Assessing the Need for Community College Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Mississippi

Johannah Bell Williams

University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations

Part of the Community College Leadership Commons

Recommended Citation

Williams, Johannah Bell, "Assessing the Need for Community College Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Mississippi" (2010). Dissertations. 963.
https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/963

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact aquilastaff@usm.edu.
ASSESSING THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS IN MISSISSIPPI

by

Johannah Bell Williams

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010
ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREES IN MISSISSIPPI

by Johannah Bell Williams

August 2010

This study involved assessing the professional and personal opinions of Mississippi community college students, faculty and administrators regarding the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi. The goal of this study was to determine if students, faculty and administrators at Mississippi community colleges believed that the implementation of baccalaureate degree programs at their respective colleges would be beneficial to the college and to the students. Furthermore, this study sought to determine if the opinions of said participants regarding the implementation of baccalaureate degree programs were affected by certain factors. Students, faculty and administrators from each of the 15 community colleges in Mississippi (as well as their associated branch campuses) were invited to participate in the survey process.

A majority of the students, faculty and administrators surveyed reported a need for community college baccalaureate degree programs. However, a majority of the individuals surveyed also believed that students could obtain baccalaureate degrees whether their local community colleges offered them or not. Furthermore, many of the factors examined did not have a significant effect on reported need. Nontraditional students, first generation students and students with family responsibilities, as well as
female employees, had a significant effect on reported need in a positive direction.

Employees listed in the “other” race category also had a significant effect on reported need, but in a negative direction.
The University of Southern Mississippi

ASSESSING THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS IN MISSISSIPPI

by

Johannah Bell Williams

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

Dr. Willie Pierce

__________________________
Director

Dr. Amy Townsend

__________________________

Dr. Debra Gentry

__________________________

Dr. Richard Mohn

__________________________

Dr. Susan A. Siltanen

__________________________
Dean of the Graduate School

August 2010
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, James and Delois Williams, who always set the academic bar just beyond my reach so that I would always strive to be better; and to my ten brothers and sisters, Michael, Zakia, Reginald, Malcolm, Solomon, Dawn, Angela, Tina, Jamie and Lois, without whom I could not have completed this process. A special dedication is reserved for Michael, who showed me it was possible, and for my lovely niece Kali.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great sincerity that I would like to thank each of those individuals who contributed to my successful completion of this process. To my committee chair, Dr. Willie Pierce, thank you for offering your wisdom and support throughout this process and for being so flexible and willing to compromise your personal time when I needed it. To Dr. Amy Townsend, I cannot express how much your being there has meant to me. I cannot imagine trying to make it through this process without your guidance. Your patience, understanding, encouragement and support has been matched by few and is greatly appreciated. To Dr. Debra Gentry, thank you for your blunt honesty and for asking realistic questions. Your kindness has always been calming and your advice and support is greatly appreciated. To Dr. Richard Mohn, you are truly one of the most patient professors I have ever known. Thank you for always being accessible and for your rapid responses to all of my inquiries. Additionally, I would like to thank you for not sprinting in the opposite direction after realizing that my study would result in the tallest mountain of statistical data.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................. ii

DEDICATION ............................................................................................................................ iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................................... v

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ..................................................................................................... viii

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................... ix

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................. 1

Statement of the Problem
Research Questions and Hypotheses
Definition of Terms
Delimitations
Assumptions
Justification

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ............................................................................................ 14

The American Community College: A Brief Historical View
Mississippi Community Colleges: A Brief Historical View
The American Community College: A Brief View of Its Growth and Expansion
Mississippi Community Colleges: A Brief View of Their Growth and Expansion
The Community College Mission
Characteristics of Community College Students
Stereotypical Perceptions of Community College Students
Community College Response to Unique Student Needs
Learning Theories and the Community College Student
Characteristics of Community College Faculty
The Role of the Baccalaureate Degree in Improving the Image of Mississippi
The Community College Baccalaureate Degree
Theoretical Framework

III. METHODOLOGY .......................................................................................................... 64

Research Design
Participants
Instrumentation
Procedures
Student Process
Faculty/Administrator Process

IV. RESULTS ...................................................................................................75

Demographics
Statistical Analysis
Ancillary Findings
Assumptions and Diagnostics

V. DISCUSSION ..........................................................................................102

Conclusions and Discussion
Limitations
Recommendations
Recommendations for Future Research

APPENDIXES .................................................................................................................109

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................123
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Map of the 15 Participating Community Colleges ........................................75
2. Items Used to Measure Reported Need (Student Survey Instrument) ............82
3. Items Used to Measure Reported Need (Employee Survey Instrument) ........83
# LIST OF TABLES

1. Participant Characteristics (Students) ................................................................. 78
2. Participant Characteristics (Employees) ............................................................... 80
3. Reported Need (Students) .................................................................................... 85
4. Reported Need (Employees) ................................................................................ 88
5. Group Statistics .................................................................................................... 92
6. Independent Samples T-Test ................................................................................ 92
7. Employee vs. Student Responses ........................................................................ 93
8. Coefficients Table (Students) ............................................................................. 96
9. Coefficients Table (Employees) .......................................................................... 98
10. Group Statistics .................................................................................................. 100
11. Independent Samples T-Test ............................................................................... 100
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The American community college has been in existence for over 100 years. Throughout its existence, it has, on a consistent basis, served the needs of the local community as well as society. In order to remain in alignment with its mission to serve the community, the American community college has consistently expanded its mission and purpose. History indicates that as the needs of the community and society change, so must the mission and purpose of the community college (Vaughan, 2006).

As is the case for American community colleges, Mississippi community colleges have always expanded to meet the needs of their students and the local community. One such expansion that may be necessary is the consideration of offering a baccalaureate degree through the community college; this major expansion may be necessary if a changing economic society warrants such an offering. According to Young and Ewing (1978), Mississippi community colleges, since their beginning in 1922, have consistently expanded in a variety of ways in order to “meet the total educational needs of youth and adults in each junior college district” (p. 19). In today’s changing times, there is dire need for increased access to the baccalaureate degree. According to Walker (1997), although there is currently a rising demand for the baccalaureate degree, the rising demand is accompanied by increasing costs which results in limited access. Walker explains that the economic health and social welfare of our nation depends heavily on widespread access to higher education, and if community colleges expand their mission to include the baccalaureate degree while maintaining their open-door philosophy and
responsiveness to community needs, the problems of rising demand, access and cost might be partly resolved.

As a result of an extensive case study conducted on Westark College (located in Fort Smith, Arkansas) and its baccalaureate degree initiative, McKee (2005) found that, among other stakeholders, Westark Community College’s faculty, students and administrators recognized the need for a manufacturing technology baccalaureate degree, and through a combined effort, successfully initiated the establishment of the manufacturing technology baccalaureate degree program. As a result of offering this baccalaureate degree, according to McKee, Westark was successful in meeting the employment needs of local manufacturing companies as well as providing employment opportunities for students that they may not have otherwise received. Perhaps, if the students, faculty and administrators of Westark College had not recognized the need for a baccalaureate degree program, community employers and their students would not have experienced these major economic advancements. Therefore, as was the case for Westark, it is necessary to determine if students, faculty and administrators at Mississippi community colleges might benefit similarly from such an expansion.

In a similar study conducted at Great Basin College (GBC), located in Elko, Nevada, Remington and Remington (2005) discovered that community stakeholders were strong advocates of GBC offering an education baccalaureate degree to train and provide teachers for the local community. According to Remington and Remington, GBC learned through its baccalaureate degree initiative that “it is beneficial for a college to reexamine its mission, re-envision its future, reassess its standards and outcomes and create new programs and curricula” (p. 148).
According to Walker (1997), regional universities are not always regionally, geographically or academically accessible to the masses. Currently, many potential baccalaureate degree candidates are denied access due to financial and academic barriers. Furthermore, according to Walker (2001), the geographical locations of four-year institutions also present a barrier for potential students. As an increasing number of college students are economically disadvantaged and limited in time and place-bound as a result of being faced with family and job responsibilities, they may not be able to pursue a baccalaureate degree through the traditional means of enrolling at a four-year institution (Fanelli, 2007; Lewin, 2009; Smith & Holcombe, 2008). Lower tuition costs and convenient geographical locations offered by community colleges would accommodate potential baccalaureate degree recipients. In an effort to support his views, Walker (2001) conducted surveys and focus groups and his findings demonstrated that many community college students are interested in obtaining baccalaureate degrees from the community college that they attend as they are either not interested in or unable to transfer to a four-year degree granting institution.

Many individuals who have a desire to obtain a baccalaureate degree are simply unable to because their financial, academic or geographical predicaments create impossible barriers. Icek Ajzen (1985) proposed the Theory of Planned Behavior which explains the links between one’s attitude toward a particular behavior, the social norms surrounding that behavior and one’s control over being able to engage/participate in the behavior. Ajzen (1991) explains that one’s likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior is dependent upon three things: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm relating to the behavior and perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (1985) states that if one’s attitude
toward a particular behavior is positive and the behavior is socially accepted as positive, one will likely engage in that behavior but only if one has perceived behavioral control. Simply put, even if a person’s attitude toward a particular behavior is overwhelmingly positive, they are only likely to engage in the behavior if they have complete control over the behavior or, in other words, they do not perceive that any particular barriers will prevent them from engaging in the behavior (e.g. financial, geographical, academic, etc.). In many cases, individuals are denied access to baccalaureate degrees because, although they are in favor of seeking the degree, their lack of control over individual barriers prevents them from obtaining the degree. Community college baccalaureate degree programs seek to eliminate those barriers and give individuals behavioral control in the realm of degree attainment.

This study sought to determine if students, faculty and administrators from Mississippi’s community college system believed that community college baccalaureate degree programs would eliminate certain barriers to the baccalaureate degree and provide Mississippi community college students with control over their abilities to obtain a baccalaureate degree. As the Theory of Planned Behavior is said to be applicable in all situations relating to human behavior, it is relevant in this case as this study seeks to discover if community college baccalaureate degree programs will, by eliminating certain barriers and increasing one’s perceived behavioral control over obtaining a baccalaureate degree, increase the number of baccalaureate degree recipients in Mississippi.

The state of Mississippi would benefit from knowing if the population that is served by Mississippi community colleges is in agreement with Walker (1997). Understanding the student, faculty and administrative attitudes toward the need for
community college baccalaureate degrees is vital to understanding the path Mississippi community colleges should follow in order to maintain their reputation of expanding their curriculum to meet the needs of students and the local community. As the purpose of this study is to determine student attitude (among other college personnel) toward the need for the community college baccalaureate degree, the results of this study will likely indicate whether Mississippi community college students believe that the implementation of baccalaureate degree programs at their respective community colleges is necessary and beneficial to their baccalaureate degree attainment.

If the student attitude toward the community college baccalaureate degree is overwhelmingly positive, one can be assured that the positive attitudes toward the need for such a degree would likely lead to enrollment in baccalaureate programs should they be implemented into the Mississippi community college system. Ajzen & Fishbein’s (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action indicates that whether or not a person engages in a certain behavior is dependent on the person’s attitude toward the behavior. According to Ajzen & Fishbein, whether a person will voluntarily engage in a particular behavior can be foreseen based on whether or not the person has a positive attitude about the behavior. In other words, if a person has a positive attitude about a particular behavior, he or she will likely engage in that behavior. Thus, if student attitudes toward community college baccalaureate degree programs are positive, they will likely participate in the programs if implemented. According to Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw (1988), the correlation between attitudes and behavioral intentions are extremely high.
Statement of the Problem

An important issue guiding the direction of this study is access to the baccalaureate degree. As society continues to evolve on a global and economic scale, access to the baccalaureate degree becomes more important. Walker (1997) explains that the current problem in higher education is that there is a rising demand for, increasing cost of, and limited access to, the baccalaureate degree. As a result, according to Walker, many community college leaders believe that allowing community colleges to implement baccalaureate degree programs would increase access to the baccalaureate degree and, in turn, improve the lives of American citizens. This study investigated whether Mississippi community college students, faculty and administrators believe that the community college baccalaureate degree is necessary.

Society is rapidly changing which has resulted in increased educational demands from employers. Walker & Zeiss (2000) explain that although, in the not-so-distant past, many employers accepted a high-school degree as an acceptable entry-level employment requirement; currently, many of those same employers are requesting entry-level requirements of at least a baccalaureate degree. Furthermore, due to financial, academic and geographical barriers, not all potential baccalaureate degree recipients are able to attend four-year institutions. Thus, it is believed that community college baccalaureate degree programs will provide a solution to the problem of limited baccalaureate degree access. This study investigated whether community college students believed that the implementation of baccalaureate degree programs at their respective community colleges was vital to their ability to obtain a baccalaureate degree.
According to a survey published by the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), the state of Mississippi ranks number 49 nationally in the percentage of people aged 25 or older who have completed the requirements for a baccalaureate degree. The U.S. Census Bureau explains that only 19% of Mississippi residents over the age of 25 have obtained a baccalaureate degree. There is a 28% overall baccalaureate degree attainment rate in the United States. Overall, this study may aid state leaders in determining if community college baccalaureate degree programs would be a necessary asset to higher education in Mississippi and if they are a necessary means of increasing access to the baccalaureate degree.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The goal of this project was threefold: a) to determine the attitudes and personal opinions of community college students in Mississippi concerning the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi; b) to determine the attitudes as well as personal and professional opinions of community college administrators and faculty members in Mississippi, and individuals from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) concerning the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi; and c) to determine if the attitudes, personal and professional opinions of students, faculty and administrators concerning the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi are affected by such factors as race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, geographic location, employment status, academic ability, college distance from closest four-year institution, first generation college student status, family status and years of experience.
Through the distribution of survey instruments relating to student, faculty and administrative attitudes toward the community college baccalaureate degree and through qualitative research of the individuals from Mississippi State Board for Community & Junior Colleges, the following research questions were examined:

1. **How strongly do Mississippi community college administrators, faculty and students report the need for the community college baccalaureate degree?**

   This was an exploratory research question. The researcher did not have a directional hypothesis regarding this question as there has been no research and, thus, there is no literature that supports such a hypothesis.

2. **Is the student reported need for community college baccalaureate degree programs different from that of faculty and administrators?**

   This was also an exploratory research question. The researcher did not have a directional hypothesis regarding this question as there has been no research and thus there is no literature that supports such a hypothesis.

3. **Is the Mississippi community college student reported need for the community college baccalaureate degree affected by race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, geographic location, employment status, academic ability, college distance from closest four-year institution, first generation college student status or family status?**

   The researcher predicted that ethnic minorities, females, older (nontraditional) students, students with a lower socioeconomic status, students who live a considerable distance from a four-year institution, students with family
responsibilities, first generation students, and students with full-time jobs would report a higher need for the degree.

4. *Is the Mississippi community college faculty and administration reported need for the community college baccalaureate degree affected by race, years of experience, gender, college distance from the nearest four year institution or age?*

This was also an exploratory research question. The researcher did not have a directional hypothesis regarding this question as there has been no research and thus, there is no literature that supports such a hypothesis.

5. *What are the attitudes of representatives of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges toward community college baccalaureate degree programs?*

This question represents the qualitative component of the study. Individuals from the Mississippi State Board for Community & Junior Colleges were contacted, but a large majority was unwilling to participate in the study. Thus, this question remains unanswered.

**Definition of Terms**

**Applied Baccalaureate.** A degree that trains one specifically to work in one’s field of study through hands-on training and provides competencies relevant to a specific workforce environment (Walker & Floyd, 2005).

**Baccalaureate Degree.** A degree that is awarded by a college or university upon the completion of at least four years of course-work (Agnes, 1999).

**Community College.** “Any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as the highest degree” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 5).
**Community College Baccalaureate (CCB).** “A bachelor’s degree awarded by a community college” (Townsend, 2005, p. 179).

**Mission.** The reason an organization was created; a purpose or reason for its existence (Radkte, 1998).

**Expansion.** To increase in extent, volume or scope (Agnes, 1999).

**Workforce Baccalaureate Degree.** A baccalaureate degree that provides the knowledge and skills required for the local workforce (Walker & Floyd, 2005).

**Place-Bound.** Inability to relocate for a variety of reasons including family or employment responsibilities (Walker, 1999).

**Higher Education.** “Postsecondary education at colleges, universities, junior or community colleges, professional schools, technical institutes, and teacher-training schools” (USDS, 2008, p. 5).

**Mission Creep.** The deviation of an organization from its original purpose or reason for existence.

**Faculty.** All professors or instructors (full-time or part-time; face-to-face, online, hybrid or any combination of the three) at a post-secondary institution.

**Administrator.** “One who administers especially business, school, or governmental affairs” (Webster’s New Dictionary, 2006).

**Student.** “One who attends a school” (Webster’s New Dictionary, 2006).

**Delimitations**

The research was conducted with the following delimitations:

1. Survey distributions were limited to faculty, students and administrators at the 15 Mississippi community colleges and their associated branches.
2. Survey distributions were limited to 50 students at each main campus, 25 students at each branch campus, 25 faculty members and administrators from each main campus, and 10 faculty members and administrators from each branch campus at each community college in Mississippi.

3. Research results and findings were only reflective of the state of Mississippi.

Assumptions

1. Students, faculty and administrators provided honest survey responses.
2. Survey questions were clear and were understood correctly by those surveyed.

Justification

This study was conducted as a means of determining if students, faculty and administrators believe that the community college baccalaureate degree would be a necessary asset in the state of Mississippi. This study is beneficial in that it has the potential to aid in determining if the growing needs of community college students are currently being met in Mississippi. In addition, this study offers statistical data that may aid Mississippi community college leaders in making informed decisions regarding the future direction of Mississippi community colleges. As this study determined if students, faculty and administrators are in agreement on whether the community college baccalaureate degree is necessary, it may also provide state leaders with advance notice of potential conflicts and disagreements should they decide to consider implementing such programs at the community college. Knowing how the three most important entities at a community college perceive the need for a bold new initiative will aid state leaders in decision making processes regarding the Mississippi community college system.
Currently, there is limited literature relating to the community college baccalaureate degree and there are only a few studies that have been conducted as a means of determining the necessity of such a degree. Therefore, this study will add to a very limited body of research on a topic that is important to the higher education field. Additionally, this study will increase awareness of the community college baccalaureate degree as knowledge of this degree is not yet widespread. Another important aspect of this study is that it will aid in determining if there are disagreements between faculty, students and administrators in the realm of what they perceive to be important to the educational success of Mississippi community college students. Furthermore, if such disagreements exist, this study may aid in determining the variables that cause the differences in opinion (i.e. age, race, gender, etc.). Alternatively, if there are no disagreements, this study will help to determine if students, faculty and administrators are in agreement on the fact that the community college baccalaureate degree either is or is not necessary. Knowing this will aid state leaders in determining if this topic is one that warrants further investigation and possible implementation.

This study may also add insight into possibilities for increasing the low number of Mississippians who have completed a baccalaureate degree and improving the educational profile of the State. Considering the fact that Mississippi ranks nationally at number 49 in baccalaureate degree attainment and Mississippi’s overall educational profile is weak, discovering if community college baccalaureate degree programs might increase access to the baccalaureate degree is important. Finally, this study may provide community college leaders in other states with a general consensus of the student, faculty and administrative perception of the community college baccalaureate degree and aid
them in determining if similar studies should be conducted as a means of determining the need for specific community college baccalaureate degree programs at their respective geographic locations.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to frame this research, this literature review will address the following topical areas: a) a historical view of the American community college; b) a historical view of Mississippi community colleges; c) the growth and expansion of the American community college; d) the growth and expansion of Mississippi community colleges; e) the community college mission; f) characteristics of community college students; g) learning theories and the community college student; h) characteristics of community college faculty; i) Mississippi’s educational profile; j) Mississippi’s poverty rate; k) the community college baccalaureate degree; l) the Theory of Planned Behavior; m) the Organizational Contingency Theory; n) theoretical framework.

The American Community College: A Brief Historical View

The American community college has been in existence for over a century. Within this time, it has served the needs of students and the local community in a variety of ways. Although currently there are more than 6 million students enrolled at community colleges across America, American community colleges originated from a very humble beginning. Although they now exist as a greatly respected and necessary higher education entity, American community colleges started out as extensions of local high schools; sometimes referred to as the 13th and 14th grades. Public American community colleges are deeply rooted in the public school system as they were created in the image of local public schools (AACC, 2009; Monroe, 1972; Palinchak, 1973; and Thornton, 1972). Additionally, according to Monroe, public community colleges were built on the same principles and traditions as the public school system. These principles include “universal
opportunity for a free public education for all persons without distinction based on social
class, family income, and ethnic racial or religious background; local control and support
of free, non-tuition educational systems; and a relevant curriculum designed to meet both
the needs of the individual and those of the nation” (Monroe, p. 1). Although the
emergence of public, state supported high schools laid the groundwork for public
community colleges (Monroe, 1972; Palinchak, 1973; Thornton, 1972), an attempt to
create a higher education system that emulated the German university system (a system
that separated general education college years from the upper level more stringent college
years) provided another push toward the development of public community colleges
(Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Monroe, 1972; Palinchak, 1973). One such supporter of the
notion of the German education system was University of Chicago president William R.
Harper. In fact, the establishment of the first public community college, Joliet Junior
College in Joliet, Ill, is accredited to Harper as a result of his devotion to appending the
first two years of college course work to the high school curriculum (Deegan & Tillery,

Although the first public community college was established in Illinois, the first
legislative authorization to establish community colleges was passed in California in
1907 (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Deegan & Tillery, 1985; Monroe, 1972). According to
Monroe, this law “permitted high school boards of education to provide the first two
years of college work by offering postgraduate courses in high school” (p. 11).
Eventually, the idea of establishing community colleges began to spread to other states.
By 1920, community colleges had been established in Illinois, California, Michigan,
Minnesota, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Texas (Dougherty, 1994; Monroe, 1972).
Additionally, the first state-wide community college system was founded in 1928 in Mississippi; followed by the second state-wide community college system which was founded in New York (Monroe, 1972; Young & Ewing, 1978). Although the initial motivation to establish community colleges was to route the less capable students to the community college thus preserving the integrity of the university (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Dougherty, 1994; Monroe 1972; Palinchak, 1973), community colleges today serve a much higher purpose.

Understanding the American community college from a historical perspective allows one to understand the current community college system and clarifies why it is so uniquely defined. Furthermore, understanding how community colleges evolved and changed significantly over time allows one to understand why such drastic changes as offering baccalaureate degrees do not seem out of the ordinary. Although the idea of community college baccalaureate programs is disagreeable to some, the notion that community colleges would implement such programs as a means of responding to community and student needs follows a historical trend.

Mississippi Community Colleges: A Brief Historical View

The history of the Mississippi community college system is reflective of the history of American community colleges. Each of the 15 community colleges in Mississippi extended from agricultural high schools. Mississippi community colleges emerged out of concern for Mississippi high school graduates who, though academically qualified, were financially unable to enter college (Young & Ewing, 1978). In response to this concern, educational leaders in Mississippi decided to emulate a few other states in the country that had added two years of college courses to their public high school
curriculums (Young & Ewing, 1978). After extensive planning by Mississippi agricultural high school superintendents and the appropriation of necessary state funds, many of Mississippi’s agricultural high schools were ready to extend their curriculum to offer college courses (Young & Ewing, 1978). According to Young and Ewing, Pearl River Agricultural High School (now Pearl River Community College) was the first to offer college courses in 1921, followed one year later by Hinds Community College. By 1930, eleven high schools were offering college courses (Young & Ewing, 1978).

Eventually, the concept of a state-wide community college system came to fruition. In 1928, a Senate Bill was passed which stated that “all junior colleges seeking to qualify under this act shall be under the control of a state commission, known as the commission of junior colleges” (Young & Ewing, 1978, p. 12). Thus, Mississippi’s community college system was the first state community college system in the country (C. Muse, personal communication, January 30, 2009; MACJC, 2007; Monroe, 1972; Musgrove, 2007; Young & Ewing, 1978).

Although the Mississippi community college system presently has an open door, non-discriminatory policy, that has not always been the case. The Mississippi community college system was established during the time of segregation. Thus, in 1950, House Bill No. 541 was passed which made “mandatory separate junior college districts for white and colored races” (Young & Ewing, 1978, p. 197). Coahoma Community College (CCC), in 1950, was the first educational institution for African-Americans to be included in the state system (Coahoma Community College, 2009). In 1954, Hinds County Agricultural High School for Negroes became Utica Institute, the second African-American community college in Mississippi (Young & Ewing, 1978). Although
community colleges in Mississippi remained segregated for years, eventually this concept came to an end. In 1982, as a result of the Ayers v. Winter desegregation lawsuit, Hinds Community College and Utica Junior College (formerly Utica Institute) merged its students, faculty and curriculum and became one organization (Fartherree & Tenhet, 2007). Although, according to Young and Ewing (1978), Mississippi community colleges were initially founded to provide college access to high school graduates who were academically prepared but financially unable to attend any of the state’s four-year institutions; Mississippi community colleges have consistently expanded their curriculum to meet the needs of the local community and their students.

Understanding the Mississippi community college from a historical perspective allows one to understand the current community college system and how and why it came to fruition. History indicates that the evolvement of Mississippi community colleges happened as a result of a direct desire to serve the Mississippi community and its young college-age citizens. Understanding the historical purpose of the Mississippi community college system will aid in understanding if the system has a new responsibility to its community and local citizens in the form of community college baccalaureate degree programs.

The American Community College: A Brief View of Its Growth and Expansion

The definition of community college has consistently changed over the years and it continues to change as the needs of the community and the services that it offers expand. As a result of its mission to serve community needs as they exist in current times, the community college’s mission and goals have always been flexible. James Thornton (1972) wrote a succinct and informal overview of the historical expansions of the
community college. According to Thornton, the definition of the community college was first created in 1922 by the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) and was written as follows: “The junior college is an institution offering two years of instruction of strictly collegiate grade” (p. 52). However, according to Thornton, the authorization of vocational courses resulting from the needs of the country following World War I resulted in the American Association of Junior Colleges significantly expanding the original definition five years later. The new definition was written as follows:

The junior college is an institution offering two years of strictly collegiate grade. This curriculum may include those courses usually offered in the first two years of the four-year college, in which case these courses must be identical, in scope and thoroughness, with corresponding courses of the standard four-year college. The junior college may, and is likely to, develop a different type of curriculum suited to the larger and ever-changing civic, social, religious and vocational needs of the entire community in which the college is located. It is understood that in this case also the work offered shall be on a level appropriate for high school graduates. (Thornton, p. 53)

By the 1930s, the idea of the junior college serving the whole community came to fruition, thus introducing the idea of the “community college”. In addition to performing the duties presented in this definition, junior colleges began to incorporate programs that would allow them to serve the country as it expanded industrially, socially and economically (O’Banion, 1989; Thornton, 1972). As a result of expanding community needs and the junior colleges’ desire to meet those needs, the definition of the community
college continued to expand. According to Thornton, in 1930, *The Junior College Journal* published a new definition of the junior college:

A fully organized junior college aims to meet the needs of a community in which it is located, including preparation for institutions of higher learning, liberal arts education for those who are not going beyond graduation from the junior college, vocational training for particular occupations usually designated as semi-professional vocations and short courses for adults with special interests. (p. 55)

The implementation of new ideas and new ways to serve profiled the junior college as an institution that did not fear change and advancement. By the 1950s, the junior college, through its obligation to providing a variety of educational formats including general education, occupational education, vocational education, community education, transfer education and developmental education, became known as a truly innovative institution (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; O’Banion, 1989; Thornton, 1972). By the 1960s, the junior college student population had grown tremendously. In response to this growth, junior colleges felt the need to devote more attention to the students. In doing so, they began to add guidance, counseling and student development to their array of service offerings as a means of aiding students in reaching their full academic potential (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Deegan & Tillery, 1985; O’Banion, 1989; Thornton, 1972).

In the following years, community colleges continued to grow at a fast pace both institutionally and in the realm of student population. Although there were only approximately 440 community colleges in the United States in 1930, by the 1970s, this number had increased to more than 1200 public and private community colleges nationwide (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The 1990s bought with it the emergence of more
community colleges as well as more innovative expansions to include distance education and the beginning of the plight for the community college baccalaureate degree. In 1998, The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) broadly defined American community colleges by stating that:

The network of community, technical, and junior colleges in America is unique and extraordinarily successful. It is, perhaps, the only sector of higher education that truly can be called a “movement”, one in which the members are bound together and inspired by common goals. From the very first, these institutions, often called “the people’s colleges”, have stirred an egalitarian zeal among their members. The open door policy has been pursued with an intensity and dedication comparable to the populist, civil rights, and feminist crusades. While more elitist institutions may define excellence as exclusion, community colleges have sought excellence in service to the many. (as cited in Shannon & Smith, 2006, p. 15)

Currently, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2009), there are more than 1100 community colleges in America and more than eleven million students enrolled in community colleges across the United States. Furthermore, according to the AACC, community colleges are at the forefront of training individuals in such dire necessities as healthcare (providing 59% of all nurses in the United States), workforce training, international programs (educating approximately 39% of all undergraduate international students), homeland security (producing almost 80% of firefighters, law enforcement officers and EMTs) and online learning (with 92% of all community colleges in the U.S. offering at least one online course). Although American community colleges have expanded in a variety of ways, each expansion resulted from
their obligation to serving the local community. Although some may view the community college’s willingness to constantly change as unsteady, community college leaders view it as remaining loyal to their core mission of serving the community and society as a whole.

Mississippi Community Colleges: A Brief Overview of Their Growth and Expansion

Mississippi Community Colleges expanded in much the same way and for many of the same reasons as American community colleges in general. Although the original purpose for Mississippi community colleges was to provide a college education for those students who were financially or geographically unable to attend any of the state’s four-year institutions, their purpose has continuously expanded.

The first major expansion that Mississippi community colleges experienced was the implementation of what they termed “terminal education” (Young & Ewing, 1978). According to Young and Ewing, the role of “terminal education” was to “meet the total educational needs of youth and adults beyond the high school level [by implementing] the type of educational program which includes both general education and occupational training in various skills” (p. 19). Mississippi community college leaders saw a need to aid students who had no desire to transfer to a four-year institution but, instead, wanted to work after completing two years of study at the community college. Therefore, by 1936, Mississippi junior college leaders modified the junior college curriculum to include courses that would provide job training and, by the end of the two years, qualify a student for immediate employment in a variety of fields (Young & Ewing, 1978).

The second major expansion of Mississippi community colleges came partially in response to the ending of World War II. Mississippi community college leaders
recognized that “industry was expanding rapidly in the state, that this expansion would increase the demand for trained employees, and that an increase in demand for training services would coincide with the return of veterans to civilian life” (Young & Ewing, 1978, p. 28). Therefore, according to Young & Ewing, junior college leaders, once again, expanded the course offerings to include “trade and occupational training programs” (p. 28).

The third major expansion of Mississippi community colleges came in 1952 as a result of a desire to meet the needs of both students and the local community. In an attempt to meet these needs, Mississippi community college leaders expanded the curriculum once more to include a large number of technical degree courses including nursing, medical, auto mechanics, cosmetology and secretarial training (Young & Ewing, 1978). By the 1960s, junior college leaders had recognized that if they were going to commit to serving the community, they must serve the entire community. Thus, they committed to establishing junior colleges for African-Americans. In a 1960 meeting of the Junior College Advisory Group Seven, it was recommended that “Negro junior colleges should be established in the already existing junior college districts when sufficient high school graduates are available to provide enrollment for a junior college” (Young & Ewing, p. 38). Also, as a means of meeting community and student needs, Mississippi junior colleges implemented a bus transportation program. This program, according to Young and Ewing, had a significant effect on many students who, because of the distance, were unable to attend junior colleges prior to the implementation of the bus program.
By the 1970s, Mississippi community colleges had once again expanded to meet the needs of the community and students by offering evening classes for working students and accommodating the physically disabled (Young & Ewing, 1978). Furthermore, in 1987, the Mississippi Association of Colleges (MAC) finalized an articulation agreement between Mississippi community colleges and Mississippi four-year institutions which guaranteed students that the courses taken at the community colleges would transfer to four-year institutions (Mississippi Association of Junior and Community Colleges, 2007). According to the MACJC, by the late 1990s, some Mississippi community colleges had begun to offer online courses. The Mississippi Virtual Community College was established soon after online courses began to gain popularity, and in the 2000 school year, offered its first online classes (MACJC). Currently, according to Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC, n.d.), “Mississippi community and junior colleges rank in the top four community college systems in the nation, provide an education for more than 273,000 Mississippians annually and trained more than 150,000 workers last year at the request of employers” (p. 1). Additionally, according to MGCCC, half of college undergraduates in the state of Mississippi are enrolled at one of the 15 Mississippi community colleges.

The Community College Mission

The community college mission is, to say the least, quite ambiguous. The historical desire of community colleges to fully and completely serve the needs of the community has presented these institutions with both an array of responsibilities and a highly multifaceted mission. As community college leaders respond to the changing needs of the community, the changing educational needs of their learners, and the
changing needs of society, the mission becomes more diverse and less succinct (Ayers, 2002; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; McPhail & McPhail, 2006; Levin, 1998; Vaughan, 2006). Although the multifaceted nature of the community college mission has been known to overwhelm and even anger some higher education leaders, it is not without merit considering the community college’s definitional purpose and responsibilities. “The [community college] institution must be able to change as communities change with new conditions, demands, or circumstances. Any time we can describe the community college in definitive specific terms, we will destroy it. It has to change” (Gleazer, 1980, p 5).

Although they emphasize that the individual missions of community colleges vary by each campus, the AACC (2009) provides a general overview of the community college’s mission as it exists today:

In simplest terms, the mission of the community college is to provide education for individuals, many of whom are adults, in its service region. Most community college missions have basic commitments to serve all segments of society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students, a comprehensive educational program, serve its community as a community-based institution of higher education, teaching and lifelong learning. (p. 1)

If the sole purpose of the community college is to serve community and societal needs, then they are responsible for changing as community and societal needs change in order to meet those needs. As long as community colleges hold steadfast to their original purpose, an ever-changing society will always result in an ever-changing mission.
Characteristics of Community College Students

The American community college consists of a uniquely diverse student population as they educate a diverse body of students including students from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, students with high academic potential, students with low academic potential, students seeking a degree, students seeking transfer credit, students learning for personal gain, students learning for employment gain, place bound students, old, young and middle aged students, students with significant family responsibilities, students with significant financial barriers, ex-convicts, and students with disabilities (among others) (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Not only do these students differ in their current predicaments, personalities and backgrounds, they also differ in their reasons for attending community colleges.

Without the community college’s low tuition requirements and open-access policy, a large number of American citizens would not be afforded the opportunity to attend college. The community college provides educational opportunities to students with a wide range of barriers including economic barriers, language barriers, low academic performance, and deficiencies in a range of basic skills (Hoachlander, Sikora & Horn, 2003). A majority of community college students are considered to be nontraditional students. Laden (2006) states the following:

nontraditional students are those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are first generation college-going, 25 years and older, from diverse racial or ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with limited English and linguistically diverse, recent immigrants, academically underprepared, full time workers and part-time enrollees, reentry women, and learning-and-physically-challenged. (p. 411)
Non-traditional students usually require special accommodations such as remedial programs and evening/online classes.

**Academic Abilities**

Many of the students who enter community colleges have certain academic deficiencies. According to Cohen and Brawer (2003), “The majority of students entering open-door community colleges come from the lower half of their high school class, academically and socioeconomically” (p. 44). Thus, many new community college students are simply not academically prepared to take courses at the college level (Aragon, 2000). Because many community college students are academically disadvantaged, most community colleges offer remediation for those students. In fact, remediation is a large part of the community college’s mission. Levin and Calcagno (2008) define remediation as “a class or activity intended to meet the needs of students who initially do not have the skills, experience or orientation necessary to perform at a level that the institutions or instructors recognize as ‘regular’ for those students” (p. 186). A large percentage of community college students who enter the community college for the first time enroll in remedial courses (Aragon, 2000; Baily, Crosta & Jenkins, 2006; & Meelow & Heelan, 2008).

The lack of academic proficiency exists in many community college students, but it is certainly not true for them all. Although a majority of community college students are academically challenged, there are some students who have a high potential for academic success. In fact, over 25% of community colleges have honors programs (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Many students who attend community colleges are among the nation’s highest academic achievers. According to Deegan and Tillery (1985), in 1982,
25% of community college students were ranked in the top five of their high school class. This is evidence that many community college students have high academic capabilities. In 1984, it was recorded that 21% of students who tested in the top 75% of students with high academic abilities, attended a community college (Deegan & Tillery, 1985). These statistics are evidence that community colleges are not simply institutions for the academically challenged. In fact, the official honor society for community and junior colleges, Phi Theta Kappa, currently consists of more than 2 million members and holds an annual induction of approximately 100,000 community college students. (Phi Theta Kappa, 2009). Furthermore, according to Phi Theta Kappa, eligible members have a 3.5 GPA and are expected to maintain a 3.25 GPA.

*Age, Sex, and Employment*

Currently, female community college students outnumber male community college students by a fairly large margin. More than half of all community college students since 1985 have been women (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007). According to the American Association of Community Colleges, 61% of community college students are female while only 39% are male. According to Cohen and Brawer (2003), in each year since 1978, women have outnumbered men in earning associate’s degrees. Researchers have presented a number of possible reasons for the gender gap between male and female students but no one really knows exactly why it exists. According to Sommers (2000), men have a lower enrollment number than women because they are often stereotyped as aggressive and nonacademic. Sommers (2000) writes that due to this stereotype, boys receive less encouragement to succeed academically than do girls and, as a result, are not as interested in obtaining a college
education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2007) however, has a different theory. The NCES explains that the gender gap is a result of the fact that males are more likely than females to drop-out or be expelled from school. Furthermore, the NCES attributes the gender gap to the fact that males enroll in special education programs at three times the rate of female enrollments. There is also a belief that the gender gap exists because of the growing number of males who choose to seek jobs in vocational areas that do not require a bachelor’s degree (Bradley, 2007).

As for age, the average community college student is 29 years old (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007). A large number of community college students are not traditional age college students (18-24). In fact, 43% of community college students are between the ages of 25 and 64 (Chaves, 2006). Furthermore, these adult students (students age 25 or older) have unique circumstances as they usually attend school part-time, work full-time and are often single parents (Howell, 2004).

A majority of community college students are balancing school with work and family responsibilities. According to Spellman (2007), 57% of community college students work at least 20 hours a week, and at least 36% of those students are active parents. Furthermore, according to Spellman, the number of community college students who also have either full-time or part-time jobs is increasing. Spellman attributes the growing number of working community college students to employers downsizing which results in the desire of their employees to pursue additional education. Additionally, many adult students are forced to work as a means of supporting their families.
Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

The student population at community colleges consists of a large number of ethnic and racial minorities, women, and first generations students. According to Aragon (2000), the student population on community college campuses is largely reflective of the diversity of the American population. Forty-six percent of ethnic minority students are enrolled at community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Furthermore, 23% of students who earn an associate’s degree are students of color (Aragon, 2000). Of these associate degree recipients, 9% are African-American, 7% are Hispanic, 5% are Asian and 1% are Indian/Alaska Native (American Association of Community Colleges, 2000).

The student population at community colleges also consists of a large number of first generation students. Forty-five percent of community college students are first generation students (Nomi, 2005). According to Nomi, the typical first generation student is a non-traditional aged female student who works full time and cares for dependents. Nomi explains that the first generation student population at the community college consists of women, non-traditional students, full time employees and full-time parents. The first generation student population at community colleges is also heavily populated with ethnic and racial minorities as 36% of first generation community college students are ethnic minorities. Of this minority first generation population, 53% are Hispanic, 43% are Native American, 41% are African-American and a significantly low number of White and Asian students are first generation (Nomi, 2005).

Stereotypical Perceptions of Community College Students

In many instances, there is a belief that community college students are academically inferior to those students at four-year institutions and are not always
expected to perform at the same level. This is a dangerous perception because, according to Culpepper (2006), “it can lead to low expectations of community-college students and an institutional culture that enables them to live down to those expectations” (p. 2). It is a well known fact that community colleges and their students are often stereotyped as “lesser than” in the world of higher education. In fact, in his July 14, 2009 speech in Warren, Michigan, President Barack Obama stated that “all too often community colleges are treated like the stepchild of the higher education system; they’re an afterthought, if they’re thought of at all.” According to Culpepper (2006), the belief that community college students attend community colleges because they are not academically capable of attending a four year college or university is common among community college students, the general public and even some faculty members. Students, however, do not necessarily attend the community college because they lack academic competence. Although inadequate college preparation is certainly the reason that many students attend community colleges, there exists a variety of other reasons that students choose to attend the community college. Students who enroll in community colleges may enroll for such reasons as to upgrade their skills for a particular job, to obtain an associate’s degree, to gain course credit for the purpose of transferring to a four-year institution, or simply to pursue a hobby (AAAC, 2007). Students who enroll at community colleges also seek to gain professional development with Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Furthermore, students may attend a community college because of certain financial, geographic or employment barriers that prevent them from attending a four year institution (Walker, 2005). The community college as a whole bases its expectations of its students on the individual student’s reason for attending college as opposed to overall perceptions of
those students. “Community colleges are an essential part of our recovery in the present – and our prosperity in the future” (Obama, 2009).

Community College Response to Unique Student Needs

Community colleges continue to provide quality educational opportunities to students who would not otherwise be afforded the opportunity to attend college. The community college’s open access policies and low tuition have resulted in the success of many underprivileged, financially disadvantaged and academically challenged students. As the future approaches, the community college is expected to take on an even bigger role in higher education. The number of eighteen year olds is expected to increase, which, in turn, will result in an increase in the community college student population. According to Cohen and Brawer (2003), the number of eighteen year olds is expected to increase from 3.3 million in 2003 to 4.4 million in 2009. As of now, according to Cohen and Brawer (2003), 63% of high school graduates enter college in the same year in which they graduate, and this percentage varies by ethnicity. Sixty – three percent of white high school graduates enter college the same year, 59% of African-American high school graduates enter college the same year, and 42% of Hispanic high school graduates enter college the same year (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The number of African-American and Hispanic students who are graduating from high school is continuously rising and, because there is a surplus of these students enrolled at community colleges, as their high school graduation rates increase, so will the enrollments at community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

In addition to the increase in the number of high school graduates, the expected rise in tuition costs at four-year institutions is expected to result in an increase of
enrollment at community colleges. As tuition at four-year institutions increase and the opportunity for financial aid for middle and upper class income students remains level, community colleges will see an increase in enrollments of these students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). As the enrollments at community colleges increase, the number of degrees awarded will increase as well. In fact, according to Cohen and Brawer (2003), by 2011, it is expected that the number of associate’s degrees earned will increase from 568,000 annually to 625,000 annually.

Currently, Mississippi community colleges are responding to the economic recession and how it has increased community college enrollment. Usually, according to Gervin (2009), as the economy declines, community college enrollment increases. As a result of the current economic recession, enrollment at Mississippi community colleges has increased by approximately 15,000 students (Gervin, 2009). Furthermore, according to Strauss (2009), nationwide, the economic recession has resulted in high unemployment driving more people to seek low-cost retraining. And difficult economic times are prompting some parents to send their children to two-year schools rather than more expensive four-year institutions. The result is an unprecedented surge in the number of applicants to community colleges. (p. A1)

Community colleges face many challenges as they provide educational opportunities for a significantly diverse population of students. Ensuring the success of a population of students with a vast array of unique circumstances and situations is not always easy. However, community college administrators persevere as they are devoted to responding to their students uniquely diverse needs. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) (2007) published a list of five strategies that
community colleges can use in order to ensure the success of their unique and diverse student population. The strategies suggested by the CCSSE include: a) community colleges should set high expectations and clear goals for their students; b) community colleges should be instrumental in helping students succeed through their first semester to prevent the onset of attrition as many students tend to drop out after the first semester; c) elevate developmental education as it has been determined that 61% of all first semester community college students are underprepared and could benefit greatly from an effective developmental program; d) use engaging instructional approaches through the use of collaborative learning which has been proven to lead to academic achievement; and e) make engagement inescapable through the implementation of required student/faculty interactions (such as office visits or after class discussions). According to CCSSE, the implementation of these five strategies will increase the chances of academic success for the community college’s unique student population.

Cohen and Brawer (2003) also provide a list of suggestions for community colleges as a means of ensuring the success of their students. According to Cohen & Brawer (2003), community colleges should, as a means for improving the success rates of their students, provide consistent advisement for the students, make students aware of the campus services that are available to help them make the transition to college, provide child care for those students who have small children, provide on-campus jobs which will allow students to work fewer hours away from campus and to install early alert systems which will require that staff members seek out students who miss more than two days of class. The implementation of open access policies and a mission to respond to community needs create a significant number of responsibilities for community colleges. However,
their flexible missions and willingness to embrace change aids their ability to serve the needs of both their students and their local community.

In summary, community college students make up a significantly diverse and vastly unique population. This diverse population includes students of different races and cultural backgrounds, students with vastly different goals and reasons for attending the community college, students from a broad range of ages, students who work full time, students who are full time parents, first generation students, students who are economically disadvantaged, students who are academically challenged and students who are hopelessly place bound. Because community colleges are responsible for the education of approximately half of all first and second year undergraduates in the United States, insuring the success of these students is vitally important to the future of this country.

Learning Theories and the Community College Student

Understanding adult learning theory is especially important when studying community college students as a majority of those students are adult learners with job and family responsibilities. Adult learning theory states that adults learn best when the goals and objectives are realistic and personally important; when learning is self directed; when learning is related to their daily activities; when learning is applicable to real world activities; when they receive feedback regarding their progress; and when they can translate their learning into daily activities (Speck, 1996). According to Lara (2009), “adult learning differs from children’s learning in that it is self-directed, problem-centered, experience based, and more often relevant to life” (p. 1). Thus, this theory is important to understanding adult community college students as they are usually mature
students with clearly defined goals and an eagerness to reap the benefits of their educational commitment. As many of these students have past employment experience or are currently employed, being able to apply their knowledge in their daily lives (specifically at work) and to see how this knowledge relates to their personal and economic goals is important.

Malcolm Knowles (1970) popularized the concept of adult learning theories through his discussion of andragogy which is defined as the science of aiding adults in the learning process. Knowles explains that adult learners are different from younger learners in that they are mature, self directed, experiential, highly motivated learners with a desire to immediately apply what they learn to that which is relevant in their daily lives. Community college baccalaureate degree programs are particularly appealing to adult learners as those learners are usually interested in obtaining a baccalaureate degree but, because of family and job responsibilities, are unable to attend a four year institution. This goes back to the concept of andragogy and the fact that adult learners usually have different circumstances than younger learners and require different types of accommodations.

Student development theory, specifically William Perry’s (1970) concept of dualism, is also relevant to community college students as it speaks directly to some nontraditional students. Perry’s (1970) cognitive development theory states that college students experience three stages; stage one being dualism, stage two being multiplicity and stage three being relativism (wherein the student ultimately commits). In the dualism phase, according to The University of Colorado (2001),
students believe there is a single right answer to all questions. [They believe that] knowledge is delivered by professors and they resist thinking independently, drawing their own conclusions, stating their own points of view, and discussing ideas. They believe that learning involves taking notes, memorizing facts, and later depositing those facts on exams. (p. 1)

This phase relates to some non-traditional students as they have little to no confidence in their own abilities. According to Rendon (2006), many nontraditional students, specifically the first generation nontraditional students, “doubt their own ability to succeed in college” as many of them have not been advised on how to succeed in college because they do not know anyone who has ever attended (p. 427). As many of these students have no confidence in their own knowledge, they are more likely to trust that their teachers (and other college authorities) know everything, and it is their responsibility to listen to their instructors and memorize what they are told. These students are reluctant to form their own ideas as they lack trust in their own thoughts and opinions. Many non-traditional students find their “comfort zone” at the community college and thus would appreciate an opportunity to complete a four-year degree at the community college.

Characteristics of Community College Faculty

Although there is an abundance of literature regarding higher education faculty, very little of that literature addresses community college faculty. Although 43% of faculty members in public higher education institutions are employees of community colleges (Townsend & Twombly, 2007); they are not often researched and are too often ignored. However, according to Monroe (1972), “after the student, the most important
element in the community college is the faculty” (p. 2). Community college faculty members educate approximately 37% of undergraduates in the United States to include 50% of all first and second year students and approximately half of all ethnic minorities (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Thus, they play a significant role in training the citizenry of this country.

Who They Are

According to Kielty (2007), “a typical community college faculty member tends to be a white female between the ages of 45 and 50, holds a masters’ degree, and in 2004-2005 earned an average salary of $53,932” (p. 525). In terms of race and ethnicity, the community college faculty body is far from balanced. Currently, Caucasians make up 80% of full-time community college faculty (Eagan, 2007; Huber, 1997; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). While over 80% of community college faculty members are white, only 6.9% are African-American and only 5.9% are Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004; Isaac & Boyer, 2007; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). The fact that the community college student body consists of a significantly large number of minority students and the faculty body is almost opposite in composition is disconcerting for many. Many community college researchers indicate that this “racial mismatch” of students and faculty can be disadvantageous for community college students (Isaac & Bowyer, 2007; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Furthermore, according to Townsend and Twombly, only about 4% of faculty members are Asian and Pacific Islanders and less than 1% are American Indians.

In terms of gender, community colleges are the only higher education institution in the country where the percentage of male and female faculty is almost equal
(Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Townsend, 2008; West & Curtis, 2006; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Twombly, 2007). According to Townsend and Twombly, women make up approximately 50% of all full-time faculty members at community colleges. This number has risen significantly over time as only 33.4% of community college faculty members were women in 1969; a percentage that had risen to 44.2% by 1992 and is now up to 50% (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

The average community college faculty member is 48 years old (Eagan, 2007; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Overall, the ages of community college faculty members are significantly diverse. According to Carter and Ottinger (1992), approximately 12.3% of community college faculty members are under the age of 35, approximately 24% are between the ages of 35 and 44, approximately 32% are between the ages of 45 and 54, approximately 22% are between the ages of 55 and 64 and approximately 8% are over the age of 65. Most community college faculty members are not tenured or ranked. There are few community colleges where tenure exists and, in those colleges, it is based on years of experience opposed to research, service and publications (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Twombly, 2007). According to Thedwall (2007), the two year college faculty body is approximately 80% non-tenure-tracked.

What They Do

Community colleges are known for their commitment to teaching. Unlike four year institutions, the primary job of community college faculty members is to teach. Community college faculty members spend approximately 85% of their time on instruction (Mupinga & Maughan, 2008; Sallee, 2008 Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Additionally, community college faculty members are expected to advise students,
develop curriculum, participate in professional development and maintain an attitude that is sensitive to the unique predicaments of their students (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Community college faculty members also spend a significant amount of time working outside of the classroom completing such tasks as preparing to teach at least five classes a week, attending conferences, grading papers and exams, and assisting remedial students (Huber, 1997; Mupinga & Maughan, 2008; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Twombly, 2007). As community colleges are known for being “many things to many people”, they consist of a diverse faculty body with a wide range of credentials and skills. Therefore, 47% of community college faculty members teach academic courses, 40% teach professional courses, 8% teach vocational courses and 4% teach developmental courses (Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006). As instruction is the primary responsibility of community college faculty members, very few of them engage in extensive research. In fact, only 5% of surveyed community college faculty members reported engaging in research and very few (less than 5%) have published an article or book (Huber, 1997; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). The small percentage of community college faculty members who are published indicates that community college faculty members engage in teaching more so than research and service (Huber, 1997; Townsend & Rosser, 2009).

Community colleges house the highest percentage of part-time faculty of any higher education institutional type – approximately 66% (Huber, 1997; Sallee, 2008; Liu, 2007; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). The number of part-time community college faculty has consistently inclined. There were only about 38% of part-time faculty members at community colleges in 1962; but by 1974 that number had increased to 50% and to 65% by 1998 (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Many of the demographics (age,
race, gender) for part-time faculty members are similar to those of full time faculty. Currently, according to Eagan (2007), 50% are male, 50% are female, 83% are white, and the average age is 49. Many part-time faculty members hold full-time jobs elsewhere and are generally teaching for personal satisfaction (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Eagan, 2007). Additionally, some part-time faculty members are hoping to obtain a full-time position at their respective colleges.

In terms of educational credentials, a master’s degree is usually a minimum requirement for all full-time academic faculty members at the community college (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Currently, approximately 65% of full-time, academic community college faculty members have a master’s degree and approximately 20% have PhDs (Eagan, 2007; Rosser & Townsend, 2006). The educational credentials of part-time faculty members are less impressive. According to Eagan, approximately 50% of part-time, academic community college faculty members have master’s degrees and only about 8% have PhDs.

Overall, community college faculty members are largely devoted to teaching. The overall community college faculty body is one of gender parity but lacks a balanced racial make-up. Though part-time faculty members significantly outnumber full-time faculty members, the majority of courses offered at community colleges are taught by full-time faculty (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Community college faculty members educate a large number of undergraduates nationwide and, though understudied and often overlooked, are an important higher education component.
The Role of the Baccalaureate Degree in Improving the Image of Mississippi

Mississippi ranks nearly at the bottom in the realm of educational achievements and poverty. In order to improve the national image of the state of Mississippi, the educational and employment demographics of Mississippi residents must be improved. It seems the major solution is increasing the number of baccalaureate degree recipients in the State; which may be accomplished through providing increased access to the baccalaureate degree.

Educational Profile

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education’s (NCPPHE 2006) Measuring Up State Report Card for Mississippi is disconcerting. According to the report, the state of Mississippi has one of the lowest proportions of 9th graders who graduate from high school within four years. According to the report, “Mississippi’s weak performance in preparing students for college, coupled with its high cost of college education, presents a barrier to enrollment for low-and middle-income families” (p. 3). The NCPPHE explains that the state of Mississippi ranks 50th on a national level in 11th and 12th grade performance on college entrance exams. Thus, more than likely, those 11th and 12th graders will require remediation in order to succeed in college and, perhaps, the community college may be the only viable option for many of them. Currently, only 19% of adults in Mississippi have a bachelor’s degree – ahead of only one other state in the nation (NCPPHE, 2006). This percentage, according to the report, is lower than it was in 2000, which indicates that the educational predicament of Mississippi residents is not improving. Perhaps other measures for increasing access to the baccalaureate degree (for example, community college baccalaureate degrees) should be examined. Overall,
according to the report, Mississippi’s higher education system received a grade of D for preparing high school graduates for college, D for percentage of students who participate in college, D for college affordability and a C+ for retention to the sophomore year of college.

Poverty

Mississippi’s poverty rate (20%) is the highest in the country (Boston, 2008). According to Boston (2008), 14 Mississippi counties have a poverty rate that is approximately 50% higher than the average poverty rate for the entire state. The 2007 Census Bureau reports a national poverty rate of 13%. According to Hill (2008), although some programs focus on creating employment as a means of reducing poverty in the state, their success will be limited unless they ensure that the prerequisites to quality employment are met. This prerequisite, according to Hill, is “earning degrees and certificates beyond the high school diploma” (p. 29).

As many Mississippians fall below the poverty line, increasing access to an affordable baccalaureate degree education is vital. According to The U.S. Census Bureau (2002), “Mississippi performs well on the low share of family income needed, after financial aid, to attend public two-year colleges in the state. But the share of income needed to attend public four-year colleges is fairly high” (p. 8). Perhaps the community college, with its lower financial cost, has the potential to eliminate financial barriers to the baccalaureate degree, and, in turn, provide increased baccalaureate degree access.

In his 2009 State Budget Recommendation, Mississippi governor Haley Barbour stated that “our community colleges are critical assets in Mississippi’s educational programs and are indispensable in academics for our high school graduates because of
lower cost and close proximity” (p. 10). Although Barbour recommended significant funding cuts to educational institutions and programs throughout the state of Mississippi (including university and public school mergers), his recognition of the importance of workforce training at community colleges to the local economy influenced his decision to refrain from reducing funding for any workforce initiatives at any Mississippi community college.

The Community College Baccalaureate Degree

Since the beginning, community colleges have existed with the purpose of providing college access to both financially and academically disadvantaged citizens and with the core mission of serving the local community. The primary mission of the community college has consistently expanded to adapt to the changing needs of society. As the needs of the community expand, so does the primary responsibilities and goals of the community by which it is served. The willingness of the community college to adapt to and serve the ever growing and changing needs of the community is, indeed, its core responsibility.

A new phenomenon has emerged as a result of the community college’s attempt to serve the community. This phenomenon is known as the community college baccalaureate degree and has been met with a variety of responses including enthusiastic welcomes, skeptical criticisms and, in some cases, complete disdain. In an effort to understand this new and somewhat oxymoronic phenomenon, researchers have engaged in extensive studies of the topic by way of surveys, individual case studies, interviews, focus groups and other research measures. Through an extensive review of the literature, it has been found that there is some consensus among researchers regarding the need,
feasibility, advantages and disadvantages of community college baccalaureate programs. However, there also exists contradictory findings and opinions by researchers on the topic.

Currently, there are four models of community college baccalaureate programs: The Articulation Model (a guarantee that senior colleges and universities will accept community college credits); The University Center Model (universities confer degrees in partnership with community colleges); The University Extension Model (community colleges that are part of a university and, after having been granted permission to offer baccalaureates, use their university affiliations in their names); and The Community College Baccalaureate (community colleges that confer baccalaureate degrees while keeping their title of “community college”) (AASCU, 2004; Floyd, 2005; Floyd & Walker, 2009). Although there are a variety of community college baccalaureate models, this research will focus only on the baccalaureate degree that is awarded directly and solely by the community college; not in collaboration with or with the assistance of any four-year institution.

Support Levels for the Community College Baccalaureate

The idea of the community college baccalaureate has been well received by many leaders in higher education. Furthermore, the idea of providing open access to the baccalaureate degree is especially pleasing to many community college leaders as the community college baccalaureate degree means equal access to the baccalaureate degree (and all of the advantages associated with the degree) for many students. Conversely, there are many leaders in higher education who believe that offering baccalaureate degrees is not the responsibility of the community college and would ultimately result in
a deviation from the mission that could be detrimental to the institution as a whole. The community college’s desire to offer baccalaureate degrees, however, is simply a result of their historical devotion to maintaining a flexible and expandable mission in order to respond to community and workforce needs (Breuder, 2006; Campbell & Leverty 2002; Cook, 2000; Floyd & Walker, 2009; Walker 1997; Walker 2000b; Walker 2001).

Mission expansion (the expanding of a mission to include additional services) is not a concept that is new to the community college. In fact, community colleges have consistently expanded their missions to meet the needs of the local community. Although the original mission of the community college was to prepare students for transfer, it has since expanded to include vocational, remedial, and continuing education as well as learning for personal fulfillment (Breuder, 2006). Expanding the mission of the community college does not mean that the original mission should be eliminated; it only means that the community college is fulfilling its responsibility of responding to the growing needs of the local community (Breuder, 2006; Cook, 2000; Floyd & Walker, 2009; Milliron, 2005; Walker 1997).

Walker and Ziess (2000) and Walker (2000b) are adamant that the community college baccalaureate degree is morally, socially, economically and politically right. They continue by stating that the community college baccalaureate is morally right because it provides access to all individuals with the ability, determination and desire to succeed; socially right because democratizing higher education is crucial to the social health of this country; economically right because workers that are properly prepared for their positions will help create a profitable market for employers; and politically right because it will demonstrate that politicians are responding to the demands of citizens of this
country. Additionally, Walker (2000a) emphasizes the importance of the community college baccalaureate and lists the following seven benefits of offering the community college baccalaureate degree:

1) it increases geographical, financial and academic access to higher education; 2) it provides cost efficiencies by utilizing existing infrastructure; 3) it supports success among non-traditional or returning students through smaller classes, less rigid sequencing and greater scheduling options; 4) it promotes ready articulation and upward mobility for students with associate degrees; 5) it helps students maintain family and employment relationships while completing a degree; 6) it expands community college commitment to both economic development and workforce development; and 7) it responds to community needs for specialized programs. (p. 28)

Walker (2001) contends that the community college’s open door policy has helped to democratize higher education in America and, through offering the community college baccalaureate degree, will help to democratize the baccalaureate degree.

Several trends that have increased the need for the community college baccalaureate degree include: the emergence of an international higher education marketplace; an increase in the enrollment of older, part-time and working students; an increase in required entry level credentials for good paying jobs and meeting the demand for open access to baccalaureate degrees (AASCU, 2004; Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; NACCTEP, 2005; Walker 2002).
Serving Community And Workforce Needs

It is obvious that the primary reason for earning a baccalaureate degree is to increase one’s chances of obtaining satisfactory employment. The community college is, and has been for many years, devoted to serving students by preparing them for the workforce and serving employers by providing them with well-trained employees. Thus, as the entry-level educational requirements for employees continue to increase, the community college feels responsible for increasing their educational offerings so as to maintain relevancy in an ever-changing workforce. Walker (1999) explains that the college degree has replaced the high-school diploma as the highest education level required by many employers. He explains that from 1983 to 1994, the fastest growing part of the economy was occupations requiring college degrees; a trend that is expected to increase. Currently, in a growing number of fields, employers require at least a baccalaureate degree for entry level positions; and by 2014, the top three new jobs will require a baccalaureate degree (Floyd & Walker, 2009).

Many community college leaders feel that it is vital that community colleges at least offer workforce baccalaureate degrees to prepare students to work in a changing workforce that seeks to hire students with baccalaureate degrees. Workforce baccalaureate degree programs train students in a particular workforce area and prepare them to begin working in that field upon graduation. These degree programs are workforce oriented and usually prepare students for work in high demand areas such as teaching, nursing and other applied sciences (Massey, 2007). Walker and Floyd (2005) explain that employers and education go hand-in-hand, and one would suffer tremendously without the other. Many employers, according to Walker and Floyd,
collaborate with local community colleges to create a curriculum that is relevant to the current needs of employers in a specific community. According to Walker and Floyd, all community colleges should be allowed to offer applied and workforce baccalaureate degrees as these degrees are designed to train students in a specific workforce field (usually one that is local) and results in both a paying job for the graduate and quality workers for the employer.

Community colleges, according to Walker and Zeiss (2000), must embark upon an expansion of the services they provide to include baccalaureate degrees in order to remain relevant in the career preparation arena. Walker and Zeiss explain that community colleges will lose their relevancy if they fail to change along with, and respond to the demands of, a new and growing economic market. The increasing qualification requirements for employment demonstrate a need for community college baccalaureate programs. If one were to view the classified ads in any newspaper, they would notice the absence of associate’s degrees as entry-level requirements; most employers request a career oriented baccalaureate degree (Breuder, 2006; Floyd & Walker, 2009; Walker, 1999; Walker & Zeiss, 2000).

The community college workforce baccalaureate degree has been instrumental in increasing employment in high occupational demand workforce areas - specifically teaching. Many community college baccalaureate degree programs, especially in Florida, resulted from local occupational demand for many critical-need job areas. “Occupational demand represents state, regional, and local employer need for specific education or training in the labor force for specific job titles” (Pfeiffer & Lassila, n.d., p. 1). One of the most notable baccalaureate degree granting community college institutions in the
country, Miami Dade, began offering baccalaureate degrees in response to a critical need for K-12 teachers (Fanelli, 2007; Smith & Holcombe, 2008). By offering community college baccalaureate degrees in teaching, many community colleges are able to almost guarantee their graduates employment as well as provide teachers for schools in critical needs regions. Furthermore, according to Shkodriani (2004), “in addition to serving the needs of local students, teacher education baccalaureate degrees at community colleges serve the needs of school districts that need new teachers who come from the community and understand its problems” (p. 2). In many instances where there are critical workforce shortages, community colleges are the only entities that can respond effectively. Shkodriani explains that then Florida Governor Jeb Bush supported the community college baccalaureate degree as he believed that it provided access to degrees in fields where there were critical workforce needs. The Florida Community College System’s official purpose is “to maximize open access for students, respond to community needs for postsecondary academic education and career degree education, and provide associate and baccalaureate degrees that will best meet the state’s employment needs” (Floyd, Hrabak, & Falconetti, 2009a, p. 197).

According to Bemmel, Floyd, and Bryan (2009), between 2005 and 2020, Florida will need about 20,000 new teachers every year. Furthermore, they explain that universities are only graduating around 6,000 teachers each year and only approximately 55% of those graduates will actually become teachers. Therefore, Florida is in desperate need of teachers, and local community colleges have been granted legislative approval to offer baccalaureate degrees in teacher education as they seek to address community and workforce needs. Although teaching represents one of the highest critical need
employment areas, there are other critical need workforce areas, such as nursing, that have been and are currently being accommodated by community college baccalaureate degree programs.

Westark College also implemented their baccalaureate degree program as a means of responding to local workforce needs. McKee (2005) conducted an in depth case study of Westark College and its baccalaureate degree initiative and found that Westark College, located in Fort Smith, Texas, was first granted permission to offer baccalaureate degrees in 1997. According to McKee, Westark began offering its first baccalaureate degree, the manufacturing technology degree, in response to community employment needs. McKee explains that, of the 70,000 citizens of Fort Smith, 30,000 are employed at manufacturing companies and these manufacturing companies have depended upon Westark to provide workforce training to their employees for approximately 60 years. According to McKee, a representative from the state senate, company CEOs, faculty members, students and administrators recognized the need for a manufacturing technology baccalaureate degree and, through a combined effort, successfully initiated the establishment of the manufacturing technology baccalaureate program. Furthermore, he explains that through offering this degree, Westark was successful in meeting the employment needs of local manufacturing companies as the manufacturing technology baccalaureate directly prepared students for management positions at local manufacturing companies; thus accomplishing their overall goal of meeting the employment needs of the community.
Increasing Access To The Baccalaureate Degree

Students and administrators mostly appreciate community college baccalaureate degree programs because of their potential to increase access to the baccalaureate degree. Just as community colleges provide open access to higher education, many believe that these institutions should provide open access to the baccalaureate degree. There are many barriers to students who seek to obtain a baccalaureate degree, including financial, academic, family responsibilities, employment and location. Students who are place bound and reside in a region where there are no four year institutions within a reasonably close distance are especially served by community college baccalaureate programs. According to Walker (1999), regional universities are not always regionally, geographically or academically accessible to the masses. Moreover, he states that the lower tuition costs and convenient geographical locations offered by community colleges would accommodate more potential baccalaureate degree recipients.

In an effort to support his views, Walker (1999) describes research that states that American companies experience great difficulties in relocating their employees from one geographical domicile to another because their employees are unwilling to uproot their families. Walker uses this research as evidence that students with families would more than likely be unwilling to relocate for the purpose of completing a degree. Therefore, if the nearest university is a significant distance from the community college that a working, family oriented student attends; most likely, that student will be unable to obtain a baccalaureate degree unless it is offered by that particular community college. Attending local community colleges is often the only reasonable option for adult students
with families and fulltime jobs, and “nontraditional students need and deserve nontraditional baccalaureate degree access and choices” (Walker 1991, p. 29).

Baccalaureate programs at community colleges tend to target and attract time and place-bound students who might not otherwise pursue a degree at a four-year college or university due to varying personal constraints (Fanelli, 2007; Smith & Holcombe, 2008). Great Basin Community College, now Great Basin College (GBC) is a clear example of the necessity of providing community college baccalaureate programs for place bound students. Although the nearest four-year degree granting institution is almost 250 miles from Great Basin, local place-bound students are realizing their dreams of obtaining a baccalaureate degree as Great Basin Community College implemented a baccalaureate degree program in 1999 which provides baccalaureate degree access to students who may be unable to relocate in order to attend a four year institution (Remington & Remington, 2005; Shkodriani, 2004; Troumpoucis, 2004). As the result of an in depth case study conducted at GBC, Remington and Remington (2005) found that community need was the primary motivator of GBC’s baccalaureate degree initiative. They explain that the local community was overly dependent on mining and was in need of a wider variation of employment and economic opportunities. Additionally, community stakeholders (including school officials, area business people, advisory & foundation boards and elected officials) were strong advocates of GBC offering an education baccalaureate to train and provide teachers for the local community (Remington & Remington, 2005; Shkodriani, 2004).

According to Shkodriani (2004), the fact that Elko, Nevada, the city in which GBC is located, is so far away from a baccalaureate degree granting institution, resulted
in a teacher shortage in the area. Thus, according to Shkoriani, Nevada was forced to recruit students from other regions in Nevada as well as other states and had difficulties retaining those teachers. As was also the case with Florida, a critical teacher shortage, as well as other local workforce needs, resulted in GBC’s baccalaureate degree initiative. However, the most important factor contributing to GBC’s desire to implement baccalaureate degree programs was their commitment to increasing access to the baccalaureate degree.

Offering baccalaureate degrees at local community colleges not only helps to train students for the workforce but also helps to keep those graduates working locally. Fanelli (2007) makes an important point that “once students leave the local area to attend baccalaureate institutions that are a distance away, they frequently do not return. The granting of a baccalaureate degree by community colleges in areas of local employment needs promotes the local economy” (p. 22). Allowing community colleges to award baccalaureate degrees would result in access to the baccalaureate regardless of one’s geographical domicile or finances; increase the opportunity for one to obtain a workforce related baccalaureate degree at a low cost; and contribute to economic and workforce development and the success of local businesses (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; Breuder, 2006; Garmon 2003; Smith & Holcombe, 2008; Walker, 1999; Walker, 2000a; Walker, 2001; Walker, 2005; Walker & Floyd, 2005).

To assume that community college baccalaureate degree programs would increase access to the baccalaureate degree is not an overzealous assumption. In fact, many community college students would prefer to complete their baccalaureate degree at the community college, and for some that would be their only option. Walker (2000a)
explains that currently almost half of all undergraduate students at public institutions are enrolled at a community college, and those students should be given the opportunity to complete their baccalaureate degrees where they started. According to Walker, the results of a survey conducted at Edison Community College indicate that 80% of survey respondents agreed that they would appreciate the opportunity to complete their baccalaureate degree at Edison Community College because Edison offers accessibility, lower costs and the type of degree that they desire.

In a similar study conducted at Tyler Junior College in Tyler, Texas, Glenn and Glenn (2003) discovered that a majority of the students at Tyler Junior College would consider completing their baccalaureate degree at Tyler Junior College if given the opportunity. Glenn and Glenn distributed a school-wide survey to 548 students at Tyler Junior College to assess the need for a baccalaureate degree program at Tyler. When asked if they would complete their baccalaureate degree at Tyler Junior College if such a degree were to be offered, approximately 81% of White males, 83% of Black males and 100% of Hispanic males answered “yes” or “maybe” (Glenn & Glenn). Furthermore, according to Glenn and Glenn, when asked the same question, approximately 90% of White females, 90% of Black females and 82% of Hispanic females answered “yes” or “maybe.” Perhaps even more importantly, the survey results indicated that almost 30% of Black males and over 33% of Hispanic males stated that obtaining a baccalaureate degree at Tyler Junior College would be their only option (Glenn & Glenn). Community college baccalaureate programs may be particularly instrumental in increasing minority access to the baccalaureate degree. Survey results indicate that minority students are more likely to
complete a baccalaureate degree program at a community college than at a four year institution (Glenn & Glenn, 2003; Floyd & Walker, 2009; Lewin, 2009).

Harper College (2004), located in Palatine, Illinois, also conducted a survey of its students to determine the necessity of baccalaureate degree programs and found that 66% of the students surveyed expressed a “very strong need” for Harper College to offer a baccalaureate degree while only 5% stated that a baccalaureate degree was not necessary. The survey results indicate that implementing baccalaureate degree programs at Harper College would be beneficial to the academic success of many of Harper College’s students. According to Robert Breuder, president of Harper College, he stated that “selected baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges are a logical progression of what community colleges were created to do; that is, serve the changing educational needs of the community. The movement is also consistent with Harper’s core mission of open access, responsiveness to the community, emphasis on teaching and learning and responding to the changing needs of today’s students” (p. 2).

**Opposing the Community College Baccalaureate**

Although there are many proponents of the community college baccalaureate degree, there are many leaders in the higher education field who oppose the idea. In fact, according to Lewin (2009), one opponent of offering the degree described it as “a solution in search of a problem” (p. A2). Those who are against it usually disagree with the idea because they fear it will deplete the community college’s original mission; otherwise known as mission creep (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; Eaton, 2005; Flieger, 2006; Floyd, Hrabak, & Falconetti, 2009b; Floyd & Skolnik, 2005; Floyd & Walker, 2003; Floyd & Walker, 2009; Townsend, 2005). Furthermore, there have been many
instances where community colleges, after being permitted to offer baccalaureate degrees, morphed into four-year institutions. This concept also concerns critics as they believe that offering baccalaureate degrees will result in a majority of American community colleges morphing into four-year institutions; thus eliminating the community college as a unique educational institution (Flieger, 2006; Townsend, 2005).

Additionally, many community college administrators fear that community college baccalaureate programs will create an unstable institutional identity (Bemmel, Floyd & Bryan, 2009; Eaton, 2005; Floyd & Skolnik, 2005).

Many of the critics of community college baccalaureate degree programs are four-year college and university administrators. In many instances, community college baccalaureate programs have caused a rivalry between community college and university administrators. In fact, many four-year institutions are threatened by the community college’s commitment to offering baccalaureate degrees as they fear that community colleges, with their low tuition and open access policies, may become a competitive force in the realm of enrollment (Floyd & Skolnik, 2005; Floyd & Walker, 2003; Garmon, 2000; Shkodriani, 2004; Walker, 1997). In a qualitative study conducted at three universities in Florida, Falconetti (2009), found that many university administrators had extremely negative attitudes toward community college baccalaureate programs. She quotes one administrator who stated:

I am concerned about the articulation system as community colleges begin adding baccalaureate degrees… then we are no longer partners, we are competitors….

Many of the degrees that they [community colleges] want to add are exactly those that we offer. First, I think it [community colleges offering baccalaureates] really
undermines the whole concept of the 2 + 2. Secondly, if community colleges are
going to offer upper-division courses, which are our bread and butter, then why
shouldn’t we offer lower division courses at our partner campuses? (p. 184)

According to Falconetti, other administrators stated that community college baccalaureate
programs “created greater tension between community colleges and universities which is
a plausible way of separating and, possibly, severing the relationships between
community colleges and universities across the state” (p. 184).

Another issue that concerns critics is the financial ramifications of community
college baccalaureate programs on community colleges’ budgets. Many critics believe
the community college baccalaureate will deplete funds that are reserved for programs
that directly serve the community college’s mission; such as remedial and developmental
education programs (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; Eaton, 2005; Lewin, 2009;
Townsend, 2005). According to Newman (2009), although students may be pleased with
the idea of implementing baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges, many
long-term faculty, staff and administrators may reject the idea; fearing that it will deplete
those resources that are allocated for programs that support the original mission of the
college. Critics also suggest that accrediting organizations will demand that community
college baccalaureate institutions meet the same standards as four-year institutions, which
may include devoting large amounts of funding to libraries and student services
(Bemmel, Floyd & Bryan, 2009; Cook, 2000; Townsend, 2005). Implementing
community college baccalaureate programs may also result in tuition increases which is
another concern of critics. Some critics believe that the cost of offering community
college baccalaureate degrees would largely outweigh the benefits as it would result in an
increase in tuition and fees (Eaton, 2005; Lewin, 2009; Shkodriani, 2004). Lastly, critics are concerned with the issue of quality. Some critics are concerned that community college baccalaureate degrees will be of lower quality than those degrees offered at traditional four-year institutions and will not be respected by employers or universities should community college baccalaureate recipients decide to pursue an advanced degree (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Shkodriani, 2004; Skolnik & Floyd, 2005; Townsend, 2005).

Community College Baccalaureate Degree Outcomes

Although community college baccalaureate degree programs are fairly new, they have been around long enough to have produced some graduates, and limited research has been conducted that documents the outcome; albeit most of the research was conducted in Florida. Currently, a majority of the students who are in the baccalaureate programs are between the ages of 25 and 44 (Smith & Holcombe, 2008). Enrollment in community college baccalaureate programs continues to increase over time. According to Smith and Holcombe, there were 627 community college baccalaureate students enrolled at Florida community colleges in the 2002-03 school year. This number had increased to 3,553 by the 2006-07 school year and it is anticipated that enrollments will continue to increase (Smith & Holcombe).

Community colleges are not only increasing enrollment in baccalaureate degree programs, but they are also producing graduates. The 2003-04 school year produced the first Florida community college baccalaureate degree graduates, and the graduation rates are steadily increasing (Smith & Holcombe, 2008). According to Smith and Holcombe, although there were only 123 graduates in the 2003-04 school year, this number had
increased to 569 graduates by the 2006-07 school year. Within four years of granting their first baccalaureate degrees, Florida community colleges had produced more than 1,300 baccalaureate degree graduates in Applied Sciences, Nursing, and Education (Smith & Holcombe).

Florida community colleges cannot only boast of producing a large amount of baccalaureate degree graduates, they might also boast that most, if not all, of those graduates are successful after graduation. According to Smith and Holcombe (2008), of the 2003-04 school year graduates, 86% were employed and 25% were continuing their education; of the 2004-05 school year graduates, 95% were employed and 23% were continuing their education, and of the 2005-06 school year graduates, 87% were employed and 9.8% were continuing their education (some graduates were both employed and continuing their education). Additionally, in the realm of success for graduates, other community college baccalaureate program administrators whom were interviewed during this study boast that all or many of their graduates are employed (Floyd & Arnauld, 2007).

Although critics complain that community college baccalaureate degree programs would increase cost of tuition at community colleges, the cost of the community college baccalaureate degrees in Florida is significantly lower than the cost for baccalaureate degrees at nearby universities (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; Smith & Holcombe, 2008). Also, in response to critics’ concern about the quality of baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges, one Florida community college administrator explained that each of their baccalaureate degree programs were nationally accredited with some even having more than one national accreditation (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009).
Furthermore, in the realm of quality, in a study of ten community colleges offering baccalaureate degree programs in education, Floyd and Arnauld (2007) found that 100% of baccalaureate degree graduates from seven of the ten colleges passed the state licensure exams; 98% of graduates from the 8th college passed the exam, while the other two colleges had not yet graduated a class.

Community college baccalaureate degree programs have also proven their worth in the realm of positively impacting the local workforce. According to Horne and Armstrong (2003), Florida community colleges continue to increase student enrollment in programs that will benefit the local workforce. They explain that by 2002, Florida community colleges had enrolled more than 1,100 students in health related programs (including nursing), more than 600 students in Information Technology/Engineering programs and more than 5,000 students in education programs.

Overall, community college baccalaureate programs in Florida have been extremely successful and have accomplished their goal of increasing access to the baccalaureate degree and serving local workforce needs. Over just a few years, Florida community colleges have significantly increased baccalaureate degree programs, enrollment in baccalaureate degree programs, and baccalaureate degree graduates (Bemmel, Floyd, & Bryan, 2009; Smith & Holcombe, 2008). However, although community college baccalaureate degree programs have been successfully implemented in a few states, there is still no indication of whether this initiative should be implemented in all states and specifically in the state of Mississippi. The 2004 American Community Survey reports that only 19% of adults in Mississippi have bachelor’s degrees. Perhaps the implementation of community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi
will aid in increasing that percentage. Current literature indicates that the implementation of community college baccalaureate degree programs has been beneficial to increasing access to the baccalaureate degree, increasing baccalaureate degree attainment and increasing workforce development.

Theoretical Framework

Icek Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior is relevant to this study as it describes the links between one’s attitude toward a particular behavior, the social norms surrounding that behavior and one’s control over being able to engage in the behavior. Ajzen explains that attitude toward a particular behavior, subjective norm relating to the behavior and perceived behavioral control impacts one’s likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior. Ajzen (1985) states that if one’s attitude toward a particular behavior is positive and the behavior is socially accepted as positive, one will likely engage in that behavior but only if one has perceived behavioral control. When relating to this study, the behavior in question is enrolling in baccalaureate degree programs and “perceived behavioral control” relates to whether certain barriers (i.e., financial, geographical, academic, etc.) exist that may prevent one from engaging in the behavior. Thus, according to Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, even if a person’s attitude toward a particular behavior is overwhelmingly positive, they are only likely to engage in the behavior if they have complete control over the behavior or, in other words, they do not perceive that any particular barriers will prevent them from engaging in the behavior. This specifically correlates with the popular belief that community college baccalaureate degree programs, by removing certain barriers (e.g. time, place, etc.) that exist in the realm of attending four year institutions, increase the potential for baccalaureate degree
attainment by those individuals who do not have “perceived behavioral control” in the realm of 4 year college and university baccalaureate degree attainment.

Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) developed the organizational contingency theory, which states that the best way to organize an institution is contingent upon the needs of the environment to which the institution must relate. According to Farazmand (2002), Lawrence and Lorsch’s organizational contingency theory argues that “environmental contingencies or situations determine the structural and functional aspects of an organization” (p. 32). Furthermore, according to Smart (1999), the organizational contingency theory indicates that “rapidly changing environments require ‘organic’ structures [which are] characterized by higher flexibility and adaptability” (p. 120). According to Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), an organization must maintain a mode of both integration and differentiation in order to meet the demands of the environment. Perhaps William Richard Scott (1981) best described the organizational contingency theory as the concept that “the best way to organize depends on the nature of the environment to which the organization must relate” (p. 114). It is clear that community colleges continue to adapt and respond to the needs and demands of the environment in which they exist. As the environment changes, so does the organizational structure of the community college. The community college’s implementation of baccalaureate degrees in an attempt to respond to the needs of their environment is directly applicable to the organizational contingency theory.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes and personal opinions of community college students in Mississippi concerning the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi. This study also sought to determine the attitudes as well as personal and professional opinions of community college administrators and faculty members in Mississippi, as well as individuals from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC), concerning the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi. Furthermore, this study sought to determine if the attitudes, personal and professional opinions of students, faculty and administrators concerning the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi were affected by certain factors. The research questions were addressed through the distribution of survey instruments and through the conduction of interviews. The original intention of the study was for it to be primarily quantitative with a follow-up qualitative component. However, due to uncontrollable circumstances that will be addressed later, the qualitative component was eliminated.

Research Design

The researcher implemented a quantitative research method as a means of evaluating the research questions. The quantitative research method consisted of two survey instruments; one for students and one for faculty/administrators. The independent variables relating to the student survey included Race (Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Multicultural) Gender (male or female), Age, Socioeconomic Status, Family Status (does the individual have family responsibilities), Employment Status (does the individual
work), Academic Ability (is the individual academically challenged), First Generation Status (is the student a first generation college student) and College Distance From the Nearest Four-year Institution. The independent variables relating to the faculty/administrator survey included Race (Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Multicultural), Gender, Age, College Distance from Nearest Four-year Institution and Years of Experience (how long the individual has worked for the institution). The dependent variable (for both surveys) is “Reported Need” (whether or not the student, faculty or administrator believed that there was a need for baccalaureate degree programs at their respective institutions).

Participants

Upon approval from The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board (Appendix J) and the Mississippi Community and Junior College’s President’s Council (Appendix E), data was collected from students, faculty and administrators at each of the 15 community colleges in Mississippi as well as their associated branch campuses during the spring 2010 school semester. Where possible, survey instruments were distributed to 50 students at each main campus, 25 students at each branch campus, 25 faculty and administrators from each main campus and 10 faculty and administrators from each branch campus, at each community college in Mississippi using both the cluster and random sampling techniques. Prior to distribution of the survey instruments (Appendixes F and G), consent letters (Appendixes A and B) were distributed to all participants of the study. This letter explained the general purpose of the research, the research procedures, time requirements, voluntary nature of participation, right to discontinue participation, confidentiality and final disposition of data, the researcher’s
contact information and the Human Subjects Review Committee statement. Participants were informed that by agreeing to an interview or completing a survey, they were granting consent to participate in the study.

The cluster sampling method was chosen for the student survey process in an attempt to obtain consistent student representation from each community college in Mississippi. By surveying an equal number of randomly selected clusters of students from each community college in Mississippi, it is likely that the opinions and views of individuals from each community college will be equally represented in the research results. It was presumed that the use of the cluster sampling method would result in a higher rate of survey returns because requiring that students complete the survey at the same time in a closed classroom setting may possibly result in a higher response rate.

With the permission and assistance of the instructor, students were surveyed during a regularly scheduled class period. In an effort to ensure confidentiality, students were informed not to include their name or any other identifying information on the survey instrument. The instructor was asked to inform the students that completion of the survey instrument is completely voluntary and may be discontinued at any point without penalty. Upon completion of the survey instrument, students returned it to their instructor, who, upon collecting all instruments, returned the survey instruments to the researcher.

Students from approximately two to three different classes from each community college in Mississippi were surveyed. At colleges where there are multiple branches, surveys were distributed to a class at each branch. Where possible, only sophomore classes (or clusters) were selected to participate in the survey process. Limiting the
participants to students in sophomore courses increased the likelihood that participants in the study had experienced at least one year at the community college and were likely to be deciding on transfer options for completing a baccalaureate degree. Where possible, survey instruments were distributed to students in both day and evening classes. The courses that were chosen were second year English courses from the general studies curriculum (courses that all students are required to take) in an effort to obtain the best student representation of the specific institution. However, in instances where those courses were unavailable, students from second semester history courses were surveyed. Survey recipients were not separated into any specific groups based on specific variables (i.e. race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.). The sample of students that were surveyed were representative of the entire institution.

As implementing the cluster sampling method when surveying faculty and administrators would have been difficult considering there are very few instances where these individuals are convened in one location for a specific period of time, the participating faculty members and administrators were randomly selected from each community college in Mississippi. The faculty names and email addresses were obtained from college websites or through personal communication with department chairs. The selected sample either received their survey instruments by mail or was asked to complete the survey process online. A majority of the participants (94%) completed the survey instrument online. The online survey was identical to the paper survey and was created using the web based survey tool Survey Monkey. The survey instruments that were mailed were accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which the participant was asked to return the survey instrument to the researcher. At colleges where
there are multiple branches, surveys were distributed to faculty members and administrators at each branch. Survey recipients were not chosen based on specific variables (i.e. race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc). Since random sampling was used, the faculty members and administrators that were surveyed were representative of faculty and administrators of the entire institution.

The data was collected during the spring 2010 school semester. The researcher mailed the paper survey instruments (Appendix G) to the faculty members and administrators (or to a liaison who distributed them to faculty members and administrators) and followed up with those instructors and administrators via phone calls and emails. Participants who completed the instrument online received an email containing a link to the survey instrument and a copy of the informed consent letter. They were also asked not to complete the online version if they had already received a paper version. Furthermore, the researcher selected an instructor from each college to distribute the survey instruments (Appendix F) and consent forms to the students. The survey instruments were distributed to students, faculty and administrators only and were limited to the 15 Mississippi community colleges and their associated branches.

Instrumentation

According to Church and Waclawski (1998), “in the organizational context, surveys play an important role in helping leaders and managers obtain a better understanding of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of their own employees and of their customers” (p. 1). Church and Waclawski explain that currently, more than 70% of institutions implement surveys as a means of gathering information as it is the most
popular technique in the realm of data collection because it allows one to obtain
information from a large group of people in a short amount of time.

The researcher designed two survey instruments using a Likert type response
scale. Students received one questionnaire and faculty and administrators received a
different questionnaire. The researcher reviewed literature that was pertinent to the study
as a means of determining appropriate items to include on the survey instrument.
Additionally, the researcher enlisted the assistance of experts in the field as a means of
determining appropriate survey items. These experts included the executive director of
the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) as well as his/her colleagues.
The survey items were crafted in such a way that responses to the survey items yielded
answers to the research questions. When all necessary items had been crafted, the
researcher determined the types of stems and response choices. The survey included
reverse items so as to minimize responses that follow a pattern. Upon completion of the
survey draft, the researcher enlisted the assistance of a panel of experts in order to
determine the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. According to Churchill
(1997) if the items on a survey instrument are written/worded correctly and the items are
appropriate for the targeted group, then the survey has content and face validity. The
experts were asked to examine the face validity of the instrument by evaluating the
questions to determine if they were written on the correct reading level of the targeted
population and if the clarity of the questions was appropriate for the targeted population.
Furthermore, the experts were asked to examine the content validity of the instrument in
search of such errors as redundancy, omissions and items that were worded improperly.
The survey instruments were adjusted according to the recommendations of the experts.
Prior to actual implementation, the survey instruments were piloted on a group of respondents that were similar to the intended target group. As all community colleges in Mississippi were included in the study, the pilot study was conducted at a community college in Louisiana. Chronbach’s Alpha was calculated in order to measure internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. The instrument was adjusted again based on the results of the pilot study. The survey questions determined the college status, race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, family status, geographic location, academic ability, first generation status, employment status and distance from closest four-year institution of each participating student. The survey questions also determined the college status, race, age, gender, employment status, distance from closest four-year institution and years of experience of each participating faculty member and administrator. Finally, the survey instrument determined how each participant reported the need for community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi.

Procedures

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted at a community college in Louisiana. Twenty-three students and 21 faculty and administrators completed the pilot survey instruments. The survey instruments used in the pilot study included eight items which measured student, faculty and administrator reported need for community college baccalaureate degrees. Reliability of these items was determined through the use of the Chronbach’s Alpha reliability test. Results of this analysis suggested an overall alpha of .705. Deleting any of the items from the survey would not have increased the alpha value enough to justify deleting the item. The pilot survey instruments also included items relating to
demographics. There were very few instances where any of those items were skipped or appeared to be misunderstood by the participants. Upon analyzing the results of the pilot study, the survey instruments were adjusted accordingly and prepared for use in the actual study.

Quantitative Component

Quantitative data was collected from the students and faculty through the use of survey instruments. These instruments were distributed to students using the cluster sampling method and to faculty and administrators either through the mail or online using the random sampling method. Liaisons were also solicited to distribute survey instruments to faculty/administrators on the researcher’s behalf. Permission was obtained from the University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Mississippi Community and Junior Colleges’ President’s Council prior to data collection. The procedure was carried out in the following order.

Student Process

1. Instructors were contacted and permission was obtained to distribute surveys to students during a regular class period.

2. Instructor’s served as liaisons, and the survey instruments were mailed to the instructors along with consent forms, instructions and a self addressed, stamped return envelope.

3. Survey instruments were distributed to students during a regular class period by their instructors.

4. Survey instruments were collected by the instructor and returned to the researcher in the envelope provided.
5. Survey data was entered into Microsoft Excel and exported into the PASW statistical software program where it was checked for accuracy and analyzed.

Faculty/Administrator Process

1. Survey instruments and consent forms were either distributed by mail to faculty and administrators or through a link to the online version via email. Some department chairs agreed to serve as liaisons and distribute hard copies of the survey instruments to faculty in their departments. Specific efforts were made to assure that no individuals completed the survey more than once.

2. Faculty members and liaisons who received a hard copy of the survey instrument were asked to return the survey instruments to the researcher upon completion via mail (stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided).

3. The results of the online survey were downloaded from the Survey Monkey database and combined with data gathered from the hard copies of the survey that were completed.

4. Survey data was exported into the PASW statistical software program where it was checked for accuracy and analyzed.

Qualitative Component

Qualitative data was collected from one representative of the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges through the conduction of a personal interview. The interview was semi-structured in nature. The interview questions were open-ended (Appendix H). Prior to the interview, the participant received an informed consent form (Appendix C). As a courtesy, the participant received the questions prior to
the scheduled interview date as well. The procedure was carried out in the following order:

1. Representatives of the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges were contacted with a request for an interview.

2. Only one individual agreed to the interview. This individual was provided with a list of the questions prior to the interview.

3. Interview time was scheduled and an interview was conducted. However, Due to limited responses, results from this interview were not included in the study.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, Chronbach’s Alpha and independent samples t-tests were used to analyze the data. Demographic information was reported through the use of descriptive information. Regression analysis was implemented in order to determine the relationships between the reported need for community college baccalaureate degree programs and the specific demographics of the participants. Independent Samples t-tests were used to determine the difference in reported need among the two groups of participants (students and employees). Chronbach’s Alpha was conducted to test the internal consistency and reliability of dependent variable items on each survey instrument.

**Limitations**

The results of this study are only applicable to community colleges in Mississippi. Furthermore, although strict measures were taken to create clear and concise survey questions, survey based research has the potential to produce varied responses based on interpretation of the survey questions. There is no guarantee that some survey responses
were not influenced by misinterpretation of the questions. Also, as this data was self-reported, it is possible that responses may have been affected by the feeling of being pressured to answer a certain way. Lastly, this research did not include input from individuals from Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning or from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Students, faculty and administrators from each of the 15 public community colleges in the state of Mississippi and individuals from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) were asked to participate in the study. An illustration of a map of the 15 participating Mississippi community colleges can be found in Figure 1. The data collection process began on February 16, 2010 and was ongoing through April 5, 2010. There were 1,497 participants in the survey process. Thus, 1,497 survey instruments were completed by participants and collected by the researcher. One thousand and eighty-nine of those participants were students and the remaining participants were faculty and administrators.

Figure 1. Map of the 15 Participating Mississippi Community Colleges.

Although, the original intention was to survey faculty, administrators and students from both the main and branch campuses, in some instances, the main and branch campuses shared the same faculty and administrators. Thus, upon collecting responses from individuals from the main campuses, there were either few or no other possible participants from the branch campuses. In other instances, the branch campuses were very small and offered less than 10 courses. Most of the instructors at these campuses were adjunct and therefore difficult to contact. This also resulted in either a low or zero return rate from some of the branch campuses. Overall, the response rate for faculty, administrators and students was satisfactory. Approximately 1,288 survey instruments were sent to community college students and 1,089 completed survey instruments were returned to the researcher (85% return rate). Furthermore, approximately 600 survey instruments were sent to faculty and administrators and 408 completed survey instruments were returned to the researcher (68% return rate). There was only community college where no faculty or administrators completed the survey process. Forty-eight students from this community college, however, participated in the study.

Approximately ten individuals from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges were contacted and asked to participate in the study. However, due to the controversial nature of the study and the potential for political backlash, only one of those individuals agreed to an interview. Therefore, the qualitative component of this study was not completed or included in the results. The PASW statistics software was used in analyzing the quantitative data for this study.
Demographics

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of the students who participated in the study were white, first generation, female, traditional age students (between the ages of 18 and 24) with part time jobs, mid level socioeconomic status, low to medium academic ability and no family responsibilities. A majority of the participating students were 1-50 miles from the nearest four year institution. Due to the small number of respondents for the Asian, Hispanic, and Multicultural categories (a combined percentage of 3.9), the race variable was recoded to combine each of those categories into the “other” category. The student’s age category was separated into the traditional (18-24 years) and nontraditional (25 years or older) age ranges. The student’s employment status measured if a student was employed, and if so, if he/she was employed full time or part time. For students who were not employed, it measured if the student planned to be employed while in school.

Students’ academic abilities were separated into two categories, low to medium and high. Students whose high school GPA and current GPA were a 2.9 or less and students who were taking (or had taken) a developmental course were listed in the “low to medium” academic ability category. All other students were listed in the “high” academic ability category.

Student’s socioeconomic status was determined by their parent(s) highest education level. According to the Tse and Werschkul (2005), socioeconomic status can be determined by the head of households highest degree obtained. Tse and Werschkul explains that less than a high school diploma indicates a “low” socioeconomic status, from high school graduate to some college or associate’s degree represents a “middle”
socioeconomic status and a bachelor’s degree and beyond represents a “high” socioeconomic status.

Table 1

*Participant Characteristics (Students)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong> (missing .5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Responsibilities</strong> (missing 1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Responsibilities</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No family responsibilities</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong> (missing .6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 &gt;</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong> (missing .5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong> (missing .9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (with plans while in school)</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (with no plans while in school)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulltime</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Generation</strong> (missing 11%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Ability</strong> (missing .4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low to medium</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance</strong> (missing 0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-50 miles</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100 miles</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic Status</strong> (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of the employees who participated were white, male faculty between the ages of 46 and 55 with more than 20 years experience at their respective college, and were 1-50 miles from the nearest four year institution. Due to the small number of respondents for the Asian, Hispanic, and Multicultural categories
(a combined percentage of 2.2), the race variable was recoded to combine each of those categories into the “other” category.

Table 2

*Participant Characteristics (Employees)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong> (missing .3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age** (missing .7%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 &gt;</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender** (missing 1%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Years Employed** (missing .7%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Employed</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 years &gt;</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment Position** (missing .5%)

- Faculty: 68.5
- Administrator: 31

**Distance** (missing 0%)

- 1-50 miles: 80.1
- 51-100 miles: 19.9

N = 408

---

**Statistical Analysis**

Before running any statistical analyses, each categorical variable was recoded and all continuous variables were centered. The variables were centered in an effort to reduce multicollinearity and aid in interpreting the constant. In order to address the first research question and determine how strongly administrators, faculty and students reported the need for the community college baccalaureate degree, descriptives were run on the eight items that represent the dependent variable.

Prior to running statistical analysis on the data, reliability tests were conducted in order to assess the degree of internal consistency among the set of questionnaire items that would represent the dependent variable “reported need” for both sets of respondents (students and employees). Question number 8 from both survey instruments was originally negatively keyed and was thus recoded so that the response options for all 8 questions were coded in the same direction. The overall alpha for the set of items on the
student questionnaire was .777 and the overall alpha for the set of items on the employee 
questionnaire was .855. The overall alpha on the set of items that were asked of both 
groups when the data from both survey responses were combined was .773. These alpha 
values indicated strong internal consistency and supported the assumption that each of the 
scale items would measure the same construct. After determining that all 8 items 
designed to measure reported need contributed to the overall reliability of the construct, a 
mean composite variable was created for the construct. Figure 2 represents the 8 items 
representing the dependent variable (reported need) for the student survey.

Figure 2. Items Used to Measure Reported Need (Student Survey Instrument)

*CCB = Community College Baccalaureate Degree
Figure 3 shows the 8 items representing the dependent variable (reported need) for the survey instruments that were completed by faculty and administrators.

Figure 3. Items Used to Measure Reported Need (Employee Survey Instrument)

*CCB = Community College Baccalaureate Degree

The results of the analysis indicated that a majority of the students who were surveyed believed that community college baccalaureate degrees would be beneficial to them as students and to their college. They also indicated that if offered, they would obtain a baccalaureate degree from their respective community college. As indicated in Table 3, 79% of students reported that the addition of a bachelor’s degree program would be beneficial to their college, 63% reported that, if offered, they would obtain a bachelor’s degree from their respective community college, 67% reported that the
addition of a bachelor’s degree program would be beneficial to them and their futures and 73% reported that being able to obtain a bachelor’s degree from their community college would eliminate financial barriers.

Although a majority of these students believe that there is a need for community college baccalaureate degrees, many of them did not believe that this would be their only option for obtaining a bachelor’s degree. Thus, although a large majority of the students support the idea of community college baccalaureate degree programs, they also reported that they would still be able to obtain a bachelor’s degree without them. Table 3 indicates that only 16% of students believed that community college baccalaureate degree programs are their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor’s degree, only 10% of students indicated that the fact that their community college does not offer a bachelors degree means that they will not be able to obtain one, only 11% of students indicated distance from the nearest four-year institution as a barrier to obtaining a bachelor’s degree and only 16% indicated that there was some barrier that was preventing them from obtaining a bachelor’s degree from a four year college or university. Although these percentages seem rather low, it is important to note that at least 16% of students surveyed will not be able to obtain a bachelors degree because they believe that they do not have access.
Table 3

Reported Need (Students)

My only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor’s degree would be through my local community college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The addition of bachelor’s degree programs would be beneficial to this college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a bachelor’s degree was offered by this community college, I would obtain a bachelor’s degree from this community college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued).

A bachelor’s degree program at this college would benefit me and my future.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since this community college does not offer a bachelor’s degree, I may not be able to obtain one.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If my local community college offered bachelor’s degrees, it would make things easier financially for me and my family.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued).

I live too far away from a 4 year college or university to get a bachelor’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is nothing preventing me from getting a bachelor’s degree from a four year college or university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=1089

The results of the same analysis conducted on the faculty and administrator responses indicate that a majority of the faculty and administrators surveyed believe that community college baccalaureate degrees would be beneficial to students and to the college. As indicated in Table 4, 83% of the faculty and administrators reported that students should have easy access to the bachelor’s degree, 56% reported that the addition of a bachelor’s degree program would benefit the college, 64% reported that the addition of a bachelor’s degree program would benefit students, and 69% reported that the
addition of a bachelor’s degree program would eliminate financial barriers to the bachelor’s degree.

Furthermore, as was the case with the student responses, a majority of faculty and administrators supported the idea of bachelor’s degree programs at their college, but also believed that students would be able to obtain a bachelor’s degree without them. Thirty-six percent believed that community college baccalaureate degree programs would be the only option for a significant number of students to obtain a bachelor’s degree, 33% percent reported that the absence of bachelor’s degree programs at their college means that students may not be able to obtain one, and 21% reported that distance from the nearest four year college or university would prevent students from obtaining a bachelor’s degree.

Table 4

Reported Need (Employees)

I believe that students should have easy access to a bachelor’s degree if they want to pursue attaining one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

A bachelor’s degree conferred by this community college district would be the only option for a significant number of students to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The addition of bachelor’s degree programs would be beneficial to this college.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students would benefit from a bachelor’s degree program at this college.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

Since this community college does not offer a bachelor’s degree, students may not be able to obtain one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a bachelor was conferred by this community college, it would make things financially easier for students and their families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distance from this community college to the nearest four year institution hinders students from obtaining a bachelor’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

There is nothing preventing students at this college from getting a bachelor’s degree from a four year college or university.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=408

In order to address research question number two, which asked if the student and employee reported need were different, an independent samples t-test was conducted on both groups of participants. Prior to conducting the analysis, students were placed in group 1 and employees were placed in group 2. As demonstrated in Table 5, the mean for the employees was slightly higher than that of the students: \( M_1 = 2.91 \) and \( SD_1 = .667 \), and \( M_2 = 3.0 \) and \( SD_2 = .895 \). Table 6 shows the results of the independent samples t-test which demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the reported need of students and employees, \( t(1483) = -3.345, p = .001 \). Cohen’s d approximation indicated a small measure of effect size of -0.12.
Table 5

*Group Statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1078</td>
<td>2.9199</td>
<td>.66766</td>
<td>.2034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>3.0633</td>
<td>.89539</td>
<td>.04438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

*Independent Samples T-Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variance Assumed</td>
<td>-3.345</td>
<td>1483</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both groups agreed that there was a need for baccalaureate degree programs at their community colleges. Both groups also agreed that, although baccalaureate degree programs at their colleges would be advantageous, students would still be able to obtain a baccalaureate degree without them. However, there was an important difference in the percentages. While only 16% of students believed that the community college baccalaureate degree would be their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor’s degree, a much larger percentage of faculty and administrators (36%) believed the same. As indicated in Table 7, this percentage difference is evident in five of the seven survey items that both sets of participants were asked. Although faculty and administrators reported a higher need for community college baccalaureate degree programs than did students, the end result is that the overall reported need for the majority of the students,
faculty and administrators who were surveyed was the same. A majority of both groups either agreed or disagreed on the same items (although in starkly different percentages).

Table 7

*Employee vs. Student Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree</th>
<th>Percentage of employees who agree or strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCB is student’s only realistic option for degree attainment.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCB Programs would benefit the college.</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCB Programs would benefit students.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The absence of CCB programs will prevent students from obtaining a bachelor’s degree.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCB programs would eliminate financial barriers for students.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree</th>
<th>Percentage of employees who agree or strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance from nearest four year institution prevents bachelor’s degree attainment.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing prevents students from obtaining a bachelors degree from a four year institution.</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to address research question three, which asked if the reported need of students was affected by race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, employment status, academic ability, first generation status, family status or distance from the nearest four year institution, multiple regression analysis was conducted on the centered and recoded independent variables as a means of determining the amount of variability that was explained by the model and if the overall model was significant. Based on relevant literature, the researcher predicted that ethnic minorities, females, older (nontraditional) students, students with a low socioeconomic status, distance from the nearest four-year institution, students with family responsibilities, first generation students, and students with full-time jobs would report a higher need for the degree. The results of the multiple
regression analysis indicated that the model explained 15.6% of the variability of the dependent variable and that the overall model was significant F (12, 929) = 15.527, p<.001.

The coefficients table resulting from the analysis (shown in Table 8) indicated that two of the independent variables included in the model (nontraditional students and students with family responsibilities) had a significant effect on the dependent variable (reported need) in a positive direction with a p<.001 value. This supports the researcher’s hypothesis that nontraditional students and students with family responsibilities would report a higher need for baccalaureate degree programs than other students. Students who were nontraditional or who had family responsibilities resulted in a .309 and .263 increase in reported need (respectively) controlling for all other variables. Although it was also predicted that students with full time jobs, female students, first generation students and ethnic minorities would report a higher need, neither of these variables had a significant effect on reported need. Students who were female, unemployed but with plans to be employed while in school, employed full time or first generation, resulted in a .035, .037, .103 and .148 increase in reported need, respectively, controlling for all other variables. Two other independent variables (distance and unemployed with no plans of being employed while in school) also had a significant effect on the dependent variable but in a negative direction. Students whose race was Black and students whose race fell into the “other” category, as well students who were unemployed with no plans of being employed while in school, resulted in a .067, .038, and .174 decrease in reported need, respectively, controlling for all other variables.
In regards to academic ability and college distance from the nearest four year institution, for every 1 unit increase in academic ability and distance from the nearest four year institution, there is a .100 and .147 decrease, respectively, in reported need controlling for all other variables. The value for the constant was 2.806. Therefore, 2.8 is the predicted score when all other values are zero. The independent variable with the greatest impact on the reported need was family responsibility.

Table 8

*Coefficients Table (Students)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.806</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>-.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Traditional</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (with plans)</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (no plans)</td>
<td>-.174</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Ability</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>-.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>-.147</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>-.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Responsibilities</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation Status</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to address research question four, which asked if faculty and administrative reported need was affected by race, years of experience, gender, age, or college distance from the nearest four year institution, multiple regression analysis was run on the centered and recoded independent variables as a means of determining the amount of variability that was explained by the model and if the overall model was significant. The results of the multiple regression indicated that the model explained 46% of the variability of the dependent variable and that the overall model was significant, \( F(6, 391) = 3.224, p<.01 \). The coefficients table resulting from the analysis (shown in Table 9) indicated that two independent variables (other and female) had a significant effect on the dependent variable. Both of the variables had significance values of \( p<.05 \). Participating employees whose race was listed as Black or in the “other” category, resulted in a .168 and .7 decrease in reported need, respectively, controlling for all other variables. Furthermore, participating employees who were female resulted in a .182 increase in reported need controlling for all other variables. In regard to age, years of employment and distance from the nearest four year institution, for every 1 unit increase in age, years of employment and distance from the nearest four year institution, there was a .031, .056 and .006 decrease in reported need, respectively controlling for all other variables. The value for the constant was 3.11. Therefore, 3.1 is the predicted score when all other values are zero. The coefficients table also indicated which independent variable had the greatest affect on the dependent variable. The independent variable with the greatest impact on the reported need was female. Thus, statistically, for every one standard deviation increase in participants who were female, there was a .084 standard deviation increase in reported need controlling for all other variables.
Overall, it is clear that students, faculty and administrators report a need for baccalaureate degrees at their community colleges. However, a majority of the individuals surveyed believed that students would be able to obtain a bachelor’s degree whether it was offered at their community college or not.

When asked if a bachelor’s degree were offered at their college why they might consider obtaining one, the top three responses from students was “because it is less expensive than a four year school” (80%), “because it is closer to where I live than any four year school” (53%), and “because I am familiar with this school” (53%). When asked if a bachelor’s degree were offered at their college why students might consider obtaining one, the top three responses from faculty and administrators was “because it is
less expensive than a four year school” (85%), “because of their family responsibilities” (64%) and “because of their work responsibilities” (62%).

Although students, faculty and administrators agreed on the issue of cost as the number one reason, only 23% of students selected “because of my work responsibilities” and only 21% selected “because of my family responsibilities. However, where 53% of students selected “because it is closer to where I live than any four year school”, 56% of faculty and administrators selected the same choice. Faculty and administrators were not asked about familiarity with the school.

Overall, the results indicate that students, faculty and administrators reported a need for community college baccalaureate degrees. However, the results showed that faculty and administrators reported a higher need than did the students, and both students and employees believed that baccalaureate degree attainment was possible without the implementation of such programs at their respective community colleges. Furthermore, results indicated that there were a few factors (nontraditional status and family responsibility for students, the race category “other” and the gender category “female” for employees) that affected reported need.

Ancillary Findings

During the analysis of the data, it was also discovered that there was a significant difference in reported need among participants from main campuses and participants from branch campuses. As demonstrated in Table 10, the mean for the branch campuses was slightly higher than that of the main campuses: $M_B = 3.13$ and $SD_B = .754$, and $M_M = 2.9$ and $SD_M = .723$. Table 11 shows the results of a independent samples t-test which
demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the reported need of branch campuses and the reported need of the main campuses, $t(1483) = 5.558, p < .001$.

Table 10

*Group Statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>2.8944</td>
<td>.72362</td>
<td>.02203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>3.3131</td>
<td>.75466</td>
<td>.03745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

*Independent Samples T-Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variance Assumed</td>
<td>5.558</td>
<td>1483</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regression analysis indicated that branch campuses have a significant effect on reported need in a positive direction. Individuals from branch campuses resulted in a .237 increase in reported need, controlling for all other variables. Another ancillary finding was that students who were not employed but had plans to be employed while they were in school reported a higher need for community college baccalaureate degree programs than those students who were not employed and had no plans of being employed while in school.

Assumptions and Diagnostics

A data analysis was conducted to determine if the assumption of homoscedasticity was met and diagnostic testing was conducted in order to test for influential statistics. A
test for homoscedasticity was conducted by re-running the regression model while including the unstandardized predicted and residual values. The scatter plot resulting from a graph of this model demonstrated that the assumption of homoscedasticity had not been violated. The scatter plot demonstrated that the variance was mostly consistent above and below the horizontal line.

In order to test for influential statistics, diagnostic testing was conducted. Standardized DFFITs were added to the model and the data was then examined to determine if there were any influential points. The DFFITs values were sorted in both ascending and descending order and there was no evidence of any doubling or halving affects in either direction. Thus, there were no influential points in the data. A test for multicollinearity was also conducted which revealed that there were no problematic tolerance values.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

An increasing number of community colleges are implementing baccalaureate degree programs while maintaining their community college identity. Relating literature indicates that community college baccalaureate degree programs are a reliable method for increasing access to baccalaureate degrees. The state of Florida’s decision to implement community college baccalaureate degree programs has proven to be beneficial to baccalaureate degree attainment in the state as well as producing qualified employers for high-demand employment fields like education and nursing. Although the state of Florida has the largest number of community colleges that are authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees (14), it is not the only state that has implemented such programs (Lewin, 2009). According to Lewin, seventeen other states, from Washington to Hawaii, all have community colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees. Although, according to Lewin, some critics view community colleges’ desire to offer baccalaureate degrees as a “solution in search of a problem”, most supporters view the idea as an answer to the problem of barriers to the baccalaureate degree and view it as an opportunity to increase baccalaureate degree attainment.

This study sought to determine if community college students, faculty and administrators in Mississippi reported a need for community college baccalaureate degree programs and if the reported need was affected by certain demographics. Data was collected from each of the 15 community colleges in the state.
Conclusions and Discussion

A majority of the students who were surveyed reported a need for community college baccalaureate degree programs. A large majority of the students reported that baccalaureate degree programs at their respective colleges would benefit them as students, would be beneficial to their college and would benefit them financially. They also indicated that if a baccalaureate degree program was offered at their respective colleges, they would obtain one from that college. Literature supports these results, stating that current community college students are advocates for community college baccalaureate degree programs (Walker, 2001).

In contrast to some of the current literature, however, a majority of the students believed that, although community college baccalaureate degree programs would be beneficial, they would still be able to obtain a baccalaureate degree without them. Perhaps this is a result of the fact that Mississippi has 8 public universities and each of the 15 community colleges in the state (and their associated branches) is at most 90 miles from the closest public university. In fact, 71% of the 15 community colleges in Mississippi are within 50 miles of the nearest public university. Most of the relative literature cited long distances from four year institutions as a major factor in reported need for community college baccalaureate degrees (McKee, 2005; Remington & Remington, 2005; Walker, 2001). Distance from the nearest four year institution, however, it not necessarily a factor in the state of Mississippi.

Also partially in contrast to current literature were factors known to increase demand for community college baccalaureate degrees to include nontraditional students and students with family responsibilities which reported the highest need for
baccalaureate degree programs. Current literature supports this conclusion. According to Walker, nontraditional students and students with family responsibilities stand to benefit from community college baccalaureate degrees as these are students who are usually unable to relocate and who desire the flexible academic accommodations community colleges offer. However, although current literature states that minority and female students would also report the highest needs (Glenn & Glenn, 2003), this study did not yield those results. Although female students did report some need, minority students reported a lower need than almost any other category surveyed. Again, this may be a result of the surplus of public four year universities in Mississippi, which includes three Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

In summary, in regard to student reported need, there was no significant relationship between ethnic minorities, females, students with low socioeconomic status, distance from the nearest four-year institution, first generation students, or students with full-time jobs and reported need. However, there was a significant relationship between nontraditional students and students with family responsibilities and reported need.

In regard to faculty and administrators, they also reported a need for community college baccalaureate degrees. A majority of the employees surveyed reported that community college baccalaureate degrees would benefit students, would benefit the college and would eliminate financial barriers for students. However, as was the case for the students, although a majority of the employees supported the idea of community college baccalaureate degrees, they also believed that students would be able to obtain baccalaureate degrees elsewhere. Only faculty and administrators who were listed as female or in the “other” race category had a significant effect on reported need. Age,
years of experience and distance did not prove to be a factor with employees in regards to reported need. The portion of this study relating to faculty and administrative opinions on community college baccalaureate degrees was exploratory, as current literature does not necessarily focus on community college baccalaureate degree programs as they relate to community college employees. McKee (2005), however, did report that faculty and administrators supported the idea of a community college baccalaureate degree at Westark Community College and ultimately aided in getting the program established.

The reported need of community college employees is an important component of this study as these are the individuals who stand to be most affected by the implementation of such programs.

The results of this study indicate that employees actually believed the implementation of baccalaureate degrees to be more important than students did. More employees than students reported that without community college baccalaureate degree programs, many students might not be able to obtain baccalaureate degrees at all. The results of the reported need of students and the reported need of faculty and administrators were similar in that a majority of both groups either agreed or disagreed on the same items. The results were different, however, in that employees reported a higher need.

Limitations

Some limitations of this study included the inability to contact adjunct faculty at some of the branch campuses and, thus, not obtaining a large enough response from individuals on those campuses. Furthermore, at two institutions, the researcher was not allowed to contact potential participants directly. Instead, individuals from the
institutional advancement department at the institution designated an individual to
distribute the survey instruments. Thus, the researcher was unable to assure that an
appropriate number of survey instruments were distributed to an even number of faculty
and administrators. The researcher was unable to solicit participation from faculty and
administrators at one community college in the state. Lastly, the researcher was unable to
solicit participation from individuals from the State Board for Community & Junior
Colleges.

Recommendations

The Mississippi community college system is known for its devotion to
responding to the needs of students and to the local community. According to Howell
(1996), “Mississippi's system of public community and junior colleges developed as a
response to changing educational needs in the state” (p. 547). Thus, it is important that
practitioners remain aware of what those changing educational needs are. As of now, the
results of this study indicate that students and employees report the need for community
college baccalaureate degrees.

Based on the results of this study, there are several recommendations for
community college practitioners in the state of Mississippi. First, practitioners should
reexamine the current needs of community college students and the local community to
determine if those needs are being met. Practitioners should be aware that currently, at
least 16% of their students feel that community college baccalaureate degrees would be
their only option for obtaining a baccalaureate degree. Furthermore, that 16% was from a
group of just under 1100 students who were surveyed. This number accounts for only
about 1.4 percent of the total number of students who are enrolled in community colleges
across the state of Mississippi (approximately 81,000). Should all 81,000 students at Mississippi community colleges be asked the same question, that percentage may increase.

Second, as a majority of students reported a need for baccalaureate degree programs at their colleges, practitioners should seek to discover what types of baccalaureate degrees these students are interested in. Are they workforce related degrees? Are they degrees that are not being offered at any public university? If they are, it might be possible to accommodate these students while avoiding “reinventing the wheel”.

Third, practitioners should examine why faculty and administrators indicated so strongly that community college baccalaureate degrees are necessary in order for their students to obtain baccalaureate degrees. This was an important finding and one that has yet to be addressed in current literature. The fact that community college employees reported that baccalaureate degree programs would be beneficial may warrant further investigation.

Recommendations for Future Research

An important addition to this study would be (as was originally attempted) to include the opinions of individuals from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges regarding the subject. As these individuals are influential in the making of many of the final decisions regarding the practices of community colleges in the state, their opinions on this topic are important. Also important to this study would be a follow-up study that measures the opinions of university professors and administrators regarding local community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees. Furthermore, it would be
important to interview or survey university students who have transferred from local community colleges to determine if, had they been given the opportunity, they would have stayed at their respective community colleges to obtain a baccalaureate degree.

Lastly, it would be important to interview or survey individuals from the Mississippi Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) to determine their opinions on community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees. Current literature states that four year college and university personnel feel threatened by the idea of community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees and usually resist the idea (Floyd & Skolnik, 2005; Floyd & Walker, 2003; Garmon, 2000; Shkodriani, 2004; Walker, 1997). It is important to discover if that fact holds true in the state of Mississippi.

Certain factors discovered during the research process may indicate that the current economic and political climate in Mississippi does not provide support for community college baccalaureate degrees at this time. If the current economic climate in Mississippi forces the closure of some of the public universities in the state, then perhaps the idea of community college baccalaureate degrees might be more appealing. Furthermore, the fact that many of the individuals from the SBCJC were reluctant to participate in the study as a result of its political nature may suggest that the political climate may need to be altered before the idea of community college baccalaureate degrees is accepted.
APPENDIX A

STUDENT CONSENT LETTER

February 20, 2010

Dear Participant,

As a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi, I am conducting a study of the community college curriculum in Mississippi. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes and personal opinions of Mississippi community college students concerning community college baccalaureate degree programs. Furthermore, this study seeks to determine the attitudes as well as personal and professional opinions of community college administrators and faculty members in Mississippi, and individuals from the State Board for Community & Junior Colleges (SBCJC) concerning community college baccalaureate degree programs.

As a contributor, you are being asked to complete a survey that should take no more than 10 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary and may be discontinued at any time without penalty. By completing the survey, you are granting your consent to participate in this study. In order to assure you the highest level of confidentiality, participants of this study will NOT be identified by name and personal information will remain completely confidential. Participants in this study must be at least 18 years of age. Thus, if you receive a survey and are under that age of 18, please return it to the distributor.

You have my sincere appreciation for agreeing to participate in this study. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Johannah B. Williams
Hinds Community College
PO Box 1100
Raymond, MS 39154
601-857-3659
jbwilliams@hindsc.edu

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects that involve human subjects follow federal regulation. Any questions may be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Southern Mississippi by calling (601) 266-6820. Please feel free to contact the researcher with any questions regarding this study at (601) 857-3659.
APPENDIX B

FACULTY CONSENT LETTER

February 20, 2010

Dear Colleague,

My name is Johannah Williams. I am a computer science instructor at Hinds Community College and a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am conducting a study of the community college curriculum in Mississippi as partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes and personal opinions of Mississippi community college students concerning community college baccalaureate degree programs. Furthermore, this study seeks to determine the attitudes as well as personal and professional opinions of community college administrators and faculty members in Mississippi and individuals from the State Board for Community & Junior Colleges (SBCJC) concerning community college baccalaureate degree programs.

As a contributor, you are being asked to complete a survey that should take no more than 10 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary and may be discontinued at any time without penalty. By completing the survey, you are granting your consent to participate in this study. In order to assure you the highest level of confidentiality, participants of this study will NOT be identified by name, institution or job title and personal information will remain completely confidential.

You have my sincere appreciation for agreeing to participate in this study. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Johannah B. Williams
Hinds Community College
PO Box 1100
Raymond, MS  39154
601-857-3659
jbwilliams@hindscc.edu

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects that involve human subjects follow federal regulation. Any questions may be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Southern Mississippi by calling (601) 266-6820. Please feel free to contact the researcher with any questions regarding this study at (601) 857-3659.
APPENDIX C

SBCJC REPRESENTATIVE CONSENT LETTER

March 17, 2010

Dear Participant,

As a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi, I am conducting a study of the community college curriculum in Mississippi. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes and personal opinions of Mississippi community college students concerning community college baccalaureate degree programs. Furthermore, this project seeks to determine the attitudes as well as personal and professional opinions of community college administrators and faculty members in Mississippi, and individuals from the State Board for Community & Junior Colleges (SBCJC) concerning community college baccalaureate degree programs.

As a contributor you are being asked to participate in an interview that should take no more than 30 minutes. By agreeing to be interviewed, you are granting your consent to participate in this study. Participants of this study will NOT be identified by name or job title and personal information will remain completely confidential assuring you the highest level of confidentiality.

You have my sincere appreciation for agreeing to participate in this study. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Johannah B. Williams
Hinds Community College
PO Box 1100
Raymond, MS 39154
601-857-3659
jbwilliams@hindsc.edu

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects that involve human subjects follow federal regulation. Any questions may be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Southern Mississippi by calling (601) 266-6820. Please feel free to contact the researcher with any questions regarding this study at (601) 857-3659.
APPENDIX D

LIAISON INSTRUCTION LETTER

Date: February 1, 2010
To: Community College Instructor/Liaison
From: Johannah B. Williams
        Computer Science Instructor
        Hinds Community College

RE: Dissertation Survey Distribution Instructions

Your Community College President has granted me permission to survey students on this campus. Thank you so much for agreeing to assist me in distributing the survey forms. I have included in this packet a consent letter and a survey form for each student in your course. Students should read the consent letter prior to completing the survey form. The survey form should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Upon completion of the survey form, students should return it to you. After you have collected all completed survey forms, please forward them to me using the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. Again, your assistance with this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Johannah B. Williams
Hinds Community College
PO Box 1100
Raymond, MS 39154
601-857-3659
(601) 857-3659.
jbwilliams@hindscce.edu
APPENDIX E

PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL PERMISSION LETTER

Date: November 17, 2009

To: SBCJC President’s Council

From: Johannah B. Williams
     Computer Science Instructor
     Hinds Community College

RE: Permission to Conduct Doctoral Research

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi. I am seeking a doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration with emphasis in Community College Leadership. My dissertation research involves examining the attitudes and opinions of Mississippi community college students, faculty and administrators regarding baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges.

I respectfully request your permission to conduct research at each of the 15 community and junior colleges in Mississippi. The research procedures will involve a survey of selected students, faculty members and administrators and will be conducted with the voluntary assistance of a liaison from each institution. The survey process is expected to take no more than 10 minutes for each participating individual.

Your permission and support for this research effort is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Johannah B. Williams

11-16-09

This was approved today at our monthly meeting!

Wick H. Pett, Chair

Signature of Consent ___________________________ Date ____________

Chair, SBCJC President’s Council
Important definition: A bachelor’s degree is a college degree that usually takes 4 years to complete. A bachelor’s degree is usually valued more than an associate’s degree by employers.

PART A
Instructions: Please check the box that indicates the primary college that you attend (where you take the most hours). If there is more than one campus for your college, please check the name of the branch campus that you attend. Please select only one choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coahoma Community College</th>
<th>Meridian Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Coahoma Community College</td>
<td>□ Meridian Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Copiah-Lincoln Community College</td>
<td>□ Mississippi Delta Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Wesson Campus (Main)</td>
<td>□ Moorhead Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Natchez Campus</td>
<td>□ Greenville Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Simpson County Center</td>
<td>□ Indianola Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Copiah-Lincoln Community College</td>
<td>□ Greenwood Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Wesson Campus (Main)</td>
<td>□ Natchez Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Simpson County Center</td>
<td>□ Simpson County Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Meridian Community College</td>
<td>□ Meridian Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ East Central Community College</td>
<td>□ Jones Junior College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ East Mississippi Community College</td>
<td>□ Itawamba Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Scooba Campus (Main)</td>
<td>□ Fulton Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mayhew Campus</td>
<td>□ Tupelo Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Hinds Community College</td>
<td>□ Holmes Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Raymond Campus (Main)</td>
<td>□ Goodman Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Academic/Technical Center (Jackson)</td>
<td>□ Grenada Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Nursing/Allied Health Center</td>
<td>□ Ridgeland Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Rankin Campus</td>
<td>□ Rankin Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Utica Campus</td>
<td>□ Utica Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Vicksburg/Warren Campus</td>
<td>□ Vicksburg/Warren Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College</td>
<td>□ Northeast Mississippi Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Perkinston Campus (Main)</td>
<td>□ Booneville Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Jackson County Campus</td>
<td>□ New Albany Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Jefferson Davis Campus</td>
<td>□ Corinth Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Northwest Mississippi Community College</td>
<td>□ Pearl River Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Senatobia Campus (Main)</td>
<td>□ Poplarville Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ DeSoto Center</td>
<td>□ Forrest County Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Lafayette/Yalobusha Technical Center</td>
<td>□ Hancock Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Southwest Community College</td>
<td>□ Southwest Community College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART B
Instructions: Please check the appropriate box for each of the following items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following best describes your race/ethnic background?</th>
<th>Which of the following best describes your current family status?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Black</td>
<td>□ I do not have any family responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ White</td>
<td>□ I have at least one child that I am responsible for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Asian</td>
<td>□ I help take care of my siblings or other family members (mother, grandmother, etc…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following describes your age range?</td>
<td>18-24, 25 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following describes your gender?</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your parents’ (combined) income?</td>
<td>Below $15,000 per year, $15,000 - $20,000 per year, $21,000 - $25,000 per year, $26,000 - $30,000 per year, $31,000 - $35,000 per year, $36,000 - $40,000 per year, $41,000 - $45,000 per year, Above $45,000 per year, I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your current income?</td>
<td>I don’t have an income, Below $15,000 per year, $15,000 - $20,000 per year, $21,000 - $25,000 per year, $26,000 - $30,000 per year, $31,000 - $35,000 per year, $36,000 - $40,000 per year, $41,000 - $45,000 per year, Above $45,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your MOTHER’S highest education level?</td>
<td>Less than a high school diploma, High School Diploma/GED, Some College, Associate’s Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree, Specialist Degree, Doctorate (PhD), I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your FATHER’S highest education level?</td>
<td>Less than a high school diploma, High School Diploma/GED, Some College, Associate’s Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree, Specialist Degree, Doctorate (PhD), I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently employed?</td>
<td>No, but I plan to be employed, No, and I do not plan to be employed while in school, Yes, Part Time, Yes, Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you are not at school, where do you live?</td>
<td>City, State, County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was your high school GPA when you graduated?</td>
<td>I didn’t graduate from high school, Below 1.0, 1.0 - 1.99, 2.0 - 2.99, 3.0 - 4.0, I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your current GPA range?</td>
<td>Below 1.0, 1.0 - 1.99, 2.0 - 2.99, 3.0 - 4.0, I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken at least one developmental course.</td>
<td>True, False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please select the type(s) of financial aid that you receive. You may select more than one choice.</td>
<td>Pell Grant, Loan, Work Study, None of the above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PART C

**Instructions:**
Please circle the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please answer every question. There is no right or wrong answer. Please select only one choice for each of the 9 items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor’s degree would be through my local community college.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The addition of bachelor’s degree programs would be beneficial to this college.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If a bachelor’s degree was offered by this community college, I would obtain a bachelors degree from this community college.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A bachelor’s degree program at this college would benefit me and my future.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Since this community college does not offer a bachelor’s degree, I may not be able to obtain one.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If my local community college offered bachelor’s degrees, it would make things easier financially for me and my family.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I live too far away from a 4 year college or university to get a bachelor’s degree.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>There is nothing preventing me from getting a bachelor’s degree from a four year college or university.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I have <strong>no</strong> desire to get a bachelor’s degree from anywhere.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART D

**Instructions:** Select each of the following statements you feel are true. You may select more than one choice.

If it were an option, I would get a bachelor’s degree from this community college:

- [ ] Because it is less expensive than a four year school
- [ ] Because it is closer to where I live than any four year school
- [ ] Because of my work responsibilities
- [ ] Because of my family responsibilities
- [ ] Because I like it here
- [ ] Because I am familiar with the school
- [ ] Because my GPA is too low to go to a four year school
- [ ] Other: Please specify in the space below:
# APPENDIX G

## FACULTY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

### COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY (FACULTY/ADMINISTRATOR)

#### PART A

**Instructions:** Please check the box that represents the primary college where you are employed. If there is more than one campus for your college, please also check the name of the branch campus where you are employed. Please select only one choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coahoma Community College</th>
<th>Meridian Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copiah-Lincoln Community College</td>
<td>Mississippi Delta Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesson Campus (Main)</td>
<td>Moorhead Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natchez Campus</td>
<td>Greenville Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson County Center</td>
<td>Indianola Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenwood Campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Central Community College</th>
<th>Jones Junior College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Mississippi Community College</td>
<td>Itawamba Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scooba Campus (Main)</td>
<td>Fulton Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayhew Campus</td>
<td>Tupelo Campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hinds Community College</th>
<th>Holmes Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raymond Campus (Main)</td>
<td>Goodman Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Technical Center (Jackson)</td>
<td>Grenada Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing/Allied Health Center</td>
<td>Ridgeland Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankin Campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utica Campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicksburg/Warren Campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College</th>
<th>Northeast Mississippi Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perkinston Campus (Main)</td>
<td>Booneville Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson County Campus</td>
<td>New Albany Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Davis Campus</td>
<td>Corinth Campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northwest Mississippi Community College</th>
<th>Pearl River Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senatobia Campus (Main)</td>
<td>Poplarville Campus (Main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSoto Center</td>
<td>Forrest County Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette/Yalobusha Technical Center</td>
<td>Hancock Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Southwest Community College | |

#### PART B

**Instructions:** Please check the appropriate box for each of the following items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following best describes your race/ethnic background?</th>
<th>Which of the following describes your age range?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>25-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>36-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>46-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your gender?</td>
<td>How long have you been employed at this institution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Male</td>
<td>□ Less than 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Female</td>
<td>□ 5 – 9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ 10 - 15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ 16 – 20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ More than 20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART C

**Instructions:** Please circle the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please answer every question. There is no right or wrong answer. Please select only one choice for each of the 8 items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I believe that students should have easy access to a bachelor’s degree if they want to pursue attaining one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A bachelor’s degree conferred by this community college district would be the only option for a significant number of students to obtain a bachelor’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The addition of bachelor’s degree programs would be beneficial to this college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students would benefit from a bachelor’s degree program at this college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Since this community college does not offer a bachelor’s degree, students may not be able to obtain one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If a bachelor’s degree was conferred by this community college, it would make things financially easier for students and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The distance from this community college to the nearest four year institution hinders students from obtaining a bachelor’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>There is nothing preventing students at this college from obtaining a bachelor’s degree from a four year college or university.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART D

**Instructions:** Please check the box for each of the following statements you feel is true. You may select more than one choice.

**If it were an option, students would seek a bachelor’s degree from this community college:**

- □ Because it is less expensive than a four year school
- □ Because it is closer to where they live than any four year school
- □ Because of their work responsibilities
- □ Because of their family responsibilities
- □ Because they like it here
- □ Because they are not academically capable of succeeding at a four year school
- □ Other (please specify in the space below)
PART E

**Instructions:** Please check the box that indicates your primary position within the community college district where you work.

- [ ] President or Vice President
- [ ] Career Technical Administrator
- [ ] Career Technical Faculty
- [ ] Academic Faculty
- [ ] Academic Administrator
- [ ] Student Affairs Administrator
- [ ] Business Office Administrator
- [ ] Program Coordinator
- [ ] Workforce Development Administrator
- [ ] Admissions Administrator
- [ ] Other (please specify in the space below):
APPENDIX H

SBCJC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for SBCJC representatives
1. What are your opinions on American community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees?

2. What are your opinions on Mississippi community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees?

3. Do you believe that community college baccalaureate degree programs would increase baccalaureate degree access/attainment in Mississippi? Why/why not?

4. Do you believe that community college baccalaureate degree programs in Mississippi would be the only realistic option for a significant number of students to obtain baccalaureate degrees?

5. Do you believe that it is the community college’s responsibility to offer baccalaureate degrees if students express that there is a need? Why/Why not?

6. What affect would the implementation of baccalaureate degree programs have on the Mississippi Community College System?

7. Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding this subject?
APPENDIX I

IRB APPROVAL LETTER (PRCC)

Pearl River Community College
Institutional Review Board Decision Letter

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has completed its review of the following project:

Principal Investigator:  Johannah B. Williams
Hinds Community College

On-Campus Liaison:  Tara Rouse

Project Title: Assessing the Need for Community College Baccalaureate Degrees in Mississippi
Funding Agency:  N/A
Proposal Number (if applicable):  N/A

The determination of the board is that:

✓ This project complies with the institution's policy and procedures regarding use of human subjects in a grant-funded research project (Common Rule Section 101, subsection b). The project may be conducted as planned subject to continuing review as outlined in the Board's procedures.

✓ This project does not comply with the institution's policy and procedures regarding use of human subjects in a grant-funded research project. Concerns of the Institutional Review Board are outlined in an attached document. The Principal Investigator has the right to modify and re-submit the proposal for another review.

Becky Acker
Chair, Institutional Review Board
3-1-10

Date
APPENDIX J

IRB APPROVAL LETTER (USM)

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 DFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are 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 regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 10012702
PROJECT TITLE: Assessing the Need for Community Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Mississippi
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 12/01/2009 to 12/01/2010
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Johannah B. Williams
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & Research
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 02/10/2010 to 02/09/2011

[Signature]
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

[Signature]
DATE
2-10-10
REFERENCES


Community College Survey of Student Engagement. (2007). *Committing to student engagement*. Austin, TX: Community College Leadership Program


Garmon, J. (2000). No need for war with four-year institutions. *Community College Week, 16*(18), 4-6.


