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The Effect on Enrollment at Hinds Community College Among Dual Enrollment Students

by

Kellie E. Herrington

A Doctoral Project Submitted to,
the College of Education and Human Sciences
and the School of Education
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The demand for dual enrollment programs is growing rapidly in higher education, but many higher education institutions do not have effective practices and procedures in place to serve this population of students. This study sought to determine whether participation in the dual enrollment program at Hinds Community College influenced the postsecondary enrollment intentions of former dual credit students from Rankin County, Mississippi, public and private high schools. To be able to properly explore this subject, a mixed methodology was used, and a mix of qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Participants responded to an anonymous survey, and the data were analyzed to determine if a correlation existed between participation in a dual enrollment program and enrollment at Hinds after high school graduation. Further, the research sought to determine if a certain number of credit hours earned influenced the enrollment intention of participants. This study focused specifically on currently enrolled Hinds students who attended a Rankin County public or private high school and graduated in the 2019-2020 academic year, and it did not account for the overwhelming number of students who did not attend Hinds after high school graduation. Overall, this project highlights the need for more focus on recruitment and retention of the dual enrollment student population by higher education institutions.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to several people without whom I would not be where I am today.

Mom and Dad, I could write millions upon millions of pages about my thankfulness for you, and it still wouldn't be enough. You both taught me a passion for not only education, but for life. I love you both so much, and I'm pleased to inform you that you will never have to hear me complain about my homework again.

To my husband, Josh, thank you for not letting me give up when things got tough. You are my true North, and I love you more than words.

To my daughter, Ellery, may you always be the fierce, unstoppable force that you are right now. I hope one day I get to watch you fulfill all your dreams.

Finally, to my grandfather, Howard Eaton, who is no longer here with me, but who I know would be smiling the biggest smile of them all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HCC Hinds Community College

DCO Dual Credit Online

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Background

As the largest community college in the state of Mississippi, Hinds Community College (Hinds) serves five different Mississippi counties over its six campuses. To compare in institution size, Hinds is the fourth largest higher education institution in Mississippi, falling only to three larger public universities: The University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and The University of Southern Mississippi. Since Hinds' establishment, the Mississippi counties of Hinds, Rankin, Warren, Claiborne, and Copiah have benefitted from the many academic and career-technical education (CTE) opportunities that Hinds has to offer. Furthermore, these benefits extend beyond the traditional college student and setting. Meaning, Hinds offers programs to students who are not receiving instruction on-campus from a face-to-face instructor as has been the custom in the past. One program in particular that is consistently growing not only at Hinds but also across the nation in higher education is dual enrollment (Kim and Bragg, 2008). For the purpose of this research study, the term *dual credit* differs from the term *dual enrollment*, though much of the literature surrounding dual credit/dual enrollment uses the terms interchangeably. In this study, *dual credit* refers to a college-serviced program that allows students to be enrolled at both the high schools they attend and the servicing-college while earning credit for both institutions. Although some four-year higher education institutions are involved with dual enrollment programs, most of the servicing institutions are community colleges. This is mostly because community colleges are more locally based than universities for some school districts, meaning that community colleges are more accessible because of the larger number of community colleges compared to the number of university options. In Mississippi, for example, all fifteen community colleges offer some version of a dual credit

program. Following the trend of being the largest community college in Mississippi, Hinds Community College also has the largest dual credit program in the state. Currently, the dual credit programs offered throughout the different Hinds campuses are handled in a centralized office. Therefore, though the opportunity for dual credit is offered college-wide at Hinds, this research study focused specifically on the impact the dual credit program has at the Rankin Campus of Hinds. Furthermore, though dual credit programs exist in both the academic and CTE areas, I have only provided research on the academic portion at this time.

The academic dual credit program at the Rankin Campus of Hinds Community College (referred to hereafter as Hinds Rankin) currently serves approximately 1,100 students. These students attend either one of the nine public high schools in Rankin County or one of four private schools in Rankin County. Students come from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, and three of the nine public schools are considered Title I schools. Schools that are Title I receive additional government funding based on the large number of low-income families (“Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies (Title I, Part A)”). Further, the student participants also represent many different demographics.

Each student participant has either met the state requirements of fourteen Carnegie units earned and a 3.0 GPA or met the state alternative requirement of a 30 on the ACT. Additionally, the students are required to have a letter of recommendation signed by a high school administrator before they can participate. The students must also meet minimum ACT or placement scores for the desired courses. Once those requirements are met, participants may proceed with requesting courses from Hinds. As participants of this program, the students receive instruction and course content on their high school campuses from instructors that are approved and hired by Hinds as adjunct instructors.

The approved adjunct instructors are expected to follow college course policies and curriculum, meaning that dual credit students should be able to meet the same Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as the traditional on-campus student population. The courses are monitored for rigor and appropriate content through SLO data. Furthermore, the instructors are expected to maintain grading, attendance, and discipline in accordance with Hinds's policies.

Upon completion of these courses, the dual credit students receive credit from both the high schools and the college. In the past, the grade weight of a dual credit course was also higher than the non-dual credit courses at the high schools, which promoted taking dual credit courses to students who were competing for the top of class rankings. Many students are able to use these dual credit courses as a means to graduate early, increase their GPAs, or fulfill program prerequisites before high school graduation.

Currently, there is no limit on the number of hours that a student can earn through dual credit at Hinds, and many of the student participants earn enough hours through the program that they can enter an on-campus collegiate setting with a sophomore status. Moreover, the class offerings are not limited to the selections taught on the high school campuses; students are also able to earn credit hours through dual credit online classes (referred to hereafter as DCO). DCO classes are not taught by the high school instructors, but the students are still able to earn credit for their high schools and the College in them. The goal of this program is to provide the student participants with the opportunity for earning college credit at an earlier and potentially more convenient time than the traditional track of postsecondary work, while still maintaining the appropriate level of academic rigor for collegiate level coursework.

Positionality Statement

My interest in the dual credit/enrollment field grew from my experience as a dual credit Composition and Literature instructor at a Mississippi high school. Later in my career, I began my job at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus as the dual credit program coordinator. Thus, I am uniquely qualified to research this topic, as I have experienced the program from both a teaching faculty and administrative perspective. Additionally, my unique perspective also afforded me the opportunity to see the many ways that dual credit/enrollment programs can benefit the students that are utilizing them. However, upon my arrival at Hinds, I realized that not everyone sees dual credit as a benefit – especially community college faculty. Further, I hope to study this topic to be able to speak with my colleagues to inform their perspectives on the program. I believe dual credit/enrollment programs provide students of all demographics and academic pathways opportunities they may not otherwise be afforded; however, many of my colleagues believe that dual enrollment will ultimately cause community colleges to become insignificant. It is this negative attitude, therefore, that I hope to combat by exploring the perspectives of high school students enrolled in a dual credit course.

Statement of the Problem

Despite dual enrollment program numbers growing exponentially in the last 50 years, little research exists on how to create and maintain a successful program. Furthermore, virtually no research exists regarding student perspective of either the dual enrollment programs or the institutions that run them. Many of my colleagues believe that dual enrollment programs cause students to skip Hinds Community College, and other community colleges like Hinds, entirely for a multitude of reasons. The most commonly referenced reason amongst my fellow employees is that number of college credit hours that a student may earn through dual enrollment often prompts them to skip community college. However, though this may be true for some students,

no data specific to Hinds Rankin exists that proves whether these accusations are true. Further, the perception that dual enrollment program participation would be that closely tied to enrollment could negatively impact faculty morale and recruitment efforts. Additionally, it overlooks potential benefits from dual enrollment programs for the college.

Like many other dual enrollment programs, the dual credit program at Hinds Rankin can not only benefit the student participants, but it offers the college several areas of potential benefit: financial, enrollment, and recruitment. Unfortunately, the area of dual credit recruitment does not receive the same level of attention from college administrators as the financial and enrollment areas do. Meaning, dual credit students are not always recruited as heavily in order to retain their enrollment. As previously mentioned, student participants are not limited to a certain number of hours or credits, which means that some students graduate from high school far ahead of their peers on their academic pathways. This does not mean, however, that the students have earned enough hours to hold an associate degree or meet the required number of hours for transfer scholarships at universities. Regrettably, a recent trend in dual credit student participants is to bypass finishing an associate degree at their dual credit servicing community college and going straight to a four-year institution, despite the financial gain of continuing at the community college. Furthermore, though this is impacting community colleges, and certainly Hinds Rankin, across the nation, essentially no research or recommendations exist on how to improve the retention rates in dual credit student participants. As a result, Hinds Rankin and many other community colleges are missing out on what should be a considerably easy group of potential on-campus students. In order to combat these ever-lowering retention rates, more research must be done on the dual credit program's role in retaining dual credit students at their servicing community college.

The research will address the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of dual credit student participants regarding enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
2. To what extent does participation in a dual credit program influence the intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
3. How does the amount of college credit hours a student earns during high school influence whether or not the student enrolls at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

Definition of Terms

In order to properly understand the information in the research, one must have a level of understanding regarding the difference between *dual enrollment* and *dual credit*. *Dual enrollment* is used as an encompassing term referring to both dual credit and dual enrollment student credit. It is also a term referring to a high school student being enrolled at both the high school and college and earning credit at strictly at the college level. In comparison, *dual credit* is a term referring to a high school student being enrolled at both the high school and college and earning credit at both the high school and college level.

Research Methodology

To be able to properly explore the previously mentioned questions, a mixed methodology was used, and a mix of qualitative and quantitative data were collected. In this case, it was most beneficial for that method to employ a survey style of data gathering because a survey was likely the easiest way for the participants to respond. Since the participant group is composed of current Hinds students, the survey was designed so that they did not lose interest in responding and

cause a low response rate or unreliable data. Additionally, the research questions were answered by using quantitative data gathered with permission from Hinds Community College. The requested data was the total number of students who graduated from a Rankin County high school in spring 2020, the number of students who did not attend Hinds at all after high school graduation, and the number of students who enrolled at Hinds after high school graduation.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

The opportunities in higher education are constantly expanding to accommodate all types of students. Included in this expanding list of postsecondary opportunities are dual credit and dual enrollment programs, which serve both academic and Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways. Though the opportunity has existed across the nation since the 1980s, dual enrollment programs are still in need of refinement, especially when considering long-term student success. Historically, the programs have been for a small population of students, but with the growing number of participants, higher education institutions are struggling to keep up with the demand and maintain appropriate standards. Further, little literature exists regarding how to create and maintain a successful dual enrollment or dual credit program because the programs are relatively new to higher education. As the literature has such a distinctive gap of missing information, it is important that more research be done to provide recommendations and data to support these recommendations. However, this literature review will provide a summary and analysis of select literature regarding dual enrollment, including its history, benefits, and areas of improvement.

History of Dual Enrollment

According to the U.S. Department of Education, Minnesota established the first dual enrollment program in 1985 (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2007). This program allowed students to earn college credit while still in high school, and it began with just 3,500 dual enrollment students (Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2017). Today, these types of programs are nationwide options and serve thousands of high school students. Kim and Bragg (2008) note, “Over the past two decades numerous efforts have been made to assist students to transition from the secondary to the postsecondary level...Of these, Tech Prep and dual credit have received attention nationwide as potential solutions to the less than optimal

transition experiences of high school students...” (p. 134). Unfortunately, once higher education institutions realized that dual enrollment/credit programs could benefit the schools financially, dual enrollment programs hastily began to appear all over the country without a proper cognizance of promoting student success. For example, Farrell and Seifert (2007) state, “College administrators thought the dual enrollment program was running smoothly until they learned that local four-year postsecondary institutions refused to give credit to incoming students who took dual-enrollment classes at the community college” (p. 70).

These institutions were simply not prepared for the influx of non-traditional students they were now servicing, nor were they prepared for the impact these dual enrollment programs would have on the students. Though the term *non-traditional student* can refer to many types of students; however, in this case, the term is used in reference to a student who is not entering higher education as a first-time, full-time student between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. Sadly, a lack of preparation did not prevent many institutions from creating dual enrollment programs anyway. Pretlow and Patteson (2015) state, “Dual enrollment programs have grown significantly over the past decade to the point where almost all community colleges offer some form of dual enrollment” (p. 21).

Dual Enrollment vs Dual Credit

People are often confused by the fact that the terms *dual credit* and *dual enrollment* are used interchangeably. Therefore, as the two have become separate entities over time, it is important to note that the term *dual credit* is different from the term *dual enrollment*. Mansell and Justice (2014) define dual credit as “a partnership between high schools and community colleges or universities that enables students to earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously” (para. 4). Though similar in that the student is enrolled at a high school while

being simultaneously enrolled at a college, dual enrollment only earns a student college credit, not high school credit. Despite their differences in definition, literature typically uses the term *dual enrollment* to encompass both dual credit and dual enrollment when speaking about the option as a whole. For the purposes of this study, I will specify if an aspect of a program is specific to dual credit programs.

Design and Goals of Dual Enrollment and Dual Credit Programs

In order to understand how dual enrollment in its entirety impacts higher education institutions, one must first understand the goals of the programs themselves. Though many of the goals are the same, dual credit programs arguably have additional goals because they allow students the opportunity for two different types of credit: high school and college. Explaining his personal experience with the goals of the dual credit program at his institution, Andrews (2000) writes,

The community college guaranteed that the courses were transferable to four-year institutions in Illinois, the majority of the faculty members teaching the courses would come from the full-time ranks, and all faculty members teaching the courses would be highly qualified in their respective subject areas. Because the courses met the needs of both school and college, students could use them to earn both high school credit and advanced placement credit, which could be applied to the college of their choice. (p. 31)

Put simply, the dual credit program at the institution referenced in Andrews' (2000) study and the dual credit programs at other institutions nationwide intend to provide high school students the option to earn college credit while simultaneously earning high school credit under the instruction of qualified and capable faculty. These qualified and capable faculty are expected to maintain the appropriate level of rigor, despite the course's high school setting. In some cases,

the faculty are comfortable with the material and expectations of the course prior to teaching a dual credit course because they are already employed by a higher education institution. Andrews (2000) adds, “These high school faculty members are often already teaching at the college on a part-time basis in the evenings or weekends...” (p. 37). Certainly, this is to the benefit of the dual credit students under their purview, as the students are receiving exposure to college-level courses taught by college-approved instructors. However, one common concern recently given a lot of consideration in academic research is whether or not dual credit faculty are able to consistently maintain the expected level of rigor. Since sustaining a qualified and effective faculty is both major goal of the program and an area that affects accreditation, many college administrators are paying closer attention to dual credit faculty.

Those with growing concerns regarding faculty who teach in dual credit programs argue that they are not held to proper expectations and not closely monitored to ensure rigor of the courses (Farrell & Seifert, 2007). Friedman (2019) asserts, “Presenting college-level course material to students who are still in high school...poses instructional challenges distinct from those that arise in traditional college instruction – especially when more than 40 percent of community college students are over the age of twenty-five” (p. 22). Though it is true that there are distinct differences in a dual credit course and a traditional course setting, it would be unfair to assume that all dual credit faculty are not maintaining an appropriate atmosphere in their courses. Furthermore, generalizing one student’s experience with another student’s experience would be dangerous to the maintenance of accurate data regarding student success in dual credit.

Beyond the faculty, the design of dual credit courses themselves must provide dual credit students with an appropriately rigorous course experience. Educational experts often define *rigor* in many different ways, and so do higher ed institutions. However, higher education

institutions and high schools are not always allowed to teach particular courses. In some states, such as Mississippi, governing bodies (i.e., Mississippi Community College Board) determine a list of approved courses that can be taught as dual credit courses. Either way, institutions must be able to ensure that the student participants are receiving the appropriate level of curriculum rigor and instruction that traditional students are in their classes. In order to hopefully guarantee this, most institutions create a required syllabus and assignment list for courses offered as a dual credit course. Helmer (2017) states, “Teachers with the right qualifications must use college syllabuses and communicate with professors to ensure the classes meet college standards” (p. 38). However, some research suggests that dual credit students receive a less rigorous version of those same classes despite an institution’s efforts to standardize student experiences. Kinnick (2012) states, “College administrators...expressed concerned about their ability to ensure the quality of courses taught in high schools taught by high school faculty. College faculty shared these concerns...” (p. 40). Helmer (2017) adds, “The students taking dual enrollment at their high schools do get more hand-holding and have more interaction with their instructors than they would college professors” (p. 38). Arguably, however, this is not a negative thing for students who are experiencing college-level courses for the first time. Instead, this extra interaction could help dual credit programs maintain the goal of bridging students from high school to college. However, Jones (2017) claims,

Dual enrollment students must be exposed to the best faculty the college offers. Highly qualified faculty will have the most impact on high school students by introducing them to the rigors of college and outlining the expectations in their first college-level experiences. Failure as a college to perceive or recognize the importance of this exposure and engagement will continue to breed criticisms of dual enrollment as nonrigorous

college credit, leading to many college and universities continuing to not accept credits for transfer (p. 80).

Essentially, many claim that since the student participating in dual enrollment is considered a student of the higher education institution, that student should be held to the same academic standards in order for the program to be considered successful.

In addition to the previously mentioned goals, Pretlow and Patteson (2015) assert that dual enrollment programs are also intended to “ease the transition from high school to college” for the student participants (p. 27). Though this may be an intended goal, literature and research regarding the attitudes of student participants suggest that many students do not feel that this is being addressed for them (Kanny, 2015). In her research regarding student attitudes of dual enrollment programs, Kanny (2015) asserts,

There was limited support from the high school or community college in ensuring students stayed on track...In fact, a number of participants highlighted feeling that they were not able to access some support services...it was clear that these participants felt generally unsupported and isolated in their tenure at City College... (p. 67).

As mentioned previously, dual enrollment programs offer higher education institutions a new opportunity for recruiting future traditional students, but many institutional leaders are not utilizing this opportunity the best that they can. In fact, some high school students are able to graduate with so many dual credit/enrollment credit hours that they enter a traditional college setting with a *sophomore* or higher status, which often eliminates the need to attend community colleges at all. Unfortunately, it seems that the community college system as a whole has not yet discovered how to support and market to this specialized group of students. Furthermore, literature suggests that dual enrollment students are often held to the academic expectations

without being given the same support services that traditional on-campus students receive. Helmer (2017) suggests, “providing early-college students with academic supports that traditional students have – such as access to the academic library, tutoring and counseling – is a key component to helping them meet college-level standards” (p. 36). Regrettably, like many topics regarding dual enrollment programs, little literature and research exists providing recommendations on how to improve the relationship between dual enrollment student participants and higher education institutions.

Benefits to High Schools and Colleges

Both programs are becoming increasingly popular amongst K-12 administrators because of the many benefits the programs offer to students and school districts. In many states, such as Mississippi, high schools receive points on their state report cards for each student who attempts and each student who passes a dual credit course – meaning that a school could receive multiple points from one student’s participation in a dual credit course. Because secondary schools and students both have potential to benefit from dual credit programs, the number of students engaged in a dual credit program of some kind has increased dramatically in the last two decades. However, it is important to note that this is not the case in every state. Kinnick (2012) states, “[Georgia] public high schools have several disincentives to participate in dual enrollment, as they lose FTE funds for dual-enrolled students and lose enrollment from Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which lowers their ranking and prestige on a state “Education Scoreboard”...” (p. 45).

Furthermore, some researchers are concerned that the intended benefits of the program may be lessened because high school students who, though they have the qualifying scores, do not have the maturity to take and be successful in college courses. Helmer (2017) offers three

concerns regarding dual enrollment programs: ill student preparation for college courses, ill advisement to students on necessary courses, and lack of rigor in dual enrollment classrooms. Yet, participating high schools and higher education institutions often ignore these concerns in favor of the impacts dual enrollment programs can have on ratings, finances, and enrollment. Helmer (2017) adds, “College and universities in 47 states engage with school district partners to offer dual enrollment programs, in which courses are taught on college campuses, at high schools, or online” (p. 35). Many higher education institutions are beginning to recognize dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities for the growing market that they are, leading them to establish partnerships with local school districts. Both the higher ed institutions and the school districts benefit from the partnership, which further encourages them.

Moreover, though it is true that universities are somewhat finding a way to compete in the field of dual enrollment or dual credit programs, many of the opportunities for dual enrollment and dual credit come from the community college level as well. Andrews (2000) adds, “This [dual credit] is just one example of how community colleges help high school students get a head start on college and make the most of their senior year...” (p. 31). Obviously, though, these opportunities are not limited to how they can help the students. Not only are dual credit and dual enrollment programs helpful to community colleges in areas such as FTE funding, but it also creates a specific market for recruiting future on-campus students. Kinnick (2012) states, “College administrators saw dual enrollment as a strategy to increase the diversity of their student bodies...” (p. 40). Surprisingly, however, little data exist on the correlation between dual credit program participation and enrollment at the servicing higher education institution after high school.

Benefits of Dual Enrollment Programs

Despite some potential barriers, dual enrollment programs do provide high school students with collegiate opportunities they may not otherwise receive that early in their academic careers. Heather Durosko's (2019) article "Challenges in transferring dual enrollment credit" explores not only some of the challenges that dually enrolled students may face, but it also mentions several key benefits for dual enrollment program student participants. Durosko (2019) claims,

The benefits for students who can take advantage of high quality dual/concurrent enrollment options are substantial. There's evidence that students are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college, and also more likely to be prepared for, persist in, and complete college (p. 56).

As previously mentioned, one of the goals of dual enrollment programs is to give students a college coursework experience while still in high school, so it would be logical to connect that the majority of students who would wish to take college courses in high school would continue on their collegiate pathways after high school. This persistence on the part of the students after high school could possibly be attributed to a number of areas, including something as simple as exposure to a college course earlier than other students (Kanny, 2015). For example, Kanny's (2015) research responses regarding the feelings of students who participated in a dual enrollment program revealed, "Notably, despite separate accounts of particular courses taken at City College and their associated challenges, each participant referenced the undeniable importance of having the chance to experience academic content and rigor of a college course" (p. 61). Not only do students benefit in the short-term from the program in high school, but they also benefit from that preparation long after their completion of the dual credit program.

Additionally, this may not only impact the students' academic careers, but it could also provide a foundation for the expectations of professional careers later in their lives.

Furthermore, many dual enrollment programs are often more affordable than traditional college tuition prices. Later in her article Durosko (2019) adds, "In many cases, these options may also save students time and money by allowing them to a jump-start on earning college credit" (p. 56). In dual enrollment programs, students are able to take the same courses they would be taking their freshmen or sophomore years of college for often a fraction of the tuition price they would be paying. Pretlow and Patteson (2015) state, "In Virginia, the state 'encourages' offering dual enrollment at no cost to students by giving both the high school and community college full credit in the state funding formulas for each dual enrolled student" (p. 23). Though this is not the case for every state, it is the case for many, which means that dual enrollment is possible for students of all socioeconomic statuses. Additionally, some states provide scholarship opportunities for students who may still be unable to pay the lowered tuition prices. In addition to a lower tuition price for their dual credit courses, students are also fast-tracking their pathways, meaning that students will spend less time in a traditional college setting, saving them money.

Areas of Improvement

Many areas of dual enrollment programs have a great deal of room for improvement. Some students in these programs attribute the negativity to a lack of intervention and support on the part of the institution; others argue that the student participants do not have the proper understanding of how taking dual enrollment classes can affect them in a long-term way (i.e., college GPA) (Kanny, 2015). Further regarding her research responses, Kanny (2015) states,

The most prevalent theme related to the drawbacks of dual enrollment was issues in credits earned as well as negative impacts on high school transcripts due to poor grades in dual enrollment courses...There was limited support from the high school or community college in ensuring students stayed on track. (pp. 64-66)

Unlike high school transcripts, which become essentially obsolete as soon as a person starts a traditional college pathway or postsecondary program, college transcripts follow the student throughout his/her college or career lifetime. And though the institutions are not entirely at fault when it comes to the burden of student success, a lack of support can be detrimental to students who may be teetering on the line between good grades and bad grades. Certainly, a student who feels supported is likely to be more successful than one who feels isolated.

Moreover, before even beginning the classes, dual enrollment student participants are potentially not being advised by a certified college counselor, meaning that they sometimes accidentally take courses that are not necessarily needed for their postsecondary pathways. This is concerning for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, wasting a student's money and time. Durosko's (2019) exploration into the attitudes of high school counselors on advising dual enrollment students showed that "Only 41 percent of public school counselor respondents said they felt 'very prepared,' despite how prevalent these programs are in public schools" (p. 57). These findings are certainly not meant to diminish the work that high school counselors do, as they are imperative to the success of high schools and high school students. Put simply, high school counselors are not always trained to give advice regarding collegiate pathways, nor it is something all high school counselors feel comfortable doing. If not advised properly, student participants could not only waste money, but they could also waste time on courses that are not even necessary to them. Though some may argue that the student still benefits from the

exposure to college coursework, and there is some truth to that statement, many students will not recognize this benefit over the frustration that an optional, and often more challenging, course is not even going to help them with their next steps. Higher education institutions have a lot of room for improvement when it comes to preparing their secondary partners for dual enrollment program success. It should not necessarily fall to the high school counselors to know how to properly advise students on college pathways, but if it is going to be expected of them, the institutions providing the courses should also provide training on that advisement and student support.

Furthermore, literature reveals that students who take dual enrollment courses through community colleges or smaller universities may be under more scrutiny when applying to bigger institutions than students who did not. Duroske (2019) adds, "...due to the wide variations in how dual/concurrent enrollment programs are offered, admission officers may require more information about these programs, especially when evaluating students from schools they are less familiar with" (p. 58). What should have been a great opportunity for students then becomes an annoyance for them when trying to take the next step after high school. However, Helmer (2017) argued, "...86 percent of institutions accepted dual enrollment credits for transfer. Public institutions are more likely than private schools to accept the credits" (p. 38). Therefore, it is important to note that, more often than not, the drawbacks to dual enrollment programs are issues that institutions could potentially address and fix; however, a lack of recommendations exists in literature and research regarding areas of weakness in dual enrollment programs.

Though not necessarily a drawback for student participants, one major area of weakness in dual enrollment programs at community colleges specifically is recruiting the student participants to continue at the institution after their high school graduation. As previously

mentioned, community colleges actively participate in implementing dual enrollment programs in their communities. Therefore, in order to properly understand or study dual enrollment programs, it is imperative to recognize how dual enrollment could potentially impact the community college system in areas such as recruitment, finance, and enrollment. Dual enrollment programs should be a great tool for helping community college retention and completion rates, but that is not currently the case. Kim and Bragg (2008) note that, “[Although] Community colleges contribute greatly to expanding students’ access to higher education with their geographic proximity and competitive cost...student retention and completion is problematic for community colleges” (p. 133). Already at a low completion rate, community colleges also see a lack of consistent student retention for dual enrollment students.

Many reasons exist as to why the students may not wish to continue at the higher education institution where their dual enrollment program was. One is the aforementioned lack of student support during their time as a dual enrollment student. Students may feel isolated from the institution itself, which discourages them from attending after high school. Kanny (2015) notes,

These feelings of isolation led to uncertainty regarding their feelings of belonging at the institution...it was clear that these participants felt generally unsupported and isolated in their tenure at City College, and asserted that these feelings were detrimental to the quality of their experiences there. (p. 67)

Although these claims are not true for every institution that offers a dual enrollment program, it is common enough to be considered an area of weakness for the institutions. However, little of the literature regarding the subject actually includes recommendations for improvement. Many solely include statements such as Kanny’s (2015) assertion,

Give the community college's ever-expanding mission and role as a provider of educational opportunity to a variety of students, it is prudent that scholars and practitioners begin to better understand the ways that dual enrollment functions as an agent of college access and success. (p. 69)

Certainly, this is a true and relevant statement regarding community colleges and their dual enrollment programs; however, as is common amongst the literature regarding dual enrollment programs, no suggestion of any kind follows it. In order to rectify the issues, more research must be done to address the areas of weakness.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

Design

The Methodology portion of this study discusses my intention to collect and analyze data regarding dual enrollment student perspectives and intentions for postsecondary work. Further, this portion details how, in what way, and from whom I collected said data.

In order to adequately address the evaluation questions, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed. The quantitative data were existing data, and the qualitative data were data which I collected. The method of data collection was specific to each evaluation question. The following section discusses each evaluation question separately to explain (a) data collection, including sources, methods, and participants; (b) implementation, including instruments, procedures, and timeframe; and (c) analysis and expected results of the data.

Research Questions

The research will address the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of dual credit student participants regarding enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
2. To what extent does participation in a dual credit program influence the intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
3. How does the amount of college credit hours a student earns during high school influence whether or not the student enrolls at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

RQ1: What are the attitudes of dual credit student participants regarding enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

Data sources, data collection methods, and participants. The first evaluation question intended to determine the attitudes of former dual credit student participants regarding full-time enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus (hereafter referred to as Hinds Rankin) after high school graduation. An understanding of this question required a collection of primarily quantitative data from student participants. The questionnaire will also include an open-ended question to gather qualitative information from participants. As mentioned previously, the participants responding to this inquiry are former high school students who were previously enrolled in a Rankin County private or public school and also completed Hinds Community College courses in addition to their high school courses. Further, the data collection process explained here is also applicable to research question two.

In order to gather the desired qualitative and quantitative data, the participants were asked to answer a Likert scale questionnaire that includes statements regarding their attitudes about enrolling full-time at Hinds Rankin. Examples of the questions are provided in Figure 1 below. The student participants were selected based on their involvement in the dual credit program at Hinds Rankin. The questionnaire will be sent to participants via email, and the email will include a link to Qualtrics in order to complete the survey.

The goal was that the email and survey would reach students within the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Students had two weeks to respond. The language of the email explained the purpose of the study, addressed the minimal impact the study would have on participants, and stressed respect for the student’s privacy. Additionally, both the email sent to potential participants and the informed consent included the following clause:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, anonymous, and will not in any way impact your grades, current enrollment, or future enrollment at Hinds Community College. Furthermore, should you choose not to participate, it will not in any way impact your grades, current enrollment, or future enrollment at Hinds Community College.

As the survey was anonymous, no incentives were offered to respondents in order to protect the validity of the data.

The questionnaire included fifteen items that requested demographic questions as well as a four-item Likert scale of options ranging from one to four (1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *disagree*, and 4 = *strongly disagree*) to gather as much information as possible about participant intentions. The questionnaire also included one open-ended response that requested further thoughts from participants not addressed in the questions. The survey did not include more open-ended response questions to promote participation. Additionally, the questionnaire was designed to require approximately five to ten minutes of a participant’s time in hopes for higher response rates. The data obtained were original data. One major goal of the survey and collected data was to gain a better understanding of the student attitude toward full-time enrollment at Hinds Rankin.

Figure 1

Below are a number of statements concerning attitudes regarding enrollment after high school.				
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My dual enrollment experience overall with Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus influenced what institution I attended after high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participation in a dual enrollment program influenced my decision to enroll at Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus after high school graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My involvement in the dual enrollment program at Hinds Community College influenced my intention to attend an institution other than Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus after high school graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Implementation instruments, procedures, and timeframe. The gathering and analysis of data was carried out over the course of one academic semester, specifically the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Fall and spring academic semesters typically span five to six months of time. The questionnaire given to student participants was designed prior to the start of the research timeframe, and the questionnaire was given near the middle of the semester. Participants had two weeks to answer the questionnaire. These implementation instruments, procedures, and timeframe also apply to research question two.

Data analysis and expected results. The analysis process included analyzing both the qualitative and the quantitative data, but through different means. The key focus of analyzing the qualitative data from the open-ended question was to determine whether the student participants viewed Hinds Rankin as a first-choice option for postsecondary education, or if they believed it to be an option of necessity. The data were further analyzed to specifically address the research question(s) through scaled responses, but, as there was an open-ended portion to the questionnaire, themes needed to be gathered from responses.

RQ2: To what extent does participation in a dual credit program influence the intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

Data sources, data collection, and participants. Question two required both qualitative and quantitative data. The purpose of this question was to determine if participation in dual credit influenced a student participant's intention to attend Hinds Rankin after high school. In order to gather the desired qualitative and quantitative data, the participants were asked to answer a questionnaire that includes items regarding whether their participation in a dual credit program

influenced their intention to enroll at Hinds Rankin after high school. Examples of the questions are provided in Figure 1 above. A major goal of the survey was to determine if participation in dual credit influenced participants' intention to enroll at Hinds Rankin.

RQ3: How does the amount of college credit hours a student earns during high school influence whether the student enrolls at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

Data sources, data collection, and participants. Unlike the first two research questions, research question three focused entirely on quantitative data. The purpose of this question was to determine if earning a certain number of college credit hours influenced program participants' enrollment at Hinds Rankin or at any Hinds campus. The desired data were requested from Hinds Community College's Office of Institutional Research, who keeps record of student enrollment. These data were specific to dual credit program student participants who graduated in the 2019-2020 school year to determine whether the student participants enrolled at Hinds after graduating high school.

Implementation instruments, procedures, and timeframe. Since the data was entirely quantitative in nature, the process of gaining access involved direct communication with Hinds instead of the student participants themselves, and this allowed access more easily. The data were analyzed to determine the following:

1. The number of student participants who enrolled at Hinds Rankin after high school graduation
2. The number of student participants who enrolled at any Hinds Community College campus after high school graduation

3. The number of student participants who enrolled at another higher education institution after high school graduation
4. The number of student participants who did not enroll at any higher education institution after high school graduation

Discussion: Rationale and Potential Barriers

This study was intended to provide data analysis specific to Hinds Rankin regarding the impact participation in a dual credit has on a student's intention to enroll after high school graduation. Furthermore, the analysis of data was meticulously reviewed for accuracy as the results of the study and recommendations created from this analysis will be available to stakeholders. Potential barriers for this evaluation included:

1. Potential bias – Students may have had response bias in two different ways. First, the students may not feel comfortable sharing negative opinions within the survey. Second, the students may feel pressured to answer favorably to avoid embarrassment. As previously mentioned, both the participation email and informed consent included a clause informing students that neither participation nor responses affect them. Furthermore, no persons who may have authority over students (i.e., teachers, administrators, parents/guardians) were involved in the collection of data.
2. Unreliability – The instruments used in the evaluation have been established for the purpose of this evaluation, which means that the potential for error is possible.
3. COVID-19 – The COVID-19 pandemic can impact a student's ability (but not necessarily desirability) to attend college (i.e., parental unemployment, etc.).

In an effort to combat these barriers, the study was designed to be somewhat brief and cover only specific portions of the program itself. Furthermore, the study's design was such that it does not rely solely on original data, and it still offers recommendations even with low response rates.

CHAPTER IV – RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of influence, if any, dual enrollment participation has on a student's postsecondary intentions. In order to adequately address the evaluation questions, I gathered and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data were existing data, and the qualitative data were data which I collected. Qualitative data from the survey provided specific information about the effect dual enrollment had on the participants. Quantitative data included information regarding the number of dual enrollment student participants who attended Hinds Rankin, another Hinds campus, or another higher education institution after high school graduation. The method of data collection is specific to each evaluation question. The research was carried out to address the following questions:

4. What are the attitudes of dual credit student participants regarding enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
5. To what extent does participation in a dual credit program influence the intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
6. How does the amount of college credit hours a student earns during high school influence whether or not the student enrolls at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

Participant Demographics

The survey link was sent to 112 potential participants who were identified based on the previously mentioned criteria. Of this 112, 14 participants started the survey. Ultimately, 13 completed at least 90% of the questionnaire, and their responses were therefore analyzed in the

study. The questionnaire collected basic demographic information through multiple-choice questions. The following demographic information was provided by participants: age at the time of high school graduation, race, ethnicity, and first-generation college student status.

Of the respondents, 76.92% (n=10) were 18 years old at the time of high school graduation, 15.38% (n=2) were 19+, and 7.69% (n=1) were 17. Regarding race, 53.85% (n=7) described themselves as white, 23.08% (n=3) as black or African American, 15.38% (n=2) as Asian, and 7.69% (n=1) as two or more races. Additionally, 92.3% (n=12) responded that their ethnicity is not described as Hispanic or Latino, while 7.69% (n=1) indicated that their ethnicity is described as Hispanic or Latino. Finally, 38.46% (n=5) identified themselves as first-generation college students in comparison, while 61.54% (n=8) indicated that one or more family members were college graduates.

In addition to the demographic information, participants were also asked to give basic information about their former high schools and the number of dual enrollment hours earned while in high school. Of the total number of respondents, an overwhelming 92.31% (n=12) indicated that they attended a public Rankin County high school, while only 7.69% (n=1) indicated that they attended a private high school in Rankin County. Further, 53.85% (n=7) of respondents indicated that they were classified as a high school senior when they began dual credit courses and 46.15% (n=6) indicated that they were classified as a high school junior. Finally, when asked to select which number best describes the number of students at their former high schools, 38.46% (n=5) responded 1500+ students, 30.77% (n=4) responded 1-499 students, 15.38% (n=2) responded 500-999 students, and 15.38% (n=2) responded 1000-1499 students. As Figure 2 demonstrates, of the 13 respondents, 7.69% (n=1) earned 31+ credit hours, 7.69% (n=1) earned 25-30 credit hours, 7.69% (n=1) earned 19-24 credit hours, 15.28% (n=2) earned 1-6

credit hours, 23.08% (n=3) earned 13-18 credit hours, and 38.46% (n=5) earned 7-12 credit hours.

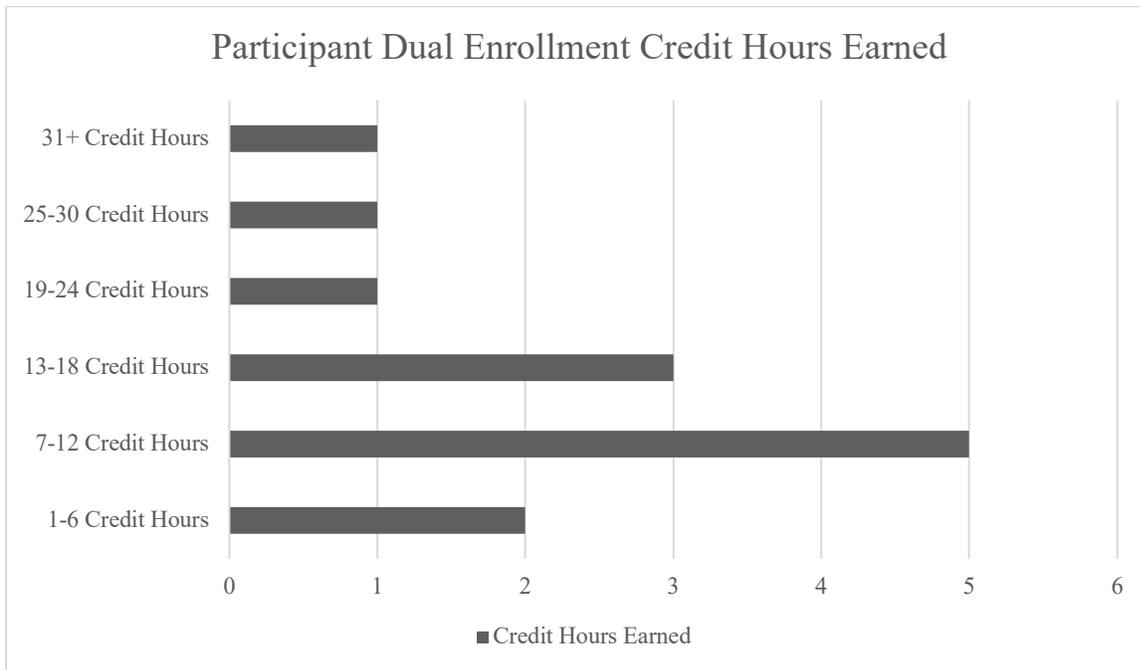


Figure 2. Student Participant Dual Enrollment Credit Hours Earned. This figure shows the number of dual enrollment credit hours earned by the respondents.

Themes from Write-in Responses

Though the survey mostly consisted of multiple-choice and Likert scale questions, the participants were given an opportunity to provide a write-in response if desired. In order to avoid potentially breaking anonymity, the statement for the write-in response was very general and not intended to influence any certain type of response. As the write-in response portion of the questionnaire was an optional question, not every participant responded. However, of the 13 total participant responses, 9 did provide additional write-in responses, and the following themes emerged.

Financial Benefit

When asked to provide additional write-in responses, 30% (n=3) of the optional responses mentioned the financial benefit of participating in dual enrollment courses and continuing at Hinds after high school graduation. One participant shared, “I went to Hinds to save money...” Similarly, another participant stated, “It helped me realize it was a good way for me to save money until I went to a 4-year university.” Finally, one participant expressed, “Dual credit enrollment at Hinds provided me with the mindset of receiving as many credit hours from Hinds as possible...to help with paying for the rest of my undergraduate degree.”

Preparation for Collegiate Rigor and Expectations

In addition to discussing the financial aspects of dual enrollment participation, 30% (n=3) of respondents also mentioned how dual enrollment helped them feel more prepared for transitioning from high school to college. For example, one participant wrote, “I felt better prepared for college since I had taken dual enrollment classes while in high school.” Another participant shared similar thoughts and said, “Gaining those hours was a plus in getting ahead in preparation of college...” A final participant shared, “Participating in dual credit courses through Hinds while being in high school helped me prepare for the college classroom experience, and I believe it helped my transition from high school college...”

Phases of Research

Two phases of research were conducted as a part of this study. First, the researcher used historical data to analyze the number of former dual enrollment student participants who attended Hinds Rankin, another Hinds campus, or another higher education institution after high school graduation. The second phase involved sending those students who met the requirements a survey inquiring about the effect of dual enrollment and analyzing the responses.

Phase 1: Historical Data Review

The first data set were obtained from Hinds Community College's Office of Institutional Research. This data consisted of numerical information regarding the number of dual enrollment student participants from a Rankin County public or private high school who graduated from said high school in the 2019-2020 academic year and their enrollment post-high school graduation. Of interest for this study was the number of students who met the criteria and remain enrolled at Hinds at any of the campus locations presently, which, though not historical, also provide some insight into potential long-term effects.

Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the 692 total number of students who met the criteria with the number of students who immediately enrolled at Hinds in the fall 2020 semester, the number of students who enrolled at other institutions, and the number of students who remain enrolled at Hinds currently. Of the total population, 57.8% (n=400) did not attend Hinds at all after high school graduation, 26% (n=180) attended Hinds after high school graduation but are not currently enrolled at Hinds, and 16.2% (112) are enrolled at Hinds currently. Of note, too, is that of the 292 students that attended Hinds after high school graduation or are presently enrolled at Hinds, 61.3% (n=179) attended the Hinds Rankin campus specifically.

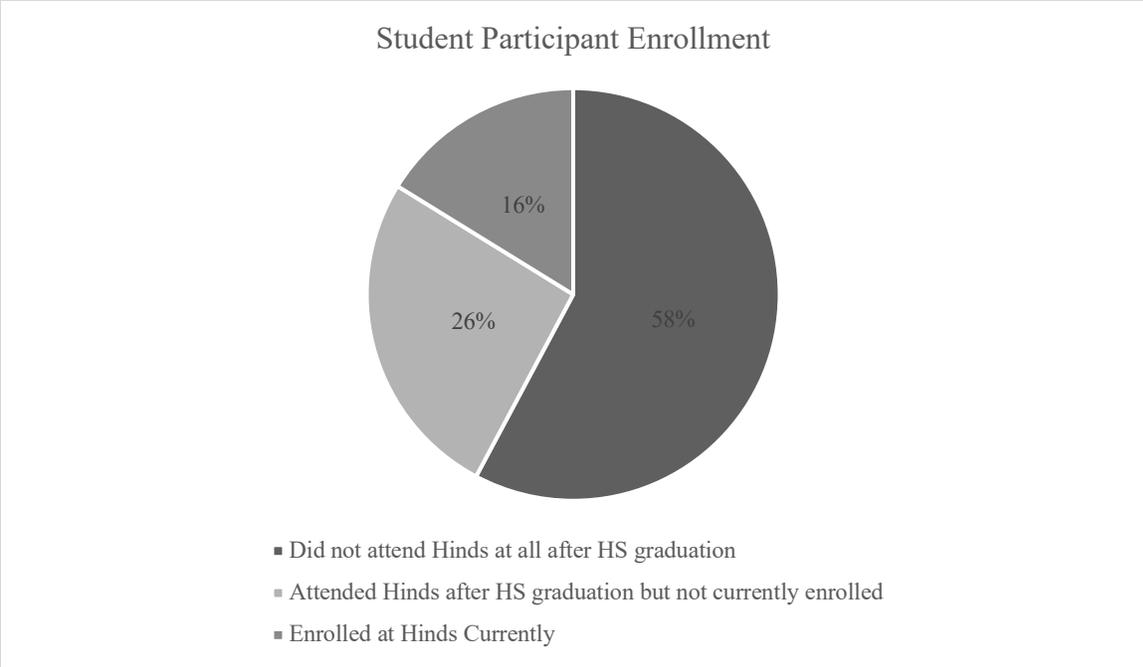


Figure 3. Student Participant Enrollment. This figure shows the numerical breakdown of enrollment after high school graduation.

Of the 692 total number of students who met the criteria, the majority did not attend Hinds in any capacity after high school graduation. Additionally, though all academic programs of study at Hinds essentially take two academic years to complete, only 16.2% (n=112) of the 692 total population remain enrolled at Hinds presently. One possible explanation is students potentially enrolling in programs with a shorter completion time, such as career and technical programs, but it is still somewhat unlikely that these students would no longer be enrolled if that were so.

Phase 2: Student Survey and Analysis of Responses

The second set of data were the results of a survey sent to students who met the criteria of participation in this study. The researcher was given an anonymous listserv of student emails from Hinds Community College’s Office of Institutional Research, and the potential participants of the survey remained anonymous throughout the study. An anonymous link to the electronic

survey was sent to the listserv provided. The link directed participants to a Qualtrics questionnaire that included statements regarding participation in dual enrollment and basic demographic information. Upon responding to these statements, participants were given a voluntary opportunity to provide an additional information.

The statements regarding dual enrollment participation were organized into groups. The first group of statements were specific to how overall participation may or may not have influenced the participant, and the second group of statements asked about whether a certain number of hours may or may not have influence the participant. Both groups of statements used a Likert scale response system to indicate participants' agreement or disagreement with each statement. Regarding overall participation, 53.85% (n=7) of respondents indicated that their dual enrollment experience influenced what institution they attended after high school graduation, and 46.15% (n=6) indicated that their participation influenced their decision to enroll at Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus after high school graduation. Figure 4 shows the responses regarding how overall participation in dual enrollment influenced the participants' enrollment after high school graduation. The statements for response in this group regarding overall participation were:

1. My dual enrollment experience overall with Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus influenced what institution I attended after high school.
2. Participation in a dual enrollment program influenced my decision to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation.

3. My involvement in the dual enrollment program at Hinds Community College influenced my intention to attend an institution other than Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation.

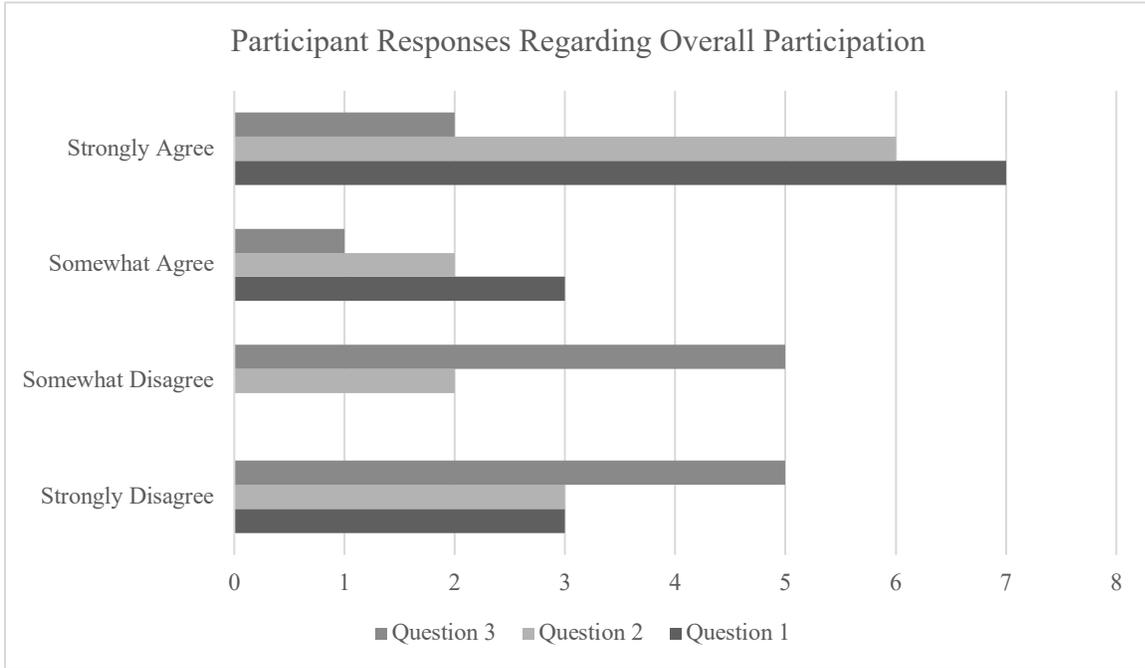


Figure 4. Participant Responses Regarding Overall Participation. This figure shows the participant responses regarding overall dual enrollment participation.

Figure 5 shows the responses regarding how the number dual enrollment credit hours influenced the participants’ enrollment after high school graduation. The statements for response in this group regarding credit hours were:

1. The number of dual credit hours I earned influenced what institution I attended after high school graduation.
2. If I had earned more dual credit hours, I would have been less likely to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation.

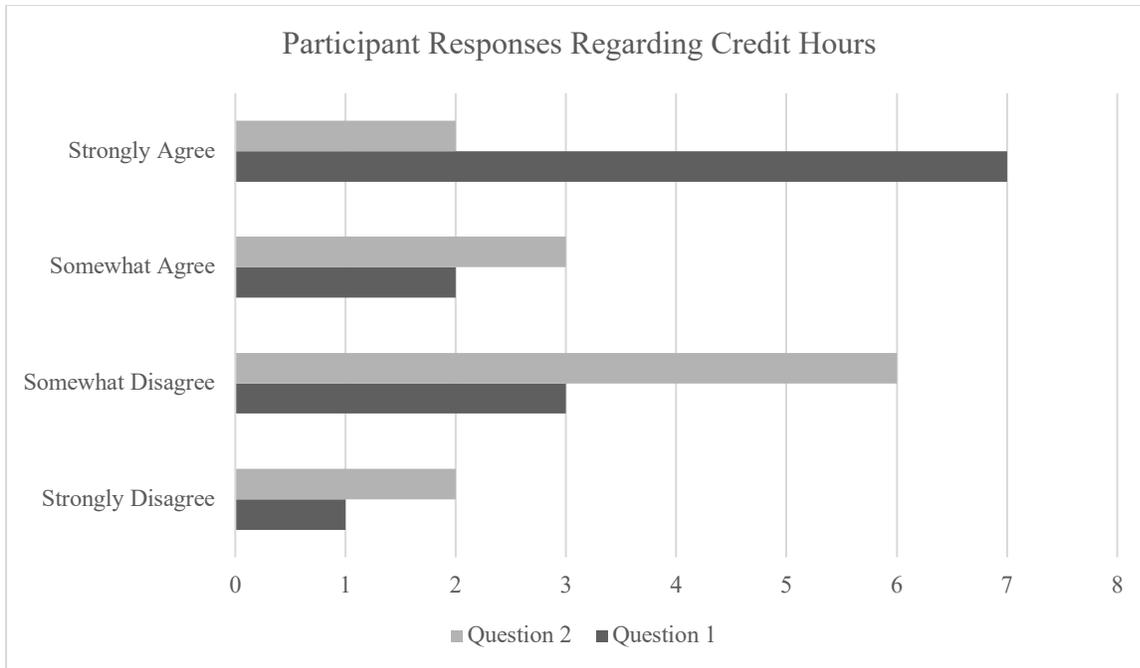


Figure 5. Participant Responses Regarding Credit Hours. This figure shows the participant responses regarding the number of dual enrollment credit hours earned.

This chapter provided the results and analysis of the data collected from participant responses to the Qualtrics survey, which asked participants to respond to a series of statements regarding their dual enrollment participation. In addition to the survey, historical data regarding enrollment after high school graduation by the population were discussed. Further, this chapter also shared the responses from participants regarding basic demographic information and information regarding their former Rankin County high schools. Additionally, this chapter presented some common themes found in the optional write-in responses from the survey. Chapter V of this study will also provide more detailed information regarding analysis of the historical and survey data.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

Summary of Study

This study sought to determine the level of influence participation in a dual enrollment program may have on a student's intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation. Historical data provided by Hinds Community College's Office of Institutional Research and survey responses were used to assess the level of influence and which factors could potentially affect the level of influence. Three research questions were addressed in this study.

1. What are the attitudes of dual credit student participants regarding enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
2. To what extent does participation in a dual credit program influence the intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?
3. How does the amount of college credit hours a student earns during high school influence whether or not the student enrolls at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school?

The first research question addressed the attitudes of student participants regarding enrollment at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school. After reviewing the historical data provided by Hinds Community College's Office of Institutional Research, it appears that the attitudes of the population were most likely either negative or indifferent, as an overwhelming majority did not choose to enroll at any Hinds campus after high school graduation. The survey responses further expressed the sentiment of indifference, as the respondents did not seem to necessarily have a positive attitude towards Hinds so much as they

were simply staying enrolled where they had begun coursework. Additionally, it is important to note that the lack of data regarding the attitudes of students who did not attend Hinds is a limitation in this study. One potential explanation for an indifference for the institution is that the students likely did not have any experiences on-campus or interacting with many Hinds employees. None of the responses from the survey participants indicated a relationship of any kind with any Hinds faculty or employee.

Similar to the first research question, the second research question aimed to determine how overall participation in a dual enrollment program influenced the participants' decision to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation. Based on the survey responses, it seems that dual enrollment participation does influence participants' postsecondary enrollment. Further, based on the themes from the optional write-in responses, students are likely to continue at Hinds Community College because they feel they have gained knowledge about Hinds and how the institution operates through their participation in its dual enrollment program. However, when considering the historical enrollment data provided by Hinds Community College's Office of Institutional Research, most students did not attend Hinds after participation in its dual enrollment, so it is important to note that it is unlikely that most of this population shared the sentiments about Hinds that the students who responded to the survey shared.

The third research question involved determining whether the number of dual enrollment credit hours a student earns influences their decision to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation. This study simply asked students to provide the number of credit hours they earned and did not ask them to elaborate on the explanation of that number. A potential area of future research could be determining how students determine the

number of credit hours they wish to earn. Certainly, each student is unique and so each student will potentially have a number of credit hours earned that is unique to them; however, the responses from the participants were consistent in that the number of credit hours earned did have an influence in their postsecondary enrollment. Interestingly, there was a mix of responses on the number of credit hours earned, so it was unclear if a certain number of credit hours has more influence than another. An area of further study may be to determine if there is a certain number that correlates with postsecondary enrollment.

Implications

The findings from this study reinforce that there is a direct correlation between dual enrollment participation and postsecondary enrollment for the student population. As both the literature surrounding dual enrollment and the responses from the student population suggest, dual enrollment is seen as a method to help prepare students for collegiate level rigor and expectations while still providing secondary level support to students. However, as evidenced in both the student responses and historical enrollment data, the dual enrollment program at Hinds Community College is not doing enough to ensure that its students are continuing their educational journeys at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus or other Hinds campuses. As dual enrollment will only continue to grow in number of students and schools, Hinds stakeholders and other higher education administrators must recognize the value in recruiting and supporting dual enrollment students.

An additional area of recommendation for stakeholders would be to potentially determine whether the number of dual enrollment credit hours should be limited for students to prevent the participants from skipping community college entirely. In the case of Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus, it is unknown if a certain number of hours correlates with the high number of

students who did not attend after high school graduation, but this information could potentially influence College policy and would likely be worth pursuing.

The historical data portion of this research also revealed a potential lack of retention in this student population. As evidenced in the data, a concerning number of students who did enroll at Hinds Community College on any campus after high school graduation are no longer enrolled presently. Further research may be needed to determine more ways to support students who are former dual enrollment students and improve retention of this student population.

Limitations and Recommendations

This section presents the limitations of this study and offers recommendations for future research studies regarding dual enrollment programs. A particular area of research that could benefit the higher education community trying to serve dual enrollment students, and the Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus specifically, is how to better recruit them for enrollment after high school graduation. Further, though some basic demographic information about the respondents was collected, the demographic information was not analyzed to determine any sort of variable specific to demographic factors exists. Additionally, very little qualitative data was gathered from the respondents and the data, therefore, cannot provide further clarification to participant responses. An entirely qualitative method study could potentially address and determine a more comprehensive understanding of the reasoning behind participants’ responses.

A major limitation to this study was a low response rate from the student population. However, as the student population for the study was already specific to only one Hinds Community College campus, this was not entirely unexpected by the researcher. Future research could explore beyond one specific campus to include all six Hinds Community College campuses or even all of the Mississippi community colleges. Additionally, a study could be

conducted to obtain information from current participants of a dual enrollment program. As this study only gathered data from students who chose to attend Hinds Community College after high school graduation, it may be enlightening for Hinds administration and stakeholders to investigate students who have not yet made the decision of where to attend after high school graduation. Certainly, a study involving that many potential participants who are also considered minors would have inherent limitations, as the researcher would need to gain parental permission in addition to being able determine a way to contact the students themselves. Furthermore, other higher education institutions should consider conducting research of this nature in order to better understand the needs of the dual enrollment population. As the number of programs grow, so should the interest of higher education stakeholders in maintaining best practices for these students.

Conclusion

This study sought to determine the level of influence participation in a dual enrollment program may have on a student's intention to enroll at Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus after high school graduation. The study involved two phases: historical data review and a student survey and analysis of the responses. The first phase of the research showed that a concerning number of the student population studied in this research did not attend Hinds Community College at all after high school graduation. Furthermore, of the students that did, many did not remain enrolled for long. Following the analysis of the historical data, the second phase of research analyzed a series of responses by the student participants regarding the level of influence overall participation and the number of dual enrollment credit hours earned had on the respondents. The results of the survey did not necessarily link the number of credit hours with influence, but it did show that overall participation does appear to influence the student

populations' postsecondary enrollment. Although more research is certainly needed on the topic of dual enrollment, Hinds Community College – Rankin Campus, other Hinds Community College campuses, and other higher education institutions are surely impacted by this program.

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APPENDIX A

Research Suvery

Informed Consent: Thank you for your potential participation in my study. My name is Kellie Herrington, and I am a doctoral student at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM). My study has been approved through USM's IRB and has the approval identifier of 21-007. My study seeks to collect data on how dual credit participation may have impacted your long-term educational journey, but it does not in any way pose a risk to you or that educational journey. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, anonymous, and will not in any way impact your grades, current enrollment, or future enrollment at Hinds Community College. Furthermore, should you choose not to participate, it will not in any way impact your grades, current enrollment, or future enrollment at Hinds Community College. The data from this study will remain anonymous and will be disposed of no later than February 2024. By clicking "I agree" below, you agree to be a participant in this study.

I agree

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Dual Credit Block

Below are a number of statements concerning attitudes regarding enrollment after high school.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My dual enrollment experience overall with Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus influenced what institution I attended after high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participation in a dual enrollment program influenced my decision to enroll at Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus after high school graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My involvement
in the dual
enrollment
program at Hinds
Community
College
influenced my
intention to attend
an institution
other than Hinds
Community
College - Rankin
Campus after high
school graduation.



Page Break

I earned the following TOTAL number of dual credit hours from Hinds Community College.

- 1-6 credit hours
 - 7-12 credit hours
 - 13-18 credit hours
 - 19-24 credit hours
 - 25-30 credit hours
 - 31+ credit hours
-

Below are a number of statements concerning attitudes regarding number of dual credit hours earned.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The number of dual credit hours I earned influenced what institution I attended after high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I had earned more dual credit hours, I would have been less likely to enroll at Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus after high school graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Please include additional comments regarding how participation in a dual credit program influenced your intention to enroll at Hinds Community College - Rankin Campus after high school.

End of Block: Dual Credit Block

Start of Block: Demographic Block

Which of the following best describes the type of high school you attended?

- Public
- Private

Page Break

Which of the following classifications best describes you at the time you began dual credit courses?

- High school senior
- High school junior

Page Break _____

What was your age at the time of your high school graduation?

- Younger than 17
- 17
- 18
- 19+

Page Break _____

Which of the following race(s) best describes you?

- Black or African-American
- White
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races

Page Break

Which ethnicity best describes you?

Not Hispanic or Latino

Hispanic or Latino

Page Break

Are one or more members of your family college graduates?

Yes

No

Page Break

Which of the following best describes the number of students at your former high school?

- 1500+
- 1000-1499
- 500-999
- 1-499

End of Block: Demographic Block

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Letter

Office of
Research Integrity



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NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident submission on InfoEd IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 21-007
PROJECT TITLE: The Effect on Enrollment at Hinds Community College Among Dual Enrollment Secondary Students
SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Educational Research & Administration
RESEARCHERS: PI: Kellie Herrington
Investigators: Herrington, Kellie--Wallace, Jason K~
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved
CATEGORY: Expedited Category
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 17-Feb-2022 to 16-Feb-2023

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald Sacco".

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson