Can Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations Improve Students’ Success at Mid-size Urban Community Colleges?

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Odo N. Butler

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to God, for every time you protected and loved me. I will be thanking you and praising you for the rest of my life. To my parents, Dr. Rory Butler and Mrs. Carrie E. Butler, thank you for the sacrifices you made for your children and for your encouragement throughout my life. Through your examples, I’ve learned the importance of hard work, integrity, humility, and kindness.

To my wife, Dr. Shai L. Butler, my Gift from heaven, thank you for your support and grace as I spent many nights and weekends away from home during this process. I dedicate this work to you. “Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Proverbs 19:14). To Chantelle, thank you for being an amazing young woman and big sister to your brothers. To my sons Koa and Nori, I’m so proud of the young men you’re growing into.

To the Metropolitan NTMBC family, Brothers in Christ, and Phi Beta Sigma thank you for your grace, words of encouragement, and prayers throughout this process. I’m humbled by the amount of support I’ve received from our village.
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Abstract

The focus of this research is to provide a framework for community colleges and community-based organizations to partner in a manner that improves student outcomes in persistence and graduation rates. The proposed framework encourages digital student engagement that assists students with their non-academic needs, such as hunger or homelessness. Community college retention and completion rates are important because the national completion rates at community colleges are subpar. The low completion rates at community colleges have led some policymakers to ask for more accountability and transparency in the community college sector.

This study utilized a mixed methods approach by first collecting empirical data from 13 semi-structured interviews with faculty/staff, students, and directors of community-based organizations, then using this data to create two different surveys. An electronic survey was completed by 34 faculty/staff, and a paper survey was completed by 106 students. Both surveys were used to identify respondents’ perception of institutional commitment to student success, student behavior that affects student success, and environmental/non-academic factors that affect student success. The surveys also captured the respondents’ perception of the college’s openness to having community-based organizations located on campus.

The results of these surveys were used to create a framework for student success through partnerships with community-based organizations. The main conclusions drawn from this study suggest that “knowing how to ask for help,” “academic preparation,” “mental illness,” “hunger,”
and “money for books” are all contributing factors to student success. The recommendation of this study is that the college should create a repository on the learning management system (LMS) for students to access services at all hours and while off campus. The study also suggests 10 different variables that are essential for digitally engaging students. These variables aligned with the three different themes of this study “Institutional Commitment,” “Student Behavior,” and “Environmental/Non-Academic factors.”
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### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AACC</td>
<td>American Association of Community Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSSE</td>
<td>Community College Survey of Student Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUNY</td>
<td>The City University of New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPEDS</td>
<td>The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSCH</td>
<td>National Student Clearinghouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSSE</td>
<td>National Survey of Student Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNY</td>
<td>State University of New York</td>
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<td>VFA</td>
<td>Voluntary Framework of Accountability</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Currently, there are over 1,000 community colleges in the United States (AACC, 2015). The vast majority of these institutions are public (87%), open access, and have articulation agreements with four-year institutions (AACC, 2015). The average tuition for students at a community college is lower than at a four-year institution (AACC, 2015; College Board, 2016). By definition, open-access institutions such as community colleges admit all applicants with a high school diploma or equivalency, with few exceptions.

Although community colleges are open access, and relatively inexpensive compared to four-year institutions, the completion/retention rates for this sector is low. The community college sector is also challenged by a universal reduction in public funding and large percentage of students who qualify for need based aid. These challenges have led me to ask, could this situation be improved if community colleges were to get connected with local, community-based organizations?

Problem of Practice

Under the Obama administration, there existed a shift of focus to educational policies that emphasized accountability, particularly as it related to improving student outcomes, around college completion. Rising tuition costs and poor educational and employment outcomes resulted in administration calls for more transparency in addition to increased accountability within higher education (White House Press Secretary, 2013).
Currently, the three-year graduation rates for first-time full-time community college students is 20% nationally (U.S. Department of Education, 2015), and the average one-year retention rate for first-time full-time students is 59% (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These poor completion and retention rates not only negate the effectiveness of community colleges, but also contribute to higher student loan debt and default rates for both students and institutions (Butler, 2014). This lengthening of time to degree, and the increased student attrition rates that result in a failure to achieve an associate’s degree serves as the impetus for research and policies designed to increase community college retention and graduation. The attrition issue is especially acute for poorer students because they are more likely to be financially vulnerable when entering college (Attewell et al., 2006).

Students who started college while economically vulnerable become even more financially insecure when they leave college with debt and no college degree or certificate (White House Press Secretary, 2013). For students whose parents never attended college, community colleges offer an opportunity for professional advancement and educational accomplishment through certificates and transferable degree programs (Sullivan, 2008a). Thirty-five percent of community college students are first-generation, and 58% of community college students qualify for need-based aid (AACC, 2016).

Since the majority of community colleges are public institutions, their performance is subject to the scrutiny of federal, state, and local legislatures (AACC, 2015). Nationally, over $36 billion dollars (62% of community college revenue) comes from government sources: 30%
from the college’s home state, 14% from the federal government, and 18% from local
governments (AACC, 2015). The community college sector enrolls 45% of all undergraduate
students that attend college overall (AACC, 2016).

The need for increased federal oversight over open-access institutions was highlighted in
2011 when the U.S. Department of Education created the Gainful Employment Rule for two-year
and vocational programs. This rule mandated that one-year vocational programs must aim to
achieve specified graduation standards, as well as the debt-to-earnings ratio for graduates.
Failing to meet these standards could result in a college losing access to Title IV funding such as
federal student loans (Education, 2015). However, declines in public funding for community
colleges prevent college leadership from hiring additional student support professional staff to
improve student outcomes (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Mitchell & Leachman, 2015; Mitchell, Palacios,
& Leachman, 2014).

The two primary approaches to improving student success at community colleges are
remediation and student engagement. The student remediation approach focuses on helping
students develop the necessary academic skills to be successful in college. At many community
colleges, students are required to take a placement test to determine their skills in English,
Writing, and Mathematics. The results of these assessments determine whether a student will be
placed in a non-credit bearing remediation course.
The community college open-access policy necessitates the offering of remediation studies (Cohen & Brawer, 1989). Chen and Simone found that between 2003 and 2004, 48% of students at public 2-year institutions were referred to at least two remedial courses in Math, English, or Writing (Chen, 2016). Several researchers have also determined that 68% of students at public 2-year institutions were referred to at least one remedial course (Chen, 2016; McCann & English, 2017). Remediation courses are designed to help students successfully navigate academic programs in postsecondary education, but much research has found that remediation courses may lead to attrition due to a protracted time to completion (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Rosenbaum, 2001).

The student engagement approach focuses on the institution's commitment to improving academic outcomes, as well as the student’s ability to modify their behavior to improve outcomes. Institutional commitment to student engagement can be strictly academic such as faculty office hours, or tutoring services to assist students with learning. These practices can also be co-curricular such as the development of learning communities or cohorts to foster inclusion or a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging is thought to encourage students to modify their behavior, to be successful in college (Tinto, 1987). This modification in behavior can be the dedication to more time studying, or the active participation in activities such as tutoring, office hours, or learning communities (Tinto, 1987).

Remediation and student engagement does not address whether the student’s basic needs are met. These approaches do not consider the role of poverty in hampering student success.
These approaches also do not take into consideration the resource constraints of community colleges. This study will focus primarily on the role of poverty on student success and external partnerships as a means to facilitating student success.

**Purpose of Study**

Community colleges' inability to provide support for students because of lack of funding necessitates consideration of other potential sources of support. This study takes as its starting point the notion that local community-based organizations might be one such source.

Knowing that there are community organizations in the surrounding area of most urban community college campuses, I asked myself whether colleges might be able to partner with these organizations to provide support for students. Over half of full-time community college students qualify for need based aid, and the issues associated with poverty affect academic performance (Goldrick-Rab, 2017). Partnerships with community organizations to support student needs is advantageous for community colleges because community organizations specialize in assisting people in need. During the pilot study for this research, several faculty members described poverty related issues as a significant contributing factor to poor grades.

The purpose of this study therefore is to develop a framework for community colleges to improve student success through partnerships with community-based organizations. This framework encourages community colleges to use existing resources in the community to
improve student success. It also encourages the use of digital student engagement to assist
students with non-academic needs, such as hunger or homelessness.

Currently, there is no existing framework for community colleges and community-based
organizations to utilize in partnering to increase access to student support. There are no articles
to date produced by Achieving the Dream (ATD), the Community College Research Center
(CCRC), or the American Association of Community Colleges that present this type of
framework for college administrators.

**Research Questions**

The research questions (RQs) guiding this study are:

RQ 1: What are the prevalent social service needs of community college students?

RQ 2: What are the most effective methods for community colleges and
community-based organizations to partner in bringing social services to campus?
(If a need for social services on campus was determined based on RQ 1).

RQ 3: What are the obstacles to creating partnerships between community
colleges and community-based organizations?

**Genesis of Study**

As a director of institutional research, I was aware of the low retention and graduation
rates at community colleges nationally. At the beginning of this research, I believed that the best
answer to this issue was to provide better data to faculty/staff assuming that this information
would instigate change. However, during my pilot study interviews with faculty/staff and students, I found that the participants were not surprised by the retention and graduation rates of community colleges.

I also unexpectedly found that the interviewees did not spend much time emphasizing methods to improve teaching and learning. However, all of the people interviewed referenced issues associated with poverty as a major obstacle to graduation and retention. This led me to consider how non-academic supports in areas such as housing and hunger could improve student success.

As an administrator at a community college, I was aware of my former institution's incapacity to directly address student success issues that related to poverty. I knew that the president of a community college is beholden to several different constituencies such as the board of trustees, the mission of the institution, and faculty/staff. The individual community members did care about issues such as homelessness or hunger, but they did not have the tools or resources to address this issue.

My college, like a number of other community colleges, was geographically close to community-based organizations that provided services that addressed homelessness and hunger. All of this has led me to ask, can partnerships with community-based organizations improve students’ success at mid-size urban community colleges?
Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in Kuh’s “What Matters in Student Success” model for student engagement (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006). Kuh’s model combines elements from several scholars in the area of student success to develop a holistic model for student success. This theoretical approach identifies student engagement as a primary indicator of student success, and student engagement can be observed when students “take part in educationally effective activities” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 7).

Kuh’s research addresses three different questions that are key to student success:

1) What do we want and need of students, before and after they enroll in postsecondary education?

2) What happens to students during their postsecondary studies?

3) What are the potential implications of the framework-informing policy and practice that improve student and institutional performance? (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 7).

The purpose of Kuh’s model is to create the conditions necessary for student engagement, hence student success. In this model, student engagement is illustrated as the cross-section between student behavior and institutional conditions (see Figure 1). This theory also examines the impact of pre-college experiences, and college experiences on post-college outcomes (Kuh et al., 2006). Kuh’s theory directly addresses the problem of low completion rates at postsecondary institutions.

This model measures factors associated with both remediation and student engagement. For example, the remediation approach takes into consideration the pre-college experience of
college students. The pre-college experiences consist of “K–12 schools, family background, enrollment choices, and financial aid” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 7).

Student behavior is defined as “the time, and effort students put into their studies, interaction with faculty, and peer involvement” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 7). Institutional conditions “include resources, educational policies, programs and practices, and structural features” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 8).

Figure 1. Kuh’s What Matters to Student Success. Source: (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006)
Student Engagement Theory

Central to Kuh’s model for student success is the student engagement theory. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) defines student engagement, based on an annual survey of four-year colleges involving 560 colleges and universities in 2016, and over 1,600 participating colleges since 2000 as follows: “Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how the institution deploys its resources, and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning” (NSSE, 2011).

These “educationally purposeful activities” can occur “both inside and outside the classroom” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 14). The student engagement theory characterizes these activities as deliberate actions that have measurable outcomes. These actions can be formative, challenging, and enriching resulting in a student feeling validated and thus continuing to persist.

Student Engagement and Community-based Organizational Partnerships

Kuh’s model for student engagement aligns with this study’s examination of the potential benefits to students of partnerships between community colleges and community-based organizations. This alignment is necessary in the area of institutional conditions and student behavior. For example dedicating institutional resources to student engagement demonstrates the institution's commitment to student engagement. Identifying local resources that can help
students in crisis is an effective method of leveraging existing resources, so as to improve the student's experience and enhance student engagement. This study also examines students’ perception of the institution's commitment to student success.

In this study, the central features of Kuh’s model (Pre-College Experience, Institutional Conditions, and Student Behavior) were used to organize the literature review, and develop the questions for the semi-structured interviews and the categories for the surveys. The results of the interviews and surveys were analyzed using the framework associated with the model, and Kuh’s study was utilized to develop a model for digital student engagement.

**Different Student Success Approaches**

Similar to this study, most studies in the area of student success explore the correlation between student engagement and academic success (Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars, & Edgecombe, 2010; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2011; Mentzer, 2015; Sullivan, 2008a). These publications on student engagement often find parallels between grades and the frequency of student interaction with faculty, staff, and fellow students (Kuh et al., 2006; Mentzer, 2015). These studies also highlight the need for community colleges to increase student engagement, to improve retention and graduation rates (Thomas G Greene, C Nathan Marti, & Kay McClenny, 2008; Kimbark, Peters, & Richardson, 2017).

Academic preparation is also viewed as a contributing factor to student success; for example, the “cooling” effect in community colleges is a concept that examines the change in
students’ aspirations after experiencing early academic setbacks (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Sullivan, 2008a, 2008b). Cooling off is described as the point in a student’s academic career when the student realizes that they are underprepared for college. This negative self-assessment can result in student attrition, changing majors, or taking more than two years to complete an Associate’s degree.

McCarthy determined that low-achieving high school seniors believed they could earn degrees even when the data contradicts this belief (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006). This study also determined that majority of students do not believe that high school achievement is relevant for future college success. McCarthy concluded that open access does not translate to educational attainment and can actually deceive students into believing that they do not have to try hard in high school (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006; Sullivan, 2008a).

In the present study, literature related to research on the impact of community-based organizations and cross-sector partnerships with community colleges addressing poverty and barriers faced by students of low socioeconomic status to achieve success was not found. There are however studies examining the impact of non-academic factors such as student hunger, domestic violence, or homelessness on student success (Goldrick-Rab, Anderson, & Kinsley, 2016).

**Summary of Introduction**

The current status of student outcomes at community colleges is a significant public policy issue because public investment in education is yielding lower than expected retention and
graduation rates (Roark, 2013). There are a variety of models for student success and student engagement that primarily focus on institutional conditions and student behavior. Kuh’s model for student success recognizes external forces that affect students’ pre-college and college experience.

This research utilizes Kuh’s model as a guide to investigating the type of non-academic services that are needed on campus, to help students be successful as well as the college’s commitment to providing these services through existing direct service agencies. In the next chapter, the work of various scholars on student success and their approaches to understanding attrition in the community college sector are further examined.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Student success:** defined as retention and graduation rate outcomes.

**Attrition:** defined as the failure of a first-time student to re-enroll at the college after a year.

**Retention:** Defined as re-enrollment of a first-time student for a second year after completing one year.

**Completion:** defined as first-time student graduation within 150% of the published duration of the program.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter a review of the research that examines factors that contribute to post-secondary student success is provided. The chapter begins with literature that defines the conditions within the community-college sector that necessitate a robust inquiry into improving student success. The next section is a review of the literature and concepts that emphasize the impact of the pre-college experience on student success. The third section presents research that examines student behavior that contributes to student success. The student behavior section is followed by a review of the literature that surveys the intersection of institutional conditions and student behavior, defined as student engagement.

The literature review will continue with a review of theoretical approaches that study poverty and research on cross-sector partnerships between institutions of higher education and other partnering entities. The chapter concludes with research that examines non-academic factors that negatively impact student outcomes such as poverty and family background.

Factors that Affect Student Success

A review of the research shows that the current national completion and retention rates for first-time freshman at community colleges are low (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This literature review focuses on the challenges and opportunities with regards to improving student success. In Kuh’s model for student engagement, six broad categories that contribute to student success were developed: pre-college experience, institutional conditions, student
behavior, student engagement, college experience, and post-college outcomes (Kuh et al., 2011; Kuh et al., 2006).

The literature utilized in the research is examined through the lens of four categories: pre-college experience, institutional conditions, student behavior, and student engagement (Kuh et al., 2011). The variables that encompass the pre-college experience are “academic preparation in K–12 schools, family background, enrollment choices, and financial aid” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 7). In Kuh’s framework, these factors are described as essential to preparing a student for college (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006).

The factors that are listed under the institutional condition theme are services such as first-year experience, academic support, campus environment, peer support, and teaching and learning approaches. Based on Kuh’s student success model, the student behaviors that affect student success are study habits, peer involvement, interaction with faculty, time on task, and motivation. Student engagement is described as the educationally purposeful activities that positively impact both grades and persistence (Kuh, 2001; Kuh et al., 2011; Mentzer, 2015; Terenzini, Pascarella, Theophilides, & Lorang, 1985).

Student Success

Data from the U.S. Department of Education shows that retention is a common challenge in community colleges across the United States. Currently, the average one-year retention rate for first-time, full-time first-year students is 59% (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The
three-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time community college students is 20% (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This data indicates that almost half of community college students will drop out of school in their first year at college, and only one in five first-year students will complete a two-year degree in three years. The high attrition rates at community colleges are problematic because these colleges represent a bridge to the middle class for underrepresented groups and those living in poverty (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; McCabe, 2000).

Students enroll in community colleges for a variety of reasons. According to the Community College Student Survey for Engagement, the goals of students in community colleges vary; complete a certificate, obtain an associate degree, transfer to a four-year course, obtain or upgrade job-related skills, self-improvement, or personal enjoyment (Kimbark et al., 2017; Kuh et al., 2011; Scherer & Anson, 2014; Sullivan, 2008b). Although student goals vary, graduation rates remain the benchmark for institutional effectiveness (Ewell, 2011).

The institutional effectiveness benchmarks used by the U.S. Department of Education are based on the traditional 4-year college model. These parameters are problematic for community colleges because low graduation rates make it difficult for public community colleges to request additional funding at the local and federal level (AACC, 2015). One of the ways community colleges try to circumvent this issue is by highlighting their transfer rates to four-year institutions through programs such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), a multidimensional tool used to highlight the various services featured at community colleges
(Dougherty, Natow, Bork, Jones, & Vega, 2013; Mentzer, 2015). However, policymakers continue to measure a college’s success through graduation rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2015; Dougherty et al., 2013).

**Pre-College Experience**

Community colleges often rely on remediation to improve student success (Jenkins et al., 2010). However, remediation assumes that the student was already exposed to the subject matter and needs a refresher. In recent years, some community college experts have determined that remedial coursework has negatively impacted retention (Bailey et al., 2010; McCann & English, 2017). The additional time in non-credit preparation classes has led to students dropping out of college (Bailey et al., 2010; Sullivan, 2008a). Innovative models such as the Community College of Baltimore County’s Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) take an integrated approach to remediation by combining upper-level developmental writing with credit-bearing English 101 courses thus improving student persistence (Jenkins et al., 2010).

Among community college professionals, high school performance is considered a reliable indicator of college success (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006). However, the correlation between high school success and college success is not a belief shared by high school students interested in college (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006). McCarthy and Kuh (2006) analyzed results from the 2005 High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) and found that low-achieving high school seniors believed that they could earn degrees even when the data contradicts this belief. Many
students do not think that high school achievement is relevant to future college success (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006).

McCarthy and Kuh (2006) also found a “troubling mismatch” between academic habits and high school students’ expectations of attending college. Overall, the majority of students in their survey planned to attend college but did not practice the study habits necessary to succeed in college (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006, p. 664). McCarthy and Kuh’s research makes the claim that the existence of open access has deceived students into believing that they do not have to try hard in high school.

Rosenbaum (2001) found that the lack of college preparation is hurting open-access institutions’ ability to produce graduates. The author faults the K-12 system for failing to prepare students for college, and asserts that open-access institutions’ admission policies encourage this behavior. Open-access policies allow high school administrators to tout high college-going rates without being responsible for the dropout rates associated with inadequate academic preparation (Rosenbaum, 2001).

Scherer and Anson (2014) argue that community colleges should enforce higher minimum requirements for admission. They conclude that open admissions not only negatively impact the institution's academic programming and graduation rates, but also negatively affect students. Higher standards protect unprepared students from being academically dismissed and “sacrificing their financial aid eligibility in the long run” (Scherer & Anson, 2014, p. 27). In the
analysis, reforming the open-access policy will improve student engagement, completion, and strengthen programs (Scherer & Anson, 2014).

Chen and Simone (2016) found that 68% of students enrolled in community colleges required some form of academic remediation. Their research examined the outcomes of student remedial completers versus non-completers and found that students who completed their remedial courses had better graduation and retention rates than students who did not complete (Chen, 2016). The authors also found that academically unprepared students who completed remedial courses “even outperformed non-remedial students in some areas.” (Chen, 2016, p. 55).

Student Behavior

Kuh (2011) found that a predictor of college grades “is the combination of an individual student’s academic preparation, high school grades, aspirations, and motivation” (Kuh et al., 2011, p. 31). Motivation coupled with ambition encourages students to join groups and change behavior that aids in reaching their goals in college (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008; Tinto, 2007). An example of this change in behavior includes dedicating more time to studies, self-advocacy, or increasing one’s interaction with faculty (Kuh et al., 2011).

In the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), interaction with faculty was determined to be a predictor of student success; however, student behavior is an essential component of student engagement (Alexander W Astin, 1984, 1993; Tinto, 2007).
Institutional Commitments

To address issues of retention, four-year institutions as well as community colleges, explored student support theories that focused on improving the institutional conditions through the development of learning communities. The learning-community model centers on the concept that a student’s success is correlated with their sense of belonging. This feeling of belonging is bolstered through mentorship, faculty-to-student interaction, student leadership, and high expectations (Tinto, 2007). Learning communities blend co-curricular and curricular activities of students in a manner that helps students collaborate and achieve student learning outcomes (Tinto, 2007, 2012b).

Institutional commitment to student engagement includes several different sub-theories and frameworks, but the consistent theme associated with institutional commitment to student engagement is that colleges should take a holistic approach to managing student success within the institution (Kuh et al., 2008). This comprehensive approach should be collaborative and foster learning. This type of approach often involves adjusting curriculum design to increase student involvement (Kuh et al., 2008; Tinto, 2012b).

Past research has included a variety of models describing different formulas for student engagement. Two of the dominant models are Vincent Tinto’s theory of student departure and Alexander Astin’s theory of student development. Tinto’s theory of student departure takes into consideration both academic integration and social inclusion. This approach considers a student’s
background, their commitment to succeed, and the college’s commitment to the student’s success (Tinto, 2012a).

Tinto's theory proposes that a student's ability to persist is contingent on their capacity to be acclimated to the campus environment. The bulk of his work focuses on first-generation and low-income students who may not have the benefit of understanding the culture of higher education. His theory challenges institutions to improve retention rates through student engagement. This method takes into consideration a student’s attributes, family background, and academic preparation. The college is assigned the responsibility for creating an environment of success through academic support, as well as the integration of curricular and co-curricular activities.

This theory makes the claim that a student’s choice to drop out can be predicted based on their integration into a college’s community. A student less integrated into the college community is more likely to drop out and a student more incorporated into the college community is more likely to be retained. This model focuses on three categories for student success: institutional action, program implementation, and promoting the success of low-income students (Tinto, 2007, 2012a).

Although Tinto’s theory focuses on class, race and ethnicity also play a role in student success (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009). There are significant disparities in educational attainment for African-American and Hispanic students at community colleges (Greene et al.,
For example, Greene et al. (2008) found that African-American and Hispanic students attending community colleges typically invest more time in their studies than their White peers but still earn lower grades. Lack of engagement with the institution may factor into why the energy devoted to their education do not reap the rewards in the classroom (Greene et al., 2008).

This engagement can involve formal mentorship, out-of-the-class interactions, and high expectations from faculty. The feedback generated through these activities helps students have a sense of belonging (Porchea, Allen, Robbins, & Phelps, 2010). Porchea et al. (2010) found that institutions improved educational outcomes when they identified at-risk students and tailored efficient intervention strategies to help them.

One method of increasing student engagement is creating learning communities, which are learning environments that integrate curricular and co-curricular activities for the benefit of student development. Lardner and Malnarich (2008) examined the execution of learning communities at various institutions and identified colleges that purposively integrated curriculum, co-curriculum, and community resources into learning communities as getting it “right.” Getting it right, in their opinion, improves retention over the long term (Lardner & Malnarich, 2008, p. 4).

In contrast to Tinto (2007) and Greene et al. (2008), Lardner and Malnarich (2008) consider the primary function of learning communities as learning, not retention. They describe retention as a by-product of a learning community, but not its primary purpose (Lardner & Malnarich, 2008). Although some may share this perspective in the higher education field,
community college effectiveness continues to be measured against quantitative benchmarks such as persistence and graduation (U. S. Department of Education, 2017a).

According to Astin’s Inputs, Environment, and Outcomes (I.E.O.) model, student involvement and experience at an institution enhance student development. According to this model, student development correlates with the “physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1984, p. 518). This theory asserts that highly engaged students typically fare better in school. The environment consists of the interactions the student has with faculty, peers, and the curriculum.

**Poverty and Student Success**

According to Goldrick-Rab in *Paying the Price*, where the lives of 3,000 community college students were researched over several years, the financial aid system in the United States is inefficient. Students from lower-income families in many cases did not receive enough financial aid support to complete college (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016). For example, she found that 13% of the students in her study were homeless (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016). There is no metric in the Integrated Post-Secondary Data System (IPEDS) that tracks student homelessness or hunger. However, institutional commitment to student engagement is the more dominant approach to researching student outcomes in higher education (Kuh et al., 2011). It easier to study because it involves internal variables that an institution can control; nevertheless, external variables such as poverty also affect student outcomes (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016).
Goldrick-Rab’s (2016) research examines important factors such as social inequities, institutional commitment, and individual economic status. For some researchers in the field of student success, context matters, specifically the role poverty has in determining student success (Bowen et al., 2009). Greene et al. (2008) recommend increases in need-based financial aid to address the barriers low-income students face in completing college. These non-academic theoretical approaches to understanding the entirety of the challenges that students face in completing college find that non-academic factors such as employment, lack of money, transportation, and family demands play a significant role in individual student success (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016; Kuh et al., 2011). Advocates for the study of the impact of poverty on student success examine how poverty and food insecurity correlate with poor academic performance (Maroto, Snelling, & Linck, 2015).

Organizational Partnerships

Community colleges do not specialize in social services for addressing student needs in a crisis. However, it is possible that these services could be provided in partnership with community-based organizations. By collaborating with community agencies, community colleges may be able to satisfy the basic needs of their students without incurring additional cost or diverting resources from other initiatives. Local direct service organizations have the expertise and the resources to address student non-academic needs.
Measures of Success

The primary standard for assessing student and institutional performance is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). “IPEDS provides basic data needed to describe and analyze trends in postsecondary education in the United States, in terms of the numbers of students enrolled, staff employed, dollars expended, and degrees earned. Congress, federal agencies, state governments, education providers, professional associations, private businesses, media, students and parents, and others rely on IPEDS data for this basic information on postsecondary institutions” (U. S. Department of Education, 2017a, p. 1). IPEDS forms the institutional sampling frame for other NCES postsecondary surveys such as the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study and the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (U. S. Department of Education, 2017a).

IPEDS data is based on a traditional student model, which does not track whether a student is independent, or is employed (Astin, 1984; U. S. Department of Education, 2017a). Community college students have a higher chance of taking remedial courses, switching to part-time, and working full-time during their academic career (AACC, 2015; Chen, 2016).

Gaps in Literature

The current literature on student success does not explore how community colleges can utilize external partners to improve student success. Community colleges continue to serve as the primary institutional type for low socioeconomic students to attain a degree, certificate, transfer to four-year institutions, or gain professional development (AACC, 2015; Rosenbaum, 2001;
Sullivan, 2008b). Direct Service community-based organizations may serve as an invaluable resource in meeting the needs of poorer students.

The mission of community colleges differs by the institution. Nonetheless, the common thread is that they provide open access to higher education to anyone with a high school equivalency degree (U. S. Department of Education, 2017b; Sullivan, 2008b). In this literature review, a summary of the studies that covered variables consistent with Kuh’s theoretical model for student success was provided. These variables included pre-college experience, student behavior, and institutional commitment. The institutional commitment sub-section was followed by a review of literature that examined the role of poverty in student success.
Chapter 3: Method and Research Design

In this chapter the design and purpose of the study of partnerships between community colleges and community-based organizations to improve student success is described. The chapter includes the research questions, variables, and research design, followed by sections on the methodological approach, population sampling, data collection including interview guide, and survey instruments. Lastly, sections on the method of data analysis – credibility, and internal validity – as well as the protection of human subjects are provided.

A cursory review of the literature determined that some community college students manage responsibilities beyond academics such as commuting to school or full-time employment. Consequently, this study is designed to explore ways to support students beyond the classroom, for academic success. This study has two underlying assumptions that are key to building partnerships with existing community-based organizations. The first assumption is that faculty and students are already aware of the existing non-academic resources on campus. The community’s awareness of resources on campus allows for the use of these services, and illustrates the institution's commitment to student engagement. The second assumption associated with this study is that student behavior is considered to be the most important factor in student success by the participants.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to identify the common non-academic needs of community college students and then develop a framework for community colleges and community-based
organizations to partner in a manner that improves student success. This framework included a
category for institutional commitment, student behavior, and non-academic environmental
factors. Institutions can customize the three categories to determine the necessary conditions for
an effective partnership, and avoid potential obstacles in developing such partnerships.

The research questions were designed to determine the factors that affect student success
and how they should be addressed. As such, the three research questions were developed in
accordance with Maxwell’s approach. The Maxwell method requires that questions are designed
to provide context and understanding of the subject’s perspective (Maxwell, 2005).

In this mixed methods approach, empirical data from semi-structured interviews with
faculty/staff, students, and directors of community-based organizations was used. The researched
institution is a mid-size upstate New York community college. The data collected provided the
individual experiences of the participants at one particular institution (Thomas, 2015).

The individual experiences were collected through semi-structured interviews and
surveys. These data provided the perspectives of students, community-based organization
leaders, and faculty/staff who worked directly with the students (Van Manen, 2016). The semi-
structured interviews uncovered new categories, which were further tested using surveys.

An inductive exploratory approach was preferable for observing patterns in the semi-
structured interview responses. This method used observations to generate a tentative hypothesis
with themes. The surveys were used to test the themes with data from a representative sample of
the population (Goot, 1969). A.D. de Groot’s Empirical Cycle informed this research approach
(see Figure 2). This approach is typically used when there is little or no research in this area. By adopting an exploratory approach, the study was open to determining whatever arises as mentioned by the participants, rather than imposing fixed categories in advance.

Figure 2. A.D. de Groot’s Empirical Cycle. Source: (Groot, 1969)
Recognizing student needs helped the college determine the types of services needed on campus. This information also contributed to the development of a framework that can be customized to meet the needs of an individual institution. Broad themes created by the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were used to inform the faculty/staff, and student survey questions. The quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys were used to test the themes from the semi-structured interviews.

A descriptive research method was applied in the survey questionnaire to identify the variables that influence faculty/staff and student perception of the non-academic needs of students. This data informed the development of a partnership model. The average scores of each of the possible variables were analyzed through descriptive methods, which allowed for the inclusion of the most influential variables in the results.

**Research Site and Population**

The sample population is faculty and students from a mid-size community college in upstate New York. During the fall of 2016, student enrollment was over 10,000 and 86% came from the surrounding area (within 30 miles). Seventy-seven percent of all first-time, full-time students received some form of financial aid.

Approximately 53% of the student population was full-time, and 47% was part-time. Males made up approximately 53% of the student population, and 57% of the students are 18-24 years of age. Approximately 73% of the student population identified as “White,” 10% as “Black or African American,” 6% as “Asian,” 6% as “Hispanic/Latino” and 3% as “two or more races.”
The population of faculty/staff was close to 600, with 37% of the faculty members being full-time and 63% part-time. Fifty-two percent of the full-time faculty had more than 10 years of service at the college.

The research study subjects were students, faculty, and staff (who have direct contact with students) at community colleges. In this framework, community-based organizations served as a resource for faculty to refer students to in times of crisis. The three questions guiding this research study are further discussed below.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to create a framework for improving academic student success at mid-size urban community colleges through partnerships with community-based organizations. The study sought to answer the following three research questions:

1) What are the prevalent social service needs of community college students?
2) What are the most effective methods for community colleges and community-based organizations to partner in bringing social services to campus?
3) What are the obstacles to creating partnerships between community colleges and community-based organizations?

All of the questions sought input from faculty/staff, students, and directors of community-based organizations. The first question was an attempt to determine the prevalent needs of students and better understand the type of services that are needed on campus by students. The goal of this question was to determine the type of partnerships that could bring
needed services to campus. The second question takes an approach to research the type of partnerships the participants believe the community college community would accept on campus. The third question sought to understand the participants’ perception of student and institutional barriers to a successful partnership between community colleges and community organizations.

**Semi-structured interview variables**

The independent variables for the semi-structured interviews were the interviewee’s general identifier as faculty/staff, student (full-time or part-time), or director at a community-based organization. The dependent variables were their lived experiences and their perspective on the factors of “Student Behavior,” “Non-academic/Environmental factors,” “Student Needs,” and “Institutional Commitment.”

1. The variables associated with “Student Behavior” were:
   - Focus/Self-Discipline
   - Tenacity/Motivated
   - Organization/Attention to detail
   - Positive Attitude
   - Confidence
   - Knowing how to ask for help
   - Disability

2. The “Non-academic/Environmental factors” that contribute to academic success were:
   - Academic preparation in high school
   - Family income
   - Family education
   - Personal physical health
   - Access to transportation
   - Personal mental health
   - Money for books
   - Health of a family member
   - Unlimited access to computers
   - Homelessness
   - Cost of college
• Housing insecurity
• Personal safety
• Hunger
• Food insecurity (not knowing where your next meal is coming from)
• Childcare

• Financial insecurity
• Domestic abuse
• Work
• Other ____________
3. The variables associated with “Institutional Commitment” are:

- The prevalent needs of the students.
- The types of resources the college has to assist students with student needs.
- The types of resources they (the subject) believe the institution should provide for student needs.
- The campus community’s openness to their (the subject) ideas for student needs services.

**Survey variables.** The independent variables for the student survey participants were gender, registration status, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, parental/guardian status, and age. The dependent variables for students were:

1) Perception of personal qualities in students that influence academic success.
2) Perception of variables that affect academics.
3) Perception of resources needed on campus to address non-academic student needs.
4) Knowledge of (non-tutoring) student services on campus that assist students in crisis.
5) Type of (non-tutoring) student services respondents think should be on campus.

In the faculty and staff survey, participants’ employment status was categorized as an independent variable (full-time, part-time, teacher, or student services). Faculty and staff first-generation status, race, and ethnicity were also independent. The dependent variables consisted of:

1) Perception of personal qualities in students that influence academic success.
2) Perception of variables that affect academics.
3) Perception of resources needed on campus to address non-academic student needs.
4) Knowledge of (non-tutoring) student services on campus that assist students in crisis.
5) Type of (non-tutoring) student services respondents think should be on campus.

**Primary Data Source**

The primary data was obtained through interviews and surveys. Three different interview guides were created for the study. Separate interview guides were designed for college faculty/staff, students, and local community-based organization directors (Appendix B). Two different surveys were set up for this study; one for faculty/staff, and one for students (Appendix B).

**Population and Recruitment**

This study employed different sampling methods for the semi-structured interviews, student surveys, and the faculty/staff surveys. The sampling method for the semi-structured interviews used a purposeful nominated/snowball method (Morse, 2016; Spradley, 1987). The student and faculty/staff surveys utilized a targeted, purposeful convenience sampling method.

The three groups used in this research were faculty/staff, students, and directors of community-based organizations. Faculty/staff at the college who directly worked with students were chosen for the study. This population was selected because of their experience observing the common social needs that prevent students from succeeding in school. The study did not include faculty/staff who do not have direct access to students.
Interviews

The interviews were conducted from January to March of 2017. Thirteen interviews were held with faculty/staff, students, and community-based organization leadership. All student interviews were conducted in person. The community-based organization leaders and the faculty and staff interviews were over the telephone. The data were categorized into three themes using content analysis. These themes were used to inform the survey tools.

Semi-structured Interviews

The participants included faculty/staff, students, and directors of community-based organizations. Faculty and staff for this study included people at the institution whose job description required that they directly interact with students on a daily basis. This included both full-time and part-time teaching faculty from diverse academic programs, as well as full-time and part-time staff from various departments. The interviewees included academic counselors and student affairs administrators. This study did not use staff not required to work directly with students because the goal was to interview people with firsthand experience interacting with students in crisis.

The interviewed students included matriculated students who were both full-time, and part-time. The study did not include non-credit students or alumni. The research goal was to have the perceptions of active students who were actively investing in their education. Employees at community-based organizations who provided services in the areas near the targeted schools were also interviewed.
Four faculty members actively working at the institution were interviewed in this study. Each of the teachers taught in a classroom setting, with two also teaching online courses. The subjects interviewed taught classes in mathematics, social sciences, and vocational programs. There was a mix of full-time and adjunct faculty members with a range of experience spanning from five to twenty years of teaching.

Of the two staff members interviewed, both were full-time employees with over 10 years of experience in student services. They also directly worked with students and had over 10 years of experience working with students in crisis. The first staff member had a background in academic affairs and talked about working with co-curriculum and curriculum-based Student Success programs. The second employee managed an outreach program that focused on students in crisis.

Students who were currently enrolled for credit at the college were chosen for the study because of their perspective on students’ needs. This population was asked about their knowledge of services on campus. The study did not include non-credit students or online students.

Of the four students interviewed, two were in their second semester of enrollment at the community college, and two were in their second year of enrollment at the community college. Three of the students surveyed were full-time while one was a part-time student. Two students were from an area near the college (within 15 to 20 miles), and the other two students were from a major city located two hours away.
Both students from the area received parental support. Of the four students, three had an academic major, and one remained undecided about their major. Three of the students interviewed were employed, and one was unemployed.

The director of community-based organizations was chosen to determine if partnerships with community colleges were desirable in his or her view. The research focused on organizations that were within 15 miles of the college and were actively serving the general public. Three community-based organizations near the institution were chosen because of location and the types of services provided. Also, the foundation of the proposed framework relies on partnerships between community colleges and existing community-based organizations in their local area.

Out of the three different community-based organizations, one was a faith-based organization that had a food pantry, a drug rehabilitation center, and was politically active in the community. The other two organizations were grant-funded and were focused on vocational training, working closely with populations that were educationally and economically disadvantaged.

**Semi-Structured Interview Recruitment**

After receiving IRB approval from the college being studied, the institution’s directory was used to obtain faculty and staff contact information. An email was sent to the potential subjects requesting interviews and was then followed-up with a telephone call. Faculty/staff who were recommended by other employees during the interviews were also recruited. To set up
community-based organization interviews, personal and professional contacts were used to identify subjects from community-based organizations for an initial email, and then a phone call as a later form of contact. Recommendations from faculty and staff were used to recruit the four students to interview.

Data Collection

Data was collected from 13 semi-structured interviews, 34 faculty/staff surveys, and 106 student surveys. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. Notes were also taken during the interviews. The data from the faculty/staff and student interviews provided information on institutional commitment to student success, student behavior, and non-academic factors that affect student success. The interviews with the community-based organizations provided information on the services that are available to community college students.

Student Survey

The student paper survey used a targeted purposive convenience sampling technique. The target population was community college students, and the survey was administered on different days of the week, and times of the day to ensure subject diversity. The paper survey was handed out at the campus center of the college. An electronic survey was not used for the student population. Pencils were provided with every packet of surveys.

The student survey had 14 questions. The survey’s first three questions were Likert-scale questions that explored the “Institutional Commitment,” “Student Behavior,” and “Non-academic/Environmental factors” issues that affect academic success. The fourth question asked
the students about their knowledge of non-academic support that already existed on campus. The fifth question asked the participants to name two non-academic services on campus that help students in crisis. The sixth question asked the student to identify two services they wished existed on campus to assist students with non-academic issues. Questions seven through 14 were demographic in nature and were placed at the end to deter participants from considering demographics when presenting their perspectives on student success.

Faculty Survey

An electronic survey was created in SurveyMonkey for faculty and staff who worked with students; the latter were accessed through emails collected from the college's website. A cover letter was attached to the survey explaining the scope of the project and the investigator’s contact information. The survey was sent to 300 faculty/staff members, and 34 participants responded.

Similar to the student survey, the faculty/staff survey identified responses that were categorized as “Institutional Commitment,” “Student Behavior,” and “Environmental/Non-academic factors” for faculty/staff. In addition to these categories, the survey also explored staff, faculty, and student openness to having community-based organizations located on campus. Questions also asked whether respondents believed that community-based organizations made a difference in improving student academic success. A new framework for student engagement requires the support of the campus community to be successful.
Survey Recruitment

To recruit subjects for the student survey, faculty were emailed and asked for permission to hand out paper surveys during classes. The survey was also distributed at the campus center during college hours. The college directory was used to send the faculty/staff the electronic survey.

Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were transcribed by Rev.com, checked for errors, and loaded into Dedoose.com. The transcripts were coded in Dedoose, and content analysis was used to identify themes and patterns in the interview data. The data from the faculty/staff and student interviews were used to understand the college’s institutional commitment to student success. The data also identified student behaviors and non-academic factors that affect student success. The purpose of conducting this analysis was to determine the type of partnerships that were effective in improving student academic success.

The goal of data collection was to identify and categorize the factors associated with student success and student need. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were used to design the student and faculty survey. Survey results were used to inform the research and data analysis.

Credibility and Internal Validity

All mixed method approach studies are subject to threats to the credibility and internal validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2009). An internal validity “threat can involve using inadequate
procedures” or a misinterpretation of the experiences of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2009, p. 171; Maxwell, 2005). To ensure that this study answered the research question and adequately captured the perspective of the participants, this research utilized a sequential approach to developing the themes and instruments (Creswell & Creswell, 2009).

The questions used in the semi-structured interviews were designed to answer the research questions. The semi-structured interviews were used to find themes, and the themes were used to develop the survey tools (Creswell & Creswell, 2009). The data collected from the semi-structured interviews and surveys were used to identify correlations and outliers in the results.

The recruitment for the semi-structured interviews used a targeted purposive recommendation/snowballing sampling method. The student survey utilized a targeted, purposeful convenience survey method. The original copies of the physical survey are stored in a secure location. The data from these hard copies were transferred into SurveyMonkey for analysis. Since human error is possible during the data entry process, 11 random surveys were chosen to confirm the accuracy of data input.

The recruitment for the faculty/staff survey utilized a targeted purposeful survey method. The survey was disseminated electronically. This process provides a track record to verify the survey invitations, response rates, and response dates. The research materials consist of email communications, interview recordings, interview notes, transcripts, data analysis, and storage. The emails and interview recordings include recommendations from interviewees to interview
their colleagues. These records confirm the recruitment procedures, interview protocol, and content analysis.

**Survey Themes**

The three categories that were used in the surveys were “Institutional Commitment” to student success, “Student Behavior” academically, and “Non-academic/Environmental” factors that affect student success. Through institutional commitment, the study measured staff, faculty, and student opinion of the college’s commitment to student success on campus, and whether they believed employee perspectives on institutional commitment to student success would make a difference in improving student academic success. The student behavior theme examined the survey participant’s perspective of student behavior and how it affects academic achievement.

For example, the faculty and staff survey measures indicated whether the respondent believed that student’s employment was a hindrance (or help) to student academic success. This is important because many community college students work outside of school. Next, the survey tool explored the effect of unforeseen emergencies on student success. The survey asked whether faculty, staff, and students think emergencies affect academic success. Finally, the surveys measured the participants’ perception of the college’s capacity and responsibility in addressing “student needs” such as hunger, homelessness, and dependent care.

For the student population, the dependent variables collected from the survey were work status (part-time/full-time), enrollment status (matriculated, full-time, and part-time), and study
hours (home, school, and in groups). The work status determined work commitments. The enrollment status and study hours determined commitment to their education.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Since this research involved human subjects, an application to Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board was submitted in October of 2016. This application included details on the number and type of subjects that were researched. The application also included a summary, goals, purpose, and recruitment procedures as well as the personnel involved in the project. The application also contained the name of the college, recruitment procedures, consent process, study process, the risks involved in the study, and methodology for protecting participants’ confidentiality.

The attachments to the application consisted of an email template and telephone scripts for recruiting faculty/staff, directors of community-based organizations, and students for semi-structured interviews. The application also included an interview guide with different questions for all three of the groups as well as unsigned interview consent forms for the participants (Appendix A).

The College’s Institutional Review Board approved the study in December of 2016. This form required a project description, objective, methodology, and procedures. The study was also required to provide the number of subjects, interview questions, storage, and disposal procedures. The safeguarding of faculty and staff confidentiality was a priority for several
reasons. A breach of confidentiality could cause harm to their professional reputation. This harm can include a loss of course sections, promotional opportunities, and employment.

The survey was deliberately kept brief to ensure that students experience as little psychological discomfort as possible. The survey also gave the participants an opportunity to make recommendations for changes that could positively impact students who experience the effects of poverty while enrolled in college.

Student confidentiality was protected through non-sign consent forms. Student confidentiality is important since faculty or staff can target a student if their opinion is considered offensive. This targeting could result in poor grades, lack of access to resources, and a block from future employment at the institution. Names or other individually identifiable information were not included in any public reports.

**Significance**

Partnerships between community colleges and four-year institutions are important to society for three reasons: 1) community colleges were designed to be a resource for local communities to improve workforce development, as well as academic achievement. The business community demands a well-trained labor force, and an educated workforce is a key to the country’s economic viability; 2) 46% of all undergraduate college students attend community colleges, and 33% of federal Pell Grant financial aid goes to community colleges (AACC, 2015); and 3) community colleges are accountable to lawmakers and taxpayers for the dollars spent (Anderson, 2015).
Data Management

To protect the identity of the participants, the data were stored in a password-protected, encrypted folder on a personal computer. The data was backed up on a password-protected, encrypted external hard drive, which is stored in a safe in a home office. Paper surveys and consent forms are stored in a locked cabinet at a home office, and recorded consent forms will be destroyed after three years.
Chapter 4: Results

The primary goal of this study was to develop a framework for community colleges to improve student success through partnerships with community-based organizations. This chapter presents the results of data collected from students, staff, faculty, and community-based organization leaders who participated in this study. The data for this study were retrieved from 13 semi-structured interviews, 34 online faculty/staff surveys, and 106 paper student surveys. The theoretical model that informed this study was Kuh’s model on student success (Kuh et al., 2006).

Descriptive Statistics

Semi-structured Interview Administration. Nine of the semi-structured interviews were conducted over the telephone, and four were conducted in person. The interviewees consisted of six faculty/staff members, four students, and three leaders of community-based organizations (Table 1). Notes were collected during all of the interviews, and 11 of the interviews were recorded. All interviewees completed a consent form before the interview.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Types</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-Structured Interviews. The interviewed six faculty/staff all worked directly with students at the community college. Each of the four students interviewed was enrolled in classes at the time of the study. All of the three community-based organization leaders interviewed worked for organizations that were located within 15 miles of the community college studied.

Online Survey Administration. For the faculty/staff survey, email addresses were gathered from the college’s website academic and student support departments. The electronic survey was sent to 300 faculty and staff members at the college, and 34 participants responded; nine opted out, and 262 did not provide a response. The 34 respondents self-identified as follows: 91% White (non-Latino), 6% Black/African American, and 3% Asian (Table 2).

Table 2

Faculty/Staff Survey Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you identify yourself racially or ethnically?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ African American</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Paper Survey. The student paper survey purposively targeted current students at the community college. A paper survey was administered at the campus center on different days of the week and different times of the day, to ensure that a representative group of students was surveyed. Each survey participant was offered a writing utensil.

One hundred and fifty surveys were administered on campus, and 106 were returned completed. Of these, 68% self-identified as White (non-Latino), 17% as Black/African-American, 6.9% as Latino, and 5% as Asian (Table 3).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you identify yourself racially or ethnically?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Employment. Figure 3 shows the percentage of students who participated in the study and were actively employed at the time of the survey.

![Student Employment Percentage](image)

*Figure 3. Student Employment Percentage*

Age of student survey participants. The average age of the respondents to the student survey was 20: The youngest participant was 18 years old, and the oldest participant was 35 years old (Table 4).
Table 4

Descriptive Student Ages Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>20.1078431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Error</strong></td>
<td>0.49121715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Deviation</strong></td>
<td>4.96105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Variance</strong></td>
<td>24.6120171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kurtosis</strong></td>
<td>30.5571608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skewness</strong></td>
<td>5.18630021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender of student survey respondents.** A higher percentage of students who participated in the study self-reported as male (Table 5). Males accounted for 63% of the respondents, females accounted for 35%, and 2% of respondents self-reported as non-binary/third gender.

Table 5

Student Survey Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary/third gender</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 103
Need for Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations

Should the campus have resources located on campus to address non-academic student needs? Fifty-eight percent of students who responded to this question on the student survey answered “Yes” the institution should have resources located on campus to address non-academic student needs (Table 6). Seventy-nine percent of the faculty/staff respondents answered “Yes” the institution should have resources located on campus to address non-academic student needs (Table 7).

Table 6

*Student Survey Campus Resources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Faculty/Staff Survey Campus Resources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Themes**

The three themes examined in this chapter are “Institutional Commitment,” “Student Behavior” factors, and “Environmental/Non-Academic” factors. These categories were created as a result of the semi-structured interviews used to develop questions for the faculty/staff survey and the student survey. These categories also align with Kuh’s Student Success model.

**Institutional Commitment**

The Institutional Commitment (IC) theme represented the services that the campus offered to students. The sub-categories associated with this theme were student engagement, the direction of resources, capacity, and openness to partnerships. The student engagement sub-category examined the interviewee’s perception of institutional commitment to promoting student interaction with faculty, staff, and the college in general.
These interactions were represented through tutoring services, curricular, co-curricular, or a combination of curricular and co-curricular activities. The direction of resources as defined by sub-categories examined how interviewees perceived the allocation of financial and human resources at the College. The capacity sub-category reviewed the interviewee's perception of the College’s capacity to provide emergency aid. The openness to the partnerships sub-category examined the interviewee's perception of the College’s openness to partnerships with community-based organizations.

**Semi-structured interview IC results**

During the semi-structured interviews, statements consistent with the sub-category of Student Engagement were the most prevalent. Student Engagement addressed the institution's commitment to interacting with students in a manner that fosters student success. In the interviews, the participants were asked about the type of non-academic support on campus that fosters student success.

Faculty/Staff member 2 described the necessity for campuses to provide learning resources that meet the entire needs of a variety of learners:

“Because you are dealing with the whole person, it is not just the academic, whether it is someplace quiet to take their test or if they need special machines to read things or someone to read a test to them. Whatever they need”.

Faculty/Staff member 3 stated that the institutions should adequately assess the goals of students to facilitate student success:
“The community college's challenge is to nail down what the student is here for, to track if the student is fulfilling that, and to see if they did at the end. That's the piece that is missing out of community college assessment.”

Student Participant 9 described the importance of interaction with faculty outside of the classroom:

“One thing I like about this college is that the campus is reasonably small. So I'm constantly seeing my own professors on campus, and they say hi, and I say hi. At the end of every semester the professors say, "If you ever need my help, I'm always here. I'll do my best to remember you". But every advisor will help you if you really need the help. And a couple of my professors do remember me”.

Within the IC theme, 62% of the comments centered on student engagement. The second most prevalent sub-category under the IC theme was the direction of resources (21%), with capacity comprising 16% of the comments (Table 8).

Table 8  

*Semi-Structured Interview Responses IC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Responses</th>
<th>Institutional Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Survey IC Results**

Both surveys request the respondents to identify non-tutoring support services on campus that assist students in crisis. Based on the semi-structured interview results, the present study’s researcher hypothesized that both the faculty/staff and students were unaware of non-academic support services on campus for students in need. The response rate on this question was 98% for faculty/staff and 74% of students.

Based on the research results 85% percent of the faculty/staff who answered this question were able to identify at least one non-academic program on campus that assisted students in crisis. However, only 46% of the students who responded to this question were able to identify at least one non-academic program on campus that assisted students in crisis (see Figure 4). Although, the surveys revealed that there is a significant difference between faculty/staff and students who are able to identify non-academic services on campus, a sizable amount of faculty/staff and students are aware of a non-academic support service on campus for students in need.
Figure 4. Student and Faculty/Staff Support Services Knowledge Gap
Table 9

*Student and Faculty/Staff Support Services Knowledge Gap T-test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified non-tutoring support service on campus that assists students in crisis</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Behavior**

The Student Behavior (SB) theme represented the perception of the role of student behavior in determining a student’s success regardless of environmental or institutional factors. The sub-categories associated with this theme were academic aptitude, academic focus, and academic preparation. The academic aptitude sub-category examines the interviewee's perception of a student's aptitude as a key indicator of student success.

The academic preparation sub-category examined the interviewee's perception of the role of academic preparation in student success. The academic focus sub-category also examined the interviewee's perception of individual academic motivation in the facilitation of academic success.
Semi-structured Interview SB Results

During the semi-structured interviews, statements consistent with the sub-category of academic focus were the most prevalent sub-category. Academic focus addressed the role of the individual students in choosing to perform in a manner that would increase success, such as studying hard or attending office hours.

During the interviews, the participants were asked to name three personal qualities that contribute to academic success, and why.

Student Participant 7 highlighted the importance of consistency and being organized as personal qualities that improve student success:

“Regular attendance, believing that that's important ... Just kind of being thorough with the material, wanting to know how to do better”.

Both Faculty/Staff Participant 3 and Student Participant 8 described the importance of a positive attitude and perseverance in student success:

“Second thing is don't give up kind of attitude, which ... you know it's like they say belief in yourself when you don't know. Belief in yourself and having the attitude that I'm not giving up attitude and knowing when to ask for help. I think those three things are what helps a student succeed without a doubt”(Faculty/Staff participant 3).

“They don't give up kind of attitude, which ... you know it's like they say belief in yourself when you don't know. Belief in yourself. Not giving up attitude and knowing when to ask for help. I think those three things are what helps a student succeed without a doubt” (Student Participant 8).
Faculty/Staff Participant 6 emphasized the importance of discipline in ensuring student success:

“Second would be discipline. Going hand in hand with the drive, if you want it then you'll make the time. You'll do the exercises, you'll do the homework, have that discipline to carve out the time you need. I had a student in class yesterday who I said, "The homework next week is going to take you a lot longer. It's difficult. It may take you two hours," look up at me and goes, "No way! I'm not spending two hours on homework!"

Academic Focus

All of the faculty/staff and students perceived academic focus as a primary contributor in determining academic success. Sixty-seven percent of the community-based organization staff viewed academic focus as a primary contributor to academic success.
Figure 5. Semi-Structured Interviews Academic Focus

Within the SB theme, 80% of the comments centered on academic focus. The second most prevalent sub-categories under the SB theme were academic preparation (16%), and academic aptitude also comprising 16% of the comments. Based on the semi-structured interview results, this researcher expected that both the faculty/staff and students would rate individual focus and self-discipline as the most important factors in academic success (Table 10).

Table 10

Semi-structured Interviews Non-Academic Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Academic factors that affect student performance</th>
<th>Academic Aptitude</th>
<th>Academic Focus</th>
<th>Academic Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
In the faculty/staff survey, participants were asked how important particular personal qualities in students were influencing academic success. The personal qualities were listed on a Likert scale as “Focus/Self-Discipline,” “Tenacity/Motivated,” “Organization/Attention to detail,” “Positive Attitude,” “Confidence” and “Knowing how to ask for help.” The scale for this question contained the choices of “very important,” “important,” “somewhat important” and “not important.” The majority of faculty and staff indicated that “knowing how to ask for help” was the most important factor in influencing academic success.

The next two options considered essential to driving academic success by faculty/staff were “focus/self-discipline” and “tenacity/motivated.” Faculty and staff ranked “confidence” in the survey as the lowest factor to facilitating success.
Table 11

**Faculty/Staff Survey Personal Qualities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus/Self Discipline</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenacity/Motivated</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Attention to detail</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Attitude</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to ask for help</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This researcher’s hypothesis that “focus/self-discipline” would be ranked as the most important factor in academic success on both surveys was incorrect. Faculty/staff ranked the variable “knowing how to ask for help” as the most important factor in student success (Table 11). However, students did rate focus/self-discipline as the most important in individual academic success (Table 12).
Table 12: Student Survey Personal Qualities

**In your view, how important are the following personal qualities in students that influence academic success?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus/Self Discipline</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenacity/Motivated</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Attention to detail</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Attitude</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to ask for help</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

*T-test: Knowing how to ask for help*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there was a significant difference between the two surveys’ ratings of the importance of “knowing how to ask for help,” there was no statistically significant difference between faculty/staff and students on the role of “focus/self-discipline” in student success. Both groups ranked focus/self-discipline as a key quality in student success. This outcome correlates with the results from the semi-structured interviews.
Table 14

*T-test Focus/Self-Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.39047619</td>
<td>1.352941176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another interesting finding in this study was the significant difference in outlooks with regards to the variable “positive attitude.” The majority of Faculty/Staff responses indicate that attitude was an important factor in student academic success; however, students did not rank attitude as vital to student success.
Table 15

*Positive Attitude*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Attitude</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Environmental/Non-Academic Factors**

The Environmental/Non-Academic (ENA) theme represented the non-academic challenges students manage outside of the classroom. All of the interviewees identified some environmental challenge that affects a student’s ability to be successful in college. The sub-categories associated with this theme were Family Education, Access to Transportation, Money for books, Access to Computers, Cost of College, Family Income, Family Support, Personal Physical Health, Personal Mental Health, Health of a Family Member, Housing, Hunger, Personal Safety, Hours Worked, and Willingness to Use Services.

The resource-based sub-categories such as “Access to Transportation,” “Money for Books,” “Access to Computers,” and “Cost of College” examined the interviewee's perception of the effects of poverty on a student's ability to persist through an unexpected crisis. The “Hours Worked” sub-category examined the interviewee’s perception of students’ tendencies to maintain employment while in school, and its effects on student success. The family commitment sub-category examined the interviewee's perception of a student’s role as primary caregivers for
family and its effect on student success. The “Willingness to Use Services” subcategory examined the possibility of stigma or inconvenience associated with seeking services. The “Types of Services Needed” sub-category examined the interviewee’s perspective on the prevalent services needed by students.

**Semi-structured interview ENA results.** During the semi-structured interviews, statements consistent with the sub-category of Family Commitments were the most prevalent. During the interviews, participants were asked to identify the uncontrollable factors that contribute to academic success. Family obligations were mentioned in several interviews as an uncontrollable variable in academic success. The “Family Commitments” sub-category addressed the challenge of balancing family obligations and education that some community college students manage.

**Interview Responses associated with Environmental/ Non-Academic Factors.**

Participant 6 emphasized the role of family support in helping students succeed in college. “Family support. Whether it's your husband taking the kids, or your wife taking the kids, or it's your 18-year old whose mom and dad are helping out by reminding them to do homework or whatever it is, family members who love and support you through this, that's huge.”

Student participant 7 described an instance when an Environmental/Non-academic factor impacted a fellow student’s ability to complete their studies. “Her grandmother got cancer. So, she was enrolled in school, excited and everything but she couldn't afford to go to school on top of her Grandmother having cancer, having to go to chemo.”
Within the ENA theme, 30% of the comments centered on family commitments. The second most prevalent sub-categories under the ENA theme were poverty (19%) followed by emotional support at 15%. Based on the semi-structured interview results, this researcher hypothesized that both the faculty/staff and students would rate variables that correlate with family commitments such as “health of a family member,” “family support,” “housing,” and “hunger” as the most important factors in academic success.

Table 16

*Interviews Environmental Non-Academic factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family Commitments</th>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Emotional Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Responses</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty/Staff Survey.** In the faculty/staff survey, participants were asked how important individual non-academic factors were in influencing academic success. These factors were listed on a Likert scale as “Academic Preparation in High School,” “Family Education,” “Access to Transportation,” “Money for Books,” “Access to Computers,” “Cost of College,” “Family Income,” “Family Support,” “Personal Physical Health,” “Personal Mental Health,” “Health of a Family Member,” “Housing,” “Hunger,” “Personal Safety,” and “Hours Worked.” The scale for this question contained the choices of “high impact,” “some impact,” “no impact,” “not sure,” and “little impact.”
The majority of faculty and staff indicated that academic preparation in high school had the most impact on success in college. The academic preparation sub-category was defined as the failure of the primary education system to prepare students for the rigors of college.

Table 17

Faculty/Staff Survey Academics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>High Impact</th>
<th>Some Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Little Impact</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Prep in High School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Education</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Transportation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for Books</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Computers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of College</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Mental Health</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health of a Family</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Worked</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although faculty/staff consider academic preparation the most important factor in facilitating student success in this study, the next section indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the student responses to this question. Students did not rate academic preparation as a major obstacle to student success. For faculty/staff, the academic preparation option was followed by access to computers, personal mental health, hunger, and cost of college.

Table 18

*Academic Preparation in High-School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Survey.** The student survey participants were asked how important individual non-academic factors were in influencing academic success. The Individual non-Academic Factors were listed on a Likert scale as “Family Education,” “Access to Transportation,” “Money for Books,” “Access to Computers,” “Cost of College,” “Family Income,” “Family Support,” “Personal Physical Health,” “Personal Mental Health,” “Health of a Family Member,” “Housing,” “Hunger,” “Personal Safety,” and “Hours Worked.” The scale for this question
contained the choices of “high impact,” “some impact,” “no impact,” “not sure” and “little impact.”

The majority of students indicated the cost of college, as having the most impact on success in college followed by access to computers, hunger, and money for books.

Table 19

*Student Survey Academics Affected by*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are academics affected by?</th>
<th>High Impact</th>
<th>Some Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Little Impact</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Preparation in High School</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Transportation</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for Books</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Computers</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of College</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Physical Health</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Mental Health</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health of a Family Member</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

This chapter presented the results of the semi-structured interviews, faculty/staff surveys, and student surveys. The semi-structured interviews helped develop the themes covered in the surveys as well as the survey questions. The results of the surveys supported this study in answering the question of what the non-academic needs of students are at the institution studied and what services are needed on campus.

The results of the faculty/staff and students surveys aligned with regards to the impact of “focus/self-discipline,” “the cost of college,” and “access to computers” on student success. However, the surveys deviate with regards to the influence of “knowing how to ask for help,” “academic preparation,” “mental illness,” “hunger,” and “money for books” as contributing factors to student success.
Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This chapter provides an overview of the study, answers to the research questions, and the study’s limitations. The chapter also provides a framework for partnering with community-based organizations to improve student success and provides recommendations for future research. In the study, it was determined that additional resources from community-based organizations would be welcomed on campus, and would be very beneficial to the college.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to create a framework for community colleges to improve student success using existing resources. The research explored the perceived challenges to academic success for community college students. Chapter 1 of this study highlighted the fact that three-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time community college students are 20% nationwide, and the average one-year retention rate for this same group of students is 59% (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These outcomes negatively impact the community college industry because poor completion and retention rates question the effectiveness of community colleges (White House Press Secretary, 2013).

Public doubts regarding the effectiveness of community colleges are an obstacle to those who would want to secure additional public funding for student support. However, additional public funding is needed to help community colleges provide adequate student support services for students (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Goldrick-Rab, Anderson, & Kinsley, 2016; Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars, & Edgecombe, 2010; Kimbark, Peters, & Richardson, 2017; Kuh, Kinzie,
Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2011; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Mentzer, 2015; Roark, 2013; Sullivan, 2008a, 2008b). This study identified the non-academic support needed by community college students and the institution's commitment to supporting these students.

The second chapter examined various literature related to student success, as well as the different variables scholars found integral to academic and student success. Prevalent variables that affect student success in the literature were academic preparation and student engagement. The academic preparation variable focused on the failure of K-12, while the student engagement approach examined the cross-section of student behavior and institutional commitment.

Kuh’s model for student success effectively incorporates various inputs for understanding student outcomes. The eight variables associated with Kuh’s model for student success served as the theoretical framework for this study. In this study, three of Kuh’s variables were used to develop a framework for partnerships between community colleges and community-based organizations. The themes (variables) were institutional commitment, student behavior, and the non-academic factors that impact student academic performance. Comments received from the semi-structured interviews were categorized and placed into these three themes.

During the semi-structured interviews with the community organizations, the administrators expressed interest in developing long term partnerships with their local community college. Partnering with a community college is advantageous to the community organization for two reasons. The first reason is that these organizations serve a population of
participants that has similar economic and demographic characteristics as the students at the college. These organizations also rely on local partnerships to pursue grant opportunities.

The semi-structured interviews were held with six faculty/staff (who directly work with the students), four students, and three leaders of community-based organizations. Based on the interviews, it was determined that an institutional commitment to student engagement is essential to student success. The semi-structured interviews were used to create two survey tools to better understand the community college’s perspective on the variables that influence student success.

An unexpected outcome of the surveys was that there was a significant gap in knowledge of the existing programs on campus that assist students in a crisis such as the food pantry or emergency financial assistance. This knowledge gap shows that there is an opportunity at this college to institutionally commit to increasing awareness among students about the current resources on campus.

**Research Questions, Findings, and Recommendations for Practice**

This study sought to create a framework for improving academic student success at a mid-size urban community college through partnerships with local community-based organizations. The three research questions used to guide this study were:

**Research Question 1: Is there a need for community-based organizations to partner with community colleges on campus?**
The semi-structured interviews identified a full range of needs that were associated with personal finances such as housing, transportation, food, clothing, and free tuition. The survey results revealed that majority of faculty/staff and students were open to on-campus resources to address non-academic student needs. The surveys also revealed that “cost of college,” “access to computers,” and “hunger” were the top three non-academic variables that students believed impacted student success the most. During the Fall of 2017, the State of New York will be implementing the Excelsior Scholarship Program, which provides free tuition for students at State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) institutions whose families’ annual income does not exceed $100,000 (NYS, 2017).

During the study interviews and survey, student participants identified the cost of college as the most important issue affecting student success even though the annual cost of attending the institution is close to $7,000 less than the national average for similar institutions. Student concerns regarding the cost of college at a community college may be partially attributed to the publicity associated with the Excelsior Scholarship Program. The Excelsior Scholarship Program is a financial aid program that allows students to attend a SUNY or CUNY college, tuition-free.

Access to computers was an issue that both faculty/staff and students found important to student success. Close to the college is a community-based organization that maintains a computer lab that is free and open to the public. If the college partnered with this direct service organization, they could expand off-campus computer access for their students. The college could also partner with this organization to place more computer labs in areas where students
reside. Providing more access to technology for students may serve as a perfect platform for student engagement at a commuter college that has a population of students that live off-campus.

Students also ranked “hunger” as a significant barrier to success in college. This is important for two reasons. The first is that faculty/staff rated ‘knowing how to ask for help’ as the most important attribute to succeeding in college. The second reason is that there is an existing food pantry on campus and since very few students mentioned the existence of the food pantry, the students may simply be unaware of its existence.

However, it is noteworthy that the existing food pantry on campus is open for a few hours a day Monday–Friday and is stocked using donations from the college community. If the college partnered with an established community-based organization that had more access to food pantry items and experienced staff to promote and operate the pantry, this partnership could be better utilized to serve students in need.

A learning management system (LMS) could be used as an early alert system that warns college officials when a student stops logging into the system over a pre-determined period of time. This can be an indicator of a student in crisis or disconnected from the college. The system could also be used as a platform to connect students to a food pantry or to housing resources. For example, a student may be experiencing food insecurity or housing insecurity and can use this resource to connect with a service without identifying themselves to the campus community. A properly deployed and routinely monitored LMS can increase student awareness through announcements, courses, and other resources.
Research Question 2: What are the most effective methods for community colleges and community-based organizations to partner in bringing social services to campus?

The surveys revealed that the majority of students are not aware of the services on campus that assist students with non-academic services. To effectively develop a partnership with a community-based organization on campus, the community-based organization must conduct an in-person and electronic outreach to the campus community. This can be accomplished by having adequate space on campus for the community-based organizations to serve students.

This study shows that the college must find ways to make students more aware of the student services on campus. A strategic outreach is important because the college enrolls more commuter than residential students and a large percentage of the students are employed. Since student success involves student engagement, the college must be purposeful in providing student support services and raising awareness about services offered.

Purposeful student support for non-academic services may require an extended-hours approach for support services, an electronic platform for referrals, and staff on-call to assist students in times of crises. By implementing extended-hours access for the purpose of non-academic, emergency support, staffing will need to be available in the evenings and on weekends. The LMS could be used as a platform to connect students to non-academic services without any stigma and without incurring the additional costs of hiring third-shift employees. An on-call staff member could refer students to services when the campus is closed.
The LMS could have a real-time instant messenger feature that can only be accessed by students. The on-call staff member could have access to a listing of social services to assist students in crisis. This feature does not guarantee that every crisis will be solved, but it will increase student engagement.

**Research Question 3: What are the obstacles to creating partnerships between community colleges and community-based organizations?**

There are three primary obstacles that serve as barriers to developing partnerships. The first is determining the right type of partnerships, contractual agreements, and the physical location of the community-based organizations on campus. To determine the right type of partnership, the college should use data from on-campus surveys to determine the most prevalent needs on campus. This type of assessment could help the college discover gaps in student engagement that may be as a result of students’ lack of awareness. A survey can also help an institution determine if there is a stigma associated with asking for a particular type of assistance or accessing support in a public place on campus. For example, this study found that the student population identified variables such as money for books and hunger as issues that impact student success. However, the majority of the students who took the survey did not identify the on-campus pantry or the emergency book voucher program on campus.

Next, the institution should develop a comprehensive list of community-based organizations in the geographical area including the services they provide. The college should also ascertain the funding cycles, funding sources, and the capacity of potential partners to
ensure that the organizational missions of both organizations align and that the community-based organization is programmatically stable. By assessing the needs and services available, the college can assess the type of partnership that would be effective for its community.

After determining the right type of community-based organization to partner with the community college based upon the needs of its students, the college should seek legal counsel to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the community-based organization to articulate the roles and responsibilities of both parties. The MOU should illustrate the intention of the program, the rights and responsibilities of both parties, funding sources for both parties, the resources provided for the partnership by each partner, the length of the agreement, program goals, and deliverables.

In any such agreement, the community college should serve as the lead agency (or principle). The MOU should also have a termination clause, which will give the college the opportunity to break off a partnership with the community-based organization at any time.

The type of services needed on campus, the availability of local community-based organizations in a 15 mile or less radius in proximity to the college, and the type of community-based organization will determine the best approach to partnership and the ideal location on campus for the partner organization.
To realize the goal of making non-academic support services more accessible, the college should create a space on the learning management system (LMS) for students to access services at all hours, and while away from the campus. An instant messaging icon can be placed on the home page of the LMS for students in crisis mode. This live chat feature will provide access to a live college staff member and/or a community-based organization resource. This electronic form of communication should have a mobile application for students who do not own a computer. This form of communication can also reduce any stigma associated with seeking services, and inform students of resources that are relevant to their immediate needs.

*Figure 6. MOUs With Local Community-based Organizations*

**Digital Student Engagement Framework**

To realize the goal of making non-academic support services more accessible, the college should create a space on the learning management system (LMS) for students to access services at all hours, and while away from the campus. An instant messaging icon can be placed on the home page of the LMS for students in crisis mode. This live chat feature will provide access to a live college staff member and/or a community-based organization resource. This electronic form of communication should have a mobile application for students who do not own a computer. This form of communication can also reduce any stigma associated with seeking services, and inform students of resources that are relevant to their immediate needs.
This study found 10 different variables that are essential for digitally engaging students (Table 20). These variables aligned with the three different themes of this study, namely Institutional Commitment, Student Behavior, and Environmental Non-Academic factors.
### Digital Student Engagement Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples of Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commit</strong> (Commit to using digital engagement)</td>
<td>Faculty and Staff will use existing digital services on campus to engage students</td>
<td>Use the college’s current LMS, such as Blackboard or Moodle, to engage students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outreach</strong> (Strategically Market Digital Engagement)</td>
<td>The college will purposively communicate the importance of the media for engagement and make the service easy to find</td>
<td>Request that the LMS provider add a Student Support live chat button to a prominent area of the LMS homepage, and encourage students on campus to explore the resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measure</strong> (Measure Results)</td>
<td>Develop a reporting structure to track the service usage, effectiveness (retention and graduation), and institutional outreach</td>
<td>Have the Institutional Research department create a quarterly report that draws data from the LMS to quantify digital engagement, and predict retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovate</strong> (Innovate Systems)</td>
<td>Use the information to change/ improve institutional behavior</td>
<td>If access to computers is affecting academics: *The college can partner with community computer labs or redirect resources to open a new computer lab or extend the hours of current labs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Variables Definition Examples of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples of Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safe</strong> (Safe/Non-judgmental Engagement for Students)</td>
<td>The ability to access services without stigma or judgment</td>
<td>A homeless student can seek services without disclosing their circumstances to more people than necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong> (Access to 24 hours of assistance)</td>
<td>Access to 24 hours of assistance</td>
<td>24 Hour access to LMS - Live people to respond to any crisis in late evenings and weekends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends/Faculty (Referrals)</strong></td>
<td>Peers and faculty can use this service to refer students</td>
<td>Encourage faculty and students to know the purpose of the service and how to refer students to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easy</strong> (Easy to use/Access/Useful)</td>
<td>The digital medium should be easy to navigate and find</td>
<td>Placed in a prominent section of the LMS homepage and be easy to navigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant</strong></td>
<td>Providing relevant services</td>
<td>Access to assistance with transportation is relevant to students at a commuter college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliable</strong></td>
<td>Providing reliable services</td>
<td>The institution should vet community-based organization for trustworthiness in service and safety to students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Limitations

The limitations of this study are that it only focused on one institution, and to achieve generalizability, this study would have to include several similar institutions for the purpose of comparison. The disadvantage of the semi-structured interviews is that responses cannot be verified for authenticity. In addition to not being able to check for honesty, the uniqueness of each interview makes it difficult to compare responses (Bernard, 2011).

The limitations of the faculty/staff and student survey were that a survey does not capture the behavior of the participants. Therefore, a participant in the study may have an opinion that contradicts the participant’s behavior.

Opportunities for Further Study

An opportunity for future study includes evaluating the impact of the Excelsior Scholarship Plan on students’ non-academic needs. This study would include multiple institutions and a combination of rural, urban, and suburban community colleges. This study would be especially interesting because the needs and available services differ based on geography.

Conclusion: Framework for Partnerships

The goal of this study was to develop a framework for community colleges and community-based organizations to effectively partner to improve student success rates. The findings of this study suggest that an effective framework is needed to implement partnerships in
a manner that encourages students to use the services, making the services accessible outside of the traditional workweek, and the use of technology to accomplish this task.

An LMS solution to student engagement can provide real-time reports to staff/faculty, facilitating an opportunity to engage with students in crisis mode. This reporting structure can be used to track when the student logs into the LMS, and if the student is searching for crisis services. This type of engagement gives the student the ability to avoid direct contact with faculty/staff and allows the college to engage with the student in a manner that is comfortable, and in a similar way to how some students engage with their peers electronically.
References


McCabe, R. H. (2000). No one to waste: A report to public decision-makers and community college leaders: ERIC.
Roark, I. R. (2013). The impact of mandatory student success courses on community college student persistence: The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter
Notification of IRB Action

Date: November 30, 2016  IRB #: CPS16-10-14

Principal Investigator(s): Neenah Estrella-Luna
                        Odo Butler

Department: Doctor of Law & Policy
            College of Professional Studies

Address: 20 Belvidere
          Northeastern University

Title of Project: Can Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations Improve Student Success for Students at Urban Midsize Community Colleges?

Participating Sites: Community College permission letters pending

Informed Consent: Three (3) unsigned consents for administrators, faculty and staff
                 One (1) signed consent for students

As per CFR 45.46.117(c)(2) signed consent is being waived as the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required.

DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7
Monitoring Interval: 12 months

Approval Expiration Date: NOVEMBER 29, 2017

Investigator's Responsibilities:
1. Informed consent forms bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #4630
Appendix B: Unsigned Consent Document-Community Based Organizations Interview

UNSIGNED CONSENT DOCUMENT (Community Based Organizations Interview)

Northeastern University, Department of: Doctor of Law & Policy College of Professional Studies
Name of Investigators: Dr. Estrella Luna Principal Investigator and Odo N. Butler Student Researcher
Title of Project: Can Partnerships with Community Based Organizations Improve Student Success for Students at Urban Midsize Community Colleges?

Request to Participate in Research
We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of this research is to create a framework for community colleges and community based organizations to partner in an effective manner that improves student success. Community based organizations may serve as a resource for students to address non-academic needs and ultimately help them achieve their academic goals.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The interview will take place at various locations and will take about 30 minutes. If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to answer a series of interview questions about the type of social services that are need on community college campuses.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help us learn more about what type of services are needed on community college campuses to help students complete a degree.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Estrella Luna n.estrella@neu.edu, the Principal Investigator. Odo N. Butler butler.o@flasny.neu.edu, Student Investigator.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588; Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

IRB: CPS16-10-14
Approved: 11/30/16
Expiration Date: 11/28/17
Appendix C: Faculty/Staff Survey

1. In your view, how important are the following personal qualities in students that influence academic success?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus/Self Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenacity Motivated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Attention to detail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to ask for help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Academics are affected by?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Impact</th>
<th>Some Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Little Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic preparation in high school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to computers</td>
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Appendix D: Student Survey

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1. In your view, how important are the following personal qualities in students that influence academic success?

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<th>N/A</th>
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2. Academics are affected by?

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</table>

3. Do you think the campus should have resources located on campus to address non-academic student needs?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

4. Please name two (non-tutoring) student services on campus that assist students in crisis. If you are not aware of any student services that assist students in crisis, write “None.”

Service for Students in Crisis 1

Service for Students in Crisis 2

2
5. Name two (non-tutoring) services you wish the campus would provide for students.
   Student Services 1
   Student Services 2

6. What is your current student registration status?
   ○ Full time student
   ○ Part time student

7. Are you currently employed?
   ○ No
   ○ Yes

   If Yes, how many hours do you work a week?

8. Are you a parent or guardian of a minor under 12 years of age?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

9. Are you the first person in your family to attend college?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ Other (please specify)

10. Your age?

11. Is English your first language?
    ○ Yes
    ○ No
    ○ Other (please specify)
12. What is your gender
- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/third gender
- Prefer not say
- Prefer to self-describe

Please self-describe here

13. How do you identify yourself racially or ethnically?
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Latino
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
- White (not Latino)

Please self-describe here.
Appendix E: Interview Guide-Faculty/Staff

1. Name three personal qualities that contribute to academic success
   a. Why?
2. Name three uncontrollable factors that contribute to academic success.
   a. Why?
3. In your experience what are the prevalent student needs of the students you work with?
   a. Why
4. What kind of resources does the college have to assist students with student needs?
5. If you had unlimited funding what kind of resources would you provide for student needs?
6. Do you think the campus community will be open to your dream student needs service?
7. Is there anything you expected me to ask that I didn’t?
Appendix F: Interview Guide-Student

1) Name three personal qualities that contribute to academic success
   a. Why?

2) Name three uncontrollable factors that contribute to academic success.
   a. Why?

3) In your experience what are the prevalent student needs on campus?
   a. Why?

4) What kind of resources does the college have to assist students with student needs?

5) If the college had unlimited funding what kind of resources should the college provide for
   student needs?

6) Do you think students will use this service if it were offered?

7) Is there anything you expected me to ask that I didn’t?
Appendix G: Interview Guide-Directors of Community-Based Organizations

1) What type of services does your organization offer?
2) What type of services do you think are needed on a community college campus?
3) Has your organization ever partnered with an academic institution?
4) What type of services can your organization offer on campus?
5) What kind of resources does the college have to provide for a partnership to be successful?
6) Is there anything you expected me to ask that I didn’t?
### Appendix H: Student Survey

**Interview Codebook C-1**

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<th>Definitions</th>
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<th>Definitions</th>
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<td>Concepts that directly tie to institutional decisions</td>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>Students’ interaction with Institution, faculty, and staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Direction of Resources</td>
<td>How resources are used</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>The college’s capacity to provide emergency aid.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Openness to Partnerships</td>
<td>Does the college have an environment conducive to partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Academic factors</td>
<td>Concepts concerning academic factors that affect student performance</td>
<td>Academic Aptitude</td>
<td>Does a student have the ability to succeed</td>
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<td>Academic Preparation</td>
<td>Was a student prepared to succeed</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Academic Focus</td>
<td>Was a student motivated to improve</td>
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<td>Individual Non-Academic Factors</td>
<td>Concepts concerning life circumstances that affect student success</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>A student's inability to persist through unexpected crisis</td>
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<td>A student’s necessity to work while in school</td>
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<td>Willingness to use services</td>
<td></td>
<td>The stigma or inconvenience associated with seeking services</td>
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<td>Types of services needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>The prevalent services needed by students</td>
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<td>Research Statement</td>
<td>Numerical Transformation</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<td>How important are the following personal qualities in students that influence academic Success</td>
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<td>Are academics affected by?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Do you think the campus should have resources located on campus to address non-academic student needs?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 Maybe</td>
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<td>Please name two (non-tutoring) student services on campus that assist students in crisis. If you are not aware of any student services that assist students in crisis, write &quot;None.&quot;</td>
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<td>2 Open-ended</td>
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<td>Name two (non-tutoring) services you wish the campus would provide for students.</td>
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# Faculty Survey Codes C-3

## Faculty Survey

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<td>Please name two (non-tutoring) student services on campus that assist students in crisis. If you are not aware of any student services that assist students in crisis, write &quot;None.&quot;</td>
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