African-American Students in Higher Education: Attitudes and Perceptions that Relate to Persistence

Frances L Ford McCullough

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS THAT RELATE TO PERSISTENCE

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Organization and Leadership Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Frances L. Ford McCullough

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May 1998
This dissertation, written under the
direction of the candidate's dissertation
committee and approved by the members of
the committee, has been presented to and
accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Education in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Education. The content and research
methodologies presented in this work
represent the work of the candidate alone.

[Signatures and dates]

Dissertation Committee

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Leo, in appreciation of his unconditional support and patient tolerance of endless stacks of books; to Mom, Ida Ford, who taught me to believe that "where there is a will, there is a way;" to my daughter, Nancy L. McCullough, J.D. for her professional expertise and support; and to Aunt Geneva and Uncle Johnny Scruggs for bringing me into their California home, enabling me to obtain an education, and for their ongoing and steadfast love and financial support during the 17- to 22-year-old period.
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CHAPTER I
The Research Problem

Statement of the Problem

African-American students are less likely than Caucasian students to earn a college degree. What are the campus climate and human relations factors possibly contributing to either the persistence or attrition of African-American students working to achieve a higher education? What might institutions of higher education do to improve the retention and subsequent success rate for this segment of the student population? An increasing number of 18- to 24-year-old African-American students do indeed enroll in college, but when compared with their Caucasian counterparts, fewer actually complete their degrees.

The American Council on Education found that 44% of African-American students completed their college degrees at 4-year institutions compared with 54% of Caucasian students (Carter & Wilson, 1997). Moreover, the American Council on Education recently published Minorities in Higher Education, 1996-97 edition highlighted the fact that, in 1995, African-Americans (15.8%) continued to trail Caucasians (26%) in the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with four or more years of college (cited in Carter & Wilson, 1997).

When the small number of African-American college enrollees are compared with graduates of the same population, the retention rate becomes even more dismal. In the academic year of 1986-87, 1,082,000 African-
Americans were enrolled in 4-year colleges. Four years later, in 1990-91, only 65,338 bachelor of arts degrees were conferred on African-American students. During the same period, 9,921,000 Caucasian students were enrolled and 904,061 received bachelor's degrees (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1994). The most current results of the Sallie Mae National Retention Project Survey conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities indicates a graduation rate for African-Americans of 30.4% and Caucasians 44.9% (Redd & Scott, 1997).

Research literature pertaining to college enrollment and retention seem contradictory. Though this inconsistency is apparent across reports, all literature reviewed for this study posits a problem of underrepresentation of minorities in general and African-Americans in particular.

The student retention problem is particularly troublesome because an increasing number of the projected jobs for the year 2000 will be knowledge driven and demand highly technical skills. By the year 2000, American workers who do not earn a college degree will be unable to compete for this growing number of highly technical positions (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, 1991).

In addition to future job prospects, a college degree also has a significant impact on income level for all workers. A recent report by the American Council on Education (1995) stated that an individual with a bachelor's degree earned an average of $12,000 to $14,000 per year more than a high school graduate (American Council on Education, 1995).
One prominent leader of a Black organization pointed out that African-Americans do participate in college; however, the problem is lack of persistence through to degree conferment. McBay (1995) documented that more than 50% of all African-American high school graduates do enroll in college, but enrollment does not lead to graduation. "Attrition remains a major problem for African-American students" (p. 37).

College attrition of African-Americans becomes more acute when educational trends for the year 2000 are considered: (a) college demographic changes indicate that more students of color, including African Americans, will be entering college, (b) conversely, recent passage of the 1996 California Civil Rights Initiative (i.e., Proposition 209) may severely impact the number of African-Americans entering college, and (c) employers of the 2000 workforce will seek well-educated professionals possessing highly technical skills.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the projected persistence or nonpersistence of African-American students enrolled in San Francisco State University (SFSU). This research adds to the understanding of why African-American students depart from college prior to conferment of their originally sought college degree. Specifically, the intention of this study is to add knowledge to the understanding of the environmental and human relations factors possibly relating to either the persistence or nonpersistence of African-American students at one multiethnic 4-year institution.
Background and Need for the Study

African-American students are less likely than Caucasian students to earn a college degree. A review of the literature does not indicate a consensus surrounding noncognitive academic variables and their relationships to the persistence of African-American students. Many past studies focus primarily on the academic variables including high-school grade point average (GPA) and college performance. This current study examines the relationship between African-American students’ plans to leave college and their perception of personal and college environmental factors. Astin (1968) defined college environment as those characteristics of the college that constitute potential student stimuli capable of changing the student’s sensory input.

The current study is based on the premise that students become nonpersisters when any of five factors—either alone or combined—influence a change in their life. An investigation was conducted to learn how the five factors relate to the persistence rate of African-American students in an urban, multiethnic, 4-year public college. The five factors of study are (a) student perceptions of discrimination toward themselves and others, (b) student opinions surrounding campus life, (c) campus affiliations and human relations courses attended, (d) the student intentions to leave college, and (e) academic class level. Students of all ethnic groups leave college for a variety of reasons including academic performance, economic constraints, loss of interest, and transfer to another college. Regardless of race or their
reason for early departure, student nonpersistence in college presents a serious problem in a knowledge-driven and technology-based society. Therefore, educators must investigate and gain greater understanding of persistence and the campus climate to curtail the problem. This study is based on student self-report of projected persistence or nonpersistence at SFSU.

Literature related to college factors and characteristics of the student who does not complete college goals provide only partial answers to questions related to the current problem of retention of African-American students within institutions of higher education. Some recent research has focused on the relationship between the ethnic diversity and composition of the student population and the success rate of African-American students. For example, Allen and Haniff (1991) reported that

Black students on White campuses have been shown to experience considerable difficulty in making the adjustment to an environment which is culturally different, academically demanding, and socially alienating. As a result, Black students sometimes do not experience reasonable levels of academic success and college satisfaction on campus. (p. 96)

Other research findings suggest that campus life influences student success both positively and negatively (Allen & Haniff, 1991; Banks, 1992; Bell, 1975; Davis, 1991). Unfortunately, the literature reviewed for this study did not examine the relationship between campus ethnic makeup and college environmental factors relating to the early departure of African-American students from a multiethnic and culturally diverse urban college setting.
Rationale for the Study

This study is based on Tinto’s (1975, 1987) theoretical model of early college departure. This explicit model was used in the current study to examine the relationship between the college environmental factors and the projected persistence or nonpersistence of African-American students within a multiethnic urban college setting. Tinto’s theoretical model of departure suggests that the academic and social integration of students may describe a condition that defines the actual or self-perceived position a student holds within the academic and social systems. Negative integration tends to reduce student acclimation into those systems (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1975). The main objective of this study was to add to the understanding of why African-Americans depart from college prior to conferment of a bachelor’s degree.

Tinto (1975, 1987) also offered a model describing institutional influences on student early departure from college. It presumes four personal characteristics: family background, academic aptitude, personality, and goal commitment coupled with intentions. These attributes are also presumed to interact with certain college environmental factors to influence a change in the student (Tinto, 1987). In addition, Tinto’s model looks specifically at interactions between the student and various elements of the institution and explains the longitudinal process. Underlying this model is Durkheim’s (1961) suicide theory, which suggests that a person who is alienated or isolated from the social membership of their community may soon depart. Both the
Tinto and Durkheim models place great emphasis on the importance of individual members having strong ties to their community. The stronger this tie, the less likely they are to depart.

Tinto (1987) argues that, beyond the existence of possible discrimination, minority students in general, and Black students in particular, may find it especially difficult to find and become a member of a supportive community within the college. Given the limited opportunities for establishing commonalities, it seems more likely that African-American students may experience a sense of alienation and isolation on some college campuses. Consequently, the early college departure of African-American students may be a manifestation of a negative college environment rather than academic factors.

The Tinto (1987) model also considers intentions of early departure a precursor to nonpersistence. It is apparent from Tinto's longitudinal model that some students depart from college early because they had no original intention of remaining through to degree completion (see Figure 1). Tinto asserted that institutions rarely collect data related to academic intentions upon student enrollment. However, this form of assessment with incoming students could provide useful insight surrounding their reasons for subsequent early departure. Intent to leave is a term pertaining to the disposition with which individuals enter institutions of higher education (Carnegie, 1984; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Tinto, 1987). The Fishbein and Ajzen research suggests that behavior is preceded by developed beliefs surrounding
the consequences of the behavior. According to the theory of intentions presented by these researchers, intentions at any level of specialty are determined by attitudes toward the behavior in question and its subjective norm.

Research Questions

Answers to the following two research questions were sought by examining the relationship between the participants' perception of their campus environment and their intentions to leave SFSU prior to degree attainment:

1. Are African-American students who reported experiences of racial discrimination more likely to consider leaving SFSU prior to degree attainment than those who have not?
2. What are the campus environmental factors related to the projected persistence of African-American students at SFSU—a multiethnic campus setting?

Limitations of the Study

Delimitations. This study was confined to one postsecondary institution located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The content of the data collection instrument contained questions previously developed by representatives of the institution of study to conduct a self-study of its human relations climate. The questions are primarily formatted with Likert-type scales or ranking scales for responses. The few open-ended questions offer limited space for participant answers. The respondents were not instructed or encouraged to use additional paper; however, several participants did augment their responses.

Limitations. The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other African-American student populations at other colleges without precaution. The study sample for this research excluded all campus residents since this group of students may not be representative of the population under study. In addition, the experiences of African-Americans at this particular university may be quite different from other similar colleges since this facility has previously conducted a self-study of its campus climate and already implemented selected solutions toward improving human relations.
Significance of the Study

The most important implication of the current study and its exploration of factors relating to persistence is the need for educators to understand how their own attitudes and perceptions impinge on the success of African-American students pursuing a higher education. In addition, knowledge gained surrounding the persistence of students will be of utmost importance to educators and employers in general. The findings from this study will increase employer awareness of the educational environment influencing graduation rates and, ultimately, their own labor source.

By the year 2000, American workers who do not earn a college degree will be unable to compete for the growing number of highly technical positions. The increasing emphasis on higher education is expected to continue. "Three out of the four fastest growing occupational groups will be the executive, administrative, and managerial professional specialty; and technician and related support occupations" (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, 1991, p. 3). While African Americans are expected to account for a higher percentage of the 21st century workforce, their successful completion of postsecondary education is lagging. In California, the problem is expected to be exacerbated with the recent passage of Proposition 209. One result of this proposition may be that fewer African-Americans will enter postsecondary educational institutions; consequently, even fewer will persist to degree conferment in a 4-year college. Therefore, it becomes imperative that more knowledge is gained surrounding the reasons these students leave
college campuses prior to degree attainment. This study provides valuable information related to environmental factors that influence student persistence in college.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that White non-Hispanics have historically been the larger component of the labor force, but their number has been dropping and is expected to fall further to approximately 64% by 2000. African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other racial groups will account for roughly 33% of labor force entrants (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1991). Consequently, it is crucial that those students who will comprise the new labor force in the coming century remain in college and become appropriately educated.

**Definition of Terms**

The following operational definitions are provided in order to explain the meaning of key terms and concepts pertinent to this study:

*Attitude* is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

*Attrition* is the loss of student enrollment by natural causes.

*Environmental factors* refer to all elements of a college campus that potentially present a stimulus for a student (Astin, 1968).

*Human relations factors* are interpersonal actions, behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes directed toward a student (Astin, 1968).
*Multiethnic campus* is a college campus with students whose ethnicity and cultural characteristics closely reflect the population of the local state. The state of California reported an estimated race/ethnic composition in 1995 of the following: African American = 7%, Caucasian = 54%, Hispanic = 28%, Asian/Pacific Islander = 10%, and Native American = 1% (State of California Department of Finance, 1996).

*Nonpersistent* means departing from, or planning to depart from, a 4-year college prior to degree conferment.

*Projected persisters* or "nonquitters" refer to students enrolled at SFSU at the time of the survey with no expectations of leaving prior to degree attainment.

*Projected nonpersisters* or "quitters" are students enrolled at SFSU at the time of this survey with plans to leave prior to degree conferment.
CHAPTER II
Review of Related Literature

General Overview

The review of literature for this study addressed four areas pertaining to persistence as relevant to race relations in institutions of higher education. The first area provides a general historical background of African-American persistence in achieving access to higher education. The second reviews the theoretical basis for student change. The racial composition of colleges and its impact on African-American students comprises the third area, and the fourth is research pertaining to the influence of attitudes and perceptions on intergroup relations within the educational arena.

Historical Background

Americans have long viewed access to higher education as a means to improve their economic conditions. Gaining equal access to postsecondary education in this country, however, has not been an easy process for many Americans. For African-Americans, access has often necessitated courtroom battles. After gaining equal access, the literature indicates that African-Americans, along with other students of color, face innumerable challenges that result in a disproportionate dropout rate when compared with Caucasian students. The literature also posits that the racial composition of a college or university is directly correlated with academic achievement (Allen, 1992; Banks, 1992; Banks & Grambs, 1972; Davis, 1991).
A long and turbulent history surrounds the current problem of obtaining equal access to educational opportunities for African-Americans. Like other Americans, Blacks have viewed higher education as a natural means of improving their economic and social conditions. But, a review of the historical legal process points to the complexities of achieving such equal educational opportunities for this segment of the U.S. population. Although the 13th amendment abolished slavery in 1896, it did not truly equalize educational opportunities for African-Americans. Moreover, educational, economical, and social progress gained during the Reconstruction Period from 1866 to 1877 was impeded when the Plessery v. Ferguson decision ruled that Blacks could legally be segregated to separate but equal public educational facilities.

Many years later, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas revoked the 1896 decision of Plessery v. Ferguson (Marshall & Wilkins, 1955). As a result, African-Americans won the legal right to pursue equal access to higher education opportunities. On the one hand, the persistence of African-Americans in obtaining equal educational opportunities in the courts has been achieved. On the other hand, the implementation of these equalized educational opportunities on various college campuses has evolved into a complexity of psychosocial issues.
Now, 42 years after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision, many questions continue to be raised regarding equal educational opportunities. Two such questions are the following:

1. Has the implementation of this landmark Supreme Court ruling finally equalized the academic opportunities for all students?

2. How does the racial composition at colleges, along with attitudes and behaviors, influence the persistence or nonpersistence of African-American students in higher education?

**College Compositions and Race Relations**

The problems of student attrition and retention are far more complex than previously assumed. Much of the current knowledge is based on Caucasian students attending White or predominantly White colleges. Those studies are extensive, but they focus primarily on academic variables. The cultural context of a college or university—particularly the underrepresentation of African-American faculty, staff, and administration—may influence its ability to recruit and retain African-American students (McGhee, Satcher, & Livingston, 1995).

Since the 1954 Supreme Court decision, which stimulated extensive desegregation of public schools, equality of education has been associated with integration. According to Allen (1992), now, more than four decades later, research has revealed some negative attributes of various compositions at universities and colleges:
College racial composition is correlated with academic achievement, high school grades, relations with professor, and class level. In general, African-American students who attend predominantly White schools report lower college grades, higher grades in high school, less favorable relations with their professors, and are, on average, younger than their peers who attend historically Black institutions. (p. 36)

Data collected by the National Study of Black College Students (NSBCS), which is based at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor was reported by Allen and Haniff (1991) in a study they conducted. Allen and Haniff analyzed this data to determine how the factors of academic performance, racial attitudes, and college satisfaction relate to student gender and campus race. The study was also concerned with three sets of causal factors judged to be antecedent to and explanatory of observed differences in student outcomes. The antecedent factors were grouped into the following categories: (a) student background such as parental socioeconomic status and high-school academic record; (b) college experiences such as involvement in college activities, the academic competitiveness of the university, adjustment to college life, and race relations on the campus; and (c) student personality orientation such as self-concept and occupational aspiration.

A total of 1,583 student data reports collected in 1981 and 1983 were analyzed (Allen & Haniff, 1991). Data were collected from several waves of NSBCS data sets pertaining to the achievement, experience, attitudes, and backgrounds of Black undergraduate students attending selected state-supported universities. All of the universities participating in the 1981 and 1983 NSBCS were selected on the basis of regional diversity and accessibility.
The sample population for both years of study were currently enrolled African-American undergraduates.

Data collection was facilitated in the Allen and Haniff (1991) study by mailed questionnaires that students returned directly to the University of Michigan with a provided business-reply envelope for subsequent coding and computer tabulation. The selection of students for participation in this study was random, based on lists of currently enrolled students supplied by the various university registrar offices. Selected students received the questionnaire and four follow-up reminders for their return.

Participants of the 1981 phase of data collection were Black undergraduates at six predominantly White public universities: University of Michigan, University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, University of California at Los Angeles, Arizona State University in Tempe, Memphis State University in Tennessee, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. The 1983 phase of the NSBCS collected data from Black undergraduates at eight predominantly Black public universities: North Carolina Central University in Durham; Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Texas Southern at Houston in Texas; Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi; North Carolina A & T State University in Greensboro; Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland; Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio; and Florida A & M University in Tallahassee. Both data sets were merged to compare and contrast students at predominantly White versus traditionally Black universities. The response
rate for 1981 was 27% and 35% for 1983 with a total sample of 1,583 students.
While the exact number of total participants is available, the breakdown of those from Black and predominantly White universities cannot be authenticated. Consequently, the findings from the NSBCS report could be questionable (Allen & Haniff, 1991).

After analyzing the results, Allen and Haniff (1991) found that academic performance varied in relation to student background, campus experience, and personality orientation:

Black students on Black campuses reported significantly higher grade point averages than was true for their peers on White campuses. Three-quarters of the students in the White campus group versus two-thirds of students in the Black campus, reported grade point averages of less than 3.0 on a four-point scale. (p. 100)

Gender differences included males reporting higher GPAs—72% were below a 3.0 grade point average, whereas females reported 68% below 3.0.

Allen and Haniff (1991) reported eight other important campus results:
(a) neither family income nor the educational level of the mother were predictors of student grade-point averages; (b) academic performance was related to student satisfaction and involvement in college life; (c) grades were higher for students who had not seriously contemplated leaving school and for those who found their interests reflected in campus activities; (d) grades were also higher for students who reported their relationships with faculty and staff as favorable—a factor Allen and Haniff considered to be an important dimension of college satisfaction; (e) academic performance was not associated with high or low self-esteem or high occupational aspiration;
(f) student racial attitudes varied by background, campus experience, and orientation, as well as by gender; and (g) Black students on White campuses were more likely to negatively describe unity among Black students on campus (62% vs. 44% at Black campuses). Interestingly, perceptual differences of Black unity also varied depending on the individual student's involvement with campus life and his or her relations with White faculty. In essence, the research found that Black students saw Black unity when they were not positively connected to activities, faculty, and staff.

Student overall satisfaction with college was rated differently depending on race and gender (Allen & Haniff, 1991). On Black campuses, two thirds of the students indicated campus activity as being either somewhat or considerably representative of their interests—males 56% and females 52%. On White campuses, the comparable figure was 38%. When comparison of extremes was made, great disparities between ethnic groups was revealed. Twenty-six percent of the students on Black campuses were positive, whereas only 8% of Black students on White campuses were positive. When queried as to campus activities being representative of their interests, Black students on Black campuses reported 10% of the activities as not at all representative of their interests, compared with 19% on White campuses.

Correlational analyses conducted on the Allen and Haniff (1991) results found no statistical relationship between the economic background of the student and whether he or she had considered early departure from school. Surprisingly, student relationships with staff were found to be significantly
less favorable where family income was the highest. This finding was clarified by the researchers when their analyses revealed that Black students with the highest incomes were enrolled at White campuses. Further, on predominantly White campuses, Black students reported a far superior GPA in high school; 49% reported 3.5 or better compared to 18% of the students on Black campuses. In addition, Allen and Haniff found that the racial composition of colleges and the major field choices of students indicated differences depending on the type of campus. For example, 73% of students on Black campuses versus 50% of the students on White campuses chose to major in a specific profession.

Allen and Haniff (1991) concluded that interpersonal relationships were central in the determination of how individual and institutional characteristics influence the experience of Black students in institutions of higher education. Interpersonal relationships form the bridge between individual dispositions and institutional tendencies, and together, these factors determine individual student outcomes. Allen and Haniff explained that the manner in which a student perceives and responds to events within the college will differentiate his or her individual college experience. Allen (1992) emphasized several important interpretations of this research in the following excerpt:

(a) The way a student perceives and responds to events in the college setting will differentiate his or her college experience and shape his or her college outcomes, (b) on predominantly White campuses, Black students emphasize feelings of alienation, sensed hostility, racial discrimination, and lack of integration, and (c) on historically Black campuses, Black students emphasize feelings of engagement,
connection, acceptance, and extensive support and encouragement. (p. 36)

Allens' interpretation is consistent with accumulated evidence on human development indicating that most human beings develop best in environments where they feel valued, protected, accepted, and socially connected (Allen, 1992; Banks, 1992; Banks & Grambs, 1972). Davis and Borders-Patterson (1973), in a study commissioned by the North Carolina Board of Higher Education and supported by the college board, found that Black students on White residential campuses become increasingly polarized, more aware of their Black identity, and in many cases, increasingly hostile toward the "White establishment" as their college years progressed.

Allen, Epps, and Haniff (1991) found a negative relationship between the family income of an African-American student and the faculty-student relationship on predominantly White campuses. According to the authors, the higher the family income, the less favorable the report of faculty-student relationship. However, based on the Tinto theory (1975, 1987), positive faculty-student interaction is essential for a result of student persistence. Prior studies pertaining to college life and African-American students on predominantly White campuses suggest that negative attributes may influence African-American nonpersistence rates on both White and Black colleges. Davis (1991) found that "Professors/students/staff relations are strong predictors of academic success and satisfaction of campus life for Black students on White and Black campuses" (p. 154). Bennet (1980) found that race and ethnicity appear to influence teacher interactions with students.
Bennet’s findings suggest that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, many teachers act in ways that inhibit the learning opportunities of poor, Black, and Mexican-American students (p. 1).

As more African-American students enroll in previously White, and hence predominantly White institutions, many educators are concerned about the lack of a supportive social environment. “Access to predominantly White universities and success in them cannot be assumed to be synonymous for minorities” (Hare, 1991, p. 215). Noncognitive factors that relate to the persistence of African-American students become even more complex when racial attitudes are included in the focus of study. Banks and Grambs (1972) “found a significant body of literature that suggests most White American adults harbor negative attitudes toward Blacks and other ethnic groups” (p. 14). Scott (1995) found that teachers held prejudiced and stereotypical ideas surrounding their minority students. This finding suggests that teachers need to remove their own biased attitudes before they can be effective in multicultural classrooms. Allen (1992) supports the findings of the Scott study by suggesting that “the need for this kind of introspection is of paramount importance when teachers are reared and socialized in White cultures and educated at predominantly White colleges and universities” (p. 69).

Numerous studies consistently acknowledge a relationship between the success of students of color in predominantly White college environments and their social support networks (Allen, 1991; Allen & Haniff, 1991; Davis & Borders-Patterson, 1973; McGhee et al., 1995; Scott, 1995). In
contrast, Steward, O’Leary, Boatwright, and Sauer (1996) investigated the issue of a social support network on a large, predominantly White campus and found no statistically significant differences across racial/ethnic groups on a measure of quality and composition of such networks. According to Steward et al., their study controlled for certain factors that tend to influence support seeking and receiving behaviors including (a) academic preparedness, (b) enrollment status, and (c) age. It involved questioning 137 “successful” students who “(a) were enrolled in college at 17.19 years of age, (b) would graduate during the semester of data collection, (c) had mean ACT score of 21.8, and (d) were a mean age of 23.4 years” (p. 97). The study implemented the Social Support Network Inventory developed by Oritt, Paul, and Behrman (1985) that is designed to measure the quality and composition of student social networks. Steward et al. admitted that their sample was quite small and, more importantly, it was totally comprised of soon-to-graduate seniors. Most previous studies dealt with freshmen and sophomore students because seniors have already become integrated into the college community and are not considered at risk for departure. Moreover, previous studies indicate that 41 of every 100 college entrants will depart the system prior to earning a degree. “Most of them, three-quarters, will leave in the first two years of college, the greatest portion in the first year” (Tinto, 1987, p. 16).

Interestingly, D’Augelli and Hershberger (1993) conducted a similar study of African-American undergraduates, highlighting the academic factors, social network, and campus environment on a predominantly White campus
and found opposing results to the Steward et al. (1996) study. D'Augelli and Hershberger also controlled for (a) academic grades, (b) current GPA, (c) semester standing, (d) gender, and (e) academic major by matching each of the factors across ethnic groups. Academic grades were obtained through official transcripts and matched to be within .25 points above or below the target students' GPA. Unlike Steward et al., D'Aguelli and Hershberger sought information on student experience with discrimination and harassment on campus.

D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) questioned a total of 146 junior and senior students—73 African-Americans and 73 Caucasians—attending a large mid-Atlantic state university in a rural area. The researchers executed an elaborate process to ensure that all participants were consistently matched using the previously described standard. The instruments administered consisted of (a) background questions seeking information related to personal and family characteristics, and (b) questions concerning the frequency and impact of 10 common student-life events such as worry over career and/or study major or inability to meet financial needs. The students subsequently completed the General Well-Being (GWB) Schedule (Fazio, 1977), a 25-item measure that containing scales measuring six aspects of subjective well-being. The scales include health, worry, energy, satisfaction, depression, mood, emotional behavioral control, and anxiety, as well as a total adjustment score. According to D'Augelli and Hershberger, the higher the scores on this measure, the better the indication of adjustment on the GWB Schedule. A
survey instrument designed specifically for their study was also administered, asking students about general and personal experiences with incidents involving verbal harassment of African-American students on campus. According to D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993), their final measure was a modification of Norberg's Social Support Questionnaire.

D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) reported important differences between the background characteristics of African-American and Caucasian students. For example, African-Americans reported that 40% of their high-school peers were African-American and 47% were Caucasian, whereas Caucasian students reported 7% of their high-school peers were African-American compared to 84% Caucasian. African-Americans reported an average family income of $28,306 and Caucasian students reported an average family income of $32,282. This study found through the Norberg Social Support Questionnaire responses that the African-American social network contained significantly fewer college graduates.

D'Augelli and Herberger (1993) reported more similarity than differences on the measure of 10 student events occurring within the academic year of the study, as well as on the GWB Schedule. The data analyses did, however, reveal several observed exceptions. African-Americans demonstrated greater worry over job loss and meeting their financial obligations than Caucasian students. However, the correlational analysis indicated no relationship between the frequency of the events and the family or personal income of African-American students. Using a
multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) of the six subscales of the GWB Schedule, a marginally statistically significant difference was indicated\( (p = .08)\). D’Augelli and Hershberger concluded that the only discernible difference between the African-American and the Caucasian students was their experience with racial discrimination on the campus. The researchers acknowledged the possibility that, by their junior and senior year, African-American students who persisted had developed important and stable social support systems.

Unfortunately, both researchers in the two studies described (D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Steward et al., 1996) selected upper level students for their sample. Given the fact that “three-quarters of nonpersisters leave college during the first two years of college” (Tinto, 1987, p. 15), it seems apparent that social support and campus climate studies would be most helpful when conducted with sample populations younger than the junior and senior college levels.

Allen (1992) pointed to the need for examination of the affective domain as it relates to persistence in college. As the student composition within colleges changes, it becomes important to understand the interpersonal factors associated with the retention or attrition of all college students. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found that students react and respond to their college environment quite differently depending on how they are socialized.
Theoretical Basis of Student Change While Attending College

Theories related to the environmental and sociological origins of change in college students provide understanding of the processes that students encounter and how they impact their lives (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Astin (1968) offered one of the earliest college impact models based on his extensive study of the environment and the characteristics of 246 colleges. According to this investigator, most factors of the institutional environment affect the life of the student. He defines his broad sense of the college environment as “including any characteristics of the college that constitutes a potential stimulus for the student, i.e., that is capable of changing the students’ sensory input” (p. 3).

This current study is based on the theory of student departure from college developed by Tinto (1975, 1987). Tinto (1987) offered a model centered on the institutional influence on students. The problem of nonpersistence for African-American students apparently occurs after the student enrolls in college and begins to interact with the various elements within the college environment. Therefore, the Tinto model, which focuses on the college attrition process, offers a framework for the study of early student departure.

In 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini published a monumental synthesis of most theoretical models pertaining to the changes in students while attending college and their subsequent effects. According to these authors, the object of their study was to review the theoretical group of past studies and offer coherent understanding of the past 20 years of research focused on how
students change while in college and why. In their review of theories and models of college student changes, their theoretical study of early school departure focused on the following four impact models:

1. In 1970, Astin proposed one of the earliest college impact models—the input-process-output model, which presumes the influence of any variable for change to occur (cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).


3. In 1985, Pascarella presented a general causal model that considers both the structural characteristics of the institution of higher education and its general environment occur (cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).


Although Astin's proposal is listed among these impact models, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) contend that the theory of involvement he proposes does not meet the general definitions of a true theory. Pascarella and Terenzini support this argument by asserting the Kerlinger (1986) definition of a theory: "A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 53). Although the theoretical purity of Astin's work may be questionable, it provided early
descriptions and measurement of some of the very important differences in the educational and social environment of various institutions.

The impact models described offer valuable propositions for understanding changes and growth in undergraduates in general, but they do not offer any particular theory relating to African-American students in particular. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) discuss a Black identity formation model by Cross, which presumes that Black identity comprises idiosyncratic and personal elements, as well as components derived from membership in a historically disadvantaged, racially based society. According to Cross, Parkham, and Helms (1991), "The social history of African-Americans has been dominated by two competing processes: deracination or the attempt to erase black consciousness, and nigrescence or the development of an African-American identity" (p. 320). Cross (1991) explains his model in the following excerpt:

Nigrescence model tends to have four or five stages. "A four stages summary" and the common point of departure is not the change process per se but an analysis of the identity to be changed. The person is first described as functioning in an ongoing steady-state (Stage 1) with a deracinated or "Negro identity"; following this, some event or series of events compel the person to seek and be a part of change (Stage 2); this is followed by psychological metamorphosis (Stage 3), and finally the person is described as having internalized the new black identity and enters another steady-state (Stage 4). The period of metamorphosis or transition is depicted as an intense struggle between the "old" and emerging "new" self; consequently, the writers saw the change process as being informed by rather than divorced from the character of the identify to be transformed. (p. 322)

Theoretical studies dealing with African-American students, as well as other students of color, must take into consideration the many similarities as
well as different characteristics and backgrounds. The Cross et al. (1991) model, along with the other four impact models, indicate that behavior and integration into the college environment are closely related to interpersonal interactions and the development of campus relationships.

Influence of Attitudes on Intergroup Relations

Since 1939, many studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of educational and curricular experiences on the racial and ethnic attitudes and beliefs of students. Banks (1992) reviewed the past 56 years of research related to the modification of racial attitudes and found positive but inconsistent results. Banks’ literature review revealed that these racial and ethnic attitudes can be positively affected through curriculum intervention. According to Banks, (1992), the inconclusive results of such interventions could have been influenced by many factors including the nature and structure of the intervention, its duration, student characteristics, characteristics of the school community, and the very important mediating variable—the teacher.

McGhee et al. (1995) conducted a study on the attitudes of school faculty toward African-American doctoral students on the variables of age, race, and gender. The sincerity of faculty responses on a self-report survey regarding their attitudes toward African-Americans was questioned. Banks (1995) and McGhee et al. (1995) found that race was an important factor when attitudes toward African-American students were measured. Neither of their studies,
however, provided answers regarding how those attitudes potentially relate to retention within a specific college system.

Many other studies pertaining to attitudes and intergroup relations and educational environments have been published. Pioneer investigators in the field, Clark and Clark (1970), demonstrated that Black youngsters who attended "separate but equal" schools in 1954 were being made to feel inferior to White students. These researchers investigated the need to equalize educational opportunities and made a valuable contribution to existing knowledge of racial identity. Other important literature relating to intergroup relations within education include publications authored by Allen (1992), Allen and Hanniff (1991), Banks (1992), Banks and Grambs (1972), Bell (1975), Clark and Clark (1970), Coleman (1966), Cross (1971), Gay (1992), and Mead (1934). An impressive amount of this literature offers a considerable consensus on intergroup relations and educational persistence, although other publications do present completely opposing views.

Kifer (1992) pointed out the problem with defining attitude. "There is neither general agreement nor consensus about the definition of attitude" (p. 109). Kifer documents that leading social scientists have posited several different definitions, the use of which is determined by the focus of study. Included in the review of definitions presented by Kifer is a mention of Allport (1954) who identified numerous definitions of attitudes, but settled on one emphasizing attitude as a state of a person that influences a response to particular objects and situations related to the state. Kifer also noted a
definition presented by Newcomb that suggests that attitude has two essential components—one dealing with individual psychological states and their relationship to objects or events, and the second emphasizing both variation within individuals and the conditions in which they find themselves.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica Micropaedia* (1973) defines attitudes as “predispositions to classify objects and events and to react to them with evaluative consistency” (p. 636). While there are many different definitions for attitudes, some social scientists seem to agree that it has three components: (a) affective (i.e., verbal statement of affect), (b) cognitive (i.e., perceptual responses and verbal statements of belief), and (c) behavioral intention (i.e., overt actions and verbal statements concerning behavior) (Cook & Selitz, 1964; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

In a recent publication, McGhee et al. (1995) reported on a study related to the attitudes of school faculty toward African-American doctoral students. McGhee et al. incorporated the independent variables of age, race, and gender and found statistically significant differences in attitudes with the variable of race. They sought college of education faculty nationwide to survey their attitudes toward African-American doctoral students. A total of 600 surveys were distributed and 278 (46%) were returned. Twelve of the surveys were incorrectly completed, resulting in a total of 266 (44%) participants. McGhee et al. chose college of education faculty because they have the highest enrollment of African-American doctoral students. Sixty universities were randomly selected from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher
Education 1990-91 Directory. Deans of selected colleges were asked to
distribute 10 surveys to faculty members within their programs who were
qualified to teach doctoral students. The researchers disclosed and
documented that randomization could have been tainted during this
distribution process.

Thirty-five percent of the respondents in the McGhee et al. (1995) study
were female and 65% were male. The racial composition was the following:
Caucasian 85%, African-American 12%, Hispanic 1.1%, Asian 1.5%, and Other
1.1%. The age-groups of the sample population were as follows: 25-34 (1.5%),
35-44 (23%), 45-54 (40%), 55-64 (29%), 65 and over (7%). The primary
researcher of the McGhee et al. study designed a survey instrument to
specifically assess attitudes toward African-American students. Literature and
interview data collected from faculty and African-American doctoral students
at the study site—Auburn University—were incorporated into its design to
ensure the representative nature of each item. The Likert-type scale consisted
of 30 statements related to African-American doctoral students. Total scores
on the instrument could range from 30 to 80. Higher scores are indicative of
positive faculty attitudes toward African-American doctoral students. A pilot
study using the instrument yielded an alpha reliability coefficient of .84.
However, the researchers were confronted with negative opposition to this
“sensitive” instrument. Some participants added narrative responses to their
survey stating that most faculty members would not express their true
attitudes toward African-Americans doctoral students on such an instrument.
The data collected in the McGhee et al. (1995) study were analyzed using an analysis of variances (ANOVA) on the independent variables of age, race, and gender. The mean score was 152.12. The analyses revealed statistically significant differences on the independent variable or race between African-American students \( (p < .05) \) and Asian faculty \( (m = 156.08) \). McGhee et al. concluded that, although statistically significant differences were found on the race variable, the small number of responses from Asian-American faculty raises questions regarding the meaningfulness of the results.

In a very recent study, Brown and Robinson Kurpius (1997) investigated the extent to which the following factors influenced the academic persistence of American-Indian undergraduates: family encouragement, academic preparation, aspirations, perceived discrimination, social integration, interaction with faculty or other staff, value placed on education, and academic performance. The researchers, using a modification of the Tinto (1975) theory of educational persistence, employed a longitudinal survey method by following up on an original survey designed to research the academic behavior and attitudes of American Indian undergraduates. Brown and Robinson Kurpius sought to identify factors that help American Indian students persist in college through to the achievement of their degree goals. The original survey was developed by Wolk and Melnick in 1989 to gather data on 378 American Indians enrolled as undergraduates in a large southwestern university.
According to the researchers, a total of 292 students participated in the original study. Brown and Robinson Kurpius (1997) linked data from the original survey to academic behavior related to persistence 5 years later. They used information on earned degrees and current educational status provided by the registrar’s office at the end of Fall 1994. The researchers documented that current educational status of the 292 students was based on whether a student had received a bachelor’s degree or was still currently enrolled at the university. Brown and Robinson Kurpius then divided the sample population intopersisters (i.e., students who had earned a degree or were still enrolled at the study site) and nonpersisters (i.e., students who had not obtained a degree nor remained enrolled). Four of the students were discovered to be working as faculty associates and eliminated from the study because their enrollment data were not available.

The final sample in the Brown and Robinson Kurpius (1997) study consisted of 288 American-Indian undergraduates. Of this total, 149 (52%) were categorized as persisters and 139 (48%) as nonpersisters. The sample was further categorized into 165 females and 123 males with age ranges from 18 to 47 (\(m = 25\)) years. The majority of the participants were single (220), 49 were married, and according to the authors, the balance were divorced or separated.

Brown and Robinson Kurpius (1997) used the original 1989 survey instrument that was administered to American Indians students with selected changes. For their study, they selected the environmental factors most reflective of the Tinto (1975) model. The resulting survey focused on
items dealing with challenges minority students were likely to face in the university setting. Their final methodical procedure was to assess 288 students on 29 items: (a) interaction with faculty or staff, (b) perceived discrimination, (c) social integration, (d) family encouragement, (e) value placed on education, and (f) academic preparation/aspiration. In addition, the GPAs of participants at the time of the initial survey were used as a seventh variable. To ensure that each factor actually measured a different construct, Brown and Robinson Kurpius calculated an interscale correlation, which ranged from .02 for the relationship between academic performance, perceived discrimination, and social integration to .36 between academic performance and academic preparation/aspirations.

For their examination of the question related to whether the selected seven variables would influence the academic persistence of American Indian undergraduates, Brown and Robinson Kurpius (1997) performed statistical tests of discriminant analysis and a MANOVA. After identifying inconsistency across the seven variables, the data was further analyzed by employing a one-way MANOVA to verify the finding of the discriminant analysis. The researchers subsequently proceeded to investigate the multivariate differences of the seven constructs through a one-way ANOVA.

When scores from the seven variable were analyzed, statistically significant differences were revealed between persisters and nonpersisters on three variables: (a) academic preparation/aspiration, (b) academic performance, and (c) faculty or staff interactions. No statistically significant
differences were revealed between persisters and nonpersisters on the other four scales that analyzed perceived discrimination, social integration, family encouragement, and value placed on education (Brown & Robinson Kurpius, 1997).

Brown and Robinson Kurpius (1997) concluded that (a) early attention is essential for students who are not doing well academically, and (b) positive faculty and staff interactions are essential to academic integration. The researchers acknowledged that their methodological process of categorizing all the original students into persisters or nonpersisters was flawed. By using this method, they may have categorized a number of transfer students as nonpersisters. However, their findings related to the importance of positive faculty and staff interactions were consistent with other reports, suggesting that such relationships are key factors to student academic success (Allen, 1992; Astin, 1972, 1996; Carnegie, 1984; Davis, 1991; McCullough, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1975, 1987).

The dynamics of positive interpersonal relations across ethnic groups in colleges seem to be emerging as essential factors of student success. How these various components of institutional interactions come together to impact the persistence of African-American students 40 years after Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas posits an interesting area for future exploratory research. There are a number of studies dealing with the psychosocial dynamics of African-American students in different environments. Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie, and Sanders (1997) employed the
qualitative method to explore and describe the experiences of eight African-Americans who completed the doctoral process at predominantly White universities within the 11 years preceding the study. According to the authors, their specific intent was to generate hypotheses surrounding the persistence of African-American students in doctoral programs. Patterson-Stewart et al. gathered data by seeking answers to the two following open-ended, discovery research questions:

1. How would you describe your doctoral experience?

2. How did these experiences contribute to your persistence through the doctoral programs?

Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997) utilized the sampling strategies of *criterion-based selection* and "snowballing." Because of the elaborate selection strategy, only a small number of students actually participated in the study. By using the snowballing method (i.e., the process of referring specific informants to the research), problems relating to the representativeness of the sample arose. Demographic information, however, indicated a diversity in gender—three men and five women—as well as in occupations: clinical psychologist (2), professor in counseling psychology education (1), professor in educational administration (1), public school administrator (2), licensed professional clinical counselor (1), and university administrator (1).

The Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997) procedures consisted of three contacts with each participant. The first was an initial telephone call to
provide potential participants with specifics of the study, request their participation, and to ensure their appropriateness for the study.

The two additional contacts were (a) the actual interview and (b) a follow-up interview after each participant had read a transcript of the initial interview and a case analysis. The duration of the interviews was not provided. The researchers stated that the purpose of the second interview was to provide the participants with an opportunity to clarify and/or add to the transcription or case analysis.

According to Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997), qualitative research validity was established by (a) use of audiotaping and extensive notetaking of responses, (b) participant critiques of case analyses and transcripts, (c) use of direct quotes from participant interviews, (d) collaboration with four research colleagues on the construction of themes and categories, and (e) connection of the research finding to theoretical perspectives and empirical studies related to doctoral program persistence. Following data collection, the researchers proceeded to conduct an elaborate two-phase analysis. In the first phase, a detailed case analysis was conducted by reading all transcripts several times, identifying patterns and regularities, and later discussing the case analysis with the research team. The principal researcher then examined the cases by using a cross-case perspective—a procedure used to organize large amounts of data onto a master chart. Finally, the interpersonal dynamics of persistence was recorded as the major theme on the metamatrix.
A unique feature of the Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997) study was that the participants provided an in-depth description of events, situations, and interactions in their universities and graduate program relationships, as well as the association of these interpersonal dynamics with persistence. In addition to the major theme, these investigators identified three embedded subthemes of the interpersonal dynamics of persistence: (a) university climate, (b) graduate program faculty, and (c) peer relationships. They further described the subthemes by stating, (a) university climate explains the perceptions and feelings experienced by participants in the university environment at-large including the sense of invisibility, (b) graduate program faculty denotes mentorship, racial incidents, cross-cultural incompetence, and faculty encouragement, and (c) peer relationship indicates that each participant had experienced positive relationships with White students. Moreover, the participants described the importance of intraethnic relationships; however, this was not always applicable because only one participant had more than one other African-American in their program.

Surprisingly, despite the lack of generalizability in the sampling strategy, the finding of the association of interpersonal dynamics with persistence is supported by another important study conducted by Allen and Haniff (1991). These researchers employed a correlational analysis of data from the NSBCS based at the University of Michigan. They analyzed a total of 1,583 data reports collected from students in two waves—one in 1981 and one in 1983. The intent was to determine how the factors of academic
performance, racial attitudes, and college satisfaction related to the racial composition of the college.

Allen and Haniff (1991) concluded that the central issue in the determination of how individual and institutional characteristics influence the higher education of Black students is interpersonal relationships. Their study dealt with undergraduate students, whereas the Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997) research addressed the experience of doctoral students in general. Neither of the two studies provided information regarding persistence as it relates to perceived racial discrimination in a multiethnic urban college.

Summary

An extensive amount of literature has been published on the enrollment and retention of college students in general and African-Americans in particular. Much of the literature related to enrollment and attrition of the African-American student focuses on the past 44 years, citing results of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. As a result of that landmark decision, African-Americans began to enroll in previously White, or predominantly White, institutions of higher education. Some studies focused on the racial composition of college campuses and how variations impact academic success. More recently, the literature has pointed to human diversity in education including intergroup relations, attitudes and perceptions, campus climate, and curricula relevancy. A review of the related literature suggests that ethnicity, particularly African-American, along with certain environmental factors at some colleges, may contribute to
nonpersistence. This current study investigates the perception of African-American students in terms of discriminatory attitudes at their college, and how negative attitudes may impinge upon their persistence in college. Hence, the study focuses on the relationship between the perception of African-American students of discriminatory behavior and their intentions of leaving college prior to the attainment of degree goals.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

Restatement of the Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze personal background, campus environment, and human relations factors to enable the projection of early departure from SFSU by African-American students. The study adds to the understanding of why African-Americans depart from college prior to conferment of a bachelor's degree. Specifically, the research identifies and analyzes the projected persistence or attrition of African-American students enrolled at SFSU based on the following factors: (a) student demographics (i.e., sex, age, GPA, income, grade level, family education level, and student work status); (b) feelings surrounding early departure from college; (c) perceptions of discrimination toward themselves and others; (d) opinions surrounding campus life; (e) family relations (i.e., emotional and financial support; and (f) affiliation with campus organizations; and (g) ethnic/cultural courses attended.

Research Methodology and Design

The research method used in gathering data for this study was survey sampling. The particular survey design was chosen because "it exposes a group of people representative of a target group, to which the researcher expects to generalize to common situations for stimuli and records their reactions" (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 361). The intent for the survey was to collect
common responses to demographic, personal, and psychological variables via a self-report questionnaire. Additionally, the survey design was preferred for this study because (a) a rapid turnaround was expected, (b) data was obtained from a representative sample of the population in a cost-effective manner, (c) anonymity of the respondents was ensured, (d) responses were easily tabulated by computer, and (e) identical questions were provided for all respondents.

**Study Population Sample**

The data for this study was obtained from the SFSU Public Research Institute (PRI). The PRI, in collaboration with the president of SFSU and the dean of human relations, has collected several sets of data on the experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and backgrounds of its students, faculty, and administrators. Two previous human relations studies in 1989 and 1996 collected a random sample of all undergraduate and graduate students. Since those particular student surveys implemented produced a low response from African-American students, the current study focused solely on this population. The study sample was comprised of all self-identified African-American students enrolled in SFSU during the academic year 1996-97. The sampling was computerized registration tapes maintained by the Office of Admissions and Records at SFSU. A total survey population of 2,155 subjects was identified; 82% were undergraduates and 18% were graduate students. At the time of the study, in the summer of 1997, a total of 27,420 students were enrolled in the university.
The sampling frame consisted of 32 first-time freshmen who had not attended a class at SFSU, 307 freshmen, 177 sophomores, 415 juniors, 827 seniors, and 397 graduates. Since time and budget were major considerations, only 600 students could be questioned. The next step was to eliminate any member of the sampling frame who was inappropriate for inclusion due to the target population. Consequently, the 32 freshmen who had not yet attended SFSU, as well as all students with campus addresses, were omitted. The researcher then identified a representative sample within the remaining survey population.

According to Babbie (1990), if your sampling frame is in a computer format, such as a floppy disk, a simple random sample could be automatically selected through the use of a fairly simple computer program. In effect, the computer would number the elements in the sampling frame, generate its own series of random numbers, and print the elements selected. The study sought to ascertain facts surrounding each class level; hence, the sampling frame was modified to a stratified random sampling. Excel 5.0 was the computer program used to generate a stratified random sample across class levels. The sample of African American students consisted of 120 freshmen, 120 sophomores, 120 juniors, 120 seniors, and 120 graduate students.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in data collection for this study was the San Francisco State University Human Relations Survey: Student Perspective (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed in 1989 to collect student and
faculty input data surrounding the human relations climate at the university. It was developed through a collaborative effort of the PRI and the Human Relations Commission. The commission is comprised of the student body, faculty, administrators, and members of the President’s University Advisory Committee.

In February 1989, Dr. Robert A. Corrigan, the 12th president of SFSU, appointed a University Commission on Human Relations. Its charge was to study how the campus community deals with human relations, focusing on issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and religion (San Francisco State University, 1990).

The 1996 revised edition of the San Francisco State University Human Relations Survey: Student Perspective (San Francisco State University, 1990) consists of 32 primary questions and three follow-up, open-ended questions seeking information related to the following variables: (a) personal characteristics, (b) family background, (c) feelings surrounding early departure from college, (d) perceptions of discrimination, (e) feelings toward others including students and faculty, (f) opinions surrounding campus life including personal rating of offensive scenarios, (g) program priorities, and (h) ethnic/cultural courses attended.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability were established by repetitive use of the questionnaire beginning in 1989. The PRI and the dean of human relations had developed four versions of the questionnaire—one for student testing in
the classroom and a second longer version for mailed distributions. Two other versions were designed to survey faculty, staff, and administrators. In 1989, 1,119 questionnaires were sent to students. The response rate was 37%—400 students. During the Fall of the 1996-97 academic year, 1,000 revised questionnaires were mailed to students within the same sample and 169 responses were received. An extensive pretesting was not considered necessary because the majority of the items were retained. The low return was attributable, in part, to two questions related to Proposition 209. Those items were deleted from the questionnaire subsequently used in this study. The response rate was consistent with each data collection (see Appendix A)

**Data Collection**

Data for this study was obtained from the PRI at SFSU. On July 28, 1997, the questionnaire was mailed to the randomly stratified sample of 600 African-American students. It was accompanied by an introductory letter signed by the researcher and the dean of human relations. A preaddressed, postage-paid envelope was also enclosed to facilitate return to the PRI. Two weeks after the initial mailing, a follow-up reminder postcard was sent to all 600 students within the study sample. Respondents were thanked for their participation and nonrespondents were urged to return the questionnaires by the deadline date of August 31, 1997. Two weeks later, a second postcard was mailed to all nonrespondents. The goal of the survey was to receive a minimum 50% return rate, although based on preliminary interviews with the SFSU, the University of California Berkeley Undergraduate Research
Office, and the University of California Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute, a 25% return from African-American students is considered very good.

**Data Analysis**

This study sought to answer two research questions that were designed to add to existing knowledge surrounding the departure of African-American students from SFSU prior to degree conferment.

Research Question 1 asked the following: Are African-Americans students who report experiences of racial discrimination more likely to consider leaving SFSU prior to degree attainment than those who have not? Data was analyzed using a chi-square nonparametric test of significance. This chi-square model allowed for the examination of the relationship between two variables with a dichotomous dependent variable. Using all respondents as independent variables, Survey Question 6 was used as a dependent variable (see Appendix A). The dichotomous responses were then used as two independent variables. This data was also examined by evaluating student responses to Survey Question 6a. Additionally, an ANOVA was conducted of the two subgroups.

Research Question 2 asked the following: What are the campus environmental factors related to the projected persistence of African-American students at SFSU—a multiethnic campus setting? Frequency counts were made of all primary variables. Using descriptive statistics analysis, two subgroups were formed. One group consisted of projected
persisters and the other was comprised of projected nonpersisters. Survey Questions 5 and 6 were used to identify and distinguish the differences between these groups (see Appendix A). This research question was also examined through responses to Question 6a to determine if projected nonpersistence is related to the race of the student. The population means were calculated by using an SPSS computer program to translate responses to the quantitative questions of the questionnaire into descriptive statistics. The mean scores for each group were analyzed using an ANOVA on the list of predictive variables. The t value was computed for the difference between means.

Variables

The following subsections of the research questionnaire (see Appendix A) were used as variables and organized to objectify the statistical data. Each variable represents an independent response that was measured by the instrument and considered to be an environmental factor.

1. Personal characteristics is a variable derived from the scaled scores measured with Survey Question 1 and 2. It includes evaluation of treatment based on gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, and national origin.

2. Perceptions and attitudes of discrimination toward students and others is addressed in Survey Questions 1 and 3 and is comprised of 21 predictive objectives.
3. Opinions surrounding campus life are queried in Survey Question 4, which consists of seven predictive variables pertaining to campus life.

4. Variable 4 pertains to student opinions surrounding affirmative action.

5. Attendance of the American Ethnic and Racial Minorities Course is determined through Survey Question 14.

6. Attendance of the Cultural, Ethnic, or Social Diversity Course is determined through Survey Question 15.

7. The variable of financial support from family consists solely of the objective response to Survey Question 23.

8. Emotional support from family is derived from Survey Question 24.

9. The variable of student affiliation with campus organizations is incorporated through Survey Question 25.

10. Variable 10 queried the highest educational level of the student's mother and is determined through Survey Question 12.

11. Variable 11 queried the highest educational level of the student's father and is determined through Survey Question 12.

12. Variable 12 is addressed in Survey Question 21 and determines the family annual income level of the student.
CHAPTER IV

Findings

Overview

The information gathered for this study will be presented in three parts. First, the demographic characteristics of the study population sample are presented. The statistical results related to each of the research questions are then presented. The third section will consist of the qualitative analysis based on responses to the three primary open-ended survey questions.

Data were collected as described in Chapter III, using a random stratified sample across the entire SFSU African-American student population. Analyses of the data were conducted based on two primary research questions.
Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants ($N = 116$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic characteristics of the study population sample are shown in Table 1. The majority of respondents were graduate students. The mean age of the respondents was 31 years with a range from 18 to 66 years. Transfer and nontransfer students were evenly divided. Nine students indicated they were not citizens of the United States and 106 confirmed citizenship. When questioned about their work status, 44% (50) reported holding full-time jobs and 6% (7) said they were seeking full-time jobs.
Thirty-two percent (28) worked in part-time jobs and 9% (10) were seeking such positions. Retirees comprised 4% of the study sample, 2% (2) were homemakers, and 7% (8) listed their work status as Other.

Results of the Research Questions

Research findings: Question 1. Are African-American students who have experienced racial discrimination more likely to consider leaving SFSU prior to degree attainment than those who have not?

The chi-square test of significance was used to draw comparisons between the two groups of students. Those who had reported perceptions of discrimination and subsequent consideration of leaving SFSU were compared with students who reported no perception of discrimination and also considered early school departure. The data in Table 2 indicate that students who perceived discrimination were no more likely to leave SFSU prior to degree attainment than students who did not perceive racial discrimination. Of the 42 respondents who reported perceptions of discrimination, 19 (45%) considered leaving SFSU, whereas 23 (55%) did not. See Table 2 on the following page.
Table 2

Perceptions of Racial Discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African-American students</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered quitting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not consider quitting</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>N = 111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Chi-square test of significance at (.05) level = 3.841; df = 1; $X^2 = 2.890$.

Research findings: Question 2. What are the campus environmental factors related to the projected persistence of African-American students at SFSU—a multiethnic campus setting?

The intent of this question was to investigate the campus climate factors potentially relating to persistence and nonpersistence of African-American students at SFSU. A relationship was anticipated between African-American students who have considered early departure from college and their experience with discriminatory behavior and attitudes on campus.

Specifically, the differences between attitudes, demographic characteristics, opinions, and experiences of persisters and nonpersisters comprised the investigation focus. Thus, Research Question 2 was examined by applying participant responses to Survey Question 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 21, 23, 24, and 25 as outcomes variables to Questions 5 and 6, which were used as dependent variables (see Appendix A). This procedure was implemented to
determine possible relationships between various campus environmental factors and student feelings surrounding leaving SFSU prior to degree attainment. Using student responses to Survey Question 6, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted categorizing subgroups of persisters and nonpersisters. An ANOVA was subsequently conducted to determine possible differences between the means of the two groups.

Primary variables are presented in Table 3. Additionally, the demographic characteristics of each subgroup (i.e., persisters and nonpersisters) are presented in Table 4. Descriptive data for the two groups, based on the predictive variables, are displayed in Table 5. Finally, figures and tables illustrating the study findings related to this research question are presented (see Tables 6–9 and Figures 2 and 3). Figure 2 denotes experience of mistreatment by academic class levels.
Table 3

**Primary Variables and Related Survey Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Related survey questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Personal characteristics &amp; treatment</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceptions of treatment &amp; disadvantages</td>
<td>1 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Opinions of student life</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Affirmative action impact</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. American Ethnic &amp; Racial Course</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cultural Ethnic &amp; Social Diversity Course</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Financial support from family</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Emotional support from family</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Belong to campus organization</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Education of mother</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Education of father</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Annual family income</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When queried on the highest level of formal education obtained by their fathers, a total of 109 students responded. Of that number, 41 were projected nonpersisters, and 63 were persisters. As shown in Table 4, the *education of father* variable indicates no statistically significant difference between the educational level of the fathers of nonpersisters and those of persisters. When the same question was posed concerning the mothers’
education level, 112 students responded. Of that total, 41 were categorized as
nonpersisters and 66 as persisters. Table 4 also indicates no significant
difference between the educational level of the mothers of persisters and
those of nonpersisters. Likewise, no significant difference was shown between
nonpersisters and persisters on the variable of belonging to a campus
organization. Overall, 24% (28) did belong to an organization, while the
majority of 75% (86) did not.
Table 4

**Demographic Characteristics of Persisters and Nonpersisters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 42)</td>
<td>(n = 74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of mother</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of father</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean income</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to campus organization</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course units taken</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>11.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family financial support</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family emotional support</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Ethnic &amp; Racial Course</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Ethnic &amp; Social Diversity Course</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual income for all students ranged from under $5,000 for 24 students to over $50,000 for 15 students. No significant difference was indicated by the descriptive data related to the mean income variable for nonpersisters and persisters. Students categorized as nonpersisters took
fewer units in the semester prior to this survey than persisters. In addition, the mean GPA score for persisters (2.68) was higher than that of nonpersisters (1.90). Descriptive data for nonpersisters and persisters on Primary Variables 1, 2, 4, and 7, compared by Survey Question 6, are presented in Table 5 on the following page.
Table 5

Results of Univariate Analysis of Variance Comparing Persisters and Nonpersisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters/Quitters (n = 42)</th>
<th>Persisters/Nonquitters (n = 74)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual identity</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in other races</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common goal</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters/Quitters (n = 42)</th>
<th>Persisters/Nonquitters (n = 74)</th>
<th>t test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human relations</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to speak</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn other cultures</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment off campus</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFSU employment</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFSU admission</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other admission</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T test significant at the .05 level (T = 2.24). *p < .0.

Figure 2 indicates differences by academic class level based on the primary variable of personal characteristics. No statistical difference was found when the dependent variable of experience with racial discrimination was measured across class levels. However, the findings suggest that, compared to the other class levels, seniors experienced higher incidence of racial mistreatment. The findings also suggest that all academic class levels with the exception of graduate students, received more mistreatment based on race than on any other personal characteristic. Graduate students experienced higher incidence of mistreatment motivated by gender.
Figure 3 displays the differences between college quitters (i.e., nonpersisters) and nonquitters (i.e., persisters) in graph format. Table 5
Figure 2. Evaluation of Mistreatment Based on Personal Characteristics Across Class Levels

Using Question 6 (see Appendix A) as a dependent variable, Primary Variables 1, 2, 4, and 7 (see Table 3) were examined. The results are presented in Table 5 and Figure 3.
A final examination of Research Question 2 was made by using descriptive statistics on the variable of having experienced racially insensitive treatment using Survey Question 5 (see Appendix A) as a predictive variable. The scale for responses was 1 to 4 (1 = never and 4 = often mistreated or disadvantaged in the usual day-to-day activities based on race/ethnicity by other students, faculty, or staff) (see Table 6 and Figure 2).
Table 6

Mistreatment Based on Personal Characteristics of Persisters and Nonpersisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters (n = 42)</th>
<th>Persisters (n = 69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scale: 1 = Never, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, and 4 = Often.

When personal characteristics were compared across projected nonpersisters and projected persisters, only mistreatment by race indicated a significant difference between the two groups (see Table 6). The mistreatment by race variable revealed a mean score of 2.83 for projected nonpersisters and a mean score of 1.30 for projected persisters. This finding suggests that students who have considered leaving SFSU prior to degree attainment have experienced mistreatment due to their race more frequently than those who have not considered early school departure. Table 7 displays means and standard deviations for the primary variable of perception of discrimination.
by projected nonpersisters andpersisters based on the level of student
offensiveness on the campus. When queried about various campus events
that could be considered offensive, persisters and nonpersisters exhibited
minimal differences.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters (n = 42)</th>
<th>Persisters (n = 69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male professor compliments female's appearance</td>
<td>2.85 1.77</td>
<td>2.72 1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor disparages the Bible</td>
<td>4.27 1.71</td>
<td>3.95 1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor perception of homosexual behavior as &quot;unnatural&quot;</td>
<td>3.46 2.12</td>
<td>3.49 2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor perception of learning difficulties with Black students</td>
<td>5.26 1.60</td>
<td>5.45 1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor &quot;difficulty&quot; with teaching Black students</td>
<td>4.22 1.88</td>
<td>4.54 1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator perception of foreign students</td>
<td>4.95 1.26</td>
<td>5.02 1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female student perception of men</td>
<td>3.22 2.00</td>
<td>3.60 1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3 Variable</td>
<td>Nonpersisters ($n = 42$)</td>
<td>Persisters ($n = 69$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate perception of Muslims &amp; their religion</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor beliefs that Whites benefit from racism</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.68$^a$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate comments surrounding the use of foreign languages in America</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor comments surrounding &quot;hard working Asian students&quot;</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate attitudes surrounding too many immigrants</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor comparisons of Palestinian treatment by Israel and the treatment of Jews by Nazis</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor attitudes surrounding a &quot;macho&quot; stance of Latin Americans</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: SD is the standard deviation.*
Note. 0 = Not at all offensive; 6 = Extremely offensive.

*Persisters mean score = 2.68; nonpersisters = 1.90.
Analysis results of the predictive variable of opinions surrounding student life are displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

Opinions Surrounding Student Life for Projected Nonpersisters and Projected Persisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters (n = 42)</th>
<th>Persisters (n = 69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-Incidents</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-Interact</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-Different</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Compare</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Restrict</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Faculty</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-Learn</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = Strongly agree; 5 = Strongly disagree.

*Nonpersisters = 2.62; persisters = 3.40.

The variable of affirmation consists of the predictive variables in Survey Question 7 that requested the opinion of students surrounding affirmative action. These results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Opinions Surrounding Affirmative Action for Projected Nonpersisters and Projected Persisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonpersisters (n = 42)</th>
<th>Persisters (n = 69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment off campus</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFSU employment</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFSU admission</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other admission</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A difference between persister and nonpersister mean is indicated only with the dependent variable of F-Faculty. Students who have considered early departure from SFSU had a mean score of 2.62, compared to 3.40 for those students who have not considered leaving. It is noted that persisters disagree with the statement that faculty are not interested in student problems. Nonpersisters moderately agree with the statement. The variable pertaining to opinions surrounding affirmative action showed no statistically significant difference between the projected nonpersisters and persisters. The mean score of both groups centered around the midpoint of the scale, at 2.65, indicating a near neutral opinion.
Results of the Qualitative Analyses

The second phase of the data analysis consisted of several thorough examinations of participant responses to Survey Questions 5, 6, and 6a (see Appendix A). A coding procedure was subsequently implemented to reduce the information into themes and categories. According to Strauss (1987), "Once the core category or categories are suspected or decided upon, then be certain to relate all categories and subcategories to that core, as well to each other" (p. 81). The themes were then analyzed to determine the actual individual frequency. Finally, a central theme, representative of a significant number of responses, was identified. Because the overall number of narrative answers was small, the researcher was able to enumerate the data. A total of 41 were analyzed in response to Question 5. Of those 41, 19 referred to "cultural/racial mistreatment by faculty." In addition, two subthemes emerged—classmates relations and grading styles.

Experiences of racial discrimination. The following question was asked: Have you ever experienced racial discrimination, insensitive treatment, or racist attitudes while attending this university? In three short lines, the responding students generally communicated freely about their feelings and perceptions surrounding the campus climate. Two students used additional paper to submit quite lengthy responses. The comments came from projected persisters, projected nonpersisters, and at least one student who had already made the decision to leave school. Most student comments were critical of professors; some were rather harsh and listed names. Additionally, some
comments appeared to have been taken out of the original context. Others dealt with feelings of isolation and/or alienation, especially when the student was the only African-American in a class.

Cultural mistreatment by faculty. One survey respondent described racial abuse in the classroom by writing:

A teacher singled me out--as the only Black student in the class--for treatment that was so bad all [of] my classmates complained on the teacher evaluation.

Another student spoke of how one professor used racist epithet in the classroom:

A professor (who is a white male) used the word “NIGGERS” to describe Black participants in a research study.

Another description of alienation was communicated in the following sentence added to a survey response:

A professor had me working on an independent project as an undergraduate because students of a certain race did not want me working with them.

According to Tinto (1987), isolation and alienation may be primary reasons students depart from college prior to the attainment of degree goals. Disintegration of the student into the institution may precede dissonance. Dissonance, as explained by Festinger (1957), is “the existence of nonfitting relations among cognitions” (p. 3). He further explained that “cognition means any knowledge, opinion, or belief about the environment, about ones’ self, or about ones’ behavior” (p. 3). One study participant typed a lengthy response to express his apparent decision to reduce personal dissonance by departing college:
I have quit SFSU. This was prompted by a number of things: (1) Lack of mentorship. Being the first in my family to attend college, I did not have an established network of experienced individuals who could pass along their college experience or instruct me in dealing with the pressures. These pressures were made even more difficult by carrying the hopes and dreams of the family. (2) Lack of financial support. Although, supported by my grandmother and financial aid, the combined resources did not adequately provide enough support for myself, nor substantially reduce the burden [that was] upon my loved ones.

This participant, who had become a nonpersister, combined his comments about professors and classmates as he further explained his experience with discrimination in the following manner:

I have experienced racial discrimination and insensitive treatment from both students and teachers. This has mainly taken the form of stereotyping with regard to academic competence, ability to grasp material, and discounting of comments. Foreign, Asian, and White students are particularly susceptible to relating to African-Americans through stereotypes. Teachers are also guilty of relating to African-American students stereotypes, until you have proven academic excellence and an acceptable work ethic.

Other students expressed their feelings surrounding racial mistreatment in terms of concern over grades. The following excerpt describes the experience of one survey respondent:

I have attended SFSU for three years. In that time two professors have acted insensitively toward me. One was Asian, Dr. ____ & the other White, Dr. _____. These two professors also gave me the lowest grades of my SFSU academic life. B___.

The assertive communication of students has sometimes appeared to result in the receipt of lower grades than they felt were earned. A study participant explains this experience by writing:

As an outspoken student with a good knowledge base, disagreement with professors have lead [sic] to irritation based on race which lead [sic] to lower grades than my work have commanded.
Seven of the 41 added survey comments related directly to peer relationships. One participant wrote of an experience of prejudiced attitudes in a classroom setting:

With a classmate. While being placed in group to do a class project, 2 White classmates showed obvious and blatant attitudes of prejudices.

Another student offered his view of classmate relationships by writing:

Yes, racist attitudes by some classmates. Different world and human viewpoints caused some to become resentful.

Some students seem to have experienced insensitive treatment from several sources as expressed by this student:

At some points that I cannot list, however, the discrimination is from the Asian students and some faculty and some of [the] administration.

Reasons for quitting. When asked, “Have you ever considered quitting San Francisco State University,” 42 students responded affirmatively. Survey Question 6 sought information related to leaving college, while 6a inquired about early college departure for racial reasons. Participants responded with a variety of reasons for leaving SFSU; some were race related while others were more generalized. The dominant themes were (a) racial discrimination, (b) lack of support, and (c) administrative issues. One student explained her racially based reason in the following survey comment:

Her [professor’s] poor treatment of me caused me to question whether I could make it at all. My self-esteem was seriously damaged. I felt like why bother in Academia if for all my hard work I am still treated poorly because of race.
One student made the following brief, but poignant, comment:

Feeling of alienation. No support.

Another expressed feelings of intellectual discrimination and alienation:

The intellectual bigotry in my department (philosophy) is dispiriting and leaves me dreading returning every Fall. I never see a woman of color in my graduate seminars. I’m it. No role models or peers.

One survey respondent explained her challenging relations with other African-American students. She attributed the problems to dating outside of her race:

Other black students have made it very difficult for me. Because I date white men and have white friends. I feel racism is too focused on at SFSU!!!

Feelings related to lack of support—whether the gaps were faculty, administrative, or family based—were heavily represented among the reasons students provided for early college departure. Two students explain lack of support:

Unlike other college experiences, there is no one to support your desires. You must be strong and self-confident to get through their system.

Yes, because there are so few African-American students as well as other minority students in my area--faculty & students. And so little understanding of our [problems].

Some students expressed their feelings by combining issues they perceived as not being supportive of their needs. For example, one comment added to a survey stated:

The system is anti-student - hard to get information or action from departments - and the information is not consistent. There are very few African American professors, and the education courses are filled with European Americans.
In response to the question concerning reasons for quitting school, one student expressed multiple reasons including feelings of alienation, lack of support, and feelings of isolation from the class professor. She wrote,

Once during the course taught by Dr.____, she acted so cold toward me and offered no guidance during the course. I became somewhat depressed, however, I decided against this in my best interest. I was one of three minorities in Dr.____’s course, and the only one in Dr.____’s. However, I believe I could do more positive things for my people if I stayed.

A review of other student comments suggested that they also attributed consideration of leaving SFSU to administrative and institutional issues. One student wrote,

I can never get any of the classes I want, yet I still end up paying way too much money to attend what few classes I do get.

Another respondent expressed that

The classes are so hard to get that I considered going elsewhere so I could graduate sooner.

Yet another student wrote of similar difficulties:

Classes are hard to schedule as a working student, supporting a wife and newborn.

For some students, the cost of an education, along with the stress of getting through the system to degree conferment, is enough to explain considerations of early departure from college:

Due to the increase in fees and reduction in courses coupled with the numerous racist encounters (e.g., Malcolm X mural).

Two other students wrote:

Too hard to get required classes. Budget cuts having adverse affect on students who pay for the education.
I find SFSU not to be user friendly to students. There is much more bureaucratic hassle than at my previous school (CSUH).

One final study participant comment explains why students may be at risk for leaving college prior to degree conferment:

Too many requirements need to be fulfilled in order to graduate with a degree.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The intent of this study was to identify and analyze factors relating to
the projected persistence or nonpersistence of African-American students at
SFSU—a multiethnic, urban state university. This chapter presents the
concluding results in the following order: (a) provide a summary of major
findings, (b) presentation of conclusions, (c) discussion of implications, (d)
recommendations for practitioners, and (e) suggestions for further research
based on the findings of this study.

Summary of Major Findings

Research Question 1 asked the following: Are African-American
students who have experienced racial discrimination more likely to consider
leaving SFSU prior to degree attainment than those who have not? No
statistically significant difference was found. However, when the same
question was asked in a different format, descriptive statistics of the means
indicated that those who considered an early departure from college had a
mean score of 2.83 with a standard deviation of .74. Those who had not
considered leaving school had a mean score of 1.30 with a standard deviation
of .82. The inconsistency of the two findings are attributable, in part, to
instrumentation. Students were to respond to Question 1 on the original
survey (see Appendix A) by selecting from the following scale: (a) never = 1,
(b) rarely = 2, (c) sometimes = 3, and (d) often = 4. Responses were based on
gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, or national origin. Results indicated a significant difference only with the dependent variable of race/ethnicity.

Survey Question 5 (see Appendix A) was used as a dependent variable for this analysis. Students responded by selecting "yes" or "no" and by providing supplemental open-ended explanations. Forty-two participants responded "yes" and 69 selected "no." Of the 42 who considered early college departure, 19 (45%) also reported perceptions of racial discrimination.

Research Question 2 asked the following: What are the campus environmental factors related to the projected persistence of African-American students at SFSU—a multiethnic campus setting? Student responses to Survey Question 6 were categorized into subgroups of persisters and nonpersisters. A comparison of descriptive means of the primary independent variables, based on the dependent predictive variables, revealed the following findings (see Table 3):

1. Data received on Variable 1—discrimination by personal characteristics—suggest that students who are considering early departure from SFSU experienced more discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity than those not considering leaving. This finding indicates an association between leaving college prior to the attainment of degree goals and perceptions of racial discrimination.

2. Data related to Variable 2—perception and attitudes of discrimination toward students and others—were derived from Survey
Question 3 and involved 15 dependent variables. Using descriptive statistics, a difference was suggested on Variable 1. Persisters apparently found the remark, "A professor says that White people benefit from racism," more offensive than nonpersisters. Nonpersisters demonstrated a mean scale score of 1.90 and a standard deviation of 206, whereas persisters had a mean score of 3.40 with a standard deviation of 1.20.

3. Data related to Variable 3—opinions surrounding campus life—were derived from Survey Question 4. Nonpersisters registered different results than persisters on the item F-Faculty (i.e., student relations). Students who have considered early departure from SFSU had a mean score of 2.62 compared to a mean score of 3.40 for those who have not considered leaving.

4. Variable 5—American Ethnic and Racial Minorities Course attendance—is addressed by Survey Question 14. More nonpersisters (mean = 3.29) have taken this SFSU required course than persisters (mean = 2.49). In addition, the data analysis revealed that students categorized as nonpersisters took fewer class units the semester prior to the survey than did persisters. Nonpersisters registered for an average load of 9.82 units with a standard deviation of 4.24, whereas persisters assumed an average load of 11.21 units with a standard deviation of 7.09. The mean GPA for persisters was 2.68, while nonpersisters demonstrated a lower GPA of 1.90. Surprisingly, no statistically significant difference was found across academic class levels. The most notable class-level difference was observed among seniors on the dependent variable of discrimination by race/ethnicity.
The salient finding of the qualitative responses to Survey Question 6 is best summarized by the comments written by one participant. His personal experiences, coupled with his perceptions of the campus environment, provide valuable information for educators:

I have quit SFSU. This was prompted by a number of things: (1) Lack of mentorship. Being the first in my family to attend college, I did not have an established network of experienced individuals who could pass along their college experience or instruct me in dealing with the pressures. These pressures were made even more difficult by carrying the hopes and dreams of the family; (2) Lack of financial support. Although supported by my grandmother and financial aid, the combined resources did not adequately provide enough support for myself, nor substantially reduce the burden [that was] upon my loved ones.

Several other students offered summarative reasons for early college departure. They describe typical reasons espoused by other students for leaving school, but consider themselves persisters. They appear to be committed to completing their education:

Once during the course taught by Dr.____, she acted so cold toward me and offered no guidance during the course, I became somewhat depressed. However, I decided against this in my best interest. I was one of three minorities in Dr.____’s course, and the only one in Dr.____’s’. However, I believe I could do more positive things for my people if I stayed.

A professor had me working on an independent project as an undergraduate because students of a certain race did not want me working with them. The classes are so hard to get that I considered going elsewhere so I could graduate sooner.

Her [professors’] poor treatment of me caused me to question whether I could make it at all. My self-esteem was seriously damaged. I felt like why bother in Academia if for all my hard work I am still treated poorly because of race.
The described findings suggest that racial discrimination alone may not cause a student to prematurely leave college prior to attaining degree goals. Rather, early college departure occurs when racial discrimination or "cultural mistreatment" is combined with other factors. Some of those factors, as indicated by this study, are (a) lack of support from staff and administration, (b) alienation by classmates, (c) lack of funds, (d) stress of family responsibilities, (e) the challenge of scheduling the right classes in time to graduate, and (f) alienation and isolation within classes due to the mistreatment of professors.

Contrary to the departure model developed by Tinto (1987) that suggests that negative integration tends to reduce system integration, the findings of this study indicate that perceptions of racial discrimination may not reduce college persistence. To summarize, the results of this study indicate that perceptions of discrimination by African-Americans may be an anticipated environmental factor rather than a new negative stimulus causing early college departure due to dissonance.

Conclusions

Based on the major findings of this study, several valuable conclusions can be drawn. Racial discrimination alone may not cause the African-American student to leave an institution such as SFSU prior to attaining degree goals. Rather, the decision to leave college, as vividly expressed in an essay by one respondent who had already quit, occurs when racial mistreatment is combined with other environmental factors. Other salient
environmental factors, as indicated by this study, are (a) lack of support from staff and administration, (b) alienation by classmates, (c) lack of funds, (d) stress of family responsibilities, (e) scheduling the right classes in time to graduate, and (f) alienation and isolation within classes due to the mistreatment of professors. The factors most cited by students as reasons for early departure from college were (a) mistreatment by faculty, (b) feelings of alienation and isolation from faculty and students, (c) the challenges of scheduling the required classes in a timely manner, and (d) the high costs associated with remaining in school.

When compared with all other characteristics potentially inducing discriminatory behavior, such as gender, disability, race/ethnicity, and national origin, race/ethnicity generated a higher rate of mistreatment incidence or disadvantages within routine activities than any other personal characteristic. Projected persisters experienced less discriminatory treatment than nonpersisters. Persisters also indicated a more positive attitude surrounding faculty relationships. Consistent with other studies, persisters exhibited a higher GPA than nonpersisters and, interestingly, persisters also registered for more units the semester prior to survey administration.

To summarize, the findings of this study suggest that African-American students at SFSU—a multiethnic urban university—experience a significant amount of racial mistreatment. Students identified as nonpersisters experienced a higher rate of racial mistreatment incidence and harbored less of a positive attitude toward faculty relationships. Persisters and
nonpersisters were also distinguished by the average number of class units taken and their grade points averages. Nonpersisters, as well as persisters, cited cultural/racial mistreatment as a reason to consider early college departure. However, the majority of the students were committed to achieving their goal of earning a college degree.

Implications

The findings of this study present several implications regarding the administration of postsecondary education. As more students of color, in general, along with African-Americans, in particular, enter the California state university system, staff, faculty, and administrators must become aware of their own attitudes and behaviors that can potentially impinge on the success of African-American students reaching for higher education. Educators need to understand the importance of recruiting and employing staff, faculty, and administrators that reflect the diversity of the student population and possess an awareness of cultural differences as well as cultural expectations. Current faculty need to know how students perceive and feel about their learning environment.

Administrators and those who teach educators must infuse professional development curriculum with "real life" experiences. Administrators must also understand how systemic barriers, such as class scheduling, may impact the ultimate graduation rate.
Recommendations

For the profession. Development of an explicit initiative at the presidential level to discourage acts of discrimination and insensitive treatment to all members of the university community is essential. Such an initiative requires policies built upon a foundation of reward and punishment that can be used as incentives to achieve the highest goals.

An increase in the ethnic diversity of university staff, faculty, and administration is also essential to reflect the ethnicity of the students being served. To facilitate achievement of this recommendation, the establishment of strong career-development linkages with kindergarten through secondary feeder schools will be crucial. Furthermore, it is recommended that relationships be developed with historically Black colleges for the purpose of recruiting faculty and maintaining continual awareness of positive techniques developed to promote the academic success of African-American students.

New employees should be oriented at all levels to an established university philosophy of providing a truly equal educational opportunity for all members of its culturally diverse community. Ongoing professional and personal development should be offered to all employees, infused with explicit cross-cultural materials including the lived experiences of all members of the university community (McCullough, 1994).

For future educational research. Future studies focused on higher education for African-American students should examine the day-to-day
experiences of students attending historically Black and multiethnic urban college campuses to gain a clearer understanding of positive differences. Obviously, positive role modeling is one distinguishing factor of Black colleges, but there are many more, waiting to be discovered, that will reap success for African-American students in a variety of college environments.
References


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

SAN FRANCISCO STATE HUMAN RELATIONS SURVEY
Human Relations at San Francisco State University: The Student Perspective

1997

A survey conducted in collaboration with the University Office of Human Relations and Frances McCullough

by the

Public Research Institute

If found, please return to the Public Research Institute by campus mail, or at C9 - Diag Center, North State Drive.
Human Relations at San Francisco State University
The Student Perspective

The community of students, faculty, and staff at San Francisco State University is a living tapestry woven of many different yarns, colors, and textures. What has your experience been in this multiethnic, multicultural setting? Have you been treated fairly by faculty, staff, and other students? How do you think others are treated others who are like you, and others who are different in some way? Please accept this invitation from the University Office of Human Relations to describe your experience and express your views.

As a student at S.F. State, how often, if at all, have you been mistreated or disadvantaged in the usual day-to-day activities (such as class discussion and handling of assignments, registration, use of the student union or other University facilities, etc.) by other students, faculty, or staff on the basis of your... (Circle one number for each row.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Gender?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Race/Ethnicity?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Sexual orientation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Religious beliefs?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Disability?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. National origin?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important would you say each of the following attributes is in defining your personal identity (who you are, your self-image, what you stand for, etc.) — not at all important, slightly important, moderately important, or very important? (Circle one number for each row.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Your gender?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Your race?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Your sexual identity/orientation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Your national origin?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Your religion?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Your ethnicity?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Your disability?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Below are statements of opinion about student life at San Francisco State University. Some students agree with these opinions, others disagree. We want to know what you think. (Circle one number for each row.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Incidents of discrimination and prejudice at S. F. State are caused by a very small number of people and do not reflect the beliefs and attitudes of the majority.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My experience at S. F. State has improved my ability to interact comfortably with people of other racial/ethnic and cultural groups.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. "Students on this campus spend too much time emphasizing their differences with students of other groups (that is, of other races, religions, etc.) rather than exploring values and goals they have in common." ........................................ 1 2 3 4 5

D. "Compared to what I see and hear off-campus, human relations among different groups on-campus at S. F. State are relatively good." .......................................................... 1 2 3 4 5

E. "The University should not restrict my right to say publicly anything I want about members of other groups, even if what I say might be regarded as offensive or insulting." .......................................................... 1 2 3 4 5

F. "Most faculty at S. F. State are not really interested in the problems of students like me." .......................................................... 1 2 3 4 5

G. "S. F. State University offers students adequate opportunities to learn about other groups and cultures." .................. 1 2 3 4 5

Have you experienced racial discrimination, insensitive treatment, or racist attitudes while attending this university?

1 Yes
2 No

*If "yes," please explain:*

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever considered quitting SFSU?

1 Yes
2 No

*If "yes," please explain:*

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

*If you answered "Yes" to Q6, please answer Q6a., otherwise, skip to Q7.*

Q6a. Were your feelings about quitting college related to your race?

1 Yes
2 No

*If "yes," please explain:*

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Certain population groups—women, disabled people, and certain people of color—are specifically covered under federal and University affirmative action programs with respect to employment, and with respect to admission of students. To the best of your knowledge, has affirmative action benefited or harmed you, personally, in each of the following situations? (Circle one number for each row.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Definitely Benefited</th>
<th>Probably Benefited</th>
<th>Neither Benefited Nor Harmed</th>
<th>Probably Harmed</th>
<th>Definitely Harmed</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employment off campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Employment at SFSU</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Admission to SFSU</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Admission to some other college</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see how your opinions compare with those of other students at S. F. State, we'd like a few facts about you. Please remember that all of your answers are strictly anonymous, so that you cannot be identified individually.

How many semesters have you attended S. F. State, including this one? (Circle one number below.)

1 1-2 semesters  
2 3-4 semesters  
3 5-6 semesters  
4 7-8 semesters  
5 9 or more semesters

Are you a transfer student? (Circle one number below.)

1 Yes  
2 No

How many units did you take in the last semester you were enrolled at SFSU? __________

What is your class standing? (Circle one number below.)

1 Freshman  
2 Sophomore  
3 Junior  
4 Senior  
5 Graduate student

What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents? (Circle one number for each column below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar school or less</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your major field of study? (Please write your major in the blank below. If your major is Undeclared, state "undeclared" below.)
Have you taken any course(s) at S. F. State to satisfy the American Ethnic and Racial Minorities (AERM) requirement? (Circle one number below.)

1 Yes
2 No

Have you taken any course(s) at S. F. State to satisfy the Cultural, Ethnic, or Social Diversity (CESD) requirement? (Circle one number below.)

1 Yes
2 No

Are you classified by the University as an international student? (Circle one number below.)

1 Yes
2 No

Are you a citizen of the United States? (Circle one number below.)

1 Yes
2 No

What is your age in years? ________________

What is your relationship status? (Circle one number below.)

1 Single, never married
2 Married
3 Commited monogamous relationship
4 Divorced
5 Widowed
6 Other, please specify: __________________________

What is your work status? (Circle one number below.)

1 Work full time
2 Work part time
3 Currently seeking full-time employment
4 Currently seeking part-time employment
5 Retired
6 Homemaker
7 Other

Please choose the category that best describes your total annual income before taxes in 1996. (Circle one number below.)

1 Less than $5,000
2 $5,000 - $9,999
3 $10,000 - $19,999
4 $20,000 - $29,999
5 $30,000 - $39,999
6 $40,000 - $49,999
7 $50,000 or more
8 Don't know, not sure
Do you receive student financial assistance? (Circle one number below.)

1  Yes
2  No

Do you receive any financial support from your family? (Circle one number below.)

1  Yes
2  No

Do you receive adequate emotional support from your family? (Circle one number below.)

1  Yes
2  No

Are you a member of any group on campus (campus organization, Greek society, student group, etc.)?

1  Yes
2  No

If "yes," please list: ________________________________________________________________

People who are conservative in their political views are referred to as being right of the center and people who are liberal or radical in their political views are referred to as being left of the center. Which of the following categories best describes your own political position? (Circle one number below.)

1  Far left
2  Moderately left
3  Slightly left
4  Middle of road
5  Slightly right
6  Moderately right
7  Far right
8  No opinion

Do you have any disability? (Circle one number below.)

1  Yes
2  No

If you were to describe your race or ethnicity to a friend, what words would you use? (Write in blank below.)
Some people identify themselves as a member of just one racial or ethnic group, and others feel that they belong in more than one group. Please tell us how strongly you identify yourself as a member of each group listed below, if at all. (Circle one number for each row.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. American Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Black, African-American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Chicano, Mexican</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Filipino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Latino, Other Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Other Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. White</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Other, please specify:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your religious preference, if any? Is it Christian, Jewish, Islamic, some other religion, or no religion? (Circle one number below.)

1  Christian  
2  Islamic  
3  Jewish  
4  None  
5  Other, please specify: ____________________

What is your most current GPA at SFSU? __________

Are you...? (Circle one number for each column.)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Please enclose this completed survey into the postage-paid envelope provided.  
Thank you.
APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT
STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered between: Dr. Joseph Julian, University Dean for Human Relations at San Francisco State University, as Grantor, and Ms. Frances McCollough, as Grantee, regarding the scholarly use of data collected as part of the San Francisco State University Campus Climate Surveys of Faculty, Students and Staff. Permission to access and use the data will be granted according to the following conditions:

1. That the data will be used only for scholarly purposes, including publication, related to the Grantee’s doctoral dissertation work at the University of San Francisco. A copy of any scholarly work or publication based on the data is to be provided to the Office of the University Dean for Human Relations.

2. That in any scholarly work or publication, the Grantee will include the following source citation of the data: San Francisco State University Campus Climate Surveys of Faculty, Students, and Staff, sponsored by the Office of the University Dean for Human Relations, Dr. Joseph Julian, University Dean, and conducted by San Francisco State University’s Public Research Institute, Dr. Rufus Browning, Director, in October-December 1996. Any assistance received by the Grantee in the course of working with the data should be acknowledged.

3. That the Grantee must not distribute the data to others, or give access to the data to others. Inquiries by others about access and use of the data should be referred to the Office of the University Dean for Human Relations.

4. That the Grantee must agree to protect absolutely the confidentiality of the data. This means: (1) No attempt be made to identify individual respondents; and (2) No reporting of the data in a manner that would allow others to identify individual respondents. Reporting information that might permit someone to deduce who was responsible for particular responses to survey questions is not allowed. The Grantee must be vigilant in ensuring that reporting tabulations or other descriptions that might permit this sort of identification or deduction does not occur. The Grantee should contact the Office of the University Dean for Human Relations if there is any question about the appropriateness of a particular tabulation or description.

If the Grantee agrees to the conditions stated above, the Grantor will approve permission for use of the data and will request the Public Research Institute to make a copy of the data in electronic form available to the Grantee, along with copies of sets of tables and cross-tabulations produced by PRI as basic reference materials for their own analysis of the data. These materials will be provided at PRI’s cost of reproduction, either in electronic or in paper form; the Grantee is to contact PRI directly about cost and procedure.

I AGREE TO THE CONDITIONS STATED ABOVE:

Ms. Frances McCollough
11 Kings Canyon Road, Pacifica, California

RELEASE OF DATA APPROVED:

Dr. Joseph Julian
University Dean for Human Relations

Date
APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
April 30, 1997

Ms. Frances McCollough
11 Kings Canyon Road
Pacifica, CA 94044

Dear Ms. McCollough:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study, “African-Americans Students in Higher Education: Attitudes and Perception that Relates to Persistence”.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS Approval #97-0076). Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal application.

2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.

3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact Ada Santa Cruz, IRBPHS Assistant, at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

June Madsen Clausen, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology
Chair, USF IRBPHS
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA.
94117-1080

cc:    Dean’s Office, School of Education-ATTENTION Gabriella West
       Allen Coler, Ed.D., Faculty Advisor
APPENDIX D

LETTER TO STUDENTS
Dear Student:

We are writing to request your participation in a survey that investigates Human Relations at San Francisco State University. This study is being conducted in collaboration with San Francisco State University's Dean of Human Relations, the Public Research Institute, and Frances McCullough, an African-American educator pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership in higher education. As you are aware, San Francisco State University is a very diverse academic community represented by many racial and ethnic groups, national origins, social, and economic backgrounds. How do you experience this unique educational institution? What is your perception of yourself and attitudes of others in this institution?

In 1989, the Public Research Institute, which was established at San Francisco State University in 1984, conducted its first human relations surveys of students, faculty, and staff on behalf of the University Commission on Human Relations. The present survey will help to answer questions about current issues.

Your name was selected in a random sample of students. By taking about 20 minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire, you will have contributed significantly to our understanding of life at this University. Although your participation is voluntary, we strongly urge you to return the completed questionnaire to the Public Research Institute in the enclosed envelope so that the surveys will accurately represent the viewpoints of the diverse student population at San Francisco State University. All responses need to be returned by August 31, 1997.

We assure you that all responses will be completely anonymous. Neither your name nor any other identification will appear on your returned questionnaire, and there is no way that your answers can be linked to you individually. After the data have been collected and analyzed, copies of the reports will be available to you in the early Spring, 1998.

If you wish to know more about this research, you may call the Public Research Institute at (415) 338-2978 and ask for the Human Relations Survey Coordinator. We invite you to be frank and open as you share your experiences and express your opinions on human relations at SFSU. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Joseph Julian, Ph.D.
University Dean for Human Relations

Frances L. McCullough
Doctoral Candidate