Experiences with Faculty* will seek to understand the respondents’ outlook regarding their level of faculty interaction at a four-year college/university versus a community college. A four-point Likert scale is used for this section (Definitely, Probably, Possibly, Probably Not). The *General Perceptions of the Four-Year Transfer College/University* section asks respondents to rate their level of agreement (Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, Agree Strongly) with statements related to the transfer process and how they will be perceived and what some potential concerns are that they may have.

The final section before respondents are given the opportunity to respond to open ended questions is *Four-Year College/University: Adjustment Process*. This section again asks respondents to rate their level of agreement (Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, Agree Strongly) regarding adjustment issues and challenges that they may encounter. Finally, respondents have the opportunity to answer four open-ended questions. They are

1. What do you wish to have assistance with regarding the transfer process while you are still attending your community college;
2. What could your community college do to enhance your success or ease the transition to the four-year transfer college/university;
3. If you could give some advice to other community college students who want to transfer, what would that advice be; and
4. What have we not asked that you would like us to know about your experiences at your community college in relation to the transfer process?

The open-ended questions provided a great deal of understanding as to the what the students wish they could have had assistance with from both the four year and community college institutions. They were also very open in providing advice to others and other questions to consider. While the study is not qualitative in nature, the open-ended responses provided a more descriptive perspective of the student's experiences. Merriam (1998) used the term "basic or general qualitative study to refer to studies in education.

The basic qualitative study in education typically draws from concepts, models, and theories in educational psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology and sociology. Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Findings are a mix of description and analysis – an analysis that uses concepts from the theoretical framework of the study. (p 11)

While the study is not a case study, the opened-ended questions in some sense are similar to that of a case study. “A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, p. 27). The content of the open-ended questions have been analyzed and categories and themes developed based on the description of the respondents to answer the research questions.

Site and Participant Selection

Ten rural community colleges in Alabama were selected for the current study. All of these colleges are currently participating in the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps, a project of The University of Alabama and funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to provide transfer advising assistance to rural community college students. All participating institutions agreed to participate in research projects associated with the grant and Program Director. Table 1 presents the names, 2005 Carnegie Basic Classifications, and enrollment of the ten institutions. Community College Transfer Advisers working at each rural community college with potential transfer students and with the Program Director at The University of Alabama assisted in providing the names and email addresses of those community college students who have indicated an intent to transfer. These students served as the participant sample pool for the current study. . It should be explicitly noted that survey participants are “self-selected” and are community college students from ten institutions who have sought advising from Alabama Advising Corps staff and have indicated an intent to transfer to a four-year college/university.

Table 1.

Names, Carnegie Classifications, and Enrollment of Participants

		2006-07 12-month unduplicated headcount	Percentage of Minority Student Enrollment
Rural Community College	2005 Carnegie Basic Associate's College Classification		
Bevill State Community College	Public Rural-serving Medium	5,682	17.0%
Gadsden State Community College	Public Rural-serving Large	7,854	26%
George C. Wallace State Community College-Hanceville	Public Rural-serving Large	7,266	8%
George C. Wallace State Community College-Selma	Public Rural-serving Large	3,184	63%
Jefferson Davis Community College	Public Rural-serving Small	1,674	37%
John C Calhoun State Community College	Public Rural-serving Large	12,805	26%
Lurleen B Wallace Community College	Public Rural-serving Small	2,144	20%
Northeast Alabama Community College	Public Rural-serving Medium	3,251	10%
Northwest Shoals Community College-Muscle Shoals	Public Rural-serving Medium	5,094	14%
Snead State Community College	Public Rural-serving Small	2,964	10%

Data Source. U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS).

Community Colleges

While the enrollment and Carnegie Basic Classification is provided in Table 1, it is also important to review the context of each community college that has participated. The ten community colleges and their mission statements are below and provide an understanding of the mission of the institution, including transfer function for students.

Mission Statement of the ten participating rural community colleges:

1. The mission of Gadsden State Community College is to meet the needs of its diverse communities by offering quality educational and cultural experiences that are accessible and affordable and that empower students to become lifelong learners (<http://gadsdenstate.edu/mission.html>);
2. Wallace State Community College Hanceville, a degree granting public community college, is committed to enabling meaningful learning that transforms lives and communities. In support of the mission, Wallace State Community College is committed to:
 - promoting student success in learning environments that are student centered, innovative, engaging, and supportive;
 - providing teaching excellence that inspires a quest for lifelong learning;
 - respecting uniqueness and valuing diversity;
 - forging strategic partnerships that advance community, workforce and economic development culturally enriching our communities; and
 - accountability and integrity(http://www.wallacestate.edu/fileadmin/user_upload/WallaceState/documents/catalog/WSCC_catalog_2009-2010_final2.pdf, Wallace State Hanceville Catalog 2009-2010);
3. The mission of Wallace Community College Selma is to provide high-quality educational opportunities and services that are responsive to individual, community and State needs. To accomplish this mission, Wallace Community College Selma shall provide the following:

General Education and Collegiate Programs at the freshman and sophomore levels that prepare students for transfer to other colleges and universities;

Technical, Vocational, and Career Education that prepare students for immediate employment, re-trains existing employees, and promotes local and state economic stability and competitiveness;

Business and Industry Development Training that meets employer needs;

Developmental Education that assists individuals in improving learning skills and overcoming educational deficiencies;

Student Services and Activities that assist individuals in formulating and achieving their educational goals; and

Continuing Education and personal enrichment opportunities that support life-long learning and the civic, social, and cultural quality of life

(<http://www.wccs.edu/pages/mission.html>);

4. Jefferson Davis Community College, one of the public two-year colleges of the Alabama College System, provides accessible quality educational opportunities, promotes economic growth, and enhances the quality of life for the college service area; (IPEDS)
5. The Mission of Calhoun Community College is to ensure student success and promote community development and cultural enrichment. The mission will be accomplished by:

Providing quality, innovative instruction;

Ensuring open access;

Promoting lifelong learning;
Valuing diversity;
Securing partnerships for economic development;
Providing comprehensive student support services;
Institutionalizing assessment, accountability, and improvement;
Providing a supportive, responsive environment; and
Ensuring opportunities for professional development;
(<http://www.calhoun.edu/mission.htm>);

6. Lurleen B. Wallace Community College is a public, two-year institution in the Alabama College System under the governance of the Alabama State Board of Education. The College offers career-oriented certificates and associate degrees, as well as university transfer courses and associate degrees. In addition, the College provides specialized training for business and industry, non-credit and continuing education, adult education and community services to the residents of its service area. With fundamental principles affirming the value of education, the freedom of teaching and learning, and the worth, dignity and personal development of each individual, the College provides an environment that emphasizes student success and achievement (IPEDS);
7. Northwest-Shoals Community College provides vocational, technical, academic and lifelong educational opportunities; promotes economic growth; and enhances the quality of life for the people of Northwest Alabama (IPEDS);
8. The mission of Northeast Alabama Community College is to provide accessible quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the

quality of life for the people of Alabama. To accomplish the mission, Northeast Alabama Community College has established the following goals or intended results:

An "open-door" admission policy which insures nondiscriminatory educational opportunities for citizens of all races, creeds, colors, national origins, genders, ages, disabilities, or social groups;

General education at the freshman and sophomore levels that prepares students to continue their education through transfer;

Courses in transfer and career programs that are available, accessible and affordable to students;

Instruction leading to the attainment of specified learning outcomes, which help assure student preparedness for transfer and/or the workforce;

Recruitment and retention of qualified personnel who are afforded professional development opportunities and institutional support needed to provide quality postsecondary education;

Developmental education, which assists individuals who need to improve their basic learning skills and supports individuals lacking college preparatory backgrounds;

Technical, vocational and career education programs that prepare students for employment in occupational fields and which lead to certificates, diplomas and/or associate degrees;

Training that meets the specific educational needs of businesses, industries, community organizations, and governmental agencies;

Student services which assist individuals to formulate and achieve career, educational and personal goals through counseling and academic advisement services and provide opportunities to participate in social and cultural activities;

Community services which support personal growth, cultural enrichment, and societal activities; provide access to college facilities for community activities; and promote community, social, and economic improvement;

Procurement and administration of financial resources in an effective manner; and

Provision for and maintenance of a physical plant with instructional facilities and technology suitable for all the institution's programs and services (<http://www.nacc.edu/about/mission.htm>);

9. Snead State Community College, one of the public two-year colleges of The Alabama College System, strives to provide accessible educational opportunities, to promote economic growth and development, and to enhance the quality of life for the College service area (IPEDS);
10. Beville State Community College is an accredited, comprehensive learning-centered institution dedicated to providing quality educational opportunities and services that enrich lives intellectually, culturally, and economically (http://www.bscc.edu/about_mission.php)

Informed Consent

Survey respondents were contacted via email and invited to complete the web survey in Survey Monkey[®]. The Program Director from the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps program provided a data file containing the names of potential participants who are currently enrolled at the ten rural community colleges to contact. The survey participants self-identified as having an interest in transferring to a four-year college/university. The survey was administered via the online survey system Survey Monkey[®]. Email invitations were sent to community college students who have been identified as having an interest in transferring to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution by College Transfer Advising Corps staff. A link was provided to the online survey for those who choose to participate. Data collection began on June 29, 2009 with email invitations being sent to 929 students identified by Advising Corps staff as having the intent to transfer. Four follow-up emails were sent to this population on the following dates; July 13, 2009, July 27, 2009, August 16, 2009 and September 11, 2009. Out of this population the response rate was less than 80 students. A flyer was then developed for Alabama Advising Corps staff to distribute to students they encountered who were interested in transferring. The survey was left open for advising staff to promote the research study and the survey was closed on October 19, 2009 with a total of 94 students answering the survey, with 72 fully completing the instrument and not skipping any questions.

A cover letter introduced the respondent to the study and explained the purpose and importance of the study, as well as any risks or benefits for participating. The confidentiality and voluntary nature of the survey was outlined for respondents. The researcher gained approval from The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board, on June 25, 2009 and the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps prior to survey distribution.

This sample was not truly random in nature, but rather a sample of convenience or non-probability samples. Gorard (2001) defined samples of convenience as “composed of those cases chosen only because they are easily available” (p. 24). Gorard stated that non-probability or convenience samples are often utilized in pilot studies as in the case of the current study. Additionally, “Non-probability samples are also more properly used when the intention is not to collect data on a general population but to use ‘cultural experts’ to help explain an educational or social process” (p. 25). The current study is doing just that, trying to explain the educational process of transferring from a community college to a four-year college/university and the cultural experts are those students who have been identified as having such an interest.

The following aided in survey participation:

1. At each participating community college, the transfer advisers employed through the grant will identified and compiled a list of the students, their email addresses and physical mailing address who have indicated an interest in pursuing a four-year degree.
2. Survey invitations were emailed to students from each of the 10 community colleges.
3. Participants were provided with the link to the survey and the deadline for completion.

No participants indicated an interest in participating in the survey, but were unable to do so online. No hardcopy versions of the instrument were provided and entered into Survey Monkey[®] manually by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Upon the termination of the survey data collection period deadline the link for accessing the survey was disabled in Survey Monkey[®]. This occurred on October 19, 2009. Survey results were calculated by Survey Monkey[®] and responses exported to files and imported into Microsoft Excel[®] for analysis. General summary data was calculated by Survey Monkey[®] and will be utilized in analyzing the survey results. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the overall sample.

Demographic data includes items from the survey including, gender, race, overall degree aspirations, and income level. Open-ended questions were read and analyzed to determine if there were any over-arching themes. These items are presented, along with statistical and tabular information in Chapter IV of this dissertation. These data is used to draw conclusions regarding the perceptions of the transfer process in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV:
ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This study focused on one primary overarching research question and eight secondary questions. What perceptions do rural community college students with the intent to obtain a bachelor's degree have in reference to the transfer process?"

The following eight secondary research questions are also addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college coursework;
2. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college academic advising/counseling;
3. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their anticipated experiences at a four-year college/university;
4. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their selection of a four-year college/university to attend;
5. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the process of transferring to a four-year college/university;
6. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated academic rigor at a four-year college/university;
7. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated classroom experiences that they will have at a four-year college/university; and,

8. What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the social activities and networking with friends that they will experience at a four-year college/university?

Ten rural community colleges in Alabama were selected for the study. All of these colleges are currently participating in the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps, a project of The University of Alabama and funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and a part of the National College Advising Corps to provide transfer advising assistance to rural community college students. All participating institutions agreed to participate in research projects associated with the grant and Program Director. See Table 1 for the names, 2005 Carnegie Basic Classifications, and enrollment of the ten institutions.

Participants for the Survey

The sample size for this exploratory study was represented with 94 respondents beginning the instrument, one who declined to participate, and two who were not eligible as they did not intend to transfer to a four-year degree granting institution. Seventy-two students completed the entire instrument. Data collection began on June 29, 2009, with email invitations being sent to 929 students identified by Advising Corps staff as having the intent to transfer. Four follow-up emails were sent to this population on the following dates: July 13, 2009, July 27, 2009, August 16, 2009, and September 11, 2009. Out of this population the response rate was less than 80 students. A flyer was then developed for Alabama Advising Corps staff to distribute to students in late August 2009 that they encountered who were interested in transferring to advertise and encourage students to complete the survey. The instrument was left open for advising staff to promote the research study and the survey was closed on October 19, 2009, with a total of 94 students answering the survey, with 72 fully completing the instrument

and not skipping any questions. The response rates are as follows, a response rate of 10% for respondents beginning the survey instrument and 8% for those completing the entire instrument. This response rate is based on the email addresses acquired and does not include respondents who may have completed the survey upon receiving an invitation flyer from Alabama Advising Corps Staff.

The population sample will be reviewed in the following sections and tables. First the gender breakdown of the sample 42% of respondents were male and 58% were female with an *n* of 90. Four respondents skipped the gender identification question. The racial/ethnic breakdown appears in Table 2.

Table 2

Ethnic Breakdown of Survey Participants

Ethnic Background	Percentage	Response Count
Native American or Alaskan Native	4%	4
African American or Black	13%	12
White (non-Hispanic)	86%	77
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0%	0
Hispanic or Latino/a	2%	2
Other (please specify)	0%	0

Eighty-seven respondents completed this question with one completing the open-ended text box on the survey incorrectly. The average or mean of the age of the respondents is 22.5. The age of the survey respondents is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Ages of survey respondents attending rural community college with intent to transfer to obtain a bachelors degree

Age Range of Respondents	Percentage	Response Count
19-20	59%	51
21-24	22%	19
25-28	5%	4
29-33	7%	6
34-40	3%	3
41 +	5%	4

The survey participants were from ten rural community colleges in Alabama working with the Alabama Advising Corps Program. Survey respondents came from all ten institutions; however Beville State Community College had the most student participation with 26% of respondents having been enrolled at Beville State Community College. Eighty-six students completed this question and eight opted to skip this question. A breakdown of respondent's community college enrollment is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Survey Respondents by Community College Enrollment

Rural Community College	Percentage	Response Count
Bevill State Community College	26%	22
Northwest-Shoals Community College	1%	1
Northeast Alabama Community College	15%	13
John C. Calhoun Community College	6%	5
Jefferson Davis Community College	2%	2
Wallace Community College-Selma	1%	1
Wallace State Community College-Hanceville	8%	7
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College	5%	4
Snead State Community College	20%	17
Gadsden State Community College	16%	14

Total

The students who participated in the research study for the most part lived with their parents while attending their community college. Over 58% reported living with their parents or relatives. Eighty-nine students answered the residency question with five students not responding to the question. It is not surprising that rural community college students for the most part would be living at home with their parents and/or relatives prior to transferring to a four-year degree granting institution. Table 5 outlines the residency of the survey respondents while they were enrolled at the community college.

Table 5

Place of Residence While Enrolled at Community College

	Percentage	Response Count
Residence hall or other college housing	5%	4
Private apartment or room within walking distance of the community college.	3%	3
House, apartment, etc. away from campus	34%	30
With parents or relatives	58%	52

The students view themselves primarily as commuter students who live off campus and attend classes at the community college. Very few, less than 3%, were online or distance learning students. Of the participants, 89 responded with five students not responding to this question. Table 6 outlines how the participants view their student type while enrolled rural community college.

Table 6

Student Type Perception as Community College Students

Student Type	Percentage	Response Count
A commuter student who takes classes on campus	93%	83
A residential student who lives in on-campus housing	5%	4
A distance learning student who only takes classes on-line	2%	2

The academic background of respondent's parents and their own academic aspirations are important to note in understanding the sample of rural community college students who

participated in this study. First, the academic backgrounds of the respondent's parents will be outlined, then the degree aspirations of the community college students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year degree granting institution. The sample size for the academic background of the respondent's parents was 89 for each question. Tables 7 and 8 will show the academic background of the respondent's mothers and fathers respectively.

Table 7

Mother's Education Level

Level of Education	Percentage	Response Count
Elementary school or less	1%	1
Some high school	11%	10
High school graduate	27%	24
Some college	30%	27
Associate's degree from two year	16%	14
Bachelor's degree	10%	9
Some graduate school	0%	0
Graduate degree	5%	4
Don't know	0%	0

Table 8

Father's Education Level

Level of Education	Percentage	Response Count
Elementary school or less	3%	3
Some high school	9%	8
High school graduate	33%	29
Some college	25%	22
Associate's degree from two year	8%	7
Bachelor's degree	8%	7
Some graduate school	1%	1
Graduate degree	8%	7
Don't know	6%	5

Students' academic goals were captured in the survey as they were asked about the highest degree that they hope to obtain at their community college, what degree they wish to obtain at their four-year transfer college/university, and their overall degree aspirations. Regarding community college degree or certificate goals, 87 students answered the question with seven students opting not to answer this question. Overall 43% of students indicated that they wish to obtain an Associate of Science degree. Students were then asked about their overall degree aspirations. Eight students skipped the question asking about their overall degree aspirations for an n of 86. Seven students opted out of the question about their degree goals for their transfer institutions with 87 responding. Tables 9, 10, and 11 show the respondents

community college degree goals, the overall degree aspirations, and transfer institution degree goals, respectively.

Table 9

Community College Degree Goal Attainment

Type of Degree/Certificate	Percentage	Response Count
None	20%	17
AA (Associate of Arts)	14%	12
AS (Associate of Science)	43%	37
AGS (Associate of General Studies)	13%	11
AAA (Associate of Applied Arts)	2%	2
AAS (Associate of Applied Science)	13%	11
ADN (Associate of Nursing)	1%	1
Diploma Certificate	1%	1
Other	1%	1

Table 10

Overall Degree Goal Attainment

Degree	Percentage	Response Count
Bachelor (BA or BS)	24%	21
Master (MA or MS)	42%	36
Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed. D)	2%	20
Medical (MD, DDS, DO, or DVM)	9%	8
Law (JD or LLB)	1%	1
Other (please specify)		5

For those listing other their responses were specific majors or programs and are as follows: 1) BS, Business Administration; 2) AS; 3) Associate's; 4) English; and 5) CRNA.

It is worthy of note that two respondents indicated their highest degree option would be an associate's degree, which likely implies that they do not intend to transfer. However, there are associate's degrees in nursing offered at four-year institutions in Alabama (University of West Alabama) and this could explain this response. However, it is not certain that this is the degree aspiration for those two respondents.

Table 11

Degree Goal Attainment at the Four-Year Transfer College/University

Degree	Percentage	Response Count
Bachelor (BA or BS)	49%	43
Master (MA or MS)	32%	28
Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed. D)	9%	8
Medical (MD, DDS, DO, or DVM)	8%	7
Law (JD or LLB)	1%	1
Other (please specify)		2

For those who listed other they included the following responses: Associate Arts and English.

Student respondents self-reported their community college grade point average (GPA). Eighty-six respondents answered this question with eight respondents skipping the question. Four of those responding responded with answers other than a GPA. Three indicated that the question was not applicable and one indicated that they did not have a GPA yet. One respondent listed unsure as a response. The results of the participants self-reported GPAs are listed in Table 12.

Table 12

Community College Self-Reported Grade Point Average (GPA)

GPA Range	Percentage	Response Count
2.0 - 2.9	16%	13
3.0 - 3.49	30%	25
3.5 - 3.9	41%	34
4.00	12%	10

The financial and economic background information will be presented next in Tables 13 and 14. The survey participants answered a question regarding their parent’s household income. Eighty-nine participants responded with five skipping this question. Of those responding 19% stated that they were financially independent from their parents with 17 survey participants answering this question. For those who are independent of their parents their socioeconomic information is presented in Table 14.

Table 13

Parents' Total Household Income

Income Level	Percentage	Response Count
Less than \$20,000	11%	10
\$20,000-\$39,999	14%	12
\$40,000-\$59,999	18%	16
\$60,000-\$79,999	17%	15
\$80,000 or more	21%	19
Financially Independent	19%	17

Table 14

Independent Respondent's Household Income Level

Income Level	Percentage	Response Count
Less than \$20,000	53%	9
\$20,000-\$39,999	35%	6
\$40,000-\$59,999	6%	1
\$60,000-\$79,999	0%	0
\$80,000 or more	6%	1

Community college students receiving financial aid and their experiences with the financial aid process are presented next. Of the 89 students responding to the financial aid question, 58% receive some form of financial aid and 42% reported that they did not receive any

type of financial aid at their community college. The type of aid students reported receiving at their community college is presents in Table 15.

Table 15

Type of Community College Financial Aid Received

Type of Aid	Percentage	Response Count
Not Receiving Aid	42%	6
Federal Loan	12%	37
Federal Grant	73%	38
State Aid	4%	2
Community College Scholarship	44%	23
External Funding	8%	4
Other (please specify)		4

For those respondents reporting other the type of aid included the following responses: 1) work study; 2) work study student; 3) federal work study; and 4) scholarship and TRA.

Students reported on whether or not they received assistance in completing their financial aid application documents. Those reporting receiving assistance included 59% of respondents with 41% of respondents reporting no assistance with their financial aid documents. Fifty-one students responded to this question while those who did not report receiving aid did not respond to this question. Those students receiving assistance with financial aid applications were assisted by a variety of individuals, which is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Assistance Provided to Student with Financial Aid

Who Assisted Student	Percentage	Response Count
Community college staff	71%	22
Friend	7%	2
Family Member	39%	12
Other (please specify)		1

The respondent who opted to enter a free form response for other, listed independent research as their other point of assistance with the financial aid process. For students receiving assistance from staff, family and friends they rated their level of satisfaction with their assistance. Thirty-one students who received aid and assistance rated their level of assistance and it presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Level of Satisfaction with Financial Aid Assistance Provided

Assistance Provided	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Minimally Helpful	Not Helpful	N/A	Total
Community college staff	19 66%	5 17%	3 10%	0 0%	2 7%	29 100%
Friend	1 6%	5 31%	3 19%	1 6%	6 38%	16 100%
Family Member	8 38%	4 19%	5 24%	1 5%	3 14%	21 100%

Almost 23% of survey respondents reported not working while enrolled at their respective community college. Those respondents who reported working while being enrolled at

their community college are presented in Table 18. Over 18% reported working over 30 hours and almost 16% worked 21-30 hours. This could be a potential area of concern upon transferring to a four-year college/university for transfer students as they may not be able to work as many hours after transfer.

Table 18

Community College Student Employment

Hours Worked	Percentage	Response Count
1-10 hours	7%	6
11-15 hours	18%	16
16-20 hours	24%	21
21-30 hours	16%	14
More than 30 hours	18%	16

Before reviewing the secondary research questions it is also imperative to review what challenges community college students currently have and what extra and co-curricular activities they are involved in while enrolled at the community college as it can correlate to their activities at the four-year transfer institution. Community college respondents were asked about their challenges or experiences with the following items, transportation, computer access, and child care. Eighty-one students answered the question with 13 skipping this particular question. Overall, survey respondents disagreed strongly that they experienced challenges or it was not applicable to them. Those reporting that they agreed strongly or agree somewhat were concerned about transportation and computer access. Child care was the least reported challenge or obstacle for respondents.

Table 19

Community College Student Challenges

Assistance Provided	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	N/A	Total
Transportation to campus	37 46%	7 9%	13 16%	6 7%	18 22%	81 100%
Computer access	40 49%	7 9%	13 16%	7 9%	14 17%	81 100%
Child care	22 27%	3 4%	8 10%	5 6%	43 53%	81 100%

Regarding student involvement, 60 students responded to this question with 34 skipping this particular question. Honor societies were the most popular with interest and service organizations to follow. Table 20 presents the student involvement of the community college students. For the seven students who listed other as an organization type, the organization/organization type was 1) TRiO Program; 2) Ambassador (3); 3) None (2); and 4) honor society officer.

Table 20

Community College Student Involvement

Student Involvement	Percentage	Response Count
Student Government	30%	18
Honor Societies	47%	28
Athletics	22%	13
Organizations related to my major	25%	15
Student publications	18%	11
Service organizations or activities	32%	19
Fine arts organizations or activities	17%	10
Organizations related to my interests	35%	21
Other (please specify)		7

This concludes the demographic and background data from survey respondents. Next, the research questions will be answered by presenting survey item data.

Results of Survey Questions

The study’s primary research question is, “What perceptions do community college students with the intent to obtain a bachelor’s degree have in reference to the transfer process?” The study’s research questions are further broken down into the following sub-research questions.

Secondary Research Question One

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college coursework? There were several survey questions that begin to answer

this research question. Questions 24, 25, 28, 31, 32 and 35 review respondents current community college experiences with their current coursework at the community college and faculty interaction related to course work. Students reported how often they spend time on the community college campus, not counting class attendance and how much they time they spend studying and preparing for courses at their community college. Question 24 and 25 both located in the *Community College Experiences* section show that 34% of respondents spend one – three hours on campus outside of class with 19% spending over 12 hours per week. Almost 57% reported that they only study only 1 -5 hours per week while enrolled at their community college. Eighty-eight students answered these questions with six respondents not answering either question. The overall results are presented in Table 21 and 22.

Table 21

Time Spent On-Campus at the Community College

Hours Spent On-Campus Outside of Class	Percentage	Response Count
None	6%	5
1 to 3 hours	34%	30
4 to 6 hours	22%	19
7 to 9 hours	9%	8
10 to 12 hours	11%	10
more than 12 hours	19%	17

Table 22

Time Spent Studying and Preparing for Courses at the Community College

Time spent studying and preparing for courses	Percentage	Response Count
1 to 5 hours	57%	50
6 to 10 hours	33%	29
11 to 15 hours	10%	9
16 to 20 hours	0%	0
more than 20 hours	2%	2

Question 28 is located in the *Community College Experiences: General Courses* section of the survey instrument. Students were asked to rate their experiences with the level of academic challenge, rigor and preparedness to transfer, with 84 participants completing this question. A scale of *Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat and Agree Strongly* was used to gain an understanding of their course experiences and their level of academic rigor. Table 23 illustrates respondents rating of their community college coursework.

Table 23

Community College Experiences: General Courses

Answer Options	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
Courses develop my critical and analytical thinking.	2 2%	4 5%	44 52%	34 40%	84 100%
Courses demand intensive writing assignments and projects	4 5%	14 17%	45 54%	21 25%	84 100%
Overall, courses are intellectually challenging	3 4%	7 8%	41 49%	33 39%	84 100%
Courses will prepare me for the academic standards at a four-year college/university	3 4%	6 %	29 35%	45 54%	83 100%
Courses will prepare me for my intended major at a four-year college/university	3 4%	3 4%	26 31%	52 62%	84 100%
Courses require extensive reading and writing	4 5%	9 11%	45 54%	26 31%	84 100%

Overall, respondents had a positive level of agreement that their community college course work was challenging, demanding and would prepare them for transfer. Overwhelmingly, 62% of respondents reported that they agree strongly that their community college courses will prepare them for their major intended coursework at their four-year transfer college/university. This finding is similar to that of Adelman (1999) who discovered that not all students who enroll in a community college do so with the intent to obtain a bachelors degree. Adelman studied students' transfer from their time at the community college, not from when they received an associate' degree.

Respondents answered question 31 in the *Community College Activities: Course Learning Section* that asked them to rate how often they participate in learning activities related

to course learning using a scale of *Never, Occasionally, Often, and Very Often*. Table 24 outlines the responses of the 82 respondents who completed this question, 12 participants did not answer question 31.

Table 24

Course Learning Activities

Course Related Activity	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often	Response Count
Take detailed notes in class	3 4%	13 16%	28 34%	38 46%	82 100%
Participate in class discussions	3 4%	17 21%	27 33%	35 43%	82 100%
Try to see how different facts and ideas fit together	3 4%	14 17%	28 34%	37 45%	82 100%
Think about practical applications of course material and content	2 2%	13 16%	31 38%	36 44%	82 100%
Work on papers or projects where I integrate ideas from various sources	3 4%	12 15%	32 39%	35 43%	82 100%
Explain course material and content to another student or friend	3 4%	19 23%	26 32%	33 41%	81 100%

As outlined in the review of literature, faculty interaction is an integral part of student development and academic integration. Table 25 illustrates the level of comfort and frequency that students have interacting with the faculty at their respective community colleges. Eighty-two participants completed this question with an overall positive level of participation interacting with faculty. Over 52% of respondents reported that they feel comfortable approaching faculty outside of class and reported doing so *Very Often*.

Table 25

Community College Faculty Student Interaction

Type of Faculty Interaction	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often	Response Count
Visit faculty and seek their advice on class projects such as writing assignments and research papers.	6 7%	33 40%	21 26%	22 27%	82 100%
Feel comfortable approaching faculty outside class.	1 1%	12 15%	26 32%	43 52%	82 100%
Ask my instructors for information related to a course I am taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)	0 0%	19 23%	26 32%	37 45%	82 100%
Visit informally and briefly with an instructor after class.	5 6%	31 38%	20 25%	25 31%	81 100%
Discuss my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.	7 9%	35 43%	15 18%	25 30%	82 100%
Ask my instructor for comments and criticisms about my work.	9 11%	26 32%	26 32%	21 26%	82 100%

In the section *Community College Satisfaction* respondents rated their level of satisfaction with a variety of academic items that included; amount of contact with faculty, class size, interaction with students, diversity of faculty, leadership opportunities and their overall community college experience in question 35. Table 26 illustrates the results of ratings that utilized a scale of *Very Dissatisfied*, *Dissatisfied*, *Satisfied*, *Very Satisfied*, and *Not Applicable*. Overwhelmingly, for those who responded ($n= 81$) respondents were satisfied and very satisfied with their community college academic experience.

Table 26

Overall Community College Satisfaction

Community College Experience	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable	Response Count
Amount of contact with faculty	0 0%	1 1%	24 30%	56 69%	0 0%	81 100%
Class size	0 0%	2 2%	23 29%	54 67%	2 2%	81 100%
Interaction with other students	1 1%	3 4%	27 33%	49 60%	1 1%	81 100%
Ethnic/racial diversity of the faculty	1 1%	7 9%	28 35%	49 49%	5 6%	81 100%
Leadership opportunities	1 1%	5 6%	33 41%	40 49%	2 2%	81 100%
Overall community college experience	0 0%	2 2%	24 30%	55 68%	0 0%	81 100%

Secondary Research Question Two

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college academic advising/counseling? There are two survey questions that begin to answer this research question about community college advising and counseling. Respondents were asked to report on their current experience with academic counseling services and rated their level of satisfaction with academic advising/counseling services with a scale of *Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, and Agree Strongly*. Eighty-four students completed this question with 10 opting not to respond. Table 27 outlines the respondents' level of satisfaction with academic counseling services at the respective community colleges.

Table 27

Satisfaction with Community College Academic Advising

Answer Options	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
I consult with academic counselors regarding transfer	4 5%	7 8%	32 38%	41 49%	84 100%
Information from academic counselor(s) is helpful in preparing for the transfer process.	3 4%	12 14%	25 30%	44 52%	84 100%
I meet with academic counselors on a regular basis.	15 18%	16 19%	29 35%	24 29%	84 100%
I talk with a counselor/advisor about courses to take, requirements, education plans.	10 12%	7 8%	30 36%	37 44%	84 100%
I discuss my plans for transferring to a four-year college/university with an academic counselor/advisor.	7 8%	5 6%	34 41 %	37 45%	83 100%
Counselors/advisors identify courses needed to meet the general education/major requirements of the four-year college/university I am interested in attending.	7 8%	3 4%	35 42%	39 46%	84 100%

Question 34 on the survey asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with overall experiences at the community college that included all aspects of the community college. Eighty-one respondents completed this question with 13 skipping this question. Respondents were *Very Satisfied* with their decision to transfer, 70%, quality of instruction, 60%, and sense of community and academic advising also over 57%. Overall, students are satisfied with their

community college experience with less than 5% being *Very Dissatisfied* in any category. Table 28 is an illustration of the respondents' satisfaction level at their community college.

Table 28

Overall Community College Satisfaction

Answer Options	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable	Response Count
Sense of belonging	0 0%	3 4%	26 32%	52 64%	0 0%	81 100%
Decision to transfer	0 0%	0 0%	23 28%	57 70%	1 1%	81 100%
Overall quality of instruction	0 0%	0 0%	31 38%	50 62%	0 0%	81 100%
Sense of community on campus	0 0%	3 4%	28 35%	47 59%	2 3%	80 100%
Academic advising	1 1%	4 5%	27 34%	46 58%	2 3%	80 100%
Career counseling and advising	1 1%	7 9%	27 33%	44 54%	2 2%	81 100%
Student housing	4 5%	5 6.17%	17 21%	10 12%	45 56%	81 100%
General education courses	2 2%	0 0%	35 43%	43 53%	1 1%	81 100%
Financial aid services	3 4%	8 10%	23 29%	38 48%	8 10%	80 100%

Secondary Research Question Three

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their anticipated experiences at a four-year college/university? This is a broad question that encompasses many aspects of a student's academic and overall anticipated university experience. Survey questions 48 – 52 begin to uncover what transfer students' anticipated experiences and adjustment issues are. Question 48, from the instrument section titled *Four-Year College/University Activities: Experiences with Faculty* illustrates what some of the concerns respondents have regarding their faculty interaction at the four-year college/university. Seventy-five students answered this question with 19 skipping this question. Table 29 outlines respondents anticipated faculty interaction with the percentages of the anticipated behavior/activity using a scale of (*Definitely, Probably, Possibly, and Probably Not*) to measure the likelihood of the respondents anticipated behavior. Respondents for the most part reported that they would anticipate visiting with faculty for advice, course related information, career ambitions and comments or criticisms about projects or assignments. Over 33% responded *Definitely* in all anticipated behaviors and over 28% probably in all anticipated faculty interaction types.

Table 29

Anticipated Faculty Interaction

Anticipated Faculty Interaction	Definitely	Probably	Possibly	Probably Not	Response Count
Visiting faculty and seek their advice on class projects such as writing assignments and research papers.	26 35%	30 40%	16 21%	3 4%	75 100%
Feeling comfortable approaching faculty outside of class.	26 35%	28 37%	17 23%	4 5%	75 100%
Asking my instructor for information related to a course I am taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)	30 40%	29 39%	14 19%	2 3%	75 100%
Visiting informally and briefly with an instructor after class.	25 33%	24 32%	19 25%	7 9%	75 100%
Discussing my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.	30 40%	21 28%	19 25%	5 7%	75 100%
Asking my instructor for comments and criticisms about my work.	32 43%	24 32%	15 20%	4 5%	75 100%

In the sections *General Perceptions of the four-year transfer college/university and Four-Year College/University Adjustment Process* the respondents answered question 49 -52 and rated their agreement level with items related to their experience and identity as a transfer student using a Likert scale. The scale included the following responses: *Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, and Agree Strongly* and was utilized to ascertain student's agreement level with statements regarding faculty interaction, bureaucracy, academic abilities, transfer student stigma, academic competition, feelings of being overwhelmed, making friends,

finding their way on campus and succeeding in general. The response rates for questions 49-52 ranged from 75 to 68 respondents completing the survey items. Response rates are as follows: question 48 had 75 respondents, with 19 skipping the item, question 49 had 72 respondents, with 22 not answering the item, question 50 with 73 responses and 21 not answering, question 51 with the lowest response rate of the group of questions with 68 responding and 26 skipping the item and finally, question 52 had 70 respondents and 24 students not answering this survey item.

One of the concerns of transfer students is the bureaucratic red tape of a four-year college university with 52% of students rating *Agree Somewhat* with the statement “It will be difficult learning the ‘red tape’ when I transfer.” Another area of concern worthy of note is that they have the perception that four-year college/university students are concerned with grades versus learning the material as over 60% of respondents agreed with the following statement, “Generally, students will be more concerned about ‘getting the grade’ instead of learning the material.” Almost 60% of respondents *Agree Strongly* that faculty will be interested in the academic development of undergraduate students, but respondents also clearly have a concern about being “treated like a number,” with 13% who responded with *Agree Strongly* and 52% reporting to *Agree Strongly* with the concern of being treated “like a number.” Forty-eight percent of participants responded *Agree Somewhat* to the statement, “I anticipate feeling overwhelmed by the size of the student body,” in survey item 51. Survey item 52 continued to ask respondents to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding their anticipated transfer experience. Over 77% of respondents indicated that they would anticipate having an increased stress level upon transfer (*Agree Somewhat or Agree Strongly*). Tables 30 -33 outline the concerns of community college transfer students.

Table 30

Anticipated Academic Experiences at a Four-Year College/University

Academic Perceptions of the Four-Year Institution	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
Faculty will be easy to approach.	2 3%	11 15%	43 60%	16 22%	71 100%
Faculty will be accessible to students.	2 3%	8 11%	46 64%	16 22%	72 100%
It will be difficult learning the "red tape" when I transfer.	8 11%	13 18%	38 54%	12 17%	71 100%
Because I am a "community college transfer," students may tend to underestimate my abilities.	17 24%	20 28%	25 35%	10 14%	72 100%
Because I am a "community college transfer," most faculty may tend to underestimate my abilities.	14 19%	24 33%	26 36%	8 11%	72 100%
There will be a stigma at my transfer college/university among students for having started at a community college.	15 21%	25 35%	27 38%	5 7%	72 100%
Generally, students will be more concerned about "getting the grade" instead of learning the material.	4 7%	13 18%	43 61%	11 15%	71 100%

Table 31

Transfer Student Concerns upon Transferring

Four-Year Institution Transfer Student Concerns	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
I am concerned I will feel like I do not "fit in" on the campus.	25 34%	19 26%	24 33%	5 7%	73 100%
Professors will be strongly interested in the academic development of undergraduates.	4 6%	14 19%	41 57%	13 18%	72 100%
I am concerned I will be treated like a "number."	14 19%	11 15%	38 52%	10 14%	73 100%
Student services will be responsive to my needs.	3 4%	14 19%	42 58%	14 19%	73 100%
If students expect to benefit from what the transfer college/university has to offer, they need to take the initiative.	2 3%	6 8%	33 45%	32 44%	73 100%

Table 32

Transfer Student Feelings and Perceptions

Anticipated Feelings and Experiences	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
Adjusting to the academic standards or expectations will be easy.	6 9%	18 26%	33 49%	11 16%	68 100%
Adjusting to the social environment will be easy.	6 9%	13 19%	32 47%	17 25%	68 100%
I anticipate feeling overwhelmed by the size of the student body.	10 15%	17 25%	33 49%	8 12%	68 100%
I anticipate feeling alienated at the college/university.	13 19%	25 37%	25 37%	5 7%	68 100%
I anticipate being very involved with social activities.	9 13%	10 15%	33 49%	15 22%	67 100%
I anticipate meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like.	1 1%	6 9%	36 54%	24 36%	67 100%

Table 33

Transfer Adjustment Issues

Anticipated Feelings and Experiences	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
It will be easy to find my way around campus.	5 7%	24 34%	31 44%	10 14%	70 100%
My level of stress will increase when I transfer.	4 6%	12 17%	43 61%	11 16%	70 100%
I may experience a decrease in my GPA at the end of my first semester at the four-year college/university.	12 17%	21 30%	31 44%	6 9%	70 100%
I may experience an increase in my GPA at the end of my first semester at the four-year college/university.	6 9%	25 36 %	26 38%	12 17%	69 100%
It will be easy to make friends at the four-year college/university.	2 3%	11 16%	40 57%	17 24%	70 100%
I will feel comfortable spending time with friends that I made at the two-year college I attended who also transferred to the same four-year college/university.	2 3%	5 7%	33 48%	29 42%	69 100%
I will feel more comfortable making friends with other transfer students than with non-transfer students.	15 21%	28 40%	23 33%	4 6%	70 100%
I anticipate that there will be a sense of competition between/among students at the four-year college/university that is not found at the community college.	11 16 %	26 37%	27 39%	6 9%	70 100%

Secondary Research Question Four

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their selection of a four-year college/university to attend? Participants select transfer institutions for a variety of reasons. The survey sections, *Four-Year School Expectations* (survey items 39, 40, 43 & 44), *Transfer Information* (survey items 21-23), and *Community College Experiences: Transfer Process* (survey item 30) begin to uncover what some of the perceptions are regarding college/university selection for community college students. Over 50% of participants indicated their reason for transferring was to obtain a bachelor's degree. Other reasons for transfer included job skills, graduate or professional school aspirations and personal interest. Seventy-nine survey participants responded to item number 39 with 15 respondents skipping this question. Table 34 illustrates these results.

Table 34

Reason for Transferring to a Four-Year College/University

Reason for Transferring	Percentage	Response Count
To obtain a bachelor's degree	53%	42
To gain skills necessary to enter a new job or occupation	22%	17
To pursue graduate or professional school	20%	16
To satisfy a personal interest (cultural, social)	5%	4

The type of transfer institution is also worthy of note as is an understanding of this “fit.” Respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statement, “I have an understanding of the type of institution to which I am transferring: i.e. flagship, regional, private, liberal arts, etc. using a scale of *Disagree Strongly*, *Disagree Somewhat*, *Disagree Somewhat*, *Agree Somewhat*,

and Agree Strongly. Table 35 illustrates the results of this survey item. Of those responding (78) 46% selected agree strongly and 41% agreed somewhat with this statement. So, in general, respondents believe that they have an understanding of the type of four-year institution to which they intend to transfer.

Table 35

Transfer Literacy: An Understanding of Institution Type

Agreement Level	Percentage	Response Count
Disagree Strongly	5%	4
Disagree Somewhat	8%	6
Agree Somewhat	41%	32
Agree Strongly	46%	36

Respondents indicated the type of institution, where and what institution they intend to transfer and why in survey questions 21 – 24. Overwhelmingly, 94% indicated that they had the intent to transfer to a public four-year college/university in Alabama with 1% intending to transfer to a private institution in Alabama and 5% wanting to transfer out-of-state. Eighty-eight students responded to this question with six students not responding. Tables 36 – 38 outline where respondents plan to transfer. For those respondents indicating out-of-state institutions, those included Indiana Bible College and Berry College in Georgia. One open-ended response was not valid. Respondents could select more than one institution after selecting in-state, out-of state, or private institution.

Table 36

Transfer Institution Type

Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count
Public four-year college/university in Alabama	94%	83
Private four-year college/university in Alabama	1%	1
Out-of-state four-year college/university	5%	4
Please specify which out-of-state college/university		3
Total	100%	91

Table 37

Public Four-Year College/University in Alabama

Four-Year Public Transfer Institution in Alabama	Percentage	Response Count
Alabama A&M University	1%	1
Alabama State University	4%	3
Athens State University	15%	12
Auburn University	11%	9
Auburn University Montgomery	2%	2
Jacksonville State University	12%	10
Troy University	4%	3
University of Alabama	33%	27
University of Alabama Birmingham	16%	13
University of Alabama Huntsville	11%	9
University of Montevallo	2%	2
University of North Alabama	10%	8
University of South Alabama	5%	4
University of West Alabama	2%	2

Table 38

Private Four-Year College/University in Alabama

Four-Year Private Transfer Institution in Alabama	Percentage	Response Count
Ambridge University	7%	1
Birmingham Southern College	14%	2
Concordia College	0%	0
Faulkner University	14%	2
Huntingdon College	0%	0
Judson College	0%	0
Miles College	7%	1
Oakwood College	0%	0
Samford University	36%	5
Selma University	0%	0
Southeastern Bible College	0%	0
Spring Hill College	14%	2
Stillman College	14%	2
Talladega College	0%	0
Tuskegee University	7%	1
United States Sports Academy	0%	0
University of Mobile	36%	5

Survey item 30 in the instrument section *Community College Experiences: Transfer Process* demonstrates the type of research done by transfer students related to the transfer process, including campus visits. Eighty-one respondents answered this item with 13 opting not to respond to this survey item. Statements and behaviors regarding the transfer process were presented to the respondent and they rated their level of agreement using the scale: *Disagree Strongly, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, and Agree Strongly*. Those respondents who agreed strongly with transfer behaviors were over 35% and ranged from 23%-44% for those who agreed somewhat with the transfer behavior to aid in the transfer process. Table 39 represents these results.

Table 39

Transfer Institution Research and Behavior

Transfer Behavior	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
I have researched various aspects of the four-year transfer college/university to get a better understanding of the environment and academic expectations.	4 5%	8 9%	34 42%	35 43%	81 100%
I believe that I know what to expect when I transfer in terms of academics.	6 7%	8 10%	31 38%	36 44%	81 100%
I have visited the admissions office at the four-year transfer institution.	23 29%	8 10%	19 24%	30 38%	80 100%
I have visited the four-year transfer college/university that interests me to learn about campus services.	17 21%	7 9%	25 31%	31 39%	80 100%
I have spoken to academic advisors/counselors/faculty at the four-year transfer college/university that interests me in order to learn about transferring and major requirements.	15 19%	11 14%	24 30%	31 38%	81 100%
I have spoken to former community college transfer students to gain an insight about their experiences as a transfer student.	12 15%	7 9%	23 28%	39 48%	81 100%

Survey items 43 and 44 located in the instrument section *Four-Year School Expectations* provide survey participants with types of influence on their transfer institution selection. Respondents rated the type of influence using the following scale: *Not Important, Somewhat Important, Important, and Very Important*. The response rate for these survey items was 78 with 16 participants skipping these survey items. The reputation of the institution was rated as very important by 59% and financial aid packages also were rated as very important (60%) and 57% rated the cost of the institution as very important. Tables 40 and 41 represent the results of reasons that could influence institution selection.

Table 40

Reasons on Influence on Four-Year College/University Selection

Influence	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Response Count
The college/university has a very good academic reputation.	1 1%	6 8%	25 32%	46 59%	78 100%
The college/university has a very good reputation for its social activities.	8 10%	21 27%	22 28%	27 35%	78 100%
I was offered financial assistance.	5 6%	8 11%	18 23%	46 60%	77 100%
The college/university has affordable tuition.	1 1%	9 12%	25 32%	43 55%	78 100%
Academic counselor(s) at the community college advised me.	11 14%	10 13%	27 35%	30 38%	78 100%
A friend suggested attending.	19 25%	24 31%	19 25%	15 19%	77 100%
A university representative recruited me.	24 31%	24 32%	15 19%	15 19%	78 100%

Table 41

Additional Reasons on Influence on Four-Year College/University Selection

Answer Options	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Response Count
This college's/university's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	8 10%	18 23%	27 35 %	24 31%	77 100%
This college's/university's graduates get good jobs.	1 1%	6 8%	31 40%	40 51%	78 100%
College/University ranking in national magazines	11 14%	22 29%	29 38%	15 19%	77 100%
Parents recommended.	21 28%	21 28%	23 30%	11 14%	76 100%
My brother(s)/sister(s) attended college/university	40 51%	17 22%	12 15 %	9 12%	78 100%
Convenience and location	8 10%	13 17%	29 37%	28 36%	78 100%
Size of the institution	17 22%	14 18%	27 35%	20 26%	78 100%
Cost	3 4%	6 8%	24 31%	44 57%	77 100%

Secondary Research Question Five

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the process of transferring to a four-year college/university? The process of transferring for many students goes beyond college university selection, which was presented in secondary research question four. The behaviors and feelings leading up to transferring to a four-year college/university are examined here. Academic advising from the four-year transfer institution is a part of the transfer process for some students, but not all. Survey item 45, located in section

Four-Year School Expectations, reports that over 56% of respondents were counseled by an academic advisor of some kind from their transfer institution prior to transfer, with 43% reporting that they had not been advised. Item 46, located in *Four-Year College/University Advising* section, provides data on the satisfaction level students had with the pre-transfer advising experience. A Likert scale of *Very Unhelpful*, *Somewhat Unhelpful*, *Somewhat Helpful*, and *Very Helpful* was used to obtain the satisfaction with advising services. Table 42 represents the level of satisfaction with advising services for the 45 respondents who reported being advised at the transfer institution.

Table 42

Satisfaction with Academic Advising at Four-Year College/University

Academic Advising at Transfer Institution	Percentage	Response Count
Very unhelpful	16%	7
Somewhat unhelpful	2%	1
Somewhat helpful	31%	14
Very helpful	51%	23

Survey items 54 and 55, located in the section *Four-Year College/University: Adjustment Process*, ask students about specific areas that could be of concern upon transfer and their overall feeling of being successful upon transferring. Seventy survey participants completed this survey item with 24 not completing the question. A Likert scale of *Disagree Strongly*, *Disagree Somewhat*, *Agree Somewhat*, *Agree Strongly*, and *Not Applicable* was used to rate the statement, “I anticipate having anxiety upon transfer to the four-year college/university with specific areas that could potentially be barriers to transfer; transportation to campus, computer access and child

care.” The responses indicate that childcare is not a major issue for this small population of students as over 50% responded with not applicable. However, computer access and transportation may be areas of anxiety or barriers for success for respondents. Table 43 illustrates these issues and the level of anxiety as reported by community college transfer respondents.

Table 43

Anxiety upon Transfer to Four-Year College/University

Transfer Concern	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	N/A	Response Count
Transportation to campus	24 34%	10 14%	20 29%	7 10%	9 13%	70 100%
Computer access	28 41%	14 21%	17 25%	1 1%	8 12%	68 100%
Child care	20 29%	3 4%	8 12%	1 1%	37 54%	69 100%

Table 44 outlines their level of agreement with the statement “I feel that I will be successful at the institution to which I am transferring.” Respondents generally are confident about their ability to succeed with 75% reporting that they agree strongly and 21% agree somewhat with the statement that they will be successful upon transferring. Only two survey participants out of the 70 answering this survey item indicated an agreement level of disagree somewhat or disagree strongly about being successful upon transferring.

Table 44

Transfer Success to a Four-Year College/University

Agreement Level	Percentage	Response Count
Disagree Strongly that they will be successful	1%	1
Disagree Somewhat that they will be successful	1%	1
Agree Somewhat that they will be successful	21%	15
Agree Strongly that they will be successful	76%	53

Secondary Research Question Six

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated academic rigor at a four-year college/university? Two survey items examine the perceptions of anticipated academic rigor upon transfer to a four-year college/university. Survey item 33 located in the *Community College Activities: Learning and Study Skills* section of the instrument asks respondents to agree or disagree that their experiences at the community college will prepare them for the level of academic rigor that they expect upon transfer to a four-year college/university. Table 45 outlines specific academic skills and their level of agreement in preparing them for transfer. In general, respondents feel that their community college academic experience has developed the skills that they believe they will need to be successful academically upon transfer.

Table 45

Community College Academic Skill Readiness for Transfer

Community College Academic Experiences	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	Response Count
Computer skills	1 1%	2 2%	11 13%	33 40%	35 43%	82 100%
Mathematical skills	1 1%	2 2%	11 13%	32 39%	36 44%	82 100%
Note taking skills	3 4%	0 0%	13 1%	28 35%	37 46%	81 100%
Problem solving skills	1 1%	1 1%	11 13%	37 45%	32 39%	82 100%
Reading skills	1 1%	1 1%	18 22%	31 38%	31 38%	82 100%
Research skills	2 2%	2 2%	9 11%	28 34%	41 50%	82 100%
Speaking and oral presentation skills	2 2%	2 2%	7 9%	32 39%	39 48%	82 100%
Test taking skills	0 0%	2 2%	8 10%	30 37%	42 51%	82 100%
Time management skills	2 2%	0 0%	10 12%	35 43%	35 43%	82 100%
Writing skills	1 1%	2 2%	10 12%	33 41%	35 43%	81 100%

Survey item Question 47 located in the *Four-Year College/University Activities: Course Learning* section asked survey participants to quantify how they believe that they will change

their academic and study behavior. Seventy- seven responses were collected and 17 survey respondents skipped this survey item. A Likert scale was used to rate their change in behavior (*Less than at my community college, Same as at my community college, and More than at my community college*). Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that they plan to change their behavior. Over 50% of respondents rated every academic behavior listed with the exception of explaining course material to a friend as “More than at my community college.” Table 46 presents the academic behavior and the level to which the respondents will change their academic behavior upon transfer.

Table 46

Anticipated Changes in Course Learning

Academic Behavior	Less than at my community college	Same as at my community college	More than at my community college	Response Count
Taking detailed notes in class.	1 1%	25 32%	51 66%	77 100%
Participating in class discussions.	4 5%	35 45%	38 49%	77 100%
Seeing how different facts and ideas fit together.	1 1%	35 46%	40 53%	76 100%
Thinking about the practical applications of course material and content.	1 1%	35 45%	41 53%	77 100%
Working on a paper or project where I have to integrate ideas from various sources.	0 0%	33 43%	44 57%	77 100%
Trying to explain course material and content to another student or friend.	4 5%	43 56%	30 39%	77 100%

Secondary Research Question Seven

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated classroom experiences that they will have at a four-year college/university? The classroom experiences of respondents is related the format of which they will take their courses. Survey item 42 in section *Four-Year School Expectations* asks respondents to identify their primary method of course taking at the transfer institution. Seventy-seven responses were collected with 17 not responding. Sixty-seven percent of respondents plan to take all four-year college/university courses on campus, and 33% will take them on campus and on-line. No respondents indicated that they would be on-line students only. Table 47 presents this data.

Table 47

Classroom Format upon Transfer

Classroom Format at Four-Year College/University	Percentage	Response Count
Will attend all courses on campus	68%	52
Will attend some courses on campus and in an online format	33%	25
Will attend all courses in an online format	0%	0

Secondary Research Question Eight

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the social activities and networking with friends that they will experience at a four-year college/university? Three survey items are related to this final secondary research question. Some questions did touch on social transitions and adjustments of the respondents; however these survey items are specific to social networking and friends upon transfer to the four-year college/university. Question 36 in the *Community College Satisfaction* section about what social

groups students are concerned about being separated from upon transfer. Seventy-nine responses were collected with 15 respondents not answering this survey time. Overall, there is a concern of being separated from friends, family, and religious groups. Over 25% of respondents responded with *Agree Somewhat* to the statement, “I am concerned upon transferring about being separated from, high school friends, community college friends, family, and church or religious groups.” For those that responded *Agree Strongly*, family was the largest concern. Table 48 illustrates the responses to survey item 36.

Table 48

Separation from Social Groups

Concerned about being separated from:	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly	N/A	Response Count
High School Friends	23 29%	16 20%	24 30%	5 6%	11 14%	79 100%
Community College Friends	16 20%	14 17%	34 43%	11 14%	4 5%	79 100%
Family	13 16%	9 11%	21 27%	30 38%	6 8%	79 100%
Church or religious groups	16 20%	10 13%	25 32%	20 25%	8 10%	79 100%

Question 41 located in *Four-Year School Expectations* reports where respondents plan to reside upon transferring to a four-year college/university. Table 49 presents this data with the largest percentage of the 72 responses being an off-campus apartment.

Table 49

Transfer Institution Place of Residence

Anticipated Place of Residence	Percentage	Response Count
Residence Hall	17%	12
Off Campus Apartment	54%	39
Greek (Fraternity/Sorority) Housing	4%	3
Current place of residence (No change)	25%	18
Other (please specify)		6

For those listing other for an anticipated place of residence, three respondents listed trailer or mobile home park off-campus, one listed “no plans yet,” and another listed on-campus apartment, which could be considered on-campus housing.

Question 53 asked respondents to report on their anticipated student involvement while on the four-year college/university campus. This question was located in the *Four-Year College/University: Adjustment Process* section of the survey. For those listing “other” responses included the following: 1) intramural athletics; 2) Million Dollar Band--Color Guard; and 3) “I still want to be an officer at my new school.”

Table 50 presents the type of student involvement respondents anticipate being involved in upon transfer to the four-year college/university. There were 66 survey participants

responding to this survey item with 28 not responding. Major related organizations were the most popular organization type selected by transfer student participants.

Table 50

Transfer Institution Student Involvement

Anticipated Student Involvement Upon Transfer	Percentage	Response Count
Student Government	20%	13
Honor Societies	44%	29
Athletics	14%	9
Organizations related to my major	73%	48
Student publications	15%	10
Service organizations or activities	39%	26
Fine arts organizations or activities	12%	8
Organizations related to my interests	49%	32
Greek Life (Fraternity/Sorority)	21%	14
Other (please specify)		3

Four open-ended questions were the last section of the survey instrument. The questions are as follows:

1. What do you wish to have assistance with regarding the transfer process while you are still attending your community college?
2. What could your community college do to enhance your success or ease the transition to the four-year transfer college/university?

3. If you could give some advice to other community college students who want to transfer, what would that advice be?
4. What have we not asked that you would like us to know about your experiences at your community college in relation to the transfer process?

Survey items 56-59 had low response rates for the open-ended questions. Response numbers for the open-ended questions were 41, 32, 42, and 23. However, given the low response numbers, responses for the questions had similar themes. The major themes that emerged included transfer credit acceptance or the articulation of transfer credit, scholarships, interactions with four-year institution faculty and/or staff, and the time-line to transfer.

Respondents referenced the articulation of community college coursework to the transfer college-university in every open-ended question. A good overview of the open-ended responses is summarized by the response to the following question: “What do you wish to have assistance with regarding the transfer process while you are still attending your community college?” A community college student responded with, “All the ‘red tape’ - the nitty-gritty details as far as paperwork, and scholarships, and transfer requirements.”

Community college students planning to transfer are aware of the “red-tape” and roadblocks that they may encounter during the transfer process. Meeting with academic advisors was also a part of respondents’ awareness of the transfer process. Many had positive interactions with advisors and referenced the importance of meeting with transfer and major advisors. An example of this includes, “Visit your transfer and major advisor, be consistent about financial aid and scholarship opportunities, as well as the STARS transfer program.”

Students are aware of transfer credit issues upon transfer and also have financial concerns. Many referenced the importance of getting financial aid and scholarships in all of the

open-ended questions. Assistance with the scholarship process at four-year institutions was an area of concern for respondents as was the availability of scholarships and aid. One respondent stated, “Help in obtaining a transfer scholarship,” and another, “Help me to apply for scholarships.” This is clearly an area of concern for survey participants.

Respondents also reported that they would like more interaction with four-year institution faculty, staff, and students. One respondent stated, “Maybe bring in representatives and current students from different school that have transferred to a four year college,” and another, “financial aid, scholarships, setting up visits with advisers/recruiters from 4 yr universities.”

As for the transfer time-frame, respondents felt it was important to become informed early and begin the transfer process early. An example of this is the following response, “Get the info way ahead of time. Know that you know what you are doing at least 6-12 months ahead of time.”

There were no responses regarding social integration or making friends. Transfer articulation, financing their education, meeting with transfer institution representatives and getting such tasks accomplished were the major themes of the open-ended responses from transfer community college students.

This chapter has presented the data associated with the survey findings for each sub-research question for the current study. The following and final chapter will discuss the results and related findings of the study as well as provide recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

CHAPTER V:
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The intent of the current study was to ascertain the adjustment issues and experiences of rural community college students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. An adapted version of the *Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ)* that focused on the experiences and perceptions of community college transfer students prior to their transfer to a four-year college/university was administered to students enrolled at ten rural community colleges in Alabama (Laanan, 2004). All of these colleges were participating in the Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps, a project of The University of Alabama funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to provide transfer advising assistance to rural community college students at the time of survey administration. It should be that survey participants are “self-selected” and are community college students who have sought advising from Alabama Advising Corps staff and have indicated an intent to transfer to a four-year college/university.

Using descriptive statistics, the results of this research study provide considerable data regarding the perceptions of rural community college students with the intent to transfer to a baccalaureate degree granting institution, including the transfer institution selection process. This chapter serves three main objectives. The first objective is to interpret and present the research findings gathered by the various survey items. Secondly, this chapter serves to lay out the

conclusions drawn from these findings. Finally, recommendations for policy, practice, and future research are outlined.

Findings and Discussion

The findings in this study present a snapshot of rural community college students in Alabama who has self-identified that they wish to transfer to a four-year college/university and obtain a bachelors degree. Descriptive statistics reveal who the study participant is, as well as other relevant demographic data. First the demographic findings will be discussed, followed by community college experiences, college/university selection, and finally findings related to the transfer process that has yet to occur. The sample size begin with 94 respondents initiating survey the instrument, one who declined to participate, two who were not eligible as they did not intend to transfer to a four-year degree granting institution. Seventy-two students completed the entire instrument.

The average survey participant was of traditional age, with the majority of survey respondents being between 19 and 24 years of age, who reside with their parents and take classes on campus at the community college. The ethnic and gender breakdown of the study participants included, over 85.6% of respondents were white and overall more females participated than males. Self-reported grade point averages for survey respondents were above average, perhaps indicating that more self-motivated students took part in the study. Over 41% reported having a GPA from 3.0- 3.49 and 12% reporting community college GPA's of a 4.0. Overwhelmingly, Bevill State Community College had the most survey participants. Twenty-five percent of survey participants were enrolled at Bevill State Community College at the time of survey administration.

The highest education levels of the respondents' parents were captured. Participants' mothers (30%) had completed some college with approximately 15% having earned associate degrees. Respondents' fathers reported having had some college with 24.7% and over 32% graduating high school. The mothers of survey respondents had a higher percentage of earning bachelor's degree at 10% with fathers just over 7%; however, fathers of respondents had a higher percentage of having a graduate degree over the mothers.

It is more purposeful, perhaps, to uncover what the academic ambitions of the survey participants are to further uncover their expectations and perceptions of the transfer process. For student participant academic aspirations, over 40% wish to obtain a master's degree, 23% a doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.), close to 10% a medical degree and 1% a law degree. This finding is attention-grabbing given that the students are enrolled at community colleges and have yet to transfer to a four-year degree granting college/university, and their parents did not have graduate degrees with only 5% of respondents reporting mothers having a graduate degree and 8% of fathers having a graduate degree.

Overwhelmingly, survey respondents wish to transfer to a four-year public university in Alabama (94%) with The University of Alabama being the most popular transfer institution, as 33% selected this institution. The University of Alabama at Birmingham was the second most popular (16%) and Athens State University was third with 15%. Large state institutions are the popular choice for survey participants, which is relevant to other findings in the study regarding transfer institution selection. The majority of students plan to take all classes on campus upon transfer, and some plan to take both on-campus and on-line classes at the four-year transfer college/university. No students reported wishing to take all courses online or being enrolled in a

type of on-line or distance learning program. This is most likely attributed to the fact that the respondents are of traditional age and are seeking the “college experience.”

Community College Experience

Regarding student involvement at the community college, respondents were involved in a variety of community college activities, with honor societies being the most popular, indicating a high achieving student completed the instrument for the study and the fact that over 40% reported a grade point average in the 3.5 – 3.9 range. It is evident that a majority of respondents were high achieving students who according to Pace’s (1980, 1984, 1992) quality of effort model presented in the literature review (QE) and are taking advantage of the offerings at the institution and exhibiting effort regarding the academic and student life community college experiences. The principle of QE is that students will receive benefits of the college experience, not solely based on what the college offers, but also on the level of effort that the student demonstrates. Survey participants were also working while enrolled at their community college and engaged in extracurricular activities. Over 18% reported working more than 30 hours per week. This coupled with the self-reported GPAs, and student involvement again indicate that high performing, motivated community college students participated in this study.

A main finding of the current study is the high level of satisfaction that respondents have with the community college experience in the classroom, with faculty, advising and extra-curricular activities. Survey respondents believe that the coursework at their respective community college is preparing them well for transfer to a four-year college/university and beyond as their academic aspirations indicate. They overall find that community college courses develop critical thinking, are demanding, and will prepare them for the future. Respondents reported their academic behaviors at the community college and the study indicates the most

popular behaviors are taking notes in class, participating in classroom discussions and think about course content while integrating outside sources. The least popular was explaining course material to other students/classmates.

Respondents also reported on specific academic skills and behaviors at the community college and how they believe they have developed to successfully transfer to a four-year college/university. All behaviors and skills were reported by respondents agree somewhat or agree strongly, as to how the skill at the community college would prepare them for the academic rigor at the transfer institution. The behaviors included the following academic skills: computer, mathematical, note taking, problem solving, reading, research, speaking and oral presentation, test taking, time management and writing. Almost 40% reported that they agreed strongly or agreed somewhat for all skill areas, again illustrating that the community college transfer student in the study feels that they are prepared for the academic rigor at the transfer institution and that they will succeed. It is worthy to note that 56.8% of study participants only reported studying one to five hours per week, 33% worked 6-10 hours per week, and just over 10% worked over 11 hours. It should be noted that the credit hour load for students was not captured, however, students are not studying a great deal as reported by participants.

The study also reports that, overall, 67.9% of respondents are satisfied with the overall community college experience, and only 2.5% are dissatisfied with their experience and none were very dissatisfied, which may set high expectations for the transfer experience. Areas of satisfaction worthy of note regarding academics included the quality of instruction (61.73% were Very Satisfied), general education courses (53.09% were Very Satisfied), and academic advising (57.5% were Very Satisfied). While very positive, close to 5% of respondents were very dissatisfied with how community college coursework demanded intensive writing assignments

and projects and required extensive reading and writing. This may be why it is discovered that students plan to change their academic behaviors upon transfer to a four-year college/university.

Students also reported being very satisfied (over 50%) with their sense of belonging and sense of campus community. It should be noted that respondents in the current study were not asked how long they had attended their current community college. The length of a student's enrollment could have an impact on respondents reflections of the community college experience. Overall, over 70% of survey respondents were very satisfied with their decision to transfer and 28% were satisfied with the decision. There were no respondents who were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with their decision to transfer.

The survey items regarding academic counseling at the community college provide results that are not surprising, as respondents have sought out counseling and advice from advising staff on their community college campus for support regarding this process. Almost 29% agree strongly and close to 35% agree somewhat that they meet with an academic advisor regarding transfer on a regular basis. This could also be attributed to the fact that participants were engaged with transfer advising staff on their campus, again presenting a high level of student involvement. The study did not report if advisors were faculty, community college staff or Alabama Advising Corps staff. The positive interactions and satisfaction could be directly related to the additional transfer advising staff available to students via the Alabama Transfer Advising Corps Program. However, there are respondents that report that they do not meet with an advisor regularly regarding the transfer process (18% strongly disagreed with the statement and 19% disagreed somewhat). So while students are visiting with advisors regarding transfer, not all are actively engaged in the advising process regarding transfer.

Additionally, it was discovered that advisors are providing information regarding the general education requirements and major requirements for students for the four-year college/university that they plan to attend, 46.43% agreed strongly and 41.67% agreed somewhat with this statement. This is an encouraging finding because students are reporting that they are receiving advising assistance related to transfer articulation and are discussing their future plans for transfer. While this finding does not delineate the difference between prescriptive and development advising, overall, community college students seem to be receiving the advising support that they believe they need regarding the transfer process from the community college staff. As reported by King, (1993a) academic advising is important to student retention but also the transfer process. Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) also suggested that community colleges need to identify those students who have the intent to transfer to a four-year college or university to begin advising and counseling students appropriately and to address the importance of their GPA.

Respondents also are very comfortable approaching faculty at the community college with over 52% reporting that they feel comfortable doing so. It was also found that that students are comfortable approaching community college faculty outside of class (52.44%), but conversely only 26.83% reported that they visited faculty to seek advice on class projects and assignments, which could potentially be a setback for students as they transition to a four-year college university. As noted in Chapter II, Davis and Casey (1999) cited that faculty interaction and attention play a role in successful adjustment and ultimately student persistence. Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) also emphasized the faculty role and the influence it has regarding transfer student adjustment.

Respondents also reported discussing their future plans with advisors and 52.38% agreed strongly that information provided by academic counselors is helpful in preparing for the transfer process. Additionally, McArthur (2005) discovered that enhanced developmental advising had a positive impact on student's advising experience and emphasized the importance of faculty and student interaction.

Transfer Institution Selection

The selection of the transfer institution is a finding that was not anticipated by the researcher. Respondents are predominately planning to transfer to a public four-year college/university in the State of Alabama, with the majority interested in The University of Alabama. What is worthy of note are the influences on their decision of where to transfer. Two questions were asked regarding the influences on their transfer university selection.

Overwhelmingly, financial assistance (financial aid or scholarships) was one of the most influential factors reported by respondents (59%). The second most influential factor reported by respondents was the academic reputation of the institution (59%) and third the affordability of tuition (55%). The least important influence on a students' decision to select an institution to transfer was that a university representative recruited them. Friends' suggestions and community college advisors (it is not know if they were Alabama Advising Corps staff) had more of an influence on their decision than four-year college/university admissions representatives.

The second question asked of survey participants on college/university selection found that it was important to respondents that the college they select has quality career placement for its graduates, or "This college's/university's graduates get good jobs," (51%). Convenience and location was influential for students (36%). Not surprisingly, the most important factor of influence in this survey item was cost or affordability (57%). This finding indicates that cost,

financial aid, affordability, and convenience/location are important factors of influence in rural community college student's selection a transfer institution. Cost and financial aid were important reasons for institution selection, which is not surprising as over 58% of survey participants reported that they had received some type of aid at their community college.

While it was found that study participants had done research regarding the various aspects of the transfer college/university, visited the campus to which they wished to transfer, including the admissions office and had spoken with advisors or faculty at the transfer institution the most popular activity reported by students was that they had spoken to former community college transfer students to gain insight about their experiences as a transfer student (48% agreed strongly). The advising by faculty/staff at the receiving institution for transfer students prior to enrolling was favorable for students with over 50% reporting that it was very helpful. Four-year college/university admission offices should take note of these findings and communicate more effectively on these areas for prospective transfer students. However, not all respondents reported visiting the campus, spoken to an academic advisor or spoken to other community college transfer students. Over 21% of respondents reported not visiting campus and over 18% had not yet spoken to an academic advisor or counselor. It is also important to note that respondents believe that they have an understanding as to the institutional type to which they plan to transfer. However, almost 12% reported that they disagreed or disagreed somewhat that they had an understanding of the type of institution that they plan to transfer to. While most, 87% agree and have an understanding, there are still students engaged in the transfer process with academic advisors that do not have a conceptual understanding of "transfer literacy" or an understanding of institutional type. This is important to note, as most have indicated a large public four-year institution.

Perceptions of the Transfer Process and Transfer Success

Regarding respondents' perceptions of advising after transfer to the four-year college/university, transfer students report that they believe that they will visit with faculty for advice, career plans and class assignments. This finding is encouraging in that it indicates the students would not feel intimidated to do so and reported that they would seek assistance, and would feel comfortable doing so (35%). It is worthy to note that survey respondents believe faculty will be accessible and easy to approach, however feel that their abilities will be underestimated because they are a transfer student from a community college. Thirty-six percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, "Because I am a community college transfer, most faculty may tend to underestimate my abilities." This concern may be troubling because students seem hopeful about the accessibility and openness of faculty at the four-year university, but they may perhaps underestimate their own abilities and reported the same for faculty perceptions. Students are implying that they have a high expectation from faculty members regarding their accessibility, but believe that they will be treated differently from faculty because they are transfer students.

The issue of transfer shock is prevalent in the literature. As discussed in Chapter II, Hills (1965) developed three conclusions regarding transfer student's academic performance: the students should expect a decline in their GPA the first semester after they transfer; their grades may improve the longer they have been in school; and native students at four-year institutions perform better than those who transfer. Additionally, other studies, (Diaz, 1992) suggest something that contradicts Hills' assertion of transfer shock, finding that transfer students have an *increase* in GPA. This phenomenon is referred to as "transfer ecstasy." This study cannot report on the academic results of the respondents as they have not yet transferred. However, their

perceptions of this central issue, is the essence of the study. Respondents in the study believe that they will adjust to the academic standards of the transfer institution, but what they report regarding their anticipated grade point average is significant. Forty-four percent of respondents reported that they agreed somewhat with the following statement, “I may experience a decrease in my GPA at the end of my first semester at the four-year college/university” and 30% disagreed somewhat with the statement. Conversely, 38% of respondents also reported that they agreed somewhat with the following statement, “I may experience an increase in my GPA at the end of my first semester at the four-year college/university” and 36% disagreed somewhat. Also, students report that they will easily adjust to the four-year college/university academic standards and expectations (49% Agree Somewhat and 16% Agree Strongly). This illustrates to the researcher that, while students may feel prepared about the academic expectations upon transfer, they are perplexed about their anticipated academic success upon transfer and their anticipated grade point average.

Additionally, students believe that there will be a “stigma” attached to them for being community college students by native students because they began their academic career at a community college. While almost 35% disagreed with the statement, “There will be a stigma at my transfer college/university among students for having started at a community college;” 38% agreed somewhat with this statement and close to 7% agreed strongly. These findings clearly indicate that, while students are generally satisfied with their community college experience in preparing them for transfer, they are unclear as to how they will perform or be perceived at a four-year college/university. They believe that, ultimately, they will be treated differently or “less than” because they are community college transfer students.

Findings also illustrate that, while they do not know how they will perform academically, they overwhelmingly believe that they will be successful at the four-year institution. Over 76% of respondents agreed strongly and 2% agreed somewhat with the following statement, “I feel that I will be successful at the institution to which I am transferring.” Additionally, 44% of survey participants reported that they agreed strongly that they believe they know what to expect when they transfer in regards to academics. However, respondents report that they will change some of their academic behaviors upon transfer, again indicating the respondents underlying concern and anxiety about the academic experience that they will experience.

Respondents overwhelmingly reported that they would change academic behaviors upon transfer to a four-year college/university. This indicates to the researcher that, while the students for the most part assume that their community college academic experience has prepared them for transfer to a four-year college/university, they do plan to make significant changes to their academic behaviors upon transfer. Overall, most academic behaviors will be done “more than at my community college.” Behaviors included taking detailed notes in class, participating in class discussion, seeing how facts fit together, thinking about the practical applications of course material and content, working on a paper or project where I have to integrate ideas from various sources and trying to explain course material content to another student. Out of all of the academic behavior items, in all but two, over 50% of respondents reported participating in behaviors more than at their community college. Participating in class discussions was 49% and explaining course material to classmates 39%. This may reveal some anxiety about speaking up/out in a class setting or communicating an understanding of course content to other students. This clearly reveals, along with the uncertainty of academic performance, that while the community college students believe that they are prepared, they have an understanding that they

will need to change behaviors or “step it up a notch” upon transfer and are clearly uncertain about how they will perform academically after their first semester at the four-year college/university. Respondents are aware that they need to change academic behaviors and have an understanding that transfer may impact their GPA. This finding of uncertainty supports the concepts of transfer shock and transfer ecstasy as found in the literature (Hills, 1965; Diaz, 1992; Cejda, 1997; Cejda & Kaylor, 1997; Cejda, Kaylor, & Rewey, 1998).

Another central finding is that respondents have a concern about the perceived bureaucratic “red-tape” at four-year colleges and universities. Over 52% reported that they agreed with the following statement, “It will be difficult learning the ‘red-tape’ when I transfer.” Close to 17% strongly agreed with the “red-tape concern.” Another finding is that students identify with “feeling like a number” upon transfer, and that they will have an increased stress level upon transfer. This finding is important for the receiving transfer institutions to realize and that; thus, they will need to provide appropriate advising and transition programs for students. Additionally, over 50% of respondents agree somewhat with the following statement, “I anticipate feeling overwhelmed by the size of the student body” and almost 12% reported to agree strongly with this statement. It is clear that respondents may be fearful of the size of the transfer institution that they have selected and the bureaucracy that comes along with attending a large, four-year public institution. As reported, most survey participants indicated transferring to public institutions in Alabama. The transition to the physical environment as reported by Davis and Casey (1999) can be stressful as some community college transfers liked the often-single building model of some smaller community colleges. Students often cited feeling more comfortable at the community college because it was relaxed and easy to navigate.

Concerning social transitional issues, rural community college students are concerned about leaving their family, community college friends and church and religious groups within their community. Separation from high school friends was less of a concern for respondents. According to Tinto (1987, 1993), many students will not persist at the institution due to an inability to develop connections with the intellectual and social life of the institution. Most students would need to relocate to Tuscaloosa, AL based on the location of the community colleges where respondents were enrolled at the time of the study. This relocation could also enhance their level of stress and sense of being overwhelmed. The community colleges where respondents attend and their home communities may in fact be smaller than the institution that they intend to transfer. The institution to which they intend to transfer, may in fact be larger than their hometown and/or community. Knowing what the social separation concerns are for students is significant in advising and providing transition services for transfer students. Tinto (1987) suggested that students must separate themselves from their previous life, transition to the new environment and norms, and then incorporate into the college environment.

An important finding is that respondents reported that they plan to be engaged and involved in social activities, and believe that they will meet people and make friends. Respondents were asked about their anticipated student involvement at the four-year transfer institution. Most reported that they would live off-campus (54%) and anticipated involvement in major-related organizations, interest organizations (49%) and honor societies (44%). Social adjustment can differ for transfer students, as some have connections with other students and easily meet other university students and have a balance of academic and social lives. However, some can over-indulge in the social aspect of the university setting, as any student can, but the social atmosphere at the community college does not have the same level of social interaction

(Davis & Casey, 1999). The fact that students are anticipating involvement in major related and honor societies may be a barometer of how they anticipate doing academically, which is encouraging in that they want to connect with major-related groups, and that they anticipate succeeding in having the opportunity to be involved in academic honor societies.

The separation that will occur upon transfer from the community college environment will be challenging for students, and it will be up to the student to provide the effort to transition to the new norms of the four-year college/university and incorporate themselves into their new campus community. Four-year colleges and universities need to be aware of what these concerns are and ready to assist transfer students in the transition to the new community. Oftentimes, transition programs such as orientation are shorter for transfer students as the four-year institution's attitude or philosophy regarding transfer students is that they have attended college before and "know the ropes," so to speak. The social transition may be one of the scariest elements for community college students. The separation will occur when the community college student sets foot on the transfer campus. When, however, will the transition really occur for these students, and more importantly, when will they feel and believe that they are fully integrated into the new campus?

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to understand the adjustment issues and experiences of rural community college students who have established the intent to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate degree-granting institution prior to transferring. The research was conducted using a survey instrument and quantitative methodologies and descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to obtain specifics regarding the transfer student population including

age, gender, race, income and overall academic goals. Eight sub-research questions were a part of the study, which are presented below along with the research results.

Research Question One

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college coursework?

Research results indicate that community college students for the most part are satisfied with their community college coursework and believe that their community college academic coursework is challenging and will prepare them for their transfer to a four-year college/university. Students have positive faculty interactions and feel confident and comfortable approaching faculty outside of the classroom. Worthy of note is the fact that 97% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their community college experience, including contact with faculty, class size, interaction with other students, leadership and the overall community college experience.

Research Question Two

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their community college academic advising/counseling?

The results revealed that, overall, students intending to transfer had a positive experience with their academic advising at the community college. Respondents reported that they do consult on a regular basis with academic counselors. Almost 49% of respondents agreed strongly with the statement, "I consult with academic counselors regarding transfer." Thirty-eight percent responded with agree somewhat with this statement. Less than 14% responded disagree somewhat or disagree strongly. It was reported that community college advisors do identify courses for students that are needed to meet general education and/or major requirements at the transfer institution with the majority of respondents reporting that counselors

advisors assisted them in identifying courses needed to meet general education and/or major requirements at their four-year transfer college/university. So not only are advisors discussing students' plans to transfer to a four-year college/university, but they are assisting with the course selection, educational plans and articulation issues surrounding the transfer process for the students participating in the current study. Respondents also reported that the information provided for these needs (the transfer process) is helpful, with 52% agreeing strongly that information provided from advisors is helpful. So, for the community colleges participating in this study, it appears that advising services are providing what students need regarding the transfer process in a variety of areas (course selection, educational goals and plans and frequency of advising).

Research Question Three

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their anticipated experiences at a four-year college/university?

The research results indicate that one of the major concerns that community college students that have the intent to transfer to a four-year college/university is the bureaucratic “red-tape” that they anticipate encountering upon transfer. It is also worthy of note that respondents anticipate having an increased stress level and will feel overwhelmed by the size of the student body and believe that they will be “treated like a number.” A majority of respondents reported that they anticipate having an increased level of stress upon transfer. Respondents report that they will be overwhelmed by the size of the student body with close to 12% agreeing strongly and 49% agreeing somewhat with the survey item statement, “I anticipate feeling overwhelmed by the size of the student body”. Over 50% of student respondents reported that they agree strongly with the statement, “I am concerned I will be treated like a number” and close to 14% agreed strongly with that statement.

In regards to academic issues, one of most interesting findings is related to transfer shock and transfer ecstasy. A nearly equal number of respondents reported that they anticipate a decrease in their grade point average upon transfer and to the number of respondents that reported anticipating an increase in their first semester GPA at the four-year college university. Students also have concerns centered on the “stigma” of being a community college student from both their peers and faculty members. These finding illustrates the anxiety and anticipated level of stress that students have regarding the transfer process. These concerns could have an impact on their anticipated academic work and achievement at a four-year college university.

Research Question Four

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding their selection of a four-year college/university to attend?

The study results provide insights into the selection of a transfer institution. Respondents wish to obtain a bachelors degree, over 50%, with some survey participants also wanting to also pursue graduate or professional school. Respondents for the most part had a good understanding as to the type of institution to which they wanted to transfer. Respondents planned to transfer to a variety of institutions, with an overwhelming majority of participants planning to transfer to public, four-year institutions in the state of Alabama (94%). The University of Alabama was the most popular transfer destination reported (33%) along with The University of Alabama at Birmingham (16%) and Athens State University (15%).

Regarding institutional research on transfer colleges/universities, it is worthy to note that student participants in the study identified with the experiences of current students who had transferred to gain insight into their experiences. Respondents reported researching their transfer college/university, had visited campus and spoken to former community college transfer students to learn more about their experiences.

Influential factors in selecting a transfer institution included; academic reputation, affordability and financial assistance. The factors that were found not to be important in selecting a transfer institution included the following: institutional ranking in national magazines, parent recommendation and sibling attendance. The most compelling finding related to four-year college/university selection was the fact that 30% of participants cited that university representatives recruiting efforts were not important. It appears for transfer students selecting a transfer institution that the affordability, financial aid options and academic reputation are the most important factors for institution selection.

Research Question Five

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the process of transferring to a four-year college/university?

Overall respondents are confident in their ability to be successful at their transfer college/university with 75% reporting that they agree strongly that they will be successful. As reported in research question three, respondents are perplexed as to how they will do academically their first semester with equal number of respondents reporting they anticipate an increase and decrease in GPA their first semester. As reported by respondents, they anticipate an increased level of stress upon transfer, with 61% % agreeing strongly and 16% agreeing strongly with the statement, “My level of stress with increase when I transfer.” Potential barriers that create a level of anxiety for survey respondents included computer access and transportation to campus.

Overall, respondents believe that faculty will be approachable and accessible to them and community college students do not anticipate having trouble meeting friends or adjusting socially upon transfer. These findings, along with findings in research question three, are

encouraging as students are positive about their anticipated adjustment and transfer to a four-year college/university.

Research Question Six

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated academic rigor at a four-year college/university?

Results provide insight into the perceptions of respondents' academic preparedness and anticipation of increased academic rigor. Overwhelmingly, participants feel that their community college academic experience has prepared them well to transfer to a four-year college/university. Community college academic experiences reported by respondents as preparing them for transfer include the following skills: computer, mathematical, note taking, problem solving, reading, research, speaking and oral presentation, test taking, time management and writing skills. More importantly, it is revealed that respondents plan to make changes to their academic behaviors upon transfer to the four-year college/university, with the exception of explaining course material to friends or classmates. Academic activities that respondents reported changing included "taking detailed notes in class," "seeing how different facts and ideas fit together," "thinking about the practical applications of course material and content," and "working on a paper or project where I have to integrate ideas from various sources." All of the above academic behavior items listed would change to "More than at my community college," with over 50% of respondent reporting that they would change their academic behavior upon transfer. Participating in class discussions was 49% and explaining course material to classmates 39%. This may reveal some anxiety about speaking up/out in a class setting or communicating an understanding of course content to other students.

Explaining course material to classmates may not be important to community college students at the community college or upon anticipated transfer. All academic behaviors in the

survey, with the exception of the explanation of material to a friend, were reported to increase (50% of respondents reporting more than at their community college) upon transfer.

Research Question Seven

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the anticipated classroom experiences that they will have at a four-year college/university?

Research results from this study show that the majority of respondents plan have their primary method of course taking to be on campus, with a few taking some online and on-campus, with no study participants reporting taking all course in an online format. The classroom experience is anticipated to be traditional as most respondents are of traditional age, with 59% between the ages of 19-20 and 22% between the ages of 21-24. Additionally, the anticipated academic behaviors reported in research question six provide insight into the classroom behavior of respondents. Respondents may not participate in classroom discussions as often as native students or as often as they did at their community college and may not explain course content to others as often as they did at the community college.

Research Question Eight

What are the perceptions of community college students who intend to transfer regarding the social activities and networking with friends that they will experience at a four-year college/university?

Research results from this study reveal that study participants are concerned about being separated from their family and church or religious groups in their respective communities. Separation from high school and community college friends was not as large of a concern as family and religious communities. The most reported anticipated involvement of transfer students include being involved in major related organizations (73%), interest organizations (49%), honor societies (44%), and service organizations or activities (39%). Fraternity and

sorority involvement represented 21% of respondents anticipated involvement. In general, survey respondents seem to be anticipating making friends and being involved on campus in some way.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the results of this study, transfer students anticipate changing their behavior upon transferring to a four-year college/university, are making their decision on where to transfer for the most part without the assistance of four-year college/university admissions staff, and are unsure if they will experience transfer shock or ecstasy upon transferring and completing coursework at a four-year college/university. With these findings in mind, the following recommendations for policy and practice are made.

Recommendation One

As the results indicate, students have had a positive experience at the community college regarding advising and feeling prepared for transfer. It cannot be determined if this directly related to the additional transfer student support provided by the Alabama Transfer Advising Corps staff at each of the ten community colleges in the study. However, in order to make the transfer of community college students to four-year colleges/universities experience smoother, a professional advisor should be appointed at community colleges to assist with this effort. A developmental advising approach could be employed to discuss student's academic and career goals from a more holistic approach. Berger, and Malaney (2003) suggested that two-year transfer students have the opportunity to meet with four-year faculty and staff to learn about the transfer process and requirements. This will lead to more successful and satisfied two-year transfer students. Therefore, community college advisors should reach out to four-year academic advisors to provide more accurate and complete articulation information and also should

collaborate with admissions staff. Four-year admission departments should designate staff to transfer students, so they are specialized to further assist in the enrollment process.

Recommendation Two

As reported, university admissions representatives were not a large factor in the college/university selection process for community college students. It may be assumed that these students will just end up where they choose or are accepted. It is unfortunate that university representatives were not a larger part of the influence in the selection process. College and university admission directors should take note of this. University representatives could have more of an influence on community college students if the same emphasis would be placed on transfer students as is given to recruiting traditional native students. Four-year institutions should consider regular visits to advising centers at community colleges to recruit transfer students. Admissions representatives along with academic advisors and financial aid representatives could assist potential transfer students navigate the transfer process. On-campus transfer visit days, and pre- advising days are other recruitment events that can aid in the transfer student recruitment process as well as and enhanced communication between institutional types. These are a few ways to bridge the gap between two and four-year institutions and assist both students and four-year institutions in enrolling transfer students successfully.

Recommendation Three

The prior two recommendations refer to both the community college advising staff and four-year advisors and admissions representatives. The researcher recommends that, based on the results of this study, the admissions representatives from the most popular public universities for transfer in this study reach out to community college feeder schools or perhaps the ten community colleges used in this study. A transfer summit involving community college advising

staff members and four-year admissions staff could be held to begin a dialogue between institutional types on how to better serve students in the areas of academic preparation or transfer readiness, articulation of credits, scholarships, and financial aid and the overall enrollment process for community college transfer students. This dialogue could open up new possibilities for students to gain knowledge of the admission process, academic program requirements, scholarships and financial aid. From there, a larger scale conference on transfer students could be held to access programming and services for this growing population. Such a summit could be lead by a large research institution to serve the advising staff of the local community colleges as part of the institutional mission of service. Such a summit on transfer student needs could be rotated among large public institutions within the state to serve the community college student service staff members to better educate them on admission, advising, financial aid, and articulation issues for the community college student who wishes to enroll in a four-year institution.

Recommendation Four

This recommendation is specifically for the receiving four-year institutions. It is clear from the study that transfer students do have anxiety about the size and “red-tape” associated with the larger four-year institution. This study shows that they have anxiety about transferring, report that they believe that they will have an increased level of stress, and are unsure of their academic performance. An effort should be made by four-year colleges/universities to better serve community college transfer students. Such an emphasis is placed on the freshman year experience and programming for residential students that the transfer student is left out of this experience. They are left out because, in some cases, transfer students are not permitted to live on-campus and programming to integrate students occurs in the residence halls and is marketed

to the freshman population. Transfer student organizations should be formed and advised by student affairs staff with connections to academic advising and counseling to staff to aid this often forgotten population of students on the four-year college/university campus. An office where transfer students can visit that is dedicated to their needs should have a presence on four-year college and university campuses.

Recommendation Five

A one-hour transition course for transfer students should be offered at the four-year receiving institution that are similar to the courses that are available for freshman and are focused on study skills or areas of interest. Such course could be developed for a six week period versus a full semester to aid in the transition issues students are facing. While transfer students may not wish to take such a course, as they believe they will be successful, four-year institutions could be well-served by requiring such a course, particularly for transfer students that are below a 3.5 overall community college transfer GPA.

Recommendations for Future Study

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further research are made.

Recommendation One

A replication of this study could be done to increase the sample size and broaden the sample population. The study population targeted to participate in this research study had self-identified as wanting to transfer to a four-year college/university. A replication of this study could be done with a larger population of community college students who may not have made a conscious, concrete decision to transfer to a four-year institution. By not limiting the population, perhaps more data could be uncovered about community college students' perceptions of the

transfer process from a more general student population, not those conscious of the process and actively engaged in the process. Incentivizing survey participation is another avenue to gain increased survey participation in future studies, which the current study did not employ. Incentives could be offered to participants to complete the survey. Incentives could include; book scholarship funds for the community college, book scholarship funds to a four-year college/university, athletic event tickets or dining dollars or meals at the community college for survey participants. By offering such incentives to participate and complete the survey could increase the number of survey respondents in the future. Additionally, by offering a paper pencil version administered in a community college classroom setting could provide increased participation for a more comprehensive sample size.

Recommendation Two

Additionally, the online survey was lengthy (59 items, some of which contained multiple questions). Shortening the instrument by eliminating questions that provided similar findings (barriers, four-year college/university selection) may increase survey participation. However, one question that should be added to take into account the experiences of community college student academic behaviors would be to add an item to the community college experiences section that would capture the students' current community college credit hour load. The current survey instrument asked participants how much time they spend on campus at the community college outside of class and how much time they spend studying. Their academic course load was not taken into account.

Recommendation Three

A future study, with a larger sample size could be conducted to gain more comparative data utilizing inferential statistics. A study at this level would be able to compare results based on variables such as race, gender, academic background, academic goals and community college.

Recommendation Four

While the current study asked four open-ended questions a qualitative approach could be taken to this research topic. A case study would be an effective qualitative method to study the phenomenon of the transfer process for community college students in a more descriptive, heuristic way. A case study, according to Merriam (1998), allows researchers to have an interest in “the process.” In this case, it would be the process of transferring from a community college, including selecting, being advised and ultimately enrolling in a four-year college/university.

Recommendation Five

An area of interest that developed out of this study that was not anticipated was that of the college/university selection process of transfer students. A study to discover how these students selected transfer institutions in comparison to how native students select a college/university would fill a void in the current literature regarding university admission. Both quantitative and qualitative research could be done in this area of study. A survey instrument could be used to discover institutional selection for both native and transfer students attending the same four-year college/university. A qualitative approach could be a case study of native and transfer students to discover how institutions are selected for these groups of undergraduate students.

Concluding Thoughts

The researcher, for the most part, gleaned an overarching snapshot of the community college experience of a small population of rural community college students in Alabama who plan to transfer to a four-year college/university. While a larger sample size would have been ideal, the data provided enhances the current literature base regarding community college students from a new perspective. By approaching transfer student research from the meditational transition perspective, (Beach, 1999) practitioners at both two-year and four-year institutions may be able to serve students in a way that better meets their needs as students in transition. As community college enrollment grows and students' academic aspirations are for advanced degrees, providing seamless transition services and support will be imperative for colleges and universities as they recruit, advise and enroll the transfer student.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Iowa State University Transfer Students Survey

Iowa State University Transfer Students Survey

Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey.

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences as a transfer student at Iowa State University. All information you provide will be kept completely confidential and will be used in summary to assist ISU administrators, faculty members, and student affairs professionals in developing resources and programs that will benefit transfer students. Your name will not be associated with your responses in any part of the reporting process.

- The survey is divided into six short sections.
- Scroll through each section to answer the questions.
- Click on the **Continue** button at the end of each section to proceed, and click on the **Final Submit** button at the end of the survey to submit your final answers.

If you submit your completed survey by April 30, 2004, you will be entered into a drawing to win one of 16 gift certificates worth \$25 for the University Bookstore.

▶ Click on the Start button to start the survey.

If you have any difficulties with this form, please contact Allison Tyler, atyler@iastate.edu, phone 294-1949.

Background Information

First, please complete the following background questions.

1. Current place of residence (during academic year)

- Residence hall or other university housing
- Fraternity or sorority house
- Private apartment or room within walking distance of the university
- House, apartment, etc. away from campus
- With parents or relatives

2. What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain ...

At any college?

- Bachelor (BA or BS)
- Master (MA or MS)
- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D)
- Medical (MD, DDS, DO, or DVM)
- Law (JD or LLB)
- Other

At Iowa State University?

- Bachelor (BA or BS)
- Master (MA or MS)
- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D)
- Medical (MD, DDS, DO, or DVM)
- Law (JD or LLB)
- Other

3. What is the highest level of education completed by your parents?

Your mother:

- Elementary school or less
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Associate's degree from two year
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate school
- Graduate degree
- Don't know

Your father:

- Elementary school or less
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Associate's degree from two year
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate school
- Graduate degree
- Don't know

4. What is your best estimate of your parents' total household income last year?

(If you are independent, please check here and indicate your income from last year.)

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000 or more

5. Gender

- Female
- Male

6. Age

7. What is your ethnic background? (You may select more than one answer.)

- Native American or Alaskan Native
- African American or Black
- White (non-Hispanic)
- Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino/a
- Other

Continue

If you have any difficulties with this form, please contact Allison Tyler, at Tyler@iastate.edu, phone 294-1949.

Community College Experiences

The purpose of this section is to obtain information about your community college experiences prior to your transfer to ISU.

8. About how many hours a week did you usually spend on the community college campus, **not counting time attending classes**?

- None
- 1 to 3 hours
- 4 to 6 hours
- 7 to 9 hours
- 10 to 12 hours
- more than 12 hours

9. About how many hours a week did you usually spend studying or preparing for your classes?

- 1 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- more than 20 hours

10. During your time at the community college, about how many hours a week did you usually spend working on a job for pay?

- None, I didn't have a job
- 1-10 hours
- 11-15 hours
- 16-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- more than 30 hours

11. Did you obtain an Associate's (AA or AS) degree?

- Yes
- No

General Courses

12. The following questions address various aspects of your community college experience. For each item below, please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
The courses developed my critical and analytical thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses demanded intensive writing assignments and projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, the courses were intellectually challenging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses prepared me for the academic standards at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses prepared me for my major at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses required extensive reading and writing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Academic Counseling Services

13. The following items address your use of academic counseling services at your community college. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
I consulted with academic counselors regarding transfer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information received from academic counselor(s) was helpful in the transfer process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I met with academic counselors on a regular basis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I talked with a counselor/advisor about courses to take, requirements, education plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I discussed my plans for transferring to a 4-year college or university with an academic advisor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Counselors/advisors identified courses needed to meet the general education/major requirements of a 4-year college or university I was interested in attending.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transfer Process

14. These items pertain to your perceptions about the "transfer process" while you were enrolled at the community college. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
I researched various aspects of ISU to get a better understanding of the environment and academic expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I knew what to expect at ISU in terms of academics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I visited the ISU campus to learn where offices and departments were located.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spoke to academic counselors at ISU about transferring and major requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I visited the admissions office at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spoke to former community college transfers to gain an insight about their adjustment experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[Continue](#)

If you have any difficulties with this form, please contact Allison Tyler, atyler@iastate.edu, phone 294-1949.

College Activities at Community College

Course Learning

15. In your experience at the community college, about how often did you do each of the following?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
Took detailed notes in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participated in class discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tried to see how different facts and ideas fit together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thought about practical applications of the material.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Worked on a paper or project where I had to integrate ideas from various sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tried to explain the material to another student or friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Experiences with Faculty

16. How often did you do each of the following at the community college?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
Visited faculty and sought their advice on class projects such as writing assignments and research papers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt comfortable approaching faculty outside class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asked my instructor for information related to a course I was taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visited informally and briefly with an instructor after class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussed my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asked my instructor for comments and criticisms about my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Learning and Study Skills

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your academic experiences at the community college gave you the skills you needed to prepare you for the standards and academic rigor at ISU?

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
Computer skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Mathematical skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Note taking skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Problem solving skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Reading skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Research skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Speaking and oral presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Test taking skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Time management skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Writing skills	<input type="radio"/>				

If you have any difficulties with this form, please contact Allison Tyler, atyler@iastate.edu, phone 294-1949.

ISU Experiences

The purpose of this section is to obtain information about your current experiences at Iowa State University.

18. About how many hours a week do you usually spend working on a job for pay?

- None, I don't have a job
- 1 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- 21 to 30 hours
- more than 30 hours

19. What is the most important reason for attending **this university**?

- To obtain a bachelor's degree
- To gain skills necessary to enter a new job or occupation
- To pursue graduate or professional school
- To satisfy a personal interest (cultural, social)

20. Listed below are some reasons that might have influenced your decision to attend ISU. How important was each reason in your decision to come here?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
This university has a very good academic reputation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This university has a very good reputation for its	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

social activities.

I was offered financial assistance.

This university has affordable tuition.

Academic counselor(s) at the community college advised me.

A friend suggested attending.

A university representative recruited me.

Not Important Somewhat Important Important Very Important

This university's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools.

This university's graduates get good jobs.

ISU's ranking in national magazines.

Parents recommended that I attend ISU.

My brother(s)/sister(s) attended ISU.

Convenience and location.

Size of the institution.

Cost.

21. Did you attend an ISU-sponsored Transfer Student Orientation?

Yes

No

22. If you answered **yes** to Question #21, how helpful was the orientation program in facilitating your transition to ISU?

- Very unhelpful
- Somewhat unhelpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Very helpful

If you have any difficulties with this form, please contact Allison Tyler, atyler@iastate.edu, phone 1-877-578-8848.

College Activities at ISU

Course Learning

23. During the past year at ISU, about how often did you do each of the following?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
Took detailed notes in class.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participated in class discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tried to see how different facts and ideas fit together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thought about practical applications of the material.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Worked on a paper or project where I had to integrate ideas from various sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tried to explain the material to another student or friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Experiences with Faculty

24. During the past year at ISU, about how often did you do each of the following?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
Visited faculty and sought their advice on class projects such as writing assignments and research papers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt comfortable approaching faculty outside class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asked my instructor for information related to a course I was taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visited informally and briefly with an instructor after class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Discussed my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asked my instructor for comments and criticisms about my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

General Perceptions of ISU

25. The following are statements about your general perceptions, adjustment process, and opinions of your overall satisfaction at ISU. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
ISU faculty are easy to approach.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ISU faculty tend to be accessible to students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It was difficult learning the "red tape" when I started.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I was a "community college transfer," most <i>students</i> tend to underestimate my abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Because I was a "community college transfer," most <i>faculty</i> tend to underestimate my abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a stigma at ISU among students for having started at a community college.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generally, students are more concerned about "getting the grade" instead of learning the material.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Many students feel like they do not "fit in" on this campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professors are strongly interested in the academic development of undergraduates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most students are treated like a "number."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Student services are responsive to student needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If students expect to benefit from what ISU has to offer, they have to take the initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel the courses I have taken have been interesting and worthwhile.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ISU is an intellectually stimulating and often exciting place to be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend to other transfer students to come to ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could start over again, I would go to the same university I am now attending.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Adjustment Process

26. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
Adjusting to the academic standards or expectations at ISU has been easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Adjusting to the social environment at ISU has been easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel (felt) overwhelmed by the size of the student body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upon transferring I felt alienated at ISU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very involved with social activities at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The large classes intimidate me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
It is easy to find my way around campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My level of stress increased when I started ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I experienced a dip in grades (GPA) during my first semester at ISU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to make friends at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable spending time with friends that I made at the two-year college I attended.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more comfortable making friends with transfer students than non-transfers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
There is a sense of competition between/among students at ISU that is not found in community colleges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

College Satisfaction

27. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the aspects of campus life listed below.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
Sense of belonging at ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision to transfer to ISU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall quality of instruction.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of community on campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic advising.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career counseling and advising.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student housing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Courses in your major field.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
Amount of contact with faculty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for community services.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Job placement services for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class size.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interaction with other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnic/racial diversity of the faculty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Leadership opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall college experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have any difficulties with this form, please contact Allison Tyler, atyler@iastate.edu, phone 294-1949.

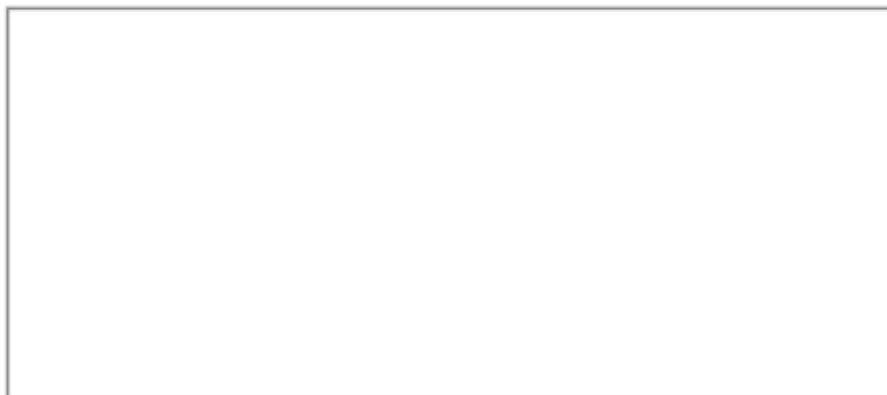
Conclusion

Comments

What factors helped you adjust to ISU? Please explain what factors contributed to your successful transfer (or unsuccessful transfer) to ISU. Feel free to include factors at both the community college and ISU.



What might the community college have done to enhance your success or ease the transition to ISU?



If you could give some advice to community college students who will be transferring to ISU, what would that advice be?

What have we **not** asked that you would like us to know about your experiences at the community college or ISU?

Focus Group Participation

We invite you to participate in a focus group to discuss your transfer and overall educational experiences in more depth. The focus group will last about 1.5 hours. If you are interested in participating in a focus group, please provide the following information. This information will be kept separate from your survey responses.

First name: Last name:

Phone number:

E-mail:

If you participate in the focus group, please be advised that your responses will remain "CONFIDENTIAL." Findings will be reported in the aggregate and no personal identifiable information will be associated with your responses.

Thank you

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this Transfer Student Survey. The Iowa State University administration greatly appreciates your contributions toward improving the university academic environment.

Frankie Santos Laanan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Appendix B
Mann Adopted Survey

Informed Consent

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
Informed Consent Statement for Transfer Student Survey

You are being asked to take part in the Community College Transfer Student Survey. The study is being conducted by Beth Sacksteder Mann, a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at The University of Alabama and is being supervised by David E. Hardy, Ph.D. who is an associate professor in the Higher Education Administration program within the College of Education at The University of Alabama.

STUDY PURPOSE: The purpose of the proposed study is to understand the perceptions of rural community college transfer students wishing to transfer to a four-year college/university.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY: The information gained from this study will provide a better understanding of rural community college transfer students' perceptions of the transfer process. The results of this study will be used to improve programs and services offered to transfer students throughout the State of Alabama.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY: You have been asked to participate in this survey because you have been identified as a community college student who has an interest in transferring to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. Approximately 1000 students have been invited to participate in this study at 10 rural community colleges in Alabama.

PROCEDURE FOR THE STUDY: If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to complete the Community College Transfer Student web survey. If you agree to participate, you will be provided with information instructing you how to complete the web survey and the instrument should take approximately 15- 20 minutes to complete. Participants will be asked to respond to statements such as, "How important is each reason in your decision to transfer?" and "I am concerned I will be treated like a "number." If you require special accommodations, please notify the principal investigator and every effort will be made to meet those requests. If you agree to participate in the survey, there will be no cost to you except for your time in completing the survey.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY: The benefits to participation are helping the researchers better understand community college transfer students in the State of Alabama, leading to improved programs and services.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY: While completing the study, it is possible that you will be uncomfortable responding to the survey items. In order to minimize risks, no unnecessary questions will be asked. It is possible that some people may find some of the questions/terminology offensive. Please be aware that you are free to decline to answer particular items on the survey. Although the survey does ask for some personal information, all responses are confidential and there will be no potential legal or disciplinary consequences for you. Collected data will be kept in a secure location accessible only to the researcher administering the survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Findings will be summarized across participants in reports that will not identify individual students.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY: Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any consequence.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS: For questions about the study, please contact the principal investigator, Beth Sacksteder Mann, at (205) 394-2954 or sackste@gmail.com or David Hardy, at (205) 348-6874 or dhardy@bamaed.ua.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, you may call Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer at UA at (205)-348-5152.

I have read this consent form. I understand what I will be asked to do. I freely agree to take part in this research study and understand that completion of the survey const

Informed Consent

I have read the informed consent form. I understand what I will be asked to do. I freely agree to take part in this research study and understand that completion of the survey constitutes my consent to take part in the research. I may print a copy of this consent form to keep.

I agree to participate

I decline to participate

Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey.

Please answer the following questions based on your experience as a community college student in Alabama. All information you provide will be kept completely confidential and will be used in summary to assist the researcher, administrators, faculty members, and student affairs professionals in developing resources and programs that will benefit transfer students. Your name will not be associated with your responses in any part of the reporting process.

- Yes, I intend to transfer to a four-year college/university.
- No, I do not have plans to transfer to a four-year college/university.

Background Information

First, please complete the following background questions.

Current place of residence (during academic year)

- Residence hall or other college housing
- Private apartment or room within walking distance of the community college.
- House, apartment, etc. away from campus
- With parents or relatives

At my community college, I would consider myself primarily to be:

- A commuter student who lives off campus and takes most of my classes on campus
- A residential student who lives in on-campus housing
- A distance learning student who only takes classes on-line

What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain... At any college?

- Bachelor (BA or BS)
- Master (MA or MS)
- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D)
- Medical (MD, DDS, DO, or DVM)
- Law (JD or LLB)

Other (please specify)

What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain... At your transfer college/university?

- Bachelor (BA or BS)
- Master (MA or MS)
- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D)
- Medical (MD, DDS, DO, or DVM)
- Law (JD or LLB)

Other (please specify)

Background Information

What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?

- Elementary school or less
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Associate's degree from two year
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate school
- Graduate degree
- Don't know

What is the highest level of education completed by your father?

- Elementary school or less
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Associate's degree from two year
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate school
- Graduate degree
- Don't know

What is your best estimate of your parents' total household income last year?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000 or more
- If you are financially independent from your parents, please check here, then click next.

Independent Income

What is your best estimate of YOUR total household income last year?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000 or more

Background Information

Gender

- Male
 Female

Age

What is your ethnic background? (You may select more than one answer.)

- Native American or Alaskan Native
 African American or Black
 White (non-Hispanic)
 Asian American/Pacific Islander
 Hispanic or Latino/a

Other (please specify)

Transfer Information

At which Alabama Community College are you currently enrolled?

Do you plan to transfer to one of the following:

- Public four-year college/university in Alabama
- Private four-year college/university in Alabama
- Out-of-state four-year college/university

Please specify the which out-of-state college/university.

Public Four-Year Colleges/Universities

To which public four-year college/university in Alabama do you wish to transfer?

Private Four-Year Colleges/Universities

To which private four-year college/university in Alabama do you wish to transfer?

Community College Experiences

The purpose of this section is to obtain information about your community college experiences prior to your transfer to a four-year college/university.

About how many hours a week do you usually spend at your community college campus, not counting time attending classes?

- None
- 1 to 3 hours
- 4 to 6 hours
- 7 to 9 hours
- 10 to 12 hours
- more than 12 hours

About how many hours a week do you usually spend studying or preparing for your classes?

- 1 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- more than 20 hours

About how many hours a week do you usually spend working on a job for pay?

- None, I didn't have a job
- 1-10 hours
- 11-15 hours
- 16-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- more than 30 hours

What type of degree, diploma or certificate do you plan to obtain from your community college?

- None
- AA (Associate of Arts)
- AS (Associate of Science)
- AGS (Associate of General Studies)
- AAA (Associate of Applied Arts)
- AAS (Associate of Applied Science)
- ADN (Associate of Nursing)
- Diploma Certificate
- Other

Community College Experiences: General Courses

The following questions address various aspects of your community college experience. For each item below, please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
Courses develop my critical and analytical thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses demand intensive writing assignments and projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, courses are intellectually challenging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses will prepare me for the academic standards at a four-year college/university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses will prepare me for my intended major at a four-year college/university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses require extensive reading and writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community College Experiences: Academic Counseling Services

The following items address your use of academic counseling services at your community college. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
I consult with academic counselors regarding transfer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information from academic counselor(s) is helpful in preparing for the transfer process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I meet with academic counselors on a regular basis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I talk with a counselor/advisor about courses to take, requirements, education plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I discuss my plans for transferring to a four-year college/university with an academic counselor/advisor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Counselors/advisors identify courses needed to meet the general education/major requirements of the four-year college/university I am interested in attending.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community College Experiences: Transfer Process

These items pertain to your perceptions about the "transfer process" to the transfer college/university to which you intend to transfer. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
I have researched various aspects of the four-year transfer college/university to get a better understanding of the environment and academic expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that I know what to expect when I transfer in terms of academics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have visited the admissions office at the four-year transfer institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have visited the four-year transfer college/university that interests me to learn about campus services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have spoken to academic advisors/counselors/faculty at the four-year transfer college/university that interests me in order to learn about transferring and major requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have spoken to former community college transfer students to gain an insight about their experiences as a transfer student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community College Activities: Course Learning

In your experience at the community college, about how often do you do each of the following?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
Take detailed notes in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in class discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try to see how different facts and ideas fit together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Think about practical applications of course material and content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work on papers or projects where I integrate ideas from various sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explain course material and content to another student or friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community College Activities: Experiences with Faculty

How often do you do each of the following at your community college?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
Visit faculty and seek their advice on class projects such as writing assignments and research papers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel comfortable approaching faculty outside class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask my instructors for information related to a course I am taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit informally and briefly with an instructor after class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask my instructor for comments and criticisms about my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community College Activities: Learning and Study Skills

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your academic experiences at your community college have developed the skills that you will need in order to be well prepared for the standards and academic rigor that you expect to experience at the four-year college/university to which you hope to transfer?

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
Computer skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Mathematical skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Note taking skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Problem solving skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Reading skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Research skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Speaking and oral presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Test taking skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Time management skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Writing skills	<input type="radio"/>				

Community College Satisfaction

The following questions address various aspects of your community college experience.

Please rate your satisfaction with each experience at your community college for each item listed below:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
Sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>				
Decision to transfer	<input type="radio"/>				
Overall quality of instruction	<input type="radio"/>				
Sense of community on campus	<input type="radio"/>				
Academic advising	<input type="radio"/>				
Career counseling and advising	<input type="radio"/>				
Student housing	<input type="radio"/>				
General education courses	<input type="radio"/>				
Financial aid services	<input type="radio"/>				

Please rate your satisfaction with each experience at your community college for each item listed below:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
Amount of contact with faculty	<input type="radio"/>				
Class size	<input type="radio"/>				
Interaction with other students	<input type="radio"/>				
Ethnic/racial diversity of the faculty	<input type="radio"/>				
Leadership opportunities	<input type="radio"/>				
Overall community college experience	<input type="radio"/>				

Four-Year School Expectations

The purpose of this section is to obtain information about your expectations at a four-year college/university.

What is the most important reason for attending a four-year college/university?

- To obtain a bachelor's degree
- To gain skills necessary to enter a new job or occupation
- To pursue graduate or professional school
- To satisfy a personal interest (cultural, social)

Listed below are some reasons that might influence your decision to attend a particular four-year college/university. How important is each reason in your decision to select a transfer four-year college/university?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
The college/university has a very good academic reputation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The college/university has a very good reputation for its social activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was offered financial assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The college/university has affordable tuition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic counselor(s) at the community college advised me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A friend suggested attending.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A university representative recruited me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Four-Year School Expectations

Listed below are some additional reasons that might influence your decision to attend a particular college/university. How important is each reason in your decision to select a transfer school?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
This college's/university's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This college's/university's graduates get good jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College/University ranking in national magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents recommended.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My brother(s)/sister(s) attended college/university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenience and location.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Size of the institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Have you been counseled by an academic counselor/advisor or faculty member at the four-year college/university to which you are interested in transferring in regard to your academic program of interest?

- Yes
 No

Four-Year College/University Advising

If you answered yes to to the previous question, how helpful was the meeting?

- Very unhelpful
- Somewhat unhelpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Very helpful

Four-Year College/University Activities: Course Learning

In what way do you anticipate changing your course learning activities once you are at a four-year college/university?

	Less than at my community college	Same as at my community college	More than at my community college
Taking detailed notes in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in class discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing how different facts and ideas fit together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thinking about the practical applications of course material and content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working on a paper or project where I have to integrate ideas from various sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to explain course material and content to another student or friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Four-Year College/University Activities: Experiences with Faculty

Do you anticipate doing each of the following at your four-year college/university once you have transferred there?

	Definitely	Probably	Possibly	Probably Not
Visiting faculty and seek their advice on class projects such as writing assignments and research papers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling comfortable approaching faculty outside of class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking my instructor for information related to a course I am taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting informally and briefly with an instructor after class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking my instructor for comments and criticisms about my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

General Perceptions of the four-year transfer college/university.

The following are statements concerning your general perceptions of the transfer process to a four-year college/university.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about how things will be for you as a transfer student at your preferred four-year college/university.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
Faculty will be easy to approach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty will be accessible to students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will be difficult learning the "red tape" when I transfer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I am a "community college transfer," students may tend to underestimate my abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I am a "community college transfer," most faculty may tend to underestimate my abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There will be a stigma at my transfer college/university among students for having started at a community college.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generally, students will be more concerned about "getting the grade" instead of learning the material.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about how things will be for you as a transfer student at your preferred four-year college/university.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
I am concerned I will feel like I do not "fit in" on the campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professors will be strongly interested in the academic development of undergraduates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am concerned I will be treated like a "number."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student services will be responsive to my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If students expect to benefit from what the transfer college/university has to offer, they need to take the initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Four-Year College/University: Adjustment Process

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about transferring to a four-year college/university.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
Adjusting to the academic standards or expectations will be easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjusting to the social environment will be easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate feeling overwhelmed by the size of the student body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate feeling alienated at the college/university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate being very involved with social activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about transferring to a four-year college/university.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
It will be easy to find my way around campus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My level of stress will increase when I transfer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I may experience a decrease in my GPA at the end of my first semester at the four-year college/university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I may experience an increase in my GPA at the end of my first semester at the four-year college/university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will be easy to make friends at the four-year college/university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will feel comfortable spending time with friends that I made at the two-year college I attended who also transferred to the same four-year college/university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will feel more comfortable making friends with other transfer students than with non-transfer students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate that there will be a sense of competition between/among students at the four-year college/university that is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

not found at the
community college.

Additional Comments

What do you wish to have assistance with regarding the transfer process while you are still attending your community college?

What could your community college do to enhance your success or ease the transition to the four-year transfer college/university?

If you could give some advice to other community college students who want to transfer, what would that advice be?

What have we not asked that you would like us to know about your experiences at your community college in relation to the transfer process?

Thank You for Completing this Survey and Questions

Thank you very much for participating and taking the time to complete the Community College Transfer Student Survey. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the principal investigator, Beth Sacksteder Mann at (205)394-2954 or at bmann@bama.ua.edu or Dr. David Hardy at (205)348-6874 or at dhardy@bamaed.ua.edu.

Thank you for willing to participate

Thank you for being willing to participate in the survey. Since you do not plan to transfer to a four-year college/university you are unable to complete the survey.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate.

Thank You

Thank you. If you would like to take the survey at another time, please revisit the link provided.

Appendix C

IRB Letter

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects



June 25, 2009

Beth Sacksteder LaClair
Department of ELPTS
College of Education
Box 870232

Re: IRB#: 09-OR-190, Perceptions of Rural Community College Students of the Transfer Process to a Four-Year Institution

Dear Ms. LaClair:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research:

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

Your application will expire on June 25, 2010. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of Continuing Review and Closure Form. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the Continuing Review and Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carpano-F. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office of Research Compliance
The University of Alabama



152 Rose Administration Building
Box 870117
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0117
(205) 348-5152
fax (205) 348-8882

Appendix D

Email Messages Sent to Survey Responders

Emails will be sent every two weeks.

EMAIL MESSAGE 1

To: [Email]

From: sackste@gmail.com

Subject: Community College Transfer Student Survey

Body: You are among approximately 500 community college students who have indicated an interest in transferring to a four-year college/university who have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by Beth Sacksteder LaClair, a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program, supervised by David E. Hardy, Ph.D., who is an associate professor in the Higher Education Administration Program within the College of Education at the University.

Link to Survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Wjeqp2gU5ctkRaNDhgCfTQ_3d_3d

Thank you in advance for taking time to complete this survey. This confidential online survey includes questions about current experiences as a community college student, along with questions related to your preparation to transfer to a four-year college/university. We ask that you be as honest as you can. Your responses to this survey will be used to improve transfer student services.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or not to answer any specific question(s). You may skip any question you are not comfortable answering.

If you choose to participate, please click on the link provided in this e-mail to begin the survey. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. We sincerely appreciate your honest and open participation.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or about this survey, please contact Beth Sacksteder LaClair at sackste@gmail.com.

Thank you again,

Beth Sacksteder LaClair
Principal Investigator

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

EMAIL MESSAGE 2

To: [Email]

From: sackste@gmail.com

Subject: Are You Planning to Transfer?

Body: You are among approximately 500 community college students who have indicated an interest in transferring to a four-year college/university who have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by Beth Sacksteder LaClair, a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program, supervised by David E. Hardy, Ph.D., who is an associate professor in the Higher Education Administration Program within the College of Education at the University.

Link to Survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Wjeqp2gU5ctkRaNDhgCfTQ_3d_3d

Thank you in advance for taking time to complete this survey. This confidential online survey includes questions about current experiences as a community college student, along with questions related to your preparation to transfer to a four-year college/university. We ask that you be as honest as you can. Your responses to this survey will be used to improve transfer student services.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or not to answer any specific question(s). You may skip any question you are not comfortable answering.

If you choose to participate, please click on the link provided in this e-mail to begin the survey. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. We sincerely appreciate your honest and open participation.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or about this survey, please contact Beth Sacksteder LaClair at sackste@gmail.com.

Thank you again,

Beth Sacksteder LaClair
Principal Investigator

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

EMAIL MESSAGE 3

To: [Email]

From: sackste@gmail.com

Subject: What Will It Be Like to Transfer to a Four-Year College/University?

Body: You are among approximately 500 community college students who have indicated an interest in transferring to a four-year college/university who have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by Beth Sacksteder LaClair, a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program, supervised by David E. Hardy, Ph.D., who is an associate professor in the Higher Education Administration Program within the College of Education at the University.

Link to Survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Wjeqp2gU5ctkRaNDhgCfTQ_3d_3d

Thank you in advance for taking time to complete this survey. This confidential online survey includes questions about current experiences as a community college student, along with questions related to your preparation to transfer to a four-year college/university. We ask that you be as honest as you can. Your responses to this survey will be used to improve transfer student services.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or not to answer any specific question(s). You may skip any question you are not comfortable answering.

If you choose to participate, please click on the link provided in this e-mail to begin the survey. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. We sincerely appreciate your honest and open participation.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or about this survey, please contact Beth Sacksteder LaClair at sackste@gmail.com.

Thank you again,

Beth Sacksteder LaClair
Principal Investigator

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix E

Email Permission from Laanan

From: Frankie Laanan [laanan@mail.hs.iastate.edu]
Sent: Thursday, May 07, 2009 3:03 PM
To: David Hardy
Cc: Laanan, Frankie S [EL PS]; Beth Sacksteder Mann
Subject: Approval

Importance: High

Follow Up Flag: Follow up

Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Dr. Hardy,

It is with great pleasure that I approve the dissertation proposal of Beth Sacksteder Mann, doctoral student at the University of Alabama.

I look forward to working with Beth on her dissertation study. Let me know if you need further assistance.

--Frankie

Frankie Santos Laanan, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Higher Education Program Coordinator
Director, Office of Community College Research and Policy (OCCRP)

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
College of Human Sciences
Iowa State University
N243 Lagomarcino Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-3195

Office: 515.294.7292

Fax: 515.294.4942

E-mail: laanan@iastate.edu

Web site: www.cclp.hs.iastate.edu

Web site: www.cclp.hs.iastate.edu/occrp/homepage.html

Appendix F

Flyer

ARE YOU PLANNING TO TRANSFER?

Want to help improve services for community college students like you who wish to transfer to a four-year college/university?

Please provide your thoughts and opinions on issues such as:

- Academic Advising
- University selection and the admissions process
- Transfer of credits
- Understanding your academic program

Please take the survey at the link below to provide your feedback about the community college transfer process in Alabama. This confidential online survey includes questions about current experiences as a community college student, along with questions related to your preparation to transfer to a four-year college/university. We ask that you be as honest as you can. Your responses to this survey will be used to improve transfer student services.

Survey link:

<http://tinyurl.com/transferstudents>

Thank you!

Appendix G

Open-ended Questions

What do you wish to have assistance with regarding the transfer process while you are still attending your community college?

- I would like to receive a more in-depth look at possible career opportunities and how they involve my chosen major.
- Better understanding of the classes I will need and communication with advisors at the 4-year school.
- courses.
- a detailed packet of what is needed on or at both campus to make transfer smooth
- I got the help I needed.
- More scholarship opportunities.
- I have all the info I need !!
- Making sure my classes will be accepted at the school I'm planning to transfer to.
- choosing which college is best suited for me
- Scholarships, Grants.....Financial Help.
- Financial Aid
- Financial Aid
- what classes are needed to transfer and what scholarships are available.
- Ensuring that I am taking the classes that are needed and helping me to make my electives reflect what I am pursuing as my major.
- Tuition, course management, classes
- I would like to know more concerning scholarship opportunities being offered to the non-traditional transfer student.
- All the "red tape" - the nitty-gritty details as far as paperwork, and scholarships, and transfer requirements.
- financial aid and housing for the 4yr college
- I want to know exactly what classes I should take during which semester and also which professors are the best for me.
- Making sure I have everything I need to transfer successfully, and finding out who provides the most on-line classes in my major.
- Financial aid, scholarships, setting up visits with advisors/recruiters from 4yr universities
- "more info. about due dates for application material.
- more info. concerning transfer requirements."
- Transcripts
- Yes

- transcripts. directions
- i wish to have assistance with scholarship information.
- Transfer process
- Finacial Status.
- Housing at the USA
- Getting information from the school
- everything
- Transcripts, etc.
- none
- Aid with finding scholarships, loans, or financial aid.
- Scholarships, I am 32 in all kinds of clubs and an officer and a 4.0 but i'm in debt no scholarship
- EVERYTHING
- i wish to have more information on what programs different colleges offer
- unsure
- Making sure my classes transfer and admissions
- yes
- Provided

What could your community college do to enhance your success or ease the transition to the four-year transfer college/university?

- My community college does a great job encouraging students to achieve whatever goals they would like to accomplish. Advisors and/or counselors spend long sessions with new and existing students to see that they find the major that is best suited for their interests. The only suggestion that I would make is to possibly ask instructors to facilitate more classroom discussion in day-to-day lectures. This would allow students to utilize critical thinking skills and cause them to possibly question the accepted precedent or lecture being taught.
- They were helpful enough.
- It would be helpful to go more in depth in subjects that will be studied again at my 4-year institution.
- The success of my transition would be amplified if the community college would work state-wide with four-year colleges to develop transferable curriculum assortments that are specific to the institution of which I might wish to join.
- Nothing NACC did a wonderful job preparing me !!
- Broaden their knowledge of colleges of all types.
- make sure i make the right decision
- Scholarships, Grants.....Financial Help.
- help in obtaining a transfer scholarship
- As I am getting a 2 year degree then doing my undergrad classes nothing yet.

- Better financial aid
- I would like to have more opportunities to meet recruiters from the 4 year colleges.
- Give more information - or show us what to look for and where to find it.
- nothing really
- Help me to apply for scholarships.
- Be more educated on the needs i have into the social work program.
- Keep the newly created transfer adviser position. Greatest idea ever. If I had any questions about transferring I knew where to go.
- see above
- be helpful
- Get me in Automatic
- send more emails about ways to better be able to transfer.
- Maybe bring in Representatives and current students from different school that have transferred to a four year college
- Help with transfer more.
- Prepare me well
- not make me take all the unnecessary classes that I will never use
- For future references, freshman shouldn't have to take the compass test. It is ridiculous, a high school diploma should be proof enough that freshman are ready for the 101 classes and such. It is a WASTE of money to take 091, 098, 093 classes when you have already learned those things from high school.
- nothing
- Help students get info from possible four year universities and encourage visiting campuses.
- be on somewhat the same teaching level
- unsure
- Have more information available
- give information
- Not much than what they're already doing

If you could give some advice to other community college students who want to transfer, what would that advice be?

- I would encourage those who plan to first chose a major best suited for the career he or she would like to pursue. From that point, utilize professional and internet resources to research the intended major. Once he or she has a good understanding of what is required within the major, select transfer institutions that offer the selected major and then evaluate options such as tuition cost, distance, housing, and available financial aid options. Once a student completes this process, he or she should be prepared to begin the transition process from a community college to a four-year institution.

- Make sure you know what your major requires and what you will need upon transferring. Don't leave everything up to your advisor.
- make a copy of everything, keep a folder, and get a STARS agreement.
- Help the students know what the equivalent of a course is before you say a class won't transfer.
- Choose the school that is best for your major. If you transfer knowing that you will succeed, then you will succeed. Community colleges are not institutions of lower education, but on the contrary they are institutions that are less costly, have fewer students per class, and can teach one more if one really applies themselves.
- My advice to students who wish to transfer to a four-year institution would be to develop long-term goals of which the community college experience will become one of the stepping stones towards achieving, instead of merely focusing on the act of graduating from the two-year college.
- Get started early!
- Look at NACC and how they prepare!!
- Make sure you know where you would like to transfer before you even start community college so you will know what goal you are working towards.
- Just believe in your self, and stick with your plan...no matter how hard it may seem.
- do the research
- Start looking for Scholarships, Grants.....Financial aid earlier.
- Get as much information as possible about the institution you are planning on transferring to.
- Research before you make your final decision.
- Do not procrastinate or get behind.
- know in advance if you are going to transfer to take as few classes as possible.
- Learn as much as you can before you transfer. School gets harder the closer you get to graduation but to remember that the classes you are taking are absolutely necessary to being successful at what you have chosen to do in life.
- Attending a community college really helped me get ready for the bid university. Many of my friends from High School also wished they would have went to a community college.
- Be proactive...dont wait for someone to help you...find yourself looking for the answers on your own!
- Start EARLIER than you think you have to!! And if at all possible, try to transfer over the SUMMER (and not over Christmas break) in order to actually get intop the classes you need.
- Make sure they are comfortable and know enough about how things work before transferring...
- Know where you are transferring to for sure fairly quickly.
- Take more on-line classes, involves great self- discipline.

- Be serious about it during Aug-Oct of your last year at the community college. More should be done to help students decide early what school they believe they want to transfer to.
- Get the info. way ahead of time. Know that you know what you are doing at least 6-12 months ahead of time.
- be helpful
- Give me lots of opportunities
- study
- check your emails and always look for information.
- Start early.
- Stick with it you can do whatever you want to do in life
- Enjoy it and make good grades because its easier than a 4 year school
- Study for the compass because it can mess your life up. You WASTE money learning things you have already learned if you do not do well on the compass.
- listen to your advisor
- Visit your transfer and major advisor. Be consistant about financial aid and scholarship oportunites as well as the STARS transer program.
- Go see a Transfer advisor
- do your best
- make sure that your ready for all the work and time
- Dont wait get started early
- Speak with advisors at their current college as well at the transferring college.
- student loans
- Expect to have to move and take out a student loan.

What have we not asked that you would like us to know about your experiences at your community college in relation to the transfer process?

- One aspect not mentioned to my knowledge is whether or not the community in which the college is located is embodied through the college. The current institution which I attend does so in many aspects. Whether it be through sponsorships in Relay for Life campaigns, local workforce development, or training employees at existing business and industries, my institution always plays an integral role in my community. The importance of involving your community with the college gives a student a better, more wholesome self-worth and understanding of how important they can become to society and especially the community wherever they reside. This can articulate from the small scale community college to the four-year university by causing more students to be more actively involved in community awareness campaigns, civic activism, and general concern for the well-being of society.

- Picking a major, a college, the right classes and everything dealing with transferring is VERY stressful!!
- The quality of the instructors which by the way are exceptional at wallace with a handful that exceed expectations
- Nothing.
- n/a
- Personality centered questions. For example: am I more a loner or a attention hound.
- It's all good.
- I think that there needs to be more opportunities for scholarships for the non-traditional junior college transfer!
- The one thing I dislike about my community college...in the summer classes, teachers go way too fast and give too much online homework.
- "Most community college faculty/staff know that it is hard to afford a good university education, but they encourage students to continue because they know we need to finish a bachelor's degree. However, most recruiters, advisers, and staff from the many 4yr schools I visited did not care about me. They did not show an interest in helping me transfer or in gaining what few scholarship dollars they offered to transfers. I was disappointed because my academic record could have given me full-tuition scholarships to most universities as an entering freshman. I chose my local community college because it was still cheaper; I graduated debt free and had saved up some money. The poorest class of people are represented by community college students, and yet I believe they receive the fewest scholarship dollars from 4yr universities. It is essential that universities commit resources to work with community colleges to recruit transfer students.
- I had seriously these AL 4yr schools: UAH, Montevallo, University of Alabama, BSC, & Samford. I eventually chose BSC because they offered me enough financial aid to make them as affordable as any of the other schools, and they treated me like I would be just as important as a freshman."
- n/a
- Nothing
- n/a
- Nothing.
- N/A
- I feel the compass test is ignorant. I personally think that the community college just wants more money, because it's a waste to learn the same things over again that you have learned in high school.
- nothing
- Everyone from advisors, instructors, and staff members were positive and happy to assist. They were willing to do as much possible.

- I don't even know who to talk to about anything I fixed my fanical aid papers my self i feel alone
- nothing
- nothing
- N/A
- Nothing