

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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Academic Supports Preferred by Academically Struggling African American Students at a Predominantly White University

Date: June 29, 2017

Time: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Place: Sigma-Aldrich Room, Marillac Hall

Abstract

Academic supports offered by Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) meet the needs of individuals who achieve standards such as high grade point averages and high standardized test scores, and who can negotiate traditional institutions. Evidence indicates that retention and graduation rates for underrepresented minority students may be lower in comparison to White peers at the same institutions. Observations indicated that academic supports offered by University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL), a Midwestern PWI, may not provide the services preferred by African American students who struggle academically in two colleges, the College of Education and the College of Nursing.

A mixed-methods design was used to determine what academic supports were known and used by academically struggling African American students at a PWI. Survey questions and interviews focused on gaining understandings of student preferences for academic supports in a population of academically struggling African American students.

These results may be used to design academic supports for struggling African American students and may be generalized to PWIs of similar demographics and socio-cultural settings. Application of the results to academic support design may improve retention and graduation rates for this student group. Students requested late night or 24-hour tutoring services, assistance with time management, more social media to assist with reminders about assignments and class projects, and assistance with technology and on-line classes. Students also requested increased interaction with faculty.

Some differences were noted between what was recorded in the literature and the results of this study. The survey sample size was 20 from a population of 74, resulting in a margin of error of 16-22%. This high margin of error meant it was difficult to determine if differences between what students reported and what the literature indicated were the results of sampling error, research design or a real difference in culture.

This is a co-authored dissertation and oral defense.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Gayle Wilkinson, Ed. D., Chairperson

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