

ABSTRACT

Bruce Panneton, TARGETED MARKETING TO THE UNDERSERVED: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COLLEGE INTENT AND CHOICE FOR MINORITY MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA (Under the direction of Dr. Crystal Chambers). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2022.

This mixed-methods study investigates the real and perceived barriers that African American male Edgecombe County high school students face when considering college enrollment to inform potential interventions to improve college enrollment of this market segment. Phase I of the study design included a survey of current, African American, male college students to determine potential barriers African American high school students may face when considering college. Phase II included semi-structured group interviews of African American male Edgecombe County high school students. “Uncertainty” and “frustration” were revealed as the main barriers these students face when considering postsecondary enrollment. Participants indicated uncertainty about college majors, college cost, paying for college, student loans, money, and self-efficacy. Additionally, participants indicated frustration related to course choices in college programs, mathematics classes, as well as their high school GPA not being an accurate indicator of their ability. Phase III included the development of career and technical education (CTE) certificates to create more dual enrollment options for underserved students. Finally, a focus group review of 9-14 pathway samples by African American male students was used to develop a student-informed template for future 9-14 pathways utilized by Edgecombe Community College.

Responses from study participants and subsequent meetings with key stakeholders show opportunities to improve the college approach to recruiting students from this demographic. More dual-enrollment certificate options and clearly defined educational pathways (from high school through college) with job market analysis incorporated in those pathways were tools that

this study has indicated may help create more postsecondary opportunities for African American male high students in the Edgecombe Community College service area. Additionally, financial aid literacy initiatives for both students and parents and increased recruiting visits to area high schools as the Novel Corona Virus pandemic begins to wane were also indicated as outreach and recruitment strategies. The findings of this study helped develop intentional, dual enrollment certificate options and 9-14 educational pathways the college will utilize to create more postsecondary opportunities for African American males and other underserved groups of students.

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THAT INFLUENCE COLLEGE INTENT AND CHOICE FOR MINORITY MALE HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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May, 2022

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their unwavering support throughout this experience. My wife, Laura. My boys, Spencer and Harrison. My parents, Bruce and Melody, and my brother Brad. I love you all so very much.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could never have done this without my wife. Thank you, Laura, for always being there. I've said it before, and I'll say it again, "there is no one else I'd rather have to quarantine/isolate with than you." You are my best friend and my true love.

Thank you to my boys, Spencer and Harrison, for being flexible and understanding over these past three years. I love you two to the moon and back. I look so forward to watching you both grow into strong, compassionate men.

To my brother Brad, my oldest friend, thank you for always helping me laugh through the struggles. Time zones may separate us, but we are always there for each other. I love you little bro.

To my parents Bruce and Melody Panneton, my oldest memories are filled with the love and support you have always shown me. Please know that the love and pride I feel from you when we are together is there even when we are apart.

Thank you to my colleagues at ECC for the encouragement to pursue this doctorate and the grace you afforded me as I juggled so many different things.

Thank you to my class of 2022 peers and friends for allowing me to "be me" as we pushed through this process together. I couldn't have chosen a more understanding or supportive group to learn and grow with. We have all done great work here, but as Robert Frost wrote, *...The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep.*

Sincerely, Dr. Bruce E. Panneton, EdD

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Enrollment at Edgecombe Community College has suffered steady declines since 2011. Throughout that decline, African American males have been the lowest represented demographic. The president of the College expressed a genuine concern that the College's current recruiting efforts may not be effectively reaching area minority male high school students (Dr. Gregory McLeod, personal communication, June 12, 2019). Edgecombe County African American males exhibit the lowest college success indicators in all areas measured, including enrollment, retention, and completion rates, compared to all other demographics (North Carolina Community College System [NCCCS], 2019). According to the North Carolina Community College System 2019 Equity Report, 30% of African American males in Edgecombe County have "some college" (see Table 1). In Edgecombe County, 77% of college-going African American males require developmental instruction. Additionally, 59% of African American male Edgecombe Community College students persist from fall to spring semesters. Only 22% of African American male high school graduates enroll in a community college after graduation (see Table 2). For those that do, only 21% have a GPA above 2.0 after their first year of college (NCCCS, 2019).

The College has several specific initiatives designed to target many of these low success indicators exhibited by minority male students. Additionally, many college-wide programs and interventions improve all Edgecombe Community College students' retention, completion, and academic success. However, what the college has not recently investigated are the circumstances keeping students (specifically, minority male students) from ever walking through the doors of the college in the first place. This is a concern to the college administration. In the words of the Edgecombe Community College President, Dr. Gregory McLeod, "we can't sit back and wait

Table 1

Percentage of Individuals 25+ with Some College in 2017

	Total %		Low %		High %	Gap %	Ratio
Statewide	61%	Hispanic Male	30%	White Female	67%	37%	2.2
Edgecombe	41%	Black Male	30%	White Female	53%	23%	1.8

Note. Comparing the state of North Carolina to Edgecombe County (NCCCS, 2019).

Table 2

Percentage of Public High School Graduates Enrolled at a Community College – 2017

	Total %		Low %		High %	Gap %	Ratio
Statewide	24%	Black Male	17%	Hispanic Female	30%	13	1.8
Edgecombe	35%	Black Male	22%	White Female	55%	33	2.5

Note. Comparing the state of North Carolina to Edgecombe County (NCCCS, 2019).

for them to show up before engaging them” (personal communication, June 12, 2019). The purpose of this research was to determine the barriers (both real and perceived) to college choice that African American male Edgecombe County high school students face and to determine the marketing and outreach strategies most likely to benefit this market segment.

Background of the Problem

The Edgecombe Community College IPEDS data shows an apparent underrepresentation for African American male enrollment. In the 2006-07 academic year, only 14.4% of the student body were Black males compared to 41.1% Black females. In the 2010-11 academic year, the numbers increased to 16.9% Black males compared to 51.1% Black females. The most recent IPEDS report indicates that 10.3% of the students at Edgecombe Community College are Black males compared to 41.9% Black females. When comparing males to females, the enrollment data from Edgecombe Community College follows the national trends (Kim & Rury 2007; McDaniel et al., 2011; McFarland et al., 2019); more females are attending and completing college than males. At Edgecombe Community College, over four times as many Black females attend college than Black males (see Table 3).

While this trend is not entirely different from national trends, the college has not locally analyzed this phenomenon to determine if a local market analysis and segmentation study could help improve this demographic's enrollment (and subsequent success rates). This dissertation research will attempt to address these phenomena.

Context of the Study

Edgecombe County is located in northeastern North Carolina, approximately halfway between the Atlantic Ocean and Raleigh, NC. The US Census Bureau reports the county demographics as 57.2% Black, 39.8% White, and 4.8% Hispanic or Latino. The county was

Table 3

Edgecombe Community College Annual Headcount – 2006-2007, 2010-2011, and 2018-2019

Enrollment Year	Unduplicated Annual Headcount (all demographics)	Black Male Enrollment	Black Female Enrollment	White Male Enrollment	White Female Enrollment
2006-07	2,489	360	1,024	445	771
2010-11	4,852	770	2,481	499	1,116
2018-19	2,967	305	1,245	269	697

Note. Retrieved from Edgecombe Community College IPEDS reports.

founded in 1741 as part of the fourteenth American Colony (Fleming, 2003, p. 14), and African Americans have made up a significant portion of the population since the county was founded. Records from 1755 indicate that African Americans constituted nearly twenty-seven percent of the population (Kay & Cary, 1995). However, the individuals in this data were not counted as part of a census but as part of the "taxable" possessions since the individuals were enslaved. The town of Princeville was incorporated as the town of Freedom Hill by formerly enslaved people in 1865 (Civil War Trails, Inc., 2006). Princeville is located immediately across the Tar River from Tarboro, which is the county seat of Edgecombe County.

Like many other Southern rural communities, year-round employment that offers family-sustaining work opportunities for African American males is limited, contributing to intergenerational poverty cycles (Beale, 1996). Textiles were the largest industry in the county from 1818-1996 (Fleming, 2003, p. 8). Several other prominent businesses and industries, in addition to textiles, downsized or left the county in the 1990s, including Hardees, Black and Decker, and Carolina Telephone (Fleming, 2003, p. 144). The flooding and devastation left in the wake of Hurricanes Dennis and Floyd in 1999 permanently shut down many small businesses as well (Fleming, 2003, p. 151). These contemporary events exasperated an already depressed job market for African American males.

Today, the North Carolina Department of Commerce designates Edgecombe County, NC as a Tier 1 (severely distressed) county (2019 North Carolina Development tier designations, 2019). This designation comes from analyzing each county's average unemployment rate, median household income, percentage growth in population, and adjusted property tax base per capita (2019 North Carolina Development tier designations, 2019). The median household income of the county is \$34,612 and it suffers an unemployment rate of 7.18% (US Bureau of

Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rate in Edgecombe County, NC, n.d.). As a result, Edgecombe County ranks as one of North Carolina's most economically distressed counties (2019 North Carolina Development tier designations, 2019). The 2019 Roadmap of Need delves more deeply into the socio-economic distress indicators for North Carolina counties. This report paints a much clearer picture of many of the day-to-day barriers the citizens of Edgecombe County, North Carolina face including health, economic, youth behavior and safety, and education indicators. The results of this study indicate that Edgecombe County is ranked 99 out of the 100 North Carolina counties. Only one North Carolina County is considered more socio-economically distressed than Edgecombe (*Roadmap of Need 2019*, 2019). Table 4 lists these indicators and compares them between Edgecombe County and the state of North Carolina. With the main campus in Tarboro, North Carolina, Edgecombe Community College was chartered in 1967 as "Edgecombe Technical Institute" (Ferrell, 2012, p. 4). In 1972, a second campus in Rocky Mount, North Carolina was established (Edgecombe Community College Fact Book: 2017-2018, 2018). In July of 1987, the college was granted authority to offer college transfer classes and the name was changed to Edgecombe Community College (Ferrell, 2012, p. 34). Today, the college has a total Fall curriculum enrollment of nearly 2,029 students, with approximately 130 different degree, diploma, and certificate programs available (Edgecombe Community College Fact Book: 2019-2020, 2020).

Community college enrollment has been directly linked to unemployment rates and household disposable income (Johnson, 2012; Pennington et al., 2002). As unemployment rates increase and disposable household income decreases, more students seek out community colleges for their higher education needs. Edgecombe Community College experienced a record

Table 4

Socio-Economic Wellness Indicators for Edgecombe County and the State of North Carolina

Indicators	NC	Edgecombe County, NC
Economic:		
Median Household Income	\$52,757	\$35,130
Percentage of Children Living in Poverty	21%	38.50%
Unemployment Rate	4.50%	7.80%
Percentage of Adults with at Least a Bachelor's Degree	29.90%	11.60%
Percentage of Children Living in Single-Parent Households	36%	59.00%
Health:		
Teen Pregnancy Rate per 1,000	30.5	52.2
Number of Physicians per 10,000	23.78	9.27
Child Fatality Rate per 10,000	5.68	10.57
Child Food Insecurity Percentage	20.90%	27.90%
Child Obesity Percentage	16.10%	14.70%
Youth Behavior and Safety:		
Juvenile Delinquency Rate per 1,000	19.58	28.63
Short-Term Suspension Rate per 1,000	142.39	299.29
Juvenile Detention Admissions Rate per 1,000	1.69	2.96
Children in DSS Custody Rate per 1,000	6.99	7.07
Child Abuse & Neglect Rate per 1,000	9.81	15.52
Education:		
Graduation Rate	86.50	80.7
3 rd Grade Reading EOG Percent Proficiency	57.80	32.4
NC Math 1 EOC Percent Proficiency	64.30	45.2
ACT Composite Score	18.6	15.7
Percentage of Schools That Met or Exceeded Growth	73.70%	42.80%

Note. Adapted from *Roadmap of Need 2019* (2019).

high Fall curriculum enrollment of 3,033 students in 2011 (Edgecombe Community College Fact Book: 2017-2018, 2018). This high enrollment was the culmination of a steady upward trend in higher education enrollment that the entire country was experiencing during the early 2000s due to the housing market collapse and recession that followed. In September 2007, when the housing market began to collapse, the unemployment rate in Edgecombe County was 7%. However, by February of 2010, the county's unemployment rate skyrocketed to 17.1% (Unemployment Rate in Edgecombe County, NC, 2020). These staggering numbers led to the unprecedented boom in enrollment that Edgecombe Community College experienced from 2009 through 2011.

By 2018, the Fall curriculum enrollment had dropped to 2,113. This 30% reduction in Fall enrollment since 2011 was a gradual decline over those seven years that was somewhat anticipated based on national economic improvements following the last recession. Additionally, the college's service area (Edgecombe County, NC) has experienced a slow but steady population decline of 8% since 2010 (United States Census Bureau: Quick Facts: Edgecombe County, North Carolina, n.d.). The continuous loss of major industries (textile and manufacturing) and unemployment rates well above state and national averages have been implicated in this trend of constituents leaving the county, the college's service area.

Overall enrollment at the college has followed a similar pattern. Edgecombe Community College Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reports indicate that the 2006-07 academic year reflected an unduplicated, annual headcount of 2,489 students. In the 2010-11 academic year, the college saw the highest enrollments in history with an unduplicated annual headcount of 4,852 students. Finally, in the most recent academic year for which data is available (2020-21), the college reported an unduplicated annual headcount of 4,390 students.

The college has staffed, and federally-funded student success centers on both campuses. The centers are open for all students and utilize intrusive advising/intervention techniques and academic soft skill development training to help improve the retention rates of particular students (1st gen, minority, low income, and several other "at-risk" categories). These initiatives focus on retaining and graduating current students, and the college experienced success due to these efforts. For example, in 2010-11, when enrollment was nearing its peak, the college awarded 384 curriculum credentials at graduation. In 2018-19, when enrollment dropped nearly 30%, the college awarded 525 curriculum credentials, an increase of 36% (Edgecombe Community College Fact Book: 2017-2018, 2018; IPEDS trend generator: Student Enrollment: How many students enroll in postsecondary institutions in the fall?, n.d.). See Table 5 for graduation rate trends.

The downward trend in enrollment was predictable and gradual. As the forecast models predicted this trend, the college enlisted the help of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) consulting firm to help maximize enrollment and retention efforts. Additionally, the college adopted many of the Completion by Design (CBD) best practices, such as more sustained and intrusive academic advising, more robust early alert systems, clearer academic maps with fewer prerequisites, and fewer elective "choices" to help increase the completion and graduation rates of enrolled students. The college has recently embarked on several new initiatives to improve student success. The college's new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), called "Start, Stay, Finish," targets increased retention and completion rates for "first time to college" students aged 19-39 (Edgecombe Community College: Quality Enhancement Plan: Start, stay, finish, 2019). In addition, the college has a robust alert and intervention system called "Starfish" to help improve

Table 5

Edgecombe Community College Completion Rates – 2007, 2011, 2019

Year Ending	Total Completers (all demographics)	Black Male Completers	Black Female Completers	White Male Completers	White Female Completers
2007	236	20	80	34	96
2011	384	40	155	50	120
2019	525	43	210	60	167

Note. Completion rates for certificates, diplomas, and degrees. Retrieved from Edgecombe Community College IPEDS reports.

communication between students, faculty, staff, counselors, and advisors to improve the retention and completion rates of all students (Starfish early alert, n.d.). While there is some sense of relief with the apparent leveling-off, another concern that does not appear to have a logical explanation is low African American male student enrollment.

Focus of Practice (FoP)

African American male recent high school graduates show the lowest nationwide college enrollment percentage (33%) compared to males and females of other demographics (McFarland et al., 2019). In Edgecombe County, NC, one of the most socio-economically distressed counties in the state (*Roadmap of Need 2019*, 2019), only 30% of the African American male population has any postsecondary credits, which is lower than any other demographic (NCCCS, 2019). The most recent IPEDS report for Edgecombe Community College indicates that only 10.3% of the students enrolled at the college are Black males. The purpose of this research was to examine the barriers to postsecondary education access for African American male high school students in Edgecombe County, North Carolina, and to utilize those findings to improve the college's targeted marketing techniques for this segment.

FoP Guiding Questions

This study grew out of a discussion with the President of Edgecombe Community College, Dr. Gregory McLeod. The conversation that gave rise to this study started with a simple dialogue about the college's challenges and potential study ideas that could help address a particular challenge. Finding ways to address the steadily decreasing enrollment at Edgecombe Community College, specifically African American, male high school graduate enrollment was quickly identified as the challenge. African American males exhibit the lowest enrollment rates at Edgecombe Community College. Dr. Gregory McLeod is interested in

learning why and what the college can do to respond to this apparent disparity. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What factors influenced current students' choice to attend Edgecombe Community College, and what barriers to enrollment did current students and their peers experience?
2. What barriers to postsecondary enrollment do Edgecombe County African American male high school students face that may prevent them from pursuing postsecondary education or training?
3. What marketing and recruiting strategies can be developed that utilize data collected to reach African American male Edgecombe County high school students more effectively?

Overview of Inquiry

In this mixed-method study, I utilized a survey and semi-structured group interviews to understand the real and perceived barriers that Edgecombe County, North Carolina, African American male high school students face when considering postsecondary education opportunities (college choice). Additionally, this study sought to discern the preferred marketing and outreach strategies of this market segment and enlisted the help of African American male students to design one of those strategies. The Phase I inquiry utilized a survey to uncover some of the barriers to college choice that current Edgecombe Community College students and their peers faced. The second inquiry phase consisted of semi-structured, focus group interviews of Edgecombe County, North Carolina, African American high school students intended to understand the real and perceived barriers to college intent and choice. Phase III utilized the data analyzed from the group interviews and information gathered during scheduled meetings with

high school counselors and career coaches to develop marketing and outreach strategies to better support this group of students. African American male students assisted in developing one of those strategies (9-14 pathways). The analysis of the impact of the Phase III strategies will occur outside the time constraints of this study.

Inquiry Partners

The inquiry partners at Edgecombe County Public Schools (ECPS) are the counselors. The counselors are involved with their students' academic planning and postsecondary aspirations. They are also very familiar with many of the real (and perceived) barriers their students face that may stand in the way of their aspirations. The inquiry partners at Edgecombe Community College are the high school liaison and the area high school career coaches. The career coaches are "the face" of Edgecombe Community College at the high schools. Coaches assist 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade students with career exploration and dual enrollment opportunities, as well as helping the students try to plan paths beyond high school.

Additionally, career coaches work hand-in-hand with counselors during the fall and spring semester academic planning for 11th and 12th graders. This collaboration helps to ensure that students can take classes at Edgecombe Community College that do not conflict with their required high school classes. The career coaches are also very familiar with the barriers their students face. Their input and that of the counselors were critically important to developing questions used in Phase II of the inquiry and the recruitment of the students to be interviewed. Finally, the career coaches and high school counselors assisted in developing one of the marketing and outreach strategies that grew out of the results of this study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework undergirding this study is college choice, specifically, the barriers to college choice that African American male high school students may face when considering college after high school. The works of Chapman (1981), Hossler and Gallagher (1987), Jackson (1982), Litten (1982), and Somers et al. (2006) assert that college characteristics, including size, distance from home, availability of financial aid, and program availability, all influence the college choice process. Additionally, a potential student's family background and academic experience, along with college cost and location, exert strong influences on college choice as well as how information is disseminated to potential students. Jugenheimer (1995) and Goldgehn (1991) discuss that advertising and marketing are investments by colleges and universities. These investments generate the highest returns when colleges and universities study and understand the needs, concerns, and preferences of the market segments that the strategies are targeting. Wood and Harrison (2014) found that Black males choose colleges based on degrees offered, availability of financial aid, job placement record, required coursework, and academic reputation. They also found that Black males choose community college mostly due to the ease of the admissions process, the low expenses (compared to 4-year universities), and the acceptance of college credits by community colleges. Evans and Noriega (2011) found that face-to-face marketing strategies with active enrollment or guidance counselors were the most effective for first-generation African American students. It is critical to all colleges and universities, but even more so for small institutions, to understand what recruiting and marketing strategies will positively impact college choice and eventual enrollment. This is even more important when colleges consider how to best reach underserved groups within their service areas.

Assumptions

The following four assumptions guide this study:

1. Edgecombe Community College (ECC) leadership supports this research to increase African American male engagement and enrollment at the college.

The success of this study and interventions depend upon the support and buy-in of senior administration and the programs directly impacted by the study. I must know that I have this support as I work across and through departments to better understand the needs of this market segment and how all of our departments can be better prepared to serve these potential students' needs.

2. Edgecombe County Public Schools (ECPS) leadership supports this research and intervention to better serve the postsecondary education needs of their African American male high school students.

This study would not have been possible without the support of ECPS leadership. I relied on ECPS leadership support and buy-in to ensure that I had the support of the necessary stakeholders at each area high school to help select and prepare the interview candidates for this critically important research. Likewise, Edgecombe Community College will rely on ECPS leadership to use the results of this study to best serve their current and future students.

3. Group interview participants will respond thoroughly and thoughtfully to the questions asked during the group interviews.

Meaningful data that can drive change will not happen if the interview participants are not committed to the endeavor. Therefore, I ensured that the participants truly understood that I conducted this research not just as a means to my education and professional ends but also to

help drive change and improve the services Edgecombe Community College offers to members of their community.

4. The data collected from this study will be utilized by campus leadership to refine (if necessary) college outreach, marketing, and recruiting efforts to better serve African American male high school graduates.

Change is generally not embraced when it requires employees to change the way they do their jobs. There is a possibility that this study will generate "more work" for many of us at the college as we try to use the information to improve our declining enrollment numbers and reach out to a group of students who are not adequately served. I trust that we will use what is learned from this study to improve our marketing, outreach, recruiting strategies for African American male high school students. I also trust that if this research produces positive change, we will expand this model to research other market segments to find ways to improve our service for more Edgecombe Community College constituents.

Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to the college choice process of Edgecombe County, North Carolina African American, male high school students, and delimited to the service area of Edgecombe Community College. This study faced limitations, not the least of which is my ability, as the researcher, to establish rapport and relational trust with the study participants who are significantly younger than I and "who look different" than I. The primary reason for using group interviews as the data collection method was for the participants to recognize that they were participating in the study along with other members of their peer network. This approach aimed to help the participants gain a sense of belonging (within the confines of the study) and a sense of confidence that they were not alone in expressing their feelings and perceptions as they

addressed the questions. I am confident that our differences were quickly overshadowed by all we have in common. I am a first-generation college student who grew up in a mid-low socio-economic status family and attended high school in rural eastern North Carolina. I also attended a local NC community college before transferring to a university.

Another limitation of this study was related to the Novel Coronavirus and technology. The restrictions in the spring of 2020 forced my Pilot Study to change from semi-structured interviews to surveys. Extended restrictions in the Fall of 2020 forced Edgecombe County public school students to continue with remote learning through March 2021 of the school year as COVID infections were leveling off but not decreasing. Nearly one-third of the households in Edgecombe County do not have access to broadband Internet. While that percentage was slowly decreasing as some companies drastically reduced the costs and availability of broadband access, my selected research participants may have had difficulty participating in virtual group interviews. Therefore, I chose to wait to conduct my interviews until the schools re-opened and students were back on campus. This “delay” in data collection allowed Edgecombe County public school students the opportunity to return to their campuses and allowed us to meet as groups (with social distancing protocols in place) to conduct the group interviews in person.

Significance of the Study

The specific focus of this study was to identify why area African American male high school graduates are significantly less likely to enroll in postsecondary education than other demographics and to understand the support mechanisms and perceived barriers they encounter when considering and choosing their postsecondary education options. The focus of this research was not unique to Edgecombe County, North Carolina. Indeed, it is a phenomenon that has been documented across the country (McFarland et al., 2019). The expectation is that this data will be

used to improve the recruiting and marketing strategies used by Edgecombe Community College to better meet the needs of this underserved market segment and to increase enrollment numbers for Edgecombe Community College. The work performed during this study is not just to "check a box" needed for the researcher to earn his Doctoral Degree but to serve the mission and goals of Edgecombe Community College and the citizens of Edgecombe County, North Carolina. Additionally, the socio-economic problems facing Edgecombe County residents are present in many rural counties in eastern North Carolina.

Advances in Practice

The advances in practices garnered here could potentially promote data-driven inquiries into educational disparities across the eastern part of this state and improve marketing and recruiting strategies for underserved groups across the region.

Summary

This study sought to understand the real and perceived barriers that Edgecombe County, North Carolina African American, male high school students face that impact their choice to (or not to) seek postsecondary education opportunities. Additionally, this study attempted to develop marketing and outreach strategies to better serve this market segment. The results of this study will serve Edgecombe Community College by helping to develop specific, data-driven marketing and outreach strategies to help increase the number of African American male (and other underserved) high school students who enroll at the college. Additionally, this research will serve Edgecombe County Public School leadership, as they will have full access to the results of this data to use in their strategic planning.

Four more chapters will follow. Chapter 2 is a comprehensive review of the literature on college choice, college enrollment, African American college choice and enrollment, the impact

of financial aid on college choice, college marketing and recruiting, and strategic enrollment management theory. Chapter 3 will discuss the research design and how the data was collected. Chapter 4 will discuss the research findings. Finally, Chapter 5 will interpret the findings and the impact on Edgecombe Community College's marketing and recruiting strategies for this underserved population of students.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this Focus of Practice was to examine the factors that influence college intent and choice for African American male high school students in Edgecombe County, NC, and to utilize that data to refine Edgecombe Community College's marketing and outreach strategies to better meet the needs of this market segment. Edgecombe County, NC is one of the most socio-economically distressed counties in the state (*Roadmap of Need 2019*, 2019). The most recent IPEDS report for Edgecombe Community College indicates that only 10.3% of the students enrolled at the college are Black males. Group interviews from 2 of the 3 public high schools were conducted to assess the students' career goals and aspirations as well as their understanding of available postsecondary education opportunities. Additionally, the support mechanisms and perceived barriers they encounter when considering and choosing their postsecondary education options were studied. The expectation is that this data will improve the recruiting and marketing strategies used by Edgecombe Community College for all potential students but most specifically for the minority male market segment that is unquestionably, underrepresented in the student body at Edgecombe Community College.

In this literature review, I discuss the histories of college choice, college access, and enrollment in the United States to set the framework for the research focus, which is minority male enrollment in postsecondary education. Marketing strategies will also be discussed. The review of marketing strategies literature will start with traditional marketing theories and will then investigate theories relevant to higher education marketing. Finally, the aspects of college choice, marketing, and recruitment will be discussed from the Strategic Enrollment Management perspective.

College Choice

College choice is an evolving area of research that has been growing for more than fifty years. As the US population growth began to slow down in the 1970s, competition for students increased. It increased again as tuition rates exceeded financial aid allowances in the 1990s (Kinzie et al., 2004). Additionally, with increased oversight of Title IV funding, colleges were required to maintain minimum standards of information available to students in order for them to make more informed college choice decisions and to try to help increase completion rates for students (Lenning & Cooper, 1978). Traditional college choice research has primarily focused on economics: the benefits of going to college, versus not and/or sociology: how socio-economic class and academic preparation influence intent and choice, as well as the consumer approach: how marketing and branding influence choice (Iloh, 2018; Jackson, 1982).

Jackson (1982) discussed that a potential student's family background and academic experience, along with college cost and location, have the strongest influence on college choice. Much of these influences are outside of the control of an area college. However, he also discusses that available information about a college can have a "moderate influence" on the choice process. He argues that one way to influence college choice (an enrollment strategy) is to improve "available information about specific colleges and jobs, so that student perceptions are accurate (or at least favor college choices)" and to utilize specific and select recruiting tactics that maximize program efficiency rather than low-focus tactics that waste money and effort (Jackson, 1982, p. 237).

Chapman's (1981) work asserts that college characteristics, including size, distance from home, availability of financial aid, and program availability, influence college choice. In addition, he argues that college efforts: including the availability and delivery of admissions and

recruiting information, influence college choice as well (Chapman, 1981). Litten (1982) discusses college choice as a process that involves personal and social phenomena and that economically efficient decisions regarding college student recruitment are critical. Generalized marketing and recruiting models are cost-effective; however, it is important to consider the cost-benefit analysis of segmented marketing strategies that address the particular needs of individuals or groups of individuals (Litten, 1982).

Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) theoretical framework advances that student college choice is a three-phase process: predisposition, search, and choice. A student's predisposition to consider attending college can begin as early as the seventh grade and is influenced by the student's socio-economic status (SES), academic ability, parental influence, peer influence, pre-college school experiences, and proximity to a postsecondary institution. Colleges and universities have little influence over the predisposition phase. The second "search" phase begins between the tenth and twelfth grades, when colleges and universities may hold the most influence over a student's choice of postsecondary institution. The choice phase occurs between the eleventh and twelfth grades (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). All colleges and universities must understand what recruiting, and marketing strategies will positively impact college choice and eventual enrollment. This is even more important as college enrollments decline and colleges consider reaching underserved groups within their service areas.

College choice research (Chapman, 1981; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Iloh, 2018; Jackson, 1982; Litten, 1982; St. John et al., 2005) shows that many common factors that influence college choice can be divided into three categories: parents, students, and institutions. The socio-economic status of the student's family, the parents' income, and the level of encouragement the students get from parents or family members all influence the student's desire

to attend college. The student's academic ability (perceived or real), the influence of friends/peers, and career aspirations also influence college intent and choice. Additionally, the institution's influence on college choice includes the location/proximity of the institution, the programs offered, cost, size, and social atmosphere. Finally, the information provided to potential students and how that information is provided can profoundly influence the college choice process (Iloh & Tierney, 2014). Freeman (1999, 2005) contends that the racial/cultural contexts of the college choice process for underrepresented groups, especially African Americans, must be included with the traditional college choice research to increase minority participation in higher education.

African American College Choice

The works of Wilson and Allen (1987), Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005), and St. John et al. (2005) all support the traditional college choice process for African Americans; family socio-economic status, student academic ability, cost of education, future earnings, the proximity of institution, programs offered, and influence of peers all impact college choice. However, they contend that racial/cultural contexts must also be accounted for. For example, traditional, economic-related college choice studies indicate that the father's educational attainment influences the college choice process. However, Wilson and Allen (1987) contend that, in African American households, the mother's educational attainment is significantly related to the educational attainment of her children. "College cost" can have a different meaning to African Americans. As college tuition continues to rise, need-based grants are becoming less capable of paying for college, increasing the unmet need for low-income families. All of which creates larger income-related gaps in higher education participation (Empty Promises. United States. Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2002; St. John et al., 2005).

Additionally, that "cost" for many African Americans also includes future earnings. As a result, many African American college graduates cannot find jobs with salaries commensurate with their education (Freeman, 1999; St. John et al., 2005; Wilson & Allen, 1987). This "Color Ceiling" (Airen, 2017) effect negatively affects the college choice process for many African Americans (Freeman, 1997). However, Freeman (1999) also indicates that many African American students express a strong desire to "go beyond the family's level of schooling."

Cabrera and La Nasa (2001) followed the secondary education completion and postsecondary education choice of over 2.6 million eighth-graders from 1988 to 1994. They found that 99.8% of college-qualified students from low socio-economic (SES) households graduated from high school but were nearly four times less likely to enroll in any postsecondary education than those from high SES households. They also found that minimally qualified students from low SES households exhibited a 98.8% high school graduation rate but were over two times less likely to enroll in any postsecondary education than minimally qualified high school graduates from higher SES households. However, students who were considered "not college qualified" graduated high school at very different rates; 88.3% for high SES students versus 66.8% for low SES students, but they exhibited very similar postsecondary education enrollment; 31.7% for high SES students versus 40.5% for low SES students (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001), see Table 6 for more details. In a more recent study, Klasik (2012) used data from the 2002 Educational Longitudinal Study and found that Black students were equally as likely as White students to complete all the steps for college admissions but were only three quarters as likely to enroll in the college they were accepted to. He also found few differences in students' completion of steps for college admission regardless of their family's SES. However, low SES

Table 6

High School Graduation Rates and College Choice Process

College Qualification	High school Graduates			No enrollment in ANY postsecondary Ed		
	Overall	Highest SES	Lowest SES	Overall	Highest SES	Lowest SES
NOT Qualified	77%	88.30%	66.80%	37.80%	31.70%	40.50%
Minimal Qualifications	99%	99.40%	98.80%	26.40%	18.20%	40%
Qualified	99.90%	99.90%	99.80%	7.90%	4.60%	18.10%

Note. 8th Grade students from low and high SES households. Adapted from Cabrera and La Nasa (2001).

students were "significantly less likely to attain minimal college qualifications" in high school (Klasik, 2012).

African American Male College Choice

Wood and Harrison (2014), analyzing the 2006 Educational Longitudinal Study data, found that African American males attending community colleges placed great importance on many of the same categories as previous studies have indicated. These categories include offering degrees in chosen fields, availability of financial aid, academic reputation, and job placement record. However, they also found that the greatest considerations were given to lower expenses, the academic reputation of the community college, the institution's acceptance of transfer credit, and the ease of the admissions process (Wood & Harrison, 2014).

Many African American students are first-generation college students, and many come from low SES households (Freeman, 1999). Freeman's (1997) research indicated two broad categories of barriers to higher education that African Americans face: economic/financial barriers and psychological/social barriers. Economic/financial barriers include a lack of funds to pay for college and a lack of job opportunities available after college. The psychological/social barriers include intimidation, loss of hope, and the fact that many feel that college was never an option for them (Freeman, 1997, 2005). Cabrera and La Nasa's (2001) research supports the need to address and better understand the racial/cultural context of the college choice process for these students because there is, clearly, a disparity in the college-going rates of college-ready, low SES high school graduates, compared to their high SES peers.

African American College Access and Exclusion

Enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities has seen unprecedented growth from the post- World War II era with 2.3 million college-going students (Kinzie et al., 2004) through

today with over 17 million in 2017 ("IPEDS Trends," n.d.). One factor contributing to this growth is the US population change during that time. The population of the United States was 123 million in 1930 (United States Census Bureau: 1930 fast facts, n.d.). The post-World War II baby boom, and subsequent generation growth, has the most recent US Census Bureau population estimate at 329 million people today (United States Census Bureau: Topics: Population, n.d.). The sheer magnitude of this population increase alone would drive higher postsecondary education enrollment. Another significant factor that has contributed to this trend is access. Today, more people have opportunities to attend college than ever before, but "equal opportunity" and "equal access" continue to have different meanings in higher education (Turner & Bound, 2003). Many major events, legal precedents, laws, and Congressional Acts have contributed to shortening the gap between equal opportunity and equal access over the past 150 years.

The Morrill Act of 1862 gave states public lands to use or sell to establish at least one college with a focus on agriculture technology (Cohen & Kiser, 2010). This grant also made education more accessible for the predominantly rural country after the Civil War (National Research Council (US), 1995). The second Morrill Act of 1890 was of critical importance to college access because it provided not only annual appropriations to help support the land grant colleges but also forbade racial discrimination in the admissions process for these colleges that were receiving federal funding under this Act (Cohen & Kiser, 2010; National Research Council (US), 1995). This specific provision of the second Morrill Act allowed for colleges for African Americans (Cohen & Kiser, 2010). This was a tremendous step forward in the early attempts to shrink the gap between opportunity and access. Unfortunately, however, the states established

colleges for African Americans to circumvent the anti-discrimination provision (National Research Council (US), 1995).

Section I of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, ratified in 1868, states:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law, which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (US Constitution. Amendment. XIV, Section I)

It would be nearly a century before the United States truly began to live up to the expectations of this amendment. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 banned racial discrimination in public places but was deemed unconstitutional and overturned by the US Supreme Court in 1883 (History, Art, & Archives. United States House of Representatives, n.d.). The *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* U.S. Supreme Court ruling (1885) established that the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment applied to everyone, regardless of their skin color, as well as the precedent that both the wording and enforcement of laws must abide by the equal protection clause. However, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* U.S. Supreme Court ruling (1896) widened the gap between opportunity and access by establishing the constitutionality of segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine, which significantly hindered minority men and women from access to higher education opportunities.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was established in 1909. From the 1920s through the 1950s, the NAACP began to focus efforts to dismantle segregation and improve educational access and opportunities for all colored people

through thoughtful litigation in the US Judicial System (Patterson et al., 2005). In that same period, the legislative and executive branches of the United States government began to address educational access and opportunity through the Serviceman's Readjustment Act and the Truman Commission on Higher Education.

The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the GI Bill (Turner & Bound, 2003), allowed postsecondary education opportunities for the over 16 million servicemen and women who served in World War II, as well as all of the servicemen and women who served in the decades that followed. The GI bill is considered a "race-neutral" act. However, according to Turner and Bound (2003), access to postsecondary and vocational education, as well as the labor market, were not. Black veterans were restricted to about 100 public and private colleges and universities in the then, still-segregated South and the historically Black colleges were forced to turn away over 20,000 Black veterans during the enrollment surge following the implementation of the GI Bill due to lack of space (Turner & Bound, 2003). One of the benefits of the GI Bill is that it is portable, meaning it can be utilized at colleges and universities across the country. However, Black GI's faced tremendous difficulty moving to northern states to pursue postsecondary education opportunities due to family obligations, lack of information about northern colleges, as well as the racial discrimination that still faced African Americans in the North (Turner & Bound, 2003).

The President's Commission on Higher Education of 1947 (also known as the Truman Commission) was the next impactful change to higher education access. Zook (1947a) explains that President Truman challenged this committee to four goals. First, to establish ways and means of expanding the educational opportunities of all "able young people." Second, to determine the adequacy of postsecondary curricula. Next, to lay the framework for establishing a

series of intermediate technical institutes. Finally, to establish a financial structure that can help address the rapidly expanding physical facility needs in higher education in the wake of the enrollment surge brought about by the GI Bill. This was the first major national commission dedicated to higher education in the United States (Zook, 1947a).

This commission addressed four major problems in response to Truman's expectations, three of which directly relate to higher education access. The first problem addressed by the commission was to establish mechanisms that would ensure higher education opportunities were available for all, regardless of race, color, religion, or economic status. The second was to establish more equitable ways of financing higher education for institutions and students alike. The early wake of the GI Bill strained the fiscal plant needs of most colleges and universities. Additionally, endowment earnings and philanthropic contributions were decreasing, which required students (and their families) to pay more, which favors the “well-to-do” at the expense of the lower class (Zook, 1947a). The Truman Commission outlined three recommendations: (1) to improve college access and equity; (2) to expand community colleges; and (3) to change/improve the way the federal government funds higher education institutions (Gilbert & Heller, 2010; Zook, 1947a; Zook, 1947b). The GI Bill and the Truman Commission helped significantly improve access to higher education for Americans, but courtroom victories ultimately led to desegregation.

In 1931, Nathan Ross Margold solidified the litigation plans of the NAACP's desegregation movement. That plan was to use two landmark US Supreme Court Cases seemingly “against each other” through what would appear to be “small” discrimination/ segregation court cases throughout the country (Patterson et al., 2005). The plan used the 1885 *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* and the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* U.S. Supreme Court rulings as the

foundation for desegregation litigation strategies. The “separate but equal” ruling of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case was not being upheld by states either in law or the enforcement of the law. When applied to individual court cases of discrimination, this approach shined a light on the fact that the 1885 *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* ruling (equal protection under the law applied to everyone, regardless of skin color) was not being upheld nor enforced nationwide either.

The 1936 *University v. Murry* decision helped desegregate the University of Maryland Law School. *Menendez v. Westminster* (1946) set the precedent that eventually led to the end of school segregation laws in California. *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education* (1950) and *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) both helped establish that the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the US constitution applied to graduate and professional school admissions. Finally, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision was a collection of five separate challenges originally filed in Delaware, Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and the District of Columbia brought before the Supreme Court in 1952. These cases were: *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas et al.*; *Harry Briggs, Jr. et al. v. R.W. Elliott et al.*; *Dorothy E. Davis et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia et al.*; *Spottswood Thomas Bolling et al. v. C. Melvin Sharpe et al.*; *Francis B. Gebhart et al. v. Ethel Louise Belton et al.*. The Supreme Court's unanimous 1954 decision declared school segregation unconstitutional by law. A year later, after further deliberation, the Supreme Court ruled that nationwide desegregation plans were to occur "with all deliberate speed." However, it would be a decade later before legislative and executive branches made segregation illegal by law (Documents Related to *Brown v. Board of Education*, n.d.).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 legally ended segregation in public places and prohibited employment discrimination. The Higher Education Act of 1965 increased the availability of

federal financial aid by creating Title IV funding for Educational Opportunities Grants and guaranteed student loans (Gilbert & Heller, 2010; Kinzie et al., 2004). The Higher Education Act of 1968 created TRIO programs to give underserved students more exposure to and preparation for postsecondary education opportunities ("History of the Federal TRIO Programs," n.d.). The 1972 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act created clear nondiscrimination laws for higher education by replacing Educational Opportunities Grants with Basic Educational Opportunities Grants under a federal review process. These grants were renamed "Pell Grants" in 1980 (Brown, 2016; Gilbert & Heller, 2010; Kinzie et al., 2004). The Middle Income Student Assistance Act of 1978 (MISAA) guaranteed subsidized loans to students regardless of need. This Act led to more college access at the expense of increased student college debt (Brown, 2016). The 1992 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act established unsubsidized Stafford Loans, which allowed students to borrow more to cover the ever-increasing costs of higher education (Gilbert & Heller, 2010). The 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act created GEAR UP, "Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs." These programs were intended to provide students, parents, and teachers at high poverty schools with more information, exposure, academic counseling, and career planning to increase these students' chances of pursuing postsecondary education (Brown, 2016; Standing et al., 2008). Finally, the 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act saw the creation of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). This Act provided more higher education access for individuals with intellectual disabilities by enabling them to qualify for Pell Grants and federal work-study programs (Brown, 2016).

Financial Aid as a Barrier to College Access

Equal opportunity does not necessarily mean equal access, as systematic factors can influence college choice for minority students (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Turner & Bound, 2003; Wilson & Allen, 1987). Freeman (1997) found that these systematic factors include economic and psychological/social barriers. The economic barriers include lack of funding for college (or lack of income during college to support the student) and lack of understanding of the jobs available after college. The psychological/social barriers include academic self-efficacy of the students and lack of internal and external motivation and support to go to college (Freeman, 1997). Additionally, racial/cultural contexts must be understood when considering college intent and choice processes for minority students (Freeman, 1999).

Long and Riley (2007) contend that the focus of federal financial aid policy has shifted in ways that benefit middle and upper-income families while making higher education access more difficult for low-income students and students of color. The trends show decreased availability of need-based aid and grants and increased focus on student loans and education tax breaks. When combined with the continuously increasing costs of postsecondary education, decreased need-based aid increases students' unmet financial needs, which disproportionately impacts low-income students more than middle and upper-income students (Long & Riley, 2007). In addition, Long and Riley (2007) identified one of the three major barriers to college access and success: the complexity of college admissions processes, the financial aid process, and the lack of accurate information about the true costs of higher education.

Nienhuser and Oshio's (2017) analysis of the 2009 High School Longitudinal Study shows that high school students have great difficulty accurately estimating the cost of college tuition. That difficulty is compounded when those high school students are from low-income

families or first-generation college students. This lack of understanding of college costs, coupled with the complexity of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA[®]) and the fact that most college-bound high school students do not consider college costs until their senior year of high school can have a detrimental impact on a student's college choice process. Moreover, these negative impacts are exacerbated if students come from disadvantaged families who may not possess the college experience or the social capital necessary to overcome these obstacles (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2017).

Kim's (2007) research finds that "Low-income students and underrepresented minority students experience far more transitioning difficulty than upper-income and White peers after high school." Meaning these students are much less likely to enroll in college directly out of high school. These delayed enrollments are usually due to a lack of financial resources and/or access to information about the costs of attending college and available financial aid. Transition difficulty can lead to delayed enrollment (or no enrollment), which has been found to decrease student retention and completion rates (Kim, 2007). In addition, not understanding the costs of college and the potential financial aid packages available to students from low and middle-income families can impact the college choice process, as well as the choice to NOT enroll in college at all (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2017).

While not understanding college costs and available financial aid can significantly decrease the chance of students enrolling in college (Kim, 2007; Nienhusser & Oshio, 2017), knowing what financial aid packages are available (or the lack thereof) can have similar impacts on college choice and enrollment. Kim (2004) stresses the importance of financial aid packages in the college choice process, especially for low-income and underrepresented minority students. They are much less likely to enroll in colleges where little to no financial aid is available.

Therefore, it is imperative that access to financial aid opportunities and the process of applying for financial aid be readily available to potential Edgecombe Community College students.

Understanding college costs and financial aid availability may still not be enough. McKinney and Novak (2013) indicate that approximately 42% of college students who are eligible for federal financial aid (specifically, Pell Grant) do not file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition, Kofoed (2016) found that college applicants forgo \$9,741.05 in federal aid (loans and grants), which totals \$24 billion, per year, in unused financial aid. Students from low-income households are forgoing over \$3,000 in Pell Grant. However, it is interesting to note that Black students, who are eligible for Pell Grant, are 10.3% more likely to complete a FAFSA than their White classmates (Kofoed, 2016). Kofoed (2016) eloquently stated, “understanding which characteristics influence a student to not complete FAFSA despite the student’s eligibility may help college administrators target students for FAFSA completion and policymakers to simplify the FAFSA form.”

African American College Enrollment

According to Page and Scott-Clayton (2016), only 41% of highly qualified high school graduates from low socio-economic (SES) families earn bachelor's degrees, compared to 74% from high socio-economic families. Many of the barriers to college enrollment and success lie with the increased costs of attending college, as well as indications that low SES families have less access to good information about college costs and benefits. Additionally, navigating the complex application processes for enrollment and financial aid has been identified as barriers to college enrollment for low SES students (Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016). These findings corroborate the college choice research of Wilson and Allen (1987), Freeman (1997, 1999,

2005), Cabrera and La Nasa (2001), Iloh and Tierney (2014), and St. John et al. (2005) discussed above.

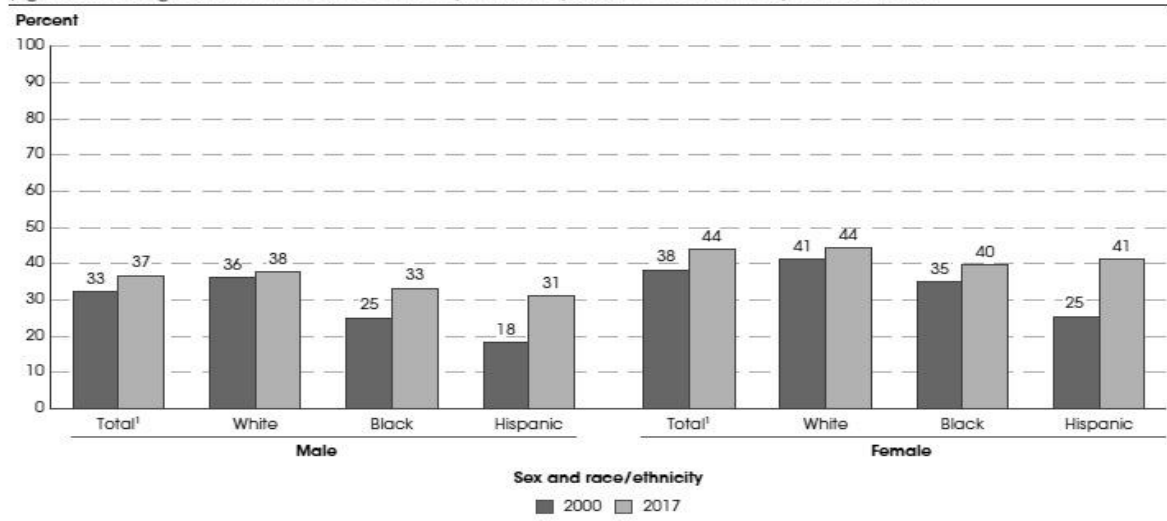
Sixteen percent of high school graduates attended college in 1940. That number increased to 40% in 1980 and 70% in 2016. In 2017 that number dropped to 67% (McDaniel et al., 2011). In 1940, women made up 30% of the total postsecondary student body in the United States, and by 1980, women surpassed men in total college degrees awarded and have led the postsecondary enrollment ever since (Kim & Rury, 2007; McDaniel et al., 2011; McFarland et al., 2019). Additionally, White females maintain the highest current college enrollment and graduation rates (McDaniel et al., 2011; McFarland et al., 2019).

Since the end of segregation, Black males have earned fewer degrees than Black females (McDaniel et al., 2011; Muhammad et al., 2008). Additionally, as Figure 1 indicates, Black male, recent high school graduates show the lowest college enrollment percentage (33%) compared to males and females of other demographics (McFarland et al., 2019). According to McDaniel et al. (2011), much of the Black male disadvantage in college enrollment and subsequent completion mirrors the findings of Wilson and Allen (1987), Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005), Cabrera and La Nasa (2001), St. John et al. (2005), and Iloh and Tierney (2014). These findings indicate and support the racial/cultural barriers to college enrollment and success for African American males. These barriers include the cost of college, lack of college preparation, lack of access to good information, difficulty navigating application processes, lack of support, and labor market perceptions.

African American College Enrollment in North Carolina

According to Tippet and Stanford (2019), “only 16% of North Carolina public high school 9th graders successfully graduate from high school on time, enroll at a North Carolina

Figure 3. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2017



Note. Retrieved from McFarland et al. (2019, p. 152).

Figure 1. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2017.

community college (NCCC) or University of North Carolina (UNC) system school in the following fall and complete an associate's or bachelor's degree within three or six years, respectively." Disaggregation of this data indicates that, by gender, the percentages are 19% and 17% for females and males, respectively, and by race, 19% and 9% for Whites and Blacks, respectively. Whites' and Blacks' high school graduation rates are close (89% and 84%, respectively), and there is a similar gap in postsecondary intent between Whites and Blacks (85% and 81%, respectively). However, the gap between college intent and enrollment is larger as 57% of Asian American, North Carolina high school graduates immediately enroll in postsecondary education after graduation compared to 44% for Whites and Native Americans, 37% for African Americans, and 36% for Hispanics. The gap between females and males is also widening (48% and 38%, respectively) (Tippett & Stanford, 2019). Overall, these data implicate a need for outreach and marketing strategies to translate North Carolina's diverse high school student body into college students.

College Marketing and Recruiting

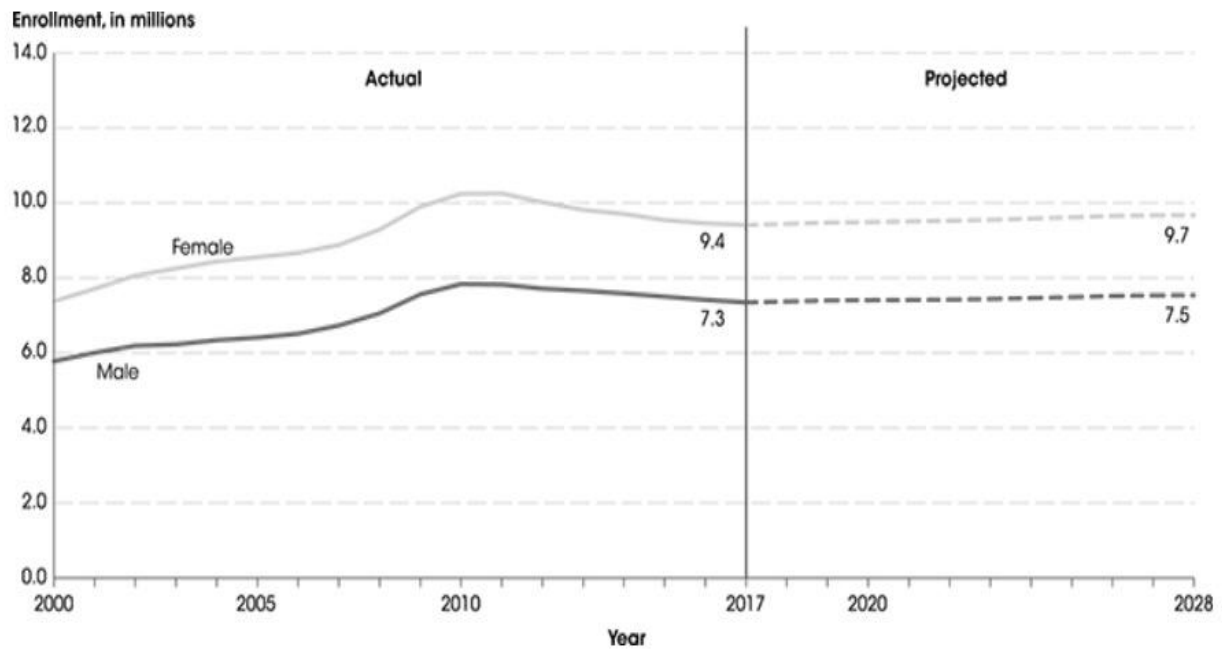
The Morrill Act of 1862 created a vehicle of change in how colleges and universities marketed to prospective students (McGrath, 2002). Before this Act, most colleges and universities relied on sharing, participation, association, and fellowship as the primary drivers for the marketing and recruitment of students, known as the "Ritual Approach" (McGrath, 2002). The institution of the Land-Grant colleges supported by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 began to make postsecondary education more accessible for Americans. It began to shift higher education marketing due to increased competition for students. The GI Bill, Higher Education, and Civil Rights Acts fostered an explosion in college growth and enrollment (Cohen & Kiser, 2010). However, since college enrollment peaked in the first decade of the twenty-first century

and enrollment projections appear to "level off" for at least the next ten years (McFarland et al., 2019), colleges now rely on marketing techniques to stay competitive. These techniques are typically associated with consumer products (Mackey, 1994). Shanklin and Burdenski (1989) describe these techniques as the "Transmission Approach" and include advertising, direct marketing, and public relations. See Figures 1 and 2 for undergraduate enrollment projections.

Many higher education administrators do not have a background in marketing and advertising, which can lead to fragmented and less effective advertising strategies. There is also resistance by some administrators to market education like a product (Goodrich et al., 2018). However, with proper planning (see Figure 3), advertising and marketing can be viewed as an investment with results that can be measured (Jugenheimer, 1995).

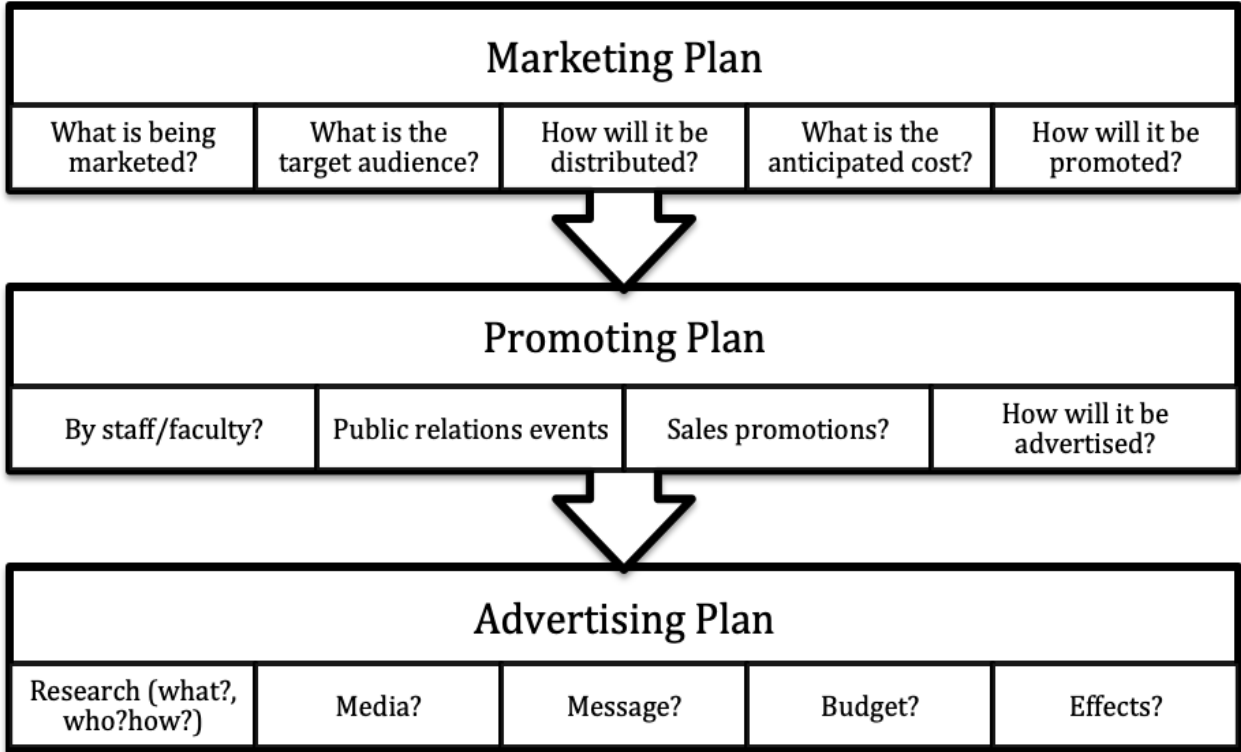
College Marketing as Product Marketing

Wasmer et al. (1997) discuss higher education marketing as the "4 C's" (concept, cost, channel, and communication). The idea of "concept" refers to the institution understanding the needs of their service area constituents and offering classes, programs, and short-term training that can address those needs. "Cost" refers to not only the cost associated with pursuing an academic credential but also the benefit [to the student] for completing that credential (i.e., potential employment and earnings associated with obtaining that credential). "Channel" refers, in some contexts, to the timing and location of programs being offered. For example, is the class/program being offered online, face-to-face, or at off-site locations. Channel is the broadest and most ambiguous of these categories in that it can encompass or include the "concept" topic since one of the drivers of the topic is based on student need/demand. The final topic is "communication," and this topic involves, solely, how the institution plans to market and promote the services, programs, courses outlined by the first three topics (Wasmer et al., 1997).



Note. Retrieved from McFarland et al. (2019, p. 154).

Figure 2. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by sex: Fall 2000 through 2028.



Note. Adapted from Jugenheimer (1995).

Figure 3. Steps in planning an advertising process.

Goldgehn (1991) surveyed over 2,000 members of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers regarding their institutions' use of 15 different marketing techniques. The research revealed that while many higher education institutions relied heavily on publicity and targeted marketing techniques, very few marketing techniques were being used with the necessary follow-up or precursor technique. Targeted marketing (marketing for specific audiences or demographics), for example, works best when preceded by market segmentation, which helps the institution better understand the needs of the target audience (by demographic information, for example), but was rarely utilized by the participating institutions in this study (Goldgehn, 1991). One of the major concerns with marketing is cost. The cost-benefit analysis of targeted marketing is measured by enrollments gained or lost. However, the cost-benefit analysis of market segmentation cannot be directly measured but has been directly linked to increased productivity of targeted marketing (Goldgehn, 1991). This study revealed a gap and lack of integration of marketing in higher education institutions and a lack of senior administration understanding of and buy-in to the complex and costly steps required for effective marketing.

In her 2002 study, Newman built upon the works of Goldgehn and others to determine if higher education marketing strategies had changed. Her study of the marketing techniques of 367 institutions revealed market planning, research, and audits had increased in use. This trend indicates that the follow-up deficiencies indicated by Goldgehn (1991) were being addressed. However, the research also revealed that target marketing, market segmentation, and positioning had decreased. Newman (2002) revealed that the findings were “perplexing” (p. 25) because those three marketing tools are specifically used to differentiate one’s products and services from

the competition and then communicate those specific products and services to specific groups of potential students.

Effective Marketing Techniques Requires Analysis

Goodrich et al. (2018) assert that while higher education marketing is much more challenging than the marketing of typical products, the primary goal of marketing in any context is to “better match consumers (students) with products (universities) to best fit their needs” (p. 2). Their research went beyond traditional market segmentation variables (like demographics) by addressing the “psychographic segmentation” variables in higher education marketing. This research surveyed 1,000 students to determine which higher education marketing media was used most by students when seeking information about prospective colleges. The results showed that campus visits outpaced other “traditional” media sources like television commercials, radio ads, and billboard advertising by nearly 10:1. In addition, University website visits were three times more effective than other online and social media advertising. An interesting finding in this study was that traditional mailing was still considered very important/influential in helping students find information about colleges (Goodrich et al., 2018).

Shields and Peruta’s (2019) study showed that most students surveyed do not indicate social media as a primary means of researching colleges and universities during the "search phase," as described by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). Instead, students indicate that the colleges' official web pages are where they visit during the pre-application phase as they investigate majors, how to apply, tuition rates, class size, and other specific characteristics of the college. However, when interviewed, students indicate that social media, specifically Facebook®, Twitter®, and Instagram®, plays a very important role after the pre-application phase, as students refine their higher education choice search. They utilize social media platforms to help

determine the college atmosphere and campus activities. Some students reported using the videos and pictures posted on a college's social media sites in place of campus visits (Shields & Peruta, 2019). This information is valuable in light of Goodrich et al.'s (2018) work that indicates the overwhelming importance of campus visits.

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz 2018 Marketing and Student Recruitment Report of Effective Practices surveyed 115 non-profit, public and private higher education institutions to determine the most effective, current marketing/recruiting techniques. This report shows that just as Goodrich et al. (2018) indicated, in-person visits were the most effective marketing and recruiting tool for higher education institutions. However, this report also indicates that text messaging is the most underutilized recruitment/marketing tactic for public (four-year) institutions. Of the 115 institutions surveyed, 96% indicate that text messaging is an effective marketing/recruiting tool. However, only 60% of the respondents indicate utilizing text messaging to communicate with potential students (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2018). This indicates first that colleges and universities should consider allowing potential students to provide cell phone numbers and opt-in to receiving messages from the college. Secondly, since in-person meetings (either on or off-campus) are still the most effective recruiting and marketing tool at the disposal of colleges and universities, these institutions must understand the background, social/psychological, and institutional factors that influence a person's college choice. Then, utilize this information to tailor these meetings to be as informational and effective as possible for all students, but especially for underrepresented (low SES and minority) students who may face more obstacles in their postsecondary education choice processes (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Evans & Noriega, 2011; Freeman, 1997, 1999; Iloh & Tierney, 2014; Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; St. John et al., 2005; Wilson & Allen, 1987).

Small Colleges and Community College Marketing

Absher and Crawford (1996) administered a survey to 675 students across four northern Alabama community colleges to illuminate which recruiting and marketing factors most influenced those students' college choice. The top-five factors indicated by respondents were overall quality of education, available programs, costs, college reputation, and faculty qualifications. Further market segmentation analysis indicated that the majority of survey respondents (58%) were most influenced by the school's interest in them, campus safety, college reputation, faculty qualifications, tuition and available financial aid, college hospitality and friendliness, and the overall quality of the education they would receive. However, other market segments relied on different factors to influence their college choice (Absher & Crawford, 1996). The results of this research reinforce Goldgehn's (1991) assertions that community college administrators must utilize market analysis techniques (market segmentation analysis and targeted marketing) to "attract and maintain a desirable student population" (Absher & Crawford, 1996, p. 66).

Clagett (2012) discusses some of the specific challenges of community college marketing. The broad mission of community colleges creates more marketing and recruiting challenges than many four-year institutions experience. Additionally, community college enrollments are influenced by many different factors as well, including by not limited to service area size, reputation, credit transferability, programs offered, customer service perception, as well as proximity and characteristics of neighboring competitors. He asserts that community college marketing plans should combine data analysis with enrollment management theory (Clagett, 2012).

Marketing to African American, Male Students: A Gap in the Research

Outside of research found for college athletics and graduate degree programs, there appears to be very little research available on college and university marketing and recruiting strategies specifically for undergraduate [freshman], African American, male students. In many cases, this data is discussed in combined approaches, i.e., student enrollment in conjunction with college success through persistence and completion for less privileged students or under-represented students. The interventions used to increase college persistence and completion, while incredibly necessary, are very different from the marketing and recruiting strategies necessary to get more of these students "in the door" and on campus. Additionally, as a market segment, Black male high school students are a very specific target audience. Suppose colleges and universities wish to increase enrollment of this specific group. In that case, the institutions need to understand what this group needs, what specific barriers this group faces, and what preferences (for marketing and outreach) this group has.

Harper et al. (2016; 2018) discuss the concept of being "intentional" in recruiting Black, suburban students to urban universities. Intentional recruiting requires understanding what a target audience (market segment) needs, wants, prefers, etc. For example, Evans and Noriega (2011) found that first-generation, African American freshmen indicated that they preferred the face-to-face approach to higher education marketing and recruitment through involved guidance counselors over other forms of advertising. Therefore, colleges must put energy and resources into market segment analysis and use that data to drive marketing and recruiting strategies to drive enrollment change for underserved groups, like African American males.

College marketing and recruiting do not happen in a vacuum. It must be a data-driven, college-wide endeavor. This is especially true for colleges and universities seeing staggering

enrollment declines but is equally important for institutions that recognize an equity gap. We cannot address a problem until we understand what that problem is. Additionally, addressing this problem cannot be the sole responsibility of one individual or department.

Strategic Enrollment Management

Enrollment management-based marketing requires that institutions identify their service area's educational and training needs then develop products and services that meet those needs. Finally, the colleges must effectively communicate (market) those products and services throughout their service area (Clagett, 2012). However, to effectively market those products and services, an institution has to understand the potential students in their service area. This is especially true when considering that many small, rural community colleges may be trying to reach first-generation, minority, low socio-economic status students. These students face barriers that may be very different from other demographics, as discussed by Wilson and Allen (1987), Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005), Cabrera and La Nasa (2001), St. John et al. (2005), Iloh and Tierney (2014), and Page and Scott-Clayton (2016).

Hossler (1999) captures the importance of using an analytical approach to college admissions to reach students early (when they are first considering postsecondary options). Additionally, he contends that understanding the different student market segments and utilizing targeted marketing strategies and recruiting activities are much more beneficial than generic, blanket-style direct mailings and advertisements (Hossler, 1999). Utilizing integrated marketing efforts that take the preferences of the different market segments into account is critical to maximizing enrollment (Hossler, 1999). This is one of the many layers of strategic enrollment management theory.

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is a systems approach to college admissions. SEM theory integrates deliberate planning of all student services that influence/impact college enrollment, including college choice, markets and niches, admissions, recruiting, cost, financial aid, registration, retention, persistence, and completion (Dunbar, 2018; Hossler & Bontrager, 2014). This particular research focuses on college choice, marketing, and recruiting. When discussing marketing and recruiting strategies, Hossler and Bontrager (2014) stress the fact that marketing and recruiting strategies must be integrated and that marketing is “everyone’s responsibility” (p. 109), and that each interaction is a “new interaction” because college and university experiences are “perishable” (p. 108). Therefore, every interaction with college faculty and staff is a possibility to gain (or lose) a potential applicant or student. Additionally, marketing and recruiting strategies include practices as simple as analyzing campus signage to minimize campus visitors’ confusion to the importance of utilizing research to understand: (1) the needs of current students, (2) to develop and test marketing strategies based on that research, and (3) to refine services based on the research (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014).

Summary

In this literature review, I highlighted the major advances in higher education opportunity and access equity that have evolved over the past century and the factors that influence college choice, and the barriers to postsecondary enrollment that many students, specifically African American male students, face. It has also reinforced that minority males, specifically African American males, are still one of the most underrepresented demographics in higher education nationwide. Colleges and universities have recognized this inequity for decades. In the wake of ever decreasing overall enrollments, these institutions have slowly begun to adopt marketing strategies traditionally reserved for commercial industries. Strategies designed to help increase

their overall enrollment trends and reach more underserved market segments. The factors influencing postsecondary education intent and choice were discussed, as were barriers to higher education that minority male students face, whether real or perceived. The value of postsecondary credentials affords long-term, positive impacts on the quality of life for recipients, their families, and their communities. Finally, the literature review highlights the importance of research and understanding the market segments and needs of current and future students in order for colleges to best tailor marketing and recruiting strategies to maximize enrollment.

The goal of this study was to determine the specific factors that influence college intent and choice for African American males in rural, eastern North Carolina and to use that data to improve marketing to and the recruiting of this underserved market segment at Edgecombe Community College. The next chapter will discuss the tools used to gather the information needed to drive that revision to the college marketing and recruiting strategies.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY

The purpose of this Focus of Practice was to examine the factors that influence college intent and choice for African American male high school students in Edgecombe County, NC, and to utilize that data to refine Edgecombe Community College's marketing and outreach strategies to better meet the needs of this market segment. Group interviews from two of the three county high schools were conducted to assess their career goals and aspirations and their understanding of available postsecondary education opportunities. Additionally, the support mechanisms and perceived barriers they encounter when considering and choosing their postsecondary education options were studied. Finally, transcriptions from the interviews were thematically analyzed. This data was used to develop marketing and outreach strategies to help increase the dual enrollment options and subsequent higher education enrollment opportunities for the minority male market segment that is unquestionably, underrepresented in the student body at Edgecombe Community College. These strategies, when implemented, will afford these opportunities and options for other underserved market segments as well.

African American male, recent high school graduates show the lowest, nationwide, college enrollment percentage (33%) compared to males and females of other demographics (McFarland et al., 2019). In Edgecombe County, NC, one of the most socio-economically distressed counties in the state (*Roadmap of Need 2019*, 2019), only 30% of the African American male population has any postsecondary credits, which is lower than any other demographic (NCCCS, 2019). The most recent IPEDS report for Edgecombe Community College indicates that only 10.3% of the students enrolled at the college are Black males. The purpose of this research is to examine the barriers to postsecondary education access for African

American males in Edgecombe County, North Carolina, and to utilize those findings to improve the college's targeted marketing techniques for this segment.

FoP Guiding Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What factors influenced current students' choice to attend Edgecombe Community College, and what barriers to enrollment did current students and their peers experience?

The purpose of addressing this question was to better understand why current Edgecombe Community College students choose the college and what real or perceived barriers these students and their peers faced in their college choice and enrollment process. The data gathered here helped develop Phase II of the study.

2. What barriers to postsecondary enrollment do Edgecombe County African American male high school students face that prevent them from pursuing postsecondary education or training?

In Edgecombe County, White, female high school graduates are 2.5 times more likely to enroll at a community college than African American, male high school graduates (NCCCS, 2019). Significant research investigates this nationwide phenomenon and tries to explain this disparity. The purpose of addressing this research question was to better understand barriers specific to the Edgecombe Community College service area and rural, economically strained eastern North Carolina residents. The data gathered through these interviews will help refine the outreach strategies deployed by the college to help reach the underserved constituents of this service area. This data will be shared with Edgecombe County Public School leadership.

3. What marketing and recruiting strategies can be developed that utilize data collected to reach African American male Edgecombe County high school students more effectively?

Current marketing strategies at Edgecombe Community College include social media, fliers, mailers, and career coaches at each service area high school. The college also has a college liaison that helps facilitate service area high school students' enrollment in college-level classes (dual-enrollment). The dual-enrollment program is growing, but the pace is slow, and with the population of the service area declining, the pool of high school students and high school graduates is shrinking. Additionally, Edgecombe Community College enrollment is steadily declining. The college administration may need to consider tailoring different marketing strategies for different market segments to maximize outreach and recruiting success. This can be a fiscally wasteful process if the marketing segment's needs and preferences are not understood. The data gathered here was used to design marketing and outreach strategies intended to increase interest and enrollment of service area, African American male high school students to Edgecombe Community College.

Inquiry Design and Rationale

The goal of this study was to determine the specific factors that influence college intent and choice for African American males in rural, eastern North Carolina and to use that data to improve marketing to and recruiting of this underserved market segment at Edgecombe Community College. The inquiry methods included surveys, group interviews, and the input of a focus group. Group interviews were chosen as both a research method and intervention. While there are specific questions I wished to find answers to during the interviews, I intended to help answer any questions the participants had. This may have helped clarify any misunderstandings

or misconceptions they may have had about considering, applying, and/or enrolling in college after graduation. This approach follows the guidance of Hossler and Bontrager (2014). They indicate that every interaction with a potential student is a "new interaction" with that student. Therefore, every interaction with those potential students is a chance to possibly gain or lose that student. The interview approach used open-ended, guided questions to allow participants to build on their collective experiences and stimulate thorough expression of their personal opinions with the support of the peer network members in the study. This approach was intended to garner rich narratives surrounding shared experiences and perspectives. Group interviews were chosen as the data collection method to give the participants a greater sense of belonging and comfort as they participated with their peers. Additionally, interviews can gain personal and intimate responses to questions and allow for follow-up questions and a deeper understanding of the topics being studied. The group interview approach was chosen to allow members of the target market segment to provide their input and preferences into the design of the proposed intervention strategy.

Context of the Study

Edgecombe County is located in northeastern North Carolina, approximately halfway between the Atlantic Ocean and Raleigh, NC. The U.S. Census Bureau reports the county demographics as 57.2% Black, 39.8% White, and 4.8% Hispanic or Latino. According to the North Carolina Community College Analytics and Reporting Dashboard, 68% of Black female Edgecombe County Public School graduates enroll in postsecondary education compared to 48% of Black males. In addition, 75% of White females and 53% of White males enroll in college after high school, compared with 45% of Hispanic males and 43% of Hispanic females. In the Fall of 2011, Edgecombe Community College enrollment hit 3033 students. Today, the college

has a total Fall curriculum enrollment of under 2000 students, and the enrollment numbers continue to drop year-to-year (Edgecombe Community College Fact Book: 2019-2020, 2020). African Americans are the largest demographic of Edgecombe County, but African American males exhibit some of the lowest postsecondary enrollment of all demographics at Edgecombe Community College. The goal of this study was to better understand why this group's postsecondary enrollments are so low and what Edgecombe Community College administrators, faculty, and staff could do to increase this group's enrollment in college after high school.

Inquiry Partners

The inquiry partners at Edgecombe County Public Schools (ECPS) were the counselors (four African American females and three White females across three high schools). The counselors are actively involved with their students' academic planning and postsecondary aspirations. They are also familiar with many of the real (and perceived) barriers their students face that may stand in the way of their aspirations. Additional stakeholders include the superintendent (African American female), Assistant Superintendent and Director of Secondary Education (African American male), and the high school principals (two African American males, one White female, and one White male).

The inquiry partners at Edgecombe Community College were the high school liaison (White female) and the area high school career coaches (one black male, two White females, and one White male). The career coaches are “the face” of Edgecombe Community College at the high schools. Coaches assist 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade students with career exploration and dual enrollment opportunities, as well as helping the students try to plan paths beyond high school. Additionally, career coaches work hand-in-hand with counselors during the fall and spring semester academic planning for 11th and 12th graders. This collaboration helps to ensure that

students can take classes at Edgecombe Community College that do not conflict with their required high school classes. The career coaches are also very familiar with the barriers their students face. Therefore, their input and that of the counselors was critically important to the development of questions used in Phase II of the inquiry and the recruitment of the student participants. Finally, the career coaches and high school counselors assisted in developing one of the marketing and outreach strategies that grew out of the results of this study. The additional Edgecombe Community college stakeholders include the President (African American male), Vice President of Student Services (African American female), Dean of Enrollment (African American male), Dean of Students (African American male), Academic Deans (White female and two White males), the Office of Public Information (two, White females), the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (one Hispanic and one White female), and the college recruiter (African American female).

The ultimate approval of my research being conducted with students from Edgecombe County high schools came from the ECPS Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. The ECPS Director of Secondary Education oversees the administration, coordination, and supervision of all high schools and high school programs. Therefore, I required the support and assistance from this position to help me "get in the door" to the area high schools and help garner the high school principals' support. When the research is completed, the data and findings will be shared with the ECPS partners in the hopes that it can be used to increase the number of African American male high school students who will consider postsecondary education pathways.

The President of ECC supports this research. His support is critical as more and more institutional divisions and individuals will be needed to help with the College's response to the data analysis and the subsequent marketing and outreach strategies that developed as a result.

The Academic Deans are my peers and were incredibly supportive of my degree pursuits. While their assistance is not directly related to my study, their help and support were invaluable. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has continued to support this endeavor since the beginning, as they assist with providing the data needed to develop this study. Finally, the Office of Public Information has also been incredibly supportive of this research. The office provided preliminary data concerning the college marketing strategies. It was very supportive and interested in learning if the study results could assist them with their efforts and initiatives.

Inquiry Procedures

This mixed-method study utilized surveys and semi-structured group interviews to understand the real and perceived barriers that Edgecombe County, North Carolina, African American male high school students face when considering postsecondary education opportunities (college choice). Additionally, this study utilized data from group interviews of African American male Edgecombe County high school students and input from career coaches and high school counselors to discern the preferred marketing and outreach strategies of this market segment that may help remove some of those real and perceived barriers. Finally, a focus group of African American male college students was used to help design the template for a proposed marketing and outreach strategy. The first phase of this inquiry (Phase I) utilized a survey to uncover some of the barriers to college choice that current Edgecombe Community College students faced. Phase II of the inquiry consisted of semi-structured, group interviews of Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students. The purpose of this phase was to attempt to understand the real and perceived barriers to college intent and choice for this market segment. Phase III utilized the analyzed data from Phases I and II and information gathered from planned meetings with Edgecombe Community College Career Coaches to inform

the development of marketing and outreach strategies that specifically target African American male, Edgecombe County high school students. These meetings were not part of the study but occurred during my duties as the Vice President of Instruction at Edgecombe Community College. The information gathered in these meetings (which occurred after the Phase II inquiry) echoed and expanded upon the information gathered during the interviews with the Phase II participants and led to the development of new career and technical education (CTE) certificates that would create dual enrollment opportunities for more Edgecombe County high school students than ever before. Additionally, a focus group of African American male college students helped develop the template of the intervention strategy that will be created because of this study. The analysis of the success of the strategies developed in Phases II and III will occur outside the time constraints of this study; however, the development of these strategies will be discussed, and examples will be shared.

Phase I (Pilot Study)

Phase I, the Pilot Study, was a mixed-method design study that consisted of a survey of current freshmen students at Edgecombe Community College. This study was initially conducted in the Spring of 2020 but only had five respondents. One was an African American male (the other four were White females). The survey was repeated in the late fall of 2020 and had thirteen additional respondents, all African American males. The purpose of this phase was to build a general understanding of the factors that influenced college choice for current college students and their peers.

Description of Participants and Recruitment Strategies

Student participants were selected, utilizing criterion sampling, by the coordinators of the Edgecombe Community College Student Success Centers, who agreed to help recruit student

participants for this study. Students were recruited from the current "Providing Students the Edge" (PSE) freshmen students. PSE students must meet at least one of the following criteria: first-generation, first-time to college, or low-income students. These criteria are considered factors that can impact college persistence and completion. PSE students are also assigned an additional advisor through the student success centers at Edgecombe Community College, who tries to help them navigate many of the barriers that PSE-criterion students face to increase their chances of persistence and completion. The surveys in this study were conducted twice. The criterion sampling in the first trial targeted all PSE students, and there were five respondents. Four of the five respondents were White females, and one of the five respondents was an African American male. The criterion sampling in the second trial targeted African American male PSE students. Thirteen responses were received, and all of them were from African American males.

Instrumentation

Upon confirmation of participation, students were given a link to a Google Forms survey (see Appendix B). Participants were asked questions to help me understand their reasons for choosing Edgecombe Community College and what types of marketing, recruiting, and outreach current students prefer. Additionally, participants were asked to share any barriers to college enrollment they or their peers may have faced. Results of the surveys were quantified and organized to identify potential categories and themes (through simple coding). The initial focus was on response themes associated with College Choice or Strategic Enrollment Management. Subsequent reviews of the themes were used to review items unrelated to the original theoretical frameworks to determine any other emergent and convergent themes that may help construct my primary research study (Phase II) that would occur later that year.

The research was originally prepared as a guided interview study. However, the college shut down that occurred due to the novel Coronavirus severely truncated the study and required the interview questions to be converted to a Survey. The questions were divided into four categories; general college enrollment and overall satisfaction questions, why students chose Edgecombe Community College, what barriers to college enrollment did participants and their peers face, and what marketing efforts/strategies might be best to reach potential students. The general college enrollment questions were provided first to help build respondent confidence and gather some important information about what the students “knew” before enrolling and their perceptions of Edgecombe Community College as an institution.

Summary of Phase I (Pilot Study)

Based on the evidence found in the Phase I Pilot Study, motivation, confidence, and costs are the topics that would be explored more heavily in Phase II of the study. Low cost may be a major marketing point for community colleges. However, if the service area residents live hand to mouth, even the low cost of community college (compared to university education) may seem too far out of reach. Additionally, if students do not understand what programs and opportunities are available for them at their local community college and how the college is "open to everyone," there will always be difficulty increasing enrollments in this under-represented group. Therefore, I planned to probe as deeply as possible into the motivations, and real and perceived barriers Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students face when considering college after high school. Additionally, I planned to learn about what the students knew and didn't know about their local community college. The goal was to use the information from these group interviews to help improve an outreach and marketing strategy (or strategies) used to target this market segment.

Phase II

This phase of the study utilized what Ryan et al. (2014) considers a “hybrid” or “theory-building” approach to focus group research. This approach used open-ended, guided questions to address the research questions. The research design emphasized the participants' responses and not the interactions between them, as is a common focus group research methodology (Morgan, 2010). This study consisted of semi-structured, group interviews of Edgecombe County African American high school students.

Inquiry Approach

Student participants were selected, utilizing criterion sampling, by the guidance counselors and career coaches from each of the local Edgecombe County high schools (Tarboro High school, North Edgecombe High school, and Southwest Edgecombe High school). Each interview group was intended to have 6-12 participants. The goal of the criterion sampling was to invite African American males from across the achievement spectrum and from all levels of high school engagement. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Interview questions were divided into two themes. The first addressed the FoP guiding question: *What barriers to postsecondary enrollment do Edgecombe County, African American male high school students face that prevent them from pursuing postsecondary education or training?* These questions used the barriers indicated by Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005) as the foundation for the inquiry. In addition, the questions probed into why participants chose to pursue college after graduation or not. The second theme attempted to address the FoP guiding question of *What marketing and recruiting strategies can be developed that utilizes data collected to reach African American male Edgecombe County high school students more effectively?* These questions investigated the participants preferred ways of learning about postsecondary opportunities.

Transcriptions were grouped by question then thematically analyzed, by hand, using a holistic, in vivo approach as described by Saldaña (2021). The second analysis cycle utilized code mapping to identify categories and themes (Saldaña, 2021). I focused, initially, on any coded responses that could be associated with themes associated with barriers to college choice. I then reviewed items unrelated to the original theoretical framework to determine any other emergent and convergent themes that may help construct Phase III. See Appendix C for group interview questions.

Summary of Phase II

The data collected in Phase II analyzed the real and perceived barriers to college intent and choice for Edgecombe County, African American male high school students. Data was collected through semi-structured, group interviews. The goal of this phase was to better understand the challenges Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students face when considering college enrollment and then to develop impactful marketing and outreach strategies to better serve the needs of this market segment (Phase III of the study).

Phase III

Formal marketing and brand management campaigns for Edgecombe Community College are all administered through the Public Information Department. College marketing strategies' return on investment (ROI) is very difficult to ascertain. The marketing department can track website hits, social media site hits, "likes, shares, and comments," but it is nearly impossible to track whether or not those hits translate to enrollment numbers. The Edgecombe Community College application does include a section that gathers "How you heard about Edgecombe Community College" data, and the graduate survey asks questions about "why you chose Edgecombe Community College." This data can be incredibly valuable, but it doesn't

appear to be consolidated in a fashion that could maximize long-term and short-term planning for the marketing department or specific academic programs. I stopped trying to collect the college application data after several repeated attempts to get it from The College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC), where the applications are administered. Even if this data was available, these data-gathering mechanisms would only capture data on students who applied to ECC and those who completed a program of study. There is still a gap. Why do intending college students choose to enroll at Edgecombe Community College? Why do college-eligible high school students and graduates not pursue postsecondary credentials? This data is more important than ever, as enrollment numbers have steadily declined for many years.

The college uses diverse marketing strategies in local magazines and newspapers, radio and television station advertisements, social media campaigns, direct mailings, program-specific brochures, and billboards. The overall college budget has seen significant cuts in the wake of the continuous enrollment decline. All programs, departments, and divisions have had to absorb and respond to the decrease in funding. College marketing funding has not been spared from this steady decline in budget allocations. It is important to note that instructional programs help inform the marketing campaigns administered by the department of public information. Therefore, instructional programs must try to analyze and understand the industry market needs and trends for producing a competent, entry-level workforce and how to effectively present program and career opportunities to potential students to continue to sustain those instructional programs. This approach affirms the assertions of Hossler and Bontrager (2014), who stress the fact that marketing and recruiting strategies must be integrated and that marketing is "everyone's responsibility" (p. 109).

Phase III utilized the analysis of Phase II data as well as data and information gathered during subsequent meetings with Edgecombe Community College career coaches to inform several strategies that could better serve our African American, male high school students as well as other students who may not be considering college as a viable option during or after high school. Those strategies include tailoring college certificates for dual-enrolled high school students that will make those certificates available to more students and developing clear pathways for all instructional programs that show how more current high school students can take advantage of college offerings while they are still in high school. These pathways will show how students can start a college program in high school and earn a college credential before graduating high school. Additionally, these pathways will show how students can continue their college studies after graduating from high school.

Pathway samples from various colleges were collected and shared with a focus group of current, African American, male Edgecombe Community College students. The strengths and weaknesses of each pathway sample were discussed with the group to determine how to develop a strong, student-centered template that would appeal to current African American male high school students. Participants of this focus group were selected by criterion sampling with the help of the Edgecombe Early College High School principal. The participants were African American male early college students of various grade levels and academic interests. The goal is to have these pathways published and available to career coaches, counselors, students, and parents by the Fall of 2022. The analysis of the success of these strategies is outside of the time constraints of this study. However, the process of developing and then implementing these strategies and examples of the strategies will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Analysis of Approach

These refined marketing strategies will occur outside the time constraints of this study; however, the development of these strategies will be discussed.

Summary of Phase III

The goal of Phase III is to begin to change the way our college approaches the outreach, recruitment, and marketing to the African American male market segment based on the data collected and analyzed from Phases I and II, as well as information and data gathered during meetings with high school career coaches and counselors. This data was used to inform the development of additional certificate programs that allow more high school students (including African American male students) the opportunity to pursue college credentials while still in high school (known as being “dual enrolled”). This data will also be used to inform the development of 9-14 pathways that more clearly describe the programs, choices, and opportunities available to these students. The pathways format will be developed with the assistance of a group of African American male college students to ensure that the information presented in these pathways meets the needs of this target market segment.

Inquiry Design Rigor

This study utilized the procedures outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018) to establish the results' validity and reliability (*trustworthiness*). These procedures include clarifying the researcher's bias, utilizing rich descriptions and member checking to confirm the interpretation of responses and themes, and presenting discrepant information and themes that may contradict other themes or perspectives given by other participants in the group interviews. Additionally, the semi-structured questions utilized during the group interviews were approved by my dissertation committee chair, my dissertation committee, and the East Carolina University

institutional review board. Finally, transcripts of the group interviews were reviewed to ensure proper transcription.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

This study is delimited to Edgecombe County, NC, which is the service area of Edgecombe Community College. Edgecombe County is a rural, economically distressed county that has suffered industry losses and subsequent resident population decline over the past decade. Therefore, the results of this study are specific to Edgecombe County, NC. However, I hope that the lessons learned in this study will translate to other rural areas in eastern North Carolina.

This study faced several limitations, not the least of which is my ability, as the researcher, to establish rapport and relational trust with the study participants who are significantly younger than I and “who look different” than I do. The primary reason for using group interviews as the data collection method was for the participants to recognize that they were participating in the study along with other members of their peer network. The goal of this approach was to help the participants gain a sense of belonging (within the confines of the study) and a sense of confidence that they are not alone in expressing their feelings and perceptions as they address the questions asked the group. I am confident that our differences were quickly overshadowed by all we have in common. I am a first-generation college student who grew up in a mid-low socioeconomic status family and attended high school in rural eastern North Carolina. I also attended a local N.C. community college before transferring to a university for my degrees.

Another limitation of this study was related to the Novel Coronavirus and technology. The restrictions in the spring of 2020 forced my Pilot Study to change from semi-structured interviews to surveys. Extended restrictions in the Fall of 2020 kept Edgecombe County public school students remote through March 2021. Nearly one-third of the households in Edgecombe

County do not have access to broadband Internet. While that percentage was slowly decreasing as some companies drastically reduced the costs and availability of broadband access (in response to the pandemic), my selected research participants may have had difficulty participating in virtual, group interviews. Therefore, I chose to wait to conduct my interviews until the schools re-opened and students were back on campus. This “delay” in data collection allowed Edgecombe County public school students the opportunity to return to their campuses and allowed us to meet as groups (with social distancing protocols in place) to conduct the group interviews in person.

The potential for selection bias is another limitation of this study. Phase II group interviews were conducted shortly after the public schools returned to on-campus learning. However, not all students had opted to return to campus. Many continued with remote learning throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. This meant that the career coaches and high school counselors may not have been able to help me recruit participants from all of the available African American male high school students simply because all of the students were not back on campus yet.

Additionally, with the tremendous difficulty everyone in K-12 and higher education faced during the transitions to and from remote learning, it is possible that the career coaches and counselors may have recruited students whom they already had regular interactions with, which may have led to the small sample size of the study participants. This may have also been why each member of the group interview sessions had family members in college or were college graduates (none were going to be first-generation college students). Additionally, each had goals and plans for life after high school graduation. If all Edgecombe County public schools students were back on campus and the study wasn't as rushed as it was due to the pandemic, perhaps the

criterion sampling would have allowed for a larger number of participants with more diverse postsecondary aspirations.

Role of the Scholarly Practitioner

I am the Vice President of Instruction at Edgecombe Community College. Before accepting this position, I was the dean of health sciences and public safety. Before that, I was the department chair for science, health, P.E., and a biology instructor. I have worked at Edgecombe Community College for sixteen years. I have seen the enrollment numbers surge, level off, and then decline in this time. The decline in college enrollment has not abated, causing the current enrollment to be below the average enrollments recorded before the surge that occurred in 2011. A close look at the enrollment breakdowns shows that African American male students are the lowest represented demographic at the College.

When I was admitted into the program and learned about the CPED model, I immediately met with my college president to find out what problem he would like for me to research and address. Our discussion quickly focused on minority male enrollment. We (as a college) must find a way to better reach and better serve these students. The goal of this study was to begin to meet the charge issued by the Edgecombe Community College president and begin to use current data (from market segment analysis) to drive marketing and outreach strategies to help reach these underserved students. The group interview sessions were recorded for transcription purposes only and will not be shared. These recordings are stored in digitally protected files. The transcriptions contain no personally identifying information. These recordings will be destroyed after the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study considered the perceived and real barriers to higher education access (specifically, community college access) that minority male high school graduates face in rural, eastern North Carolina to improve marketing and recruiting strategies for this group. Edgecombe County Public School administration approved the research as their students (high school juniors and seniors) were the target audience of the group interviews. Additionally, the area high school principals approved the research, as did the dissertation committee and East Carolina University's IRB.

The data collection process in this study was completely confidential as no personally identifying information was collected. Additionally, the study results will be shared with all stakeholders (Edgecombe Community College and Edgecombe County Public Schools administrations) and the administrations of the high schools where the group interviews were conducted.

Summary

Phase I, the Pilot Study, was intended to gather preliminary information from current Edgecombe Community College students to help better understand why they chose the institution and, most importantly, what barriers or problems they and their peers experienced as they were beginning their enrollment process at the college. The sample size of this group was very small and not as diverse as I had hoped, but not understanding the financial aid process was a clear theme that came out of this phase of the study. These were Edgecombe Community College students who admitted to not understanding how financial aid worked when they began their enrollment journeys. How many students do not even attempt to pursue postsecondary education and training opportunities because they (1) do not think they can afford college or (2)

do not understand how financial aid works nor the tremendous amount of aid that may be available to them?

Phase II of this study was intended to get the heart of those two questions and better understand why students (specifically Black, male high school students) choose to (or not to) pursue a college education after high school. Additionally, participants were asked to discuss marketing and outreach strategies that they preferred to help determine the marketing and outreach strategy (or strategies) that could help to remove some of those barriers. Finally, the interactions during Phase II were intended to be an outreach opportunity for those students. After each group interview, I transitioned the interaction to an advising session to see if I could help these students answer questions they may have concerning education opportunities at Edgecombe Community College and other institutions. I hope that the experience empowered the students who did not intend to go to college to consider the possibility. I also hope that those students planning to go to college will consider Edgecombe Community College as their first choice. This approach follows the guidance of Hossler and Bontrager (2014). They indicate that every interaction with a potential student is a "new interaction" with that student. Every interaction with those potential students is a chance to possibly gain or lose that student.

The goal of Phase III is to begin to change the way our college approaches outreach, recruitment, and marketing to the African American male market segment based on the data collected and analyzed from Phases I and II. The data collected during these phases was used to inform the development of new dual-enrolled college certificates and 9-14 pathways that directly address some of the barriers discussed by student participants, career coaches, and counselors. African American male students assisted in developing the pathway template, and a goal for Fall 2022 has been set to have these pathways and certificates published.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence college intent and choice for African American male high school students in Edgecombe County, NC, and to utilize that data to suggest refinements to Edgecombe Community College marketing and outreach strategies to better meet the needs of this market segment. The Novel Coronavirus Pandemic and subsequent school closings, shifts to remote working and learning, and required social and physical distancing lead to several unplanned challenges during this study. These challenges required Phase I (Pilot Study) interviews to be changed to surveys and the phase II group interviews to be delayed for nearly four months. As a result, I waited for schools to re-open for in-person learning before conducting group interviews.

Phase I of this study (Pilot Study) addressed the following research question: *What factors influenced current students' choice to attend Edgecombe Community College, and what barriers to enrollment did current students experience?* One hundred and forty-three Edgecombe Community College students were invited to participate in a Pilot Study to which a total of 18 responded. The Pilot Study was conducted twice. I decided to conduct a second pilot due to the low response rate of the first attempt and the fact that only one of the participants in the initial pilot matched the demographics of the target market segment of the study (African American males). The initial Pilot Study was administered in March of 2020 and received five responses. It was administered again in January of 2021 to a larger group, to which thirteen African American Male Edgecombe Community College students responded. The Pilot Study survey was administered through Google ® Forms (see Appendix B).

Phase II of this study utilized focus-group style interviews of Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students to answer the following research question: *What barriers to postsecondary enrollment do Edgecombe County, African American male high school students face that prevent them from pursuing postsecondary education or training?* There are three traditional high schools in the Edgecombe Community College service area (Edgecombe County); Southwest Edgecombe High School, Tarboro High School, and North Edgecombe High School. All three high schools were invited to be study sites. The career coaches at Southwest Edgecombe High School approached ten students to participate in the study. Of the ten students that were approached, five completed the required permission forms, and three participated in group interviews conducted on April 4th, 2021. The counselor and career coach at Tarboro High School approached 20 students to participate in the study. Of the 20 students that were approached, five completed the required permission forms and participated in the group interviews conducted on May 4th, 2021. The counselor at North Edgecombe High School approached approximately 20 students to participate in the study. Unfortunately, none of North Edgecombe High School students returned permission forms. Therefore, group interviews were not conducted at this site.

Phase III of this study utilized the data collected during Phases I and II to inform the development of certificates for dual-enrolled high school students that better met the needs of not only some African American, male students, but many other students who may be unable to take dual enrolled courses while in high school. The data from Phases I and II was also used to develop 9-14 pathways that will help recruit African American male high school students into dual enrollment programs. The goal of developing these pathways is to help remove some of the real and perceived barriers to college enrollment identified by study participants and give more

African American male high students the opportunities to consider taking college classes while still in high school. The framework for these pathways was developed with the help of African American male college students.

Phase I (Pilot Study)

This phase aimed to gather college choice and barriers to college enrollment data from current Edgecombe Community College students. The Pilot Study survey was developed to gather basic demographic information, including gender, race, high school attended, and intended major, and questions regarding the student experience at Edgecombe Community College. The primary study questions addressed in the Pilot Study survey were:

1. Why did you choose to attend Edgecombe Community College?
2. What are the top 3 reasons [you think] some of your high school classmates did not go to college after graduation?
3. What do you think are the most effective ways for Edgecombe Community College to reach today's minority male high school students to help them learn about ECC's programs and education/career training?

Phase I Study Question: Why did you Choose to Attend Edgecombe Community College?

Most Phase I respondents (12 of 18) indicated that the *college's location* was a very important factor when considering Edgecombe Community College (see Figure 4). Course offerings and available majors (see Figure 5), and cost (see Figure 6) were also very important considerations for the students. Other common answers to this question included: online options, class availability, and recommendations by friends or family members. An African American male college transfer student who intends to major in psychology when he transfers to

How important was ECC's location in your decision to attend?

18 responses

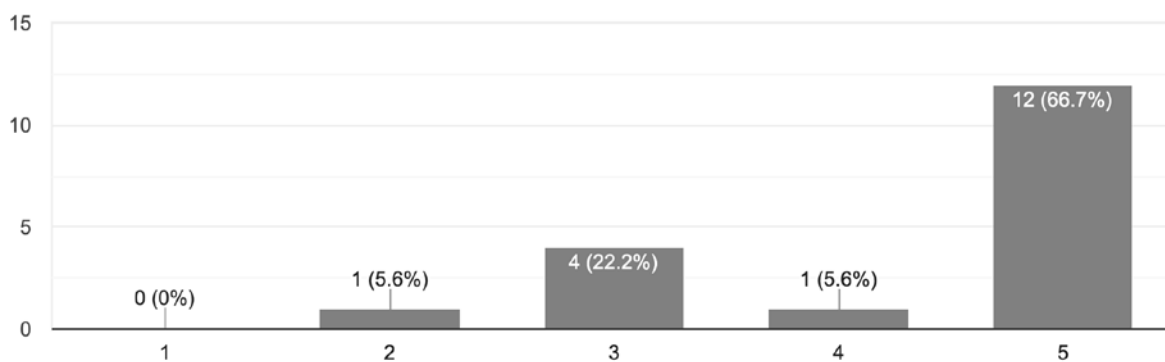


Figure 4. Phase I (Pilot Study): “How important was ECC’s location in your decision to attend?”

1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

How important was course offerings (majors) in your decision to attend Edgecombe Community College?

18 responses

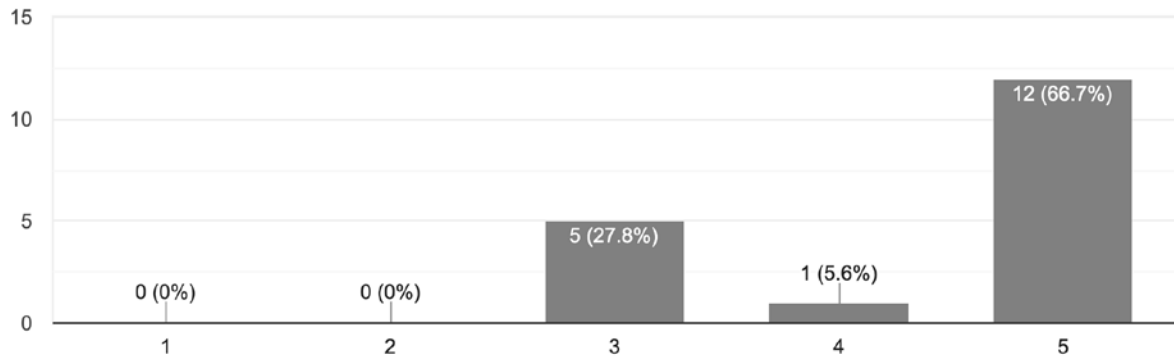


Figure 5. Phase I (Pilot Study): “How important was course offerings in your decision to attend ECC?” 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

How important was ECC's cost (compared to other institutions) in your decision to attend?

18 responses

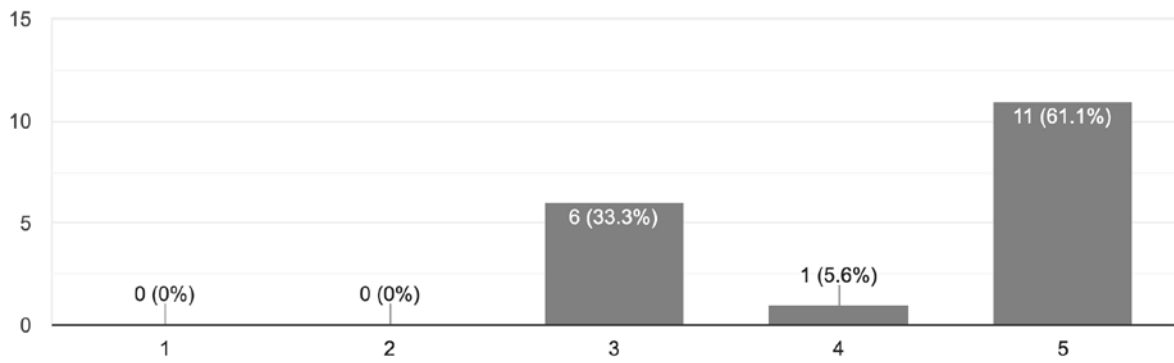


Figure 6. Phase I (Pilot Study): “How important was ECC’s cost in your decision to attend?” 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

a university stated, "Nash [Community College] is less than three miles from my house, but I like the small class size here at Edgecombe." An Information Technology Support Services student stated, "I chose this college ...because it is close. I feel like ECC had all the resources I needed to become a better person. I just received my AHED/GED in September 2018. So, I just continued." The answers provided for this Pilot Study align with early college choice researchers (Chapman, 1981; Jackson, 1982; Litten, 1982), which indicates that location (proximity to home), cost, and program/class availability greatly influence a college choice.

Phase I Study Question: What are the Top Three Reasons Some of Your High School Classmates did not Go to College after Graduation?

I asked participants to speculate on why they thought their high school classmates may have chosen not to go to college after high school as a way of gathering perceived barriers to postsecondary enrollment. A theme became quickly apparent in the participant responses to this question, *lack of awareness*: a lack of awareness of the costs of community college and available financial aid. Seven of the eighteen participants indicated that they, themselves, were not aware of the financial aid opportunities available to them at Edgecombe Community College (see Figure 7). Additionally, participant responses indicate that those classmates may have underestimated their academic abilities and may not have understood the support systems available at the college to help students be successful. The most common answers to this question were *cost, expensive, finances, lack of knowledge of available funds, and money*. Some other notable answers were being *scared of college courses, low self-esteem, confidence, tired of school, and motivation*. A minority male nursing student stated, "Lack of confidence and belief they can succeed. Intangible barriers can easily rival financial struggles." The responses given

Were you aware of the financial aid opportunities (like Pell Grant, Edge Scholars, etc) available to ECC students BEFORE you chose to attend?

18 responses

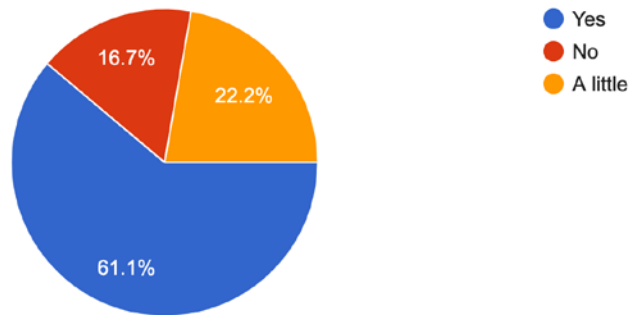


Figure 7. Phase I (Pilot Study): “Were you aware of the financial aid opportunities available to ECC students before you chose to attend?”

for this Pilot Study question were used to develop probative questions that followed during the Phase II focus group interviews.

Phase I Study Question: What do you think are the Most Effective Ways for Edgecombe Community College to Reach Today's Minority Male High School Students to Help Them Learn about ECC's Programs and Education/Career Training?

There were far fewer responses to this question than any of the others. The most common answer was *more [high school] campus visits* (4 of 18 respondents indicated this). Two of the respondents indicated *Building relationships with students*. Two more identified *clearer advertising of programs, their length, available financial aid, and starting salaries* as a possible strategy. One of those respondents, An African American male college transfer student, also responded, "Advertise clearly the programs, their length, available financial aid, and starting salaries for graduates." Social media is generally seen as a cost-effective means of reaching the community, current students, and potential students. Edgecombe Community College relies heavily on social media to promote programs, events, and opportunities. Yet, only one-third of the Phase I study respondents indicate that they follow ECC on social media (see Figure 8).

The responses given for this Pilot Study question were also used to inform the probative questions during the subsequent Phase II interviews. It is interesting to note that the respondents to this Phase I (Pilot Study) were Edgecombe Community College students. These students overcame the real and perceived barriers to higher education enrollment. Many of them were also admitted into highly competitive health sciences programs. However, the responses these students offered aligned very closely with previous college choice research. Additionally, seven of the eighteen respondents indicated "no" or "a little" when asked if they were aware of the financial aid opportunities (such as Pell Grant or Edge Scholarships) available to ECC students

Do you follow ECC on social media?
18 responses

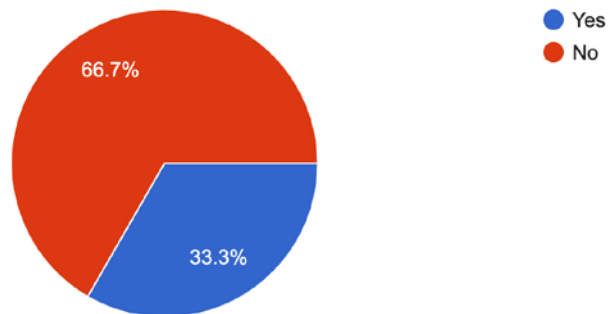


Figure 8. Phase I (Pilot Study): “Do you follow ECC on social media?”

before they chose to attend. These were college-age and non-traditional students; many of them had little understanding of the financial aid process or financial aid availability. This specific information was deliberately used to inform some of the probative questions of the Phase II interviews to determine how much area high school students understood about financial aid for college.

Finally, a response to the question concerning why peers may choose not to go to college was given by a respondent who identified as a mixed-race Black, Asian, Hispanic male. This response captured my attention for several reasons. First, because it references an ongoing barrier that community colleges face when trying to reach potential students, the stereotype that community colleges are inferior and not first-choice options for students (compared to universities). Next, it mentions the importance of teaching students about the FASFA. Finally, it references the difficulty some students face when applying for student aid due to parents not helping with sharing required information.

I was looked down upon for starting at a local community college, even while turning down acceptances from Chapel Hill, Emory, NC State, UNC -Asheville, and more. I firmly believe general education classes taken at an accredited community college are superior on a cost basis. We need to remove the stigma behind them. Educate those in high school about FAFSA and how they can apply. Give students in abusive households...opportunities to get out and get financial aid even if they can't qualify due to their parents making too much (do you really think an abusive parent will care that the government expects them to help with their child's college costs?).

This response does not directly inform this study. However, it does resonate with me (as a former community college student, college transfer advisor, and instructor) because it captures just a

small snapshot of some of the very real barriers and struggles that community colleges and some of our students face every day.

Phase II

My focus in Phase II was to discover some of the barriers that African American male high school students face when considering college. In addition, a goal of Phase II was to capture student voices in the discussion of those barriers and possible strategies to help mitigate some of them. Participants for this study phase were recruited utilizing criterion sampling by the guidance counselors and career coaches from their respective high schools. I conducted semi-structured group interviews on Southwest Edgecombe High School and Tarboro High School campuses. The interviews utilized an organic approach where I allowed the participants to discuss the topics that were important to them as we discussed the primary research question for this study: What barriers to postsecondary enrollment do Edgecombe County, African American male high school students face that prevent them from pursuing postsecondary education or training? The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed for thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Each interview session was different, which meant the framing and [more specifically] the probative questions differed depending on responses and comfort levels of the participants. This interview approach was used to allow the interview sessions to be as authentic as possible. My goal was for the interviews to be a conversation rather than a question-and-answer session. Participant responses to the semi-structured interview questions were initially grouped by question then analyzed, by hand, using a holistic, in vivo approach as described by Saldaña (2021). Utilizing a holistic approach allowed all the questions and responses to be analyzed as part of the whole conversation. The various questions (and responses) were grouped based on

similarities in this analysis phase. Then, utilizing the in vivo approach, the participants' own words (their voices) were used to determine codes. Some examples of this approach include "money" and "math," which were terms that came up in numerous answers to various questions. The next analysis cycle utilized code mapping to identify categories (Saldaña, 2021). The codes from the in vivo analysis were grouped independent of the context of the questions they were associated with to categorize those responses into discernable groups of responses (categories). This approach was possible due to the small sample size. The categories became very apparent as the in vivo analysis developed. Those categories were then consolidated into two concepts that attempt to answer the primary (Phase II) research question: *The real and perceived barriers to college after high school and why someone would choose not to go to college after high school* and were further analyzed to determine themes. Study participants had ideas to share regarding the Phase III research question of *"what marketing and recruiting strategies can be developed that utilize data collected to reach African American male Edgecombe County high school students more effectively."* Those responses were limited but were compiled and will be discussed below.

Demographics

A goal of the participant recruiting process was to engage African American male high school students from all grade levels across the academic performance spectrum and students with various levels of extracurricular engagement. There were eight participants in this study: three from Southwest Edgecombe High School and five from Tarboro High School. All participants were African American male students. Three participants were freshmen, three were sophomores, and two were juniors. Two of the participants were high school athletes. All of these participants had plans for life after high school. Seven of the participants were planning to

attend college after high school. After high school, the eighth participant aspired to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. It is important to note also that these participants were *not* going to be first-generation college students; all eight participants had family members who had attended or were currently attending colleges and universities.

Results

Five primary interview questions received the most in-depth conversations and chances for probative questions to address the FoP guiding question of, *"What barriers to postsecondary enrollment do Edgecombe County, African American male high school students face that prevent them from pursuing postsecondary education or training?"* Those questions were:

1. When you think about life after high school and/or college, what three things are you most concerned or worried about?
2. When you think about college, what are some of the stressors that come to mind?
3. When you think about students who choose not to go to college, do you know why they choose not to go?
4. Are there any systemic barriers [to college] that are "roadblocks" that African American males deal with regularly?
5. What are some ways the college can reach students who think "college may not be for them?"

Two overlapping themes emerged from the responses to these questions: uncertainty and frustration. Participants express uncertainty when discussing college choice and how to pay for college. Participants express frustration at the apparent lack of choice when considering the college classes they would be required to take, especially the college math classes. When participants were asked to discuss what they were worried about concerning life after high school

or the stresses concerning college, a clear theme of uncertainty became evident. Participants expressed concerns over whether they could pick the right college major, whether they were going to live on campus or commute, how they would pay for college, and if they could keep good grades in college and still maintain a social life. “Responsibilities” was a common response as well. One participant’s response clearly shows the uncertainty that these young men face when considering what to do after high school when he stated,

Not being able to like, like, keep going like staying focused, like being able to maintain yourself, financial issues, because I mean they might look easy now but as I watch my parents go on financial issues are a big problem when it comes to being an adult, keeping up with bills and paying insurance and all that. That's a big struggle. I worry about just making it through college.

It is interesting to note that when the participants were asked what they were most excited about (concerning life after high school), "living on your own," "being an adult," and "getting out there" were very common answers. They exhibited an eagerness to move on to the next phase of their lives after high school. However, two of the eight participants expressed concerns that somewhat counter those responses when they stated that “[you have to] Go to work [and] do the same thing every day until you retire,” which indicated some apprehension over the thought of the possible monotony of unexciting careers.

Another topic that appears to create a tremendous amount of uncertainty for these participants when they consider life after high school or stresses concerning college is money. Participants responded with “bills,” “financial issues,” and “you just need money.” Fear of student loans was another concern voiced by more than one participant. When asked about how they planned to pay for college, one participant answered, "I mean, loans, student loans, but then

you get older, you know you got to pay them back. No one wants to pay off student loans." Another participant who is aspiring to play football in college stated, "unless you become a walk-on and they give you a scholarship, they selves, No, you got to figure it out." Another stated, "...most people worried about 'dang I ain't gonna be able to pay for this, how am I gonna pay this back?'" Finally, one participant's response captured the uncertainty theme very well when he stated,

.... I'm not going to say money, how do I say, it's not like, you just need the money. And it's not because I say, so you can spend it on yourself, but because you need to get your responsibilities out of the way before you can learn how to have fun. So, I guess like that's the very most stressful part, especially when it comes to people entering college for the first time, money, especially me. Money is always the only thing that's on my mind. Like how am I going to get out, tuition, fees, books? I mean, all that stuff starts to add up in a hurry, you know, and then get into and from college and then if you're going to live on campus or off-campus. I mean, it's all, you know, money doesn't solve all problems, but it certainly is something I worry about all the time.

Thus, participants saw themselves negotiating a wide range of uncertainty regarding their postsecondary options.

More student responses to these primary and probative questions could be themed as "frustration" than any other category or theme. Participants express frustration at the courses they must take in high school only to have to "take them again" in college. One participant stated, "Of course, everybody has to take English. You know, it's like, already done it, I've done it for four years, I have to do it again [in college]." Another participant expressed concern over college being "more work that we're forced to do." Another participant expressed frustration regarding

his GPA not being a real indicator of his ability. He stated, "when I first got here, my GPA was like, excellent, and I started slacking and just kept going down, by the time I realized it stays with you forever. Yeah, that's what a lot of people scared. They think, 'hey, I'm smart, but I'm like, my GPA is not showing it.'"

Math was another frustration that multiple participants expressed. The perception and/or realization that math is a required subject in many college majors seems to be a serious concern for many study participants. The frustration was driven by concerns of mathematics being a subject that could diminish academic self-confidence. Some responses that expressed that frustration were:

Say, you go to school and not the greatest at math, but, you know you're still not the greatest at math...and even though he's doing better, which is making him feel, thinking that school isn't the best choice for him.

I've been worried about math so much in high school that when I get to college, I'm thinking I'm gonna have to do the same thing so but then I'm worn out and won't be able to focus on it.

I mean, yeah, some kid could not be doing the greatest in math, but he could be a genius at every other subject, but just because he's bad at math, he feels like, oh, there's no need for me to go to college.

Other participants expressed frustration concerning additional mathematics classes that appear to be unnecessary for students because they could not foresee when they would ever need to use the advanced mathematical concepts in real-life situations. One participant stated, "I really don't like math because I know how to count my money, so I'm good. I don't need nothing else." Finally, a participant tried to capture the group's feeling toward math classes when he stated, "I don't know

when I'll ever use negative v plus or minus the square root of two squared minus 40 c divided by two, but whenever I do, I'll come back and thank my teacher.”

Some of the probative questions that followed the expression of frustrations, especially those regarding math in college, brought about responses that helped to devise some possible solutions to these concerns as well as possible answers to the third, guiding FoP question: *What marketing and recruiting strategies can be developed that utilizes data collected to reach African American, male Edgecombe County high school students more effectively?* Suppose colleges could provide clear information regarding program of study requirements, most importantly the choices available to students, in some type of comparable formatting. In that case, that could help relieve some of the stress concerning "math" or that feeling of "being forced to take more classes again” that some participants expressed. One participant in the first group interview suggested, “... I'll probably have like a chart, saying that you have all your majors at the top...” Another student then followed up that suggestion with,

Yeah...I get it that there would be something I want to look at and choose because if I feel like, you know, I see a chart and I see my majors, and I see some classes I don't have to take... I can. I can take these classes and still do good, okay.

When I asked the second group if they thought the sharing course requirements for different programs might help undecided students be more likely to consider college if the students knew they had choices of what classes they could take, participants responded with “possibly,” “yeah,” and “maybe.”

Participants also indicated that they follow their favorite colleges and universities on social media. However, most indicated that they only follow them during sports seasons and do not pay much attention in-between seasons. When asked whether the college coming to visit the

high school was an effective recruiting strategy, the overwhelming opinion affirmed. Most importantly, the participants indicated the importance of having people in different career fields at those recruiting events. One participant mentioned, "...to get to see people in those fields and talk about it. Yeah, like their life explaining what they had to do to go through." Another participant indicated, "That would be pretty much helpful because I mean if you want to become a doctor and nurse, and you see that person in front of you. And you see that they made it." S

Participants expressed frustration regarding college requirements and the apparent lack of choice regarding course selection within majors. They indicated that some type of clear and comparative device that showed required and elective courses within college majors might help to alleviate some of that frustration. Additionally, participants indicated that on-campus visits that included professionals in perspective students' fields of interest would provide those students role model examples that could help remove some of the real and perceived barriers they face when considering college.

Meetings were held with career coaches and high school counselors in the Fall semester of 2021. These meetings were held as part of my normal responsibilities as the vice president of instruction. However, I used the information gathered during my Phase II group interviews to inform the discussion points for the meetings. The career coaches from Tarboro High School and Southwest Edgecombe High School and the high school counselor from the local charter school, and the ECC high school liaison, attended this meeting. Creating better ways to "reach" students (and parents) and creating community college opportunities for more high school students were the focal points of this meeting.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) certificates were discussed at length. CTE certificates are approved community college credentials that high school students can pursue as

"dual-enrolled students." In these discussions, I learned that the CTE certificates offered by Edgecombe Community College created potential barriers for large groups of high school students. Community College certificates must be between twelve and eighteen credits. The North Carolina Community College System has established curriculum standards for all programs that outline the required and elective courses chosen for specific degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Community colleges approved to offer degrees can also offer certificates and diplomas from that "parent" degree program. The instructional leadership at each community college then designs the required courses within those degrees, certificates, and diplomas based on the options given within the curriculum standard.

During the meeting with the career coaches, counselor, and liaison, I was made aware that many of our CTE certificates had been developed with one or two college transfer courses in them. According to the North Carolina Community College Career and College Promise policies and procedures, high school students must have an unweighted high school GPA of 2.8 or higher to take any college transfer course or pursue any certificate or pathway that has even one (1) college transfer course in them. High school students with GPAs greater than or equal to 2.8 highly seek these certificates because those college transfer courses afford opportunities to earn high school credits (for those courses) weighted on the 5.0 scale. However, having the college transfer course in the certificate prohibits any student with an unweighted high school GPA of 2.79 or less from exploring those certificate opportunities. As one of the Southwest Edgecombe High School career coaches very succinctly put it, "We are missing these students. We have to create more community college opportunities for them."

The high school liaison was present at this meeting as well. I permitted the liaison to begin investigating how we could offer certificates with the same CTE courses but without the

college transfer courses in them. We off-handedly called these "parallel certificates." These dual enrolled-focused certificates would allow high school students to gain the same career exploration experience and college credits without the barriers created by the college transfer courses. The liaison met with various program chairs and helped develop certificates brought to the college Curriculum Review Committee for discussion and approval. The new high school certificates were approved and will be available to students by Fall 2022 (see appendix F for examples of these certificates). Finally, all certificates were reviewed and organized so that career coaches, counselors, students, and parents could easily distinguish between certificates with and without college transfer classes in them.

The other focal point of the meeting discussed ways to help students and their parents better understand how the community college could help students by being a bridge for four-year university matriculation and/or career and technical skill training. A career coach put it simply when she said, "...a lot of students and parents just don't know." This conversation prompted me to share some of my group interview study findings with this team. We discussed the uncertainty and frustration expressed by my study participants and the possibility of creating comparative tools that students and parents could use that could help them see college enrollment (specifically dual enrollment) as a viable option. Potential solutions were discussed; solutions that could show students (and their parents) not only what was available but also how they could pursue those opportunities and where they could take them. A career coach from Southwest Edgecombe and the high school counselor from the local charter school both began to show examples of different 9-14 pathways that various community colleges in North Carolina were offering. These pathways appeared to be designed to show students (and parents) how students could take college classes while in high school and what college credentials students could earn while still

in high school. Some pathways showed local job market data as well. It was then decided that Edgecombe Community College would begin to design pathways to address the frustrations indicated by study participants and the needs shared by career coaches and counselors. These pathways, however, would be designed with influence and input from students, specifically African American male students.

Phase III

My focus in Phase III was to utilize African American male student input to develop a 9-14 pathway template that our college would use to provide high school students (and their parents) easy to understand dual enrollment options and subsequent postsecondary opportunities. Phase II participants express uncertainty when considering college and frustration at the apparent lack of choice they have when considering college courses within majors. The purpose of these student-informed pathways would be to provide clear guides that students, parents, career coaches, and counselors can use to discuss academic and career opportunities and options for these students. I convened a focus group of eight African American male Edgecombe Early College students to review existing 9-14 pathway samples from five different North Carolina community colleges (see appendix G for pathway samples used with the focus group). Focus group participants were asked to review the samples and document the strengths and weaknesses of each. Data collected from this focus group was used to develop the 9-14 template that Edgecombe Community College would use when developing pathways. See Appendix H for the Edgecombe Community College 9-14 pathway template. My goal is to have these pathways published by Fall 2022. The timeline for this process will be discussed in chapter 5.

Results

Focus group participants favored pathways that included high school course "blocks." They explained that high school students might be more able to see the possibility of taking college classes if they could see how those courses "fit" within their high school schedules. Participants also indicated that some pathway samples were "wordy" or "overwhelming." They appreciated seeing some choices within pathways, but not all the choices as all the possible choices made the font small and the document difficult to understand. One participant explained that seeing a "direct path, with some choices" was preferred over a pathway that showed all the possible choices. In addition, participants preferred pathways that included college course names and not just the course prefix and number as most students would not know what "BUS 110" means, for example. Finally, participants preferred pathways that explained possible career opportunities and entry-level salaries that were available for certificate, diploma, and degree completers because it could help motivate unsure students (or parents) about the benefits of starting and completing the pathway.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence college intent and choice for African American, male high school students in Edgecombe County, NC, and to utilize that data to suggest refinements to Edgecombe Community College marketing and outreach strategies to better meet the needs of this market segment. Phase I of this study (the Pilot Study) utilized a survey of current, African American, male, Edgecombe Community College students to determine why they chose ECC. Location (close to home), cost, and available financial aid were the most common answers to this question. Another question in the survey probed some suspected reasons why some of these students' high school classmates may

have chosen not to attend college after high school. Again, the most common answers were cost, lack of awareness of financial aid, scared of college courses, low self-esteem, and motivation. The information gathered in the Pilot Study was used to drive the probative questions of the research study (Phase II), which was conducted at Edgecombe County public high schools.

Small groups of African American male students were recruited from two Edgecombe County high schools (three students from Southwest Edgecombe High School and five students from Tarboro High School). The purpose of these group interviews was to attempt to answer the primary (Phase II) research questions that sought to determine *the real and perceived barriers to college after high school* and *why someone would choose not to go to college after high school*. When asked about what the participants were worried about or stressed about concerning college or life after high school or what roadblocks they feel that African American high students may face when considering college, two overlapping themes emerged from the analysis of the responses to the group interview questions: uncertainty and frustration.

Participants expressed uncertainty about money, how to pay for college, how to choose a career, and student loan debt. In addition, participants expressed frustration with the "lack of choice" students face when considering college courses. This frustration seemed to be centered around the apparent "repetition" of courses that students are required to take in high school and college (English and math, for example) and the feeling that math is a major roadblock to student success. Ways to help mitigate some of this uncertainty and frustration were discussed with the study participants. For example, study participants suggested more clarity regarding program of study requirements and choices within programs of study that were easy to follow and compare. Participants also suggested that continuing to have a college presence on campus, including

bringing professionals to talk with high school students about "how they did it," may be effective ways to help get more African American male high school students to consider college.

Meetings with career coaches and counselors allowed for further discussion of the uncertainties and frustrations that Phase II participants expressed and other barriers that many Edgecombe County high school students face that prevent them from pursuing college classes as dual-enrolled students. These discussions, informed by the Phase II data and first-hand accounts of career coaches and high school counselors, laid the framework for strategies to help address those barriers. High school CTE certificates and 9-14 pathways were chosen as the proposed strategies. The high school liaison and Edgecombe Community College program chairs began to create dual-enrollment certificates to allow more high school students to pursue college courses and certificates while still in high school. Those certificates were presented to and approved by the College Curriculum Review Committee and will be officially added to the 2022-2023 college catalog, which goes live in the late spring of 2022, which is in time for Fall 2022 advising. The Edgecombe Community College 9-14 pathway template was designed with the help of a focus group of African American male college students. Focus group participants reviewed 9-14 pathway samples from five different North Carolina community colleges and discussed the preferred formatting and information to be included in the new template. This template will be used to build all 9-14 pathways offered by the college with the goal of having all the new CTE certificate 9-14 pathways published and available to students, parents, career coaches, and counselors by the Fall of 2022.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of this study was to identify some of the real and perceived barriers that African American, male Edgecombe County high school students face when considering college enrollment and to inform and develop specific outreach and marketing strategies that Edgecombe Community College will use to try to increase the opportunities available for this underserved and underrepresented market segment. The voices of the study participants were used as much as possible to help illuminate the uncertainty and frustration that these African American male high students face when considering postsecondary education. Additionally, meetings were conducted with high school career coaches, counselors, and the high school liaison (all inquiry partners) during the semester following the study interviews. Preliminary study findings were discussed and concerns, needs, and goals of the counselors, coaches, and liaison. In the following chapter, I summarize and interpret the study findings and the discussions held with inquiry partners. These findings and discussions were used to facilitate recruiting, and outreach approach changes that Edgecombe Community College will use to help remove some of the uncertainty and relieve some of the frustrations these students face as they consider college enrollment options.

Summary of the Findings

Freeman (2005) explains that when considering barriers to college enrollments, "African American high school students are rarely if ever, asked for their perceptions of the problems or, more importantly, for their ideas about possible solutions." Therefore, this study tried to capture some of the perceptions of local African American male high school students. In addition, it used the input of African American male students to help develop the framework for one of the strategies initiated by this study.

According to the findings in Chapter 4, many participants in the Phase I (pilot) study indicated that they chose Edgecombe Community College because it is close to home and offers programs and options that meet their needs and goals. Participants indicated that their peers who chose not to attend college may have done so due to a lack of understanding of the cost of attending a community college and the financial aid options available to community college students. Participants also indicated that their peers may have faced a lack of confidence in their ability to be successful in college. They also indicated that having a more routine presence on high school campuses and removing the stigma associated with community colleges may help with recruitment success. Additionally, clear advertising about program requirements, available financial aid, and career opportunities (starting salaries) was indicated as potentially helpful recruiting tools.

The research study that followed (Phase II) found that Edgecombe County, African American male high school students feel very uncertain about whether they can be successful in college and expressed sincere concerns about how to pay for college. They also expressed genuine frustration concerning the apparent requirement to “repeat” classes in college that they have already taken in high school (English and Math, for example). That frustration is amplified concerning the math classes that many college programs require. There was a tremendous amount of discouragement expressed when participants discussed math classes and the apparent lack of choice they have concerning classes they are required to take (both in high school and in college). Study participants proposed ways to alleviate some of the uncertainty and frustration that included more high school campus visits by colleges with professionals as guests to help students learn how others successfully made it into their chosen professions. Another proposed strategy included providing clearer program information that includes the choices of classes that

students can take in pursuit of a degree in order to reduce some of the fear associated with taking college classes, in particular, the fear of the math classes that students may or may not have to take in pursuit of their degree. Subsequent meetings with career coaches, counselors, and the high school liaison echoed the need for clarity by proposing program mapping (also known as 9-14 pathways).

Phase III of this study included the development of these 9-14 pathways. These pathways were developed with the help and input of a group of African American male college students to ensure that the information presented in the pathways would benefit the primary target audience of this study (African American male students) and other underserved groups of students. The pathway format was developed in the Spring of 2022. The pathways will be built in the summer of 2022 and implemented in the Fall of 2022 (outside the time frame of this study).

In addition to the 9-14 pathways, the creation of more Career and Technical Education (CTE) certificates that would allow more high school students the opportunity to pursue dual-enrolled course work (taking college classes while still in high school) were developed for implementation. We began to move forward on this proposal by creating dual-enrollment CTE certificates that would allow high school students with unweighted GPAs of less than 2.8 to pursue these certificates. These proposed curriculum changes were brought before the college Curriculum Review Committee in the Fall of 2021 and approved for implementation for Fall 2022 (also outside the time frame of this study).

These strategies will help create more opportunities for African American male high school students and many other underserved groups of students to pursue college classes while still in high school (dual enrollment). The strategies will also help potential students and their parents better understand the classes required for various college programs and students' choices

within those programs. Finally, these strategies will allow more high school students the opportunities to pursue college credits and credentials while still in high school. These opportunities allow for career exploration, save the students and their families money, and help build student confidence as they successfully pursue and complete college credentials (certificates) before graduating high school.

Interpretation of the Findings

The Pilot Study (Phase I) findings support the early contentions of Chapman (1981) and Jackson (1982). They discuss how college characteristics (size, location, cost, availability of financial aid, and programs offered) can influence college choice. These characteristics (especially when compared to four-year universities) may be an “easy” marketing strategy for community colleges. However, this macro-perspective does not consider that every college and service area is different. Therefore, it is important to understand why students choose a particular college to better understand how to market to and recruit future students. Eighteen respondents gave twenty-three "reasons" for choosing ECC. The top reason given was "location / close to home." *Cost and availability of financial aid, desired programs/courses, and online and face-to-face offerings*, appear to be equally important to the respondents. *Recommended by friend/family* was also an important factor mentioned by 3 of the respondents. The information gathered from these surveys confirmed many of the prime selling points used in discussing North Carolina Community Colleges as a viable choice; close to home, cost, and smaller class sizes (Retrieved from <https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/about-us>).

The works of Iloh and Tierney (2014) and Litten (1982) discuss the importance of specific and deliberate marketing strategies to impact college choice and eventual enrollment. Goldgehn (1991) as well as Hossler and Gallagher (1987), and Ruffalo Nowel Levitz (2018)

discuss that specific recruiting and marketing strategies will be more effective when colleges and universities understand the specific needs of specific groups. Freeman (2005) expands on the work of Hossler and Gallagher by adding that understanding the racial and cultural contexts of underrepresented groups can help increase minority participation in higher education.

The survey asked respondents to list any possible barriers high school students might face when considering college. This question elicited thirty responses from the participants in the second Pilot Study. These responses could be grouped into three categories: *motivation*, *confidence*, and *cost*. In the **motivation** category, *tired of school*, *motivation*, *timing*, *lack of ambition*, *lack of understanding of the value of trades programs*, and *lack of understanding of the programs available* prevails. *Grades* and *lack of confidence* were the most commonly repeated answers grouped in the **confidence** category. Finally, six of the thirteen respondents chose **cost** as a possible barrier to college.

Additionally, *more need-based aid*, *lack of knowledge of funding*, and *earlier exposure to financial aid and FAFSA* were important barriers. This data supports the findings of Cabrera and La Nasa (2001), Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005), Turner and Bound (2003), and Wilson and Allen (1987) that indicate systemic factors that can influence college choice for minority students. In addition, Long and Riley (2007) indicate that navigating the financial aid process was one of the three main barriers to college access and success. Participant responses appear to align with these findings. They indicate that a lack of understanding of the true costs of college and available financial aid, and the financial aid application process, may represent some of those systemic barriers.

The availability and delivery of information are considered a critical influence on college choice. Unfortunately, 67% of the respondents indicated that they did not follow the college on

social media. Social media marketing is a relatively low-cost endeavor; however, tremendous business hours are invested in social media marketing. This data indicates that a low (but not insignificant) number of students (and potential students) follow Edgecombe Community College on social media. Further research may help college staff better focus on social media marketing efforts. Goodrich et al. (2018) found that students were three times more likely to use a college website instead of social media to find information. All the respondents indicated that the college website was easy to navigate. However, one mentioned, "the search function was rarely helpful." Website creation and maintenance is a very time and labor-intensive undertaking. The complexity of a college website, with all the subsequent and linked pages and content, can be very difficult to navigate regardless of layout. Perhaps an introduction to the college website during recruiting events could assist students in better understanding where to look for information. Shields and Peruta (2019) found that students rely heavily on college website searches during the pre-application phase, so it will be important to make sure college website searches are helpful to students who are considering Edgecombe Community College.

Phase II of this study attempted to use Edgecombe County, African American, male high school student voices to begin to drive change in the marketing and recruiting strategies to be used by Edgecombe Community College for this market segment. The findings of the research study (Phase II) were consistent with the findings of Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005) when considering participants' uncertainty regarding how to pay for college and the psychological/social barriers many African American students face when considering college. In addition, the findings of Long and Riley (2007) discussed the disproportionate impacts student loans have on lower-income students. Participants in this study understood the financial burden that excessive student loans would create and exhibited uncertainty concerning whether student

loans were viable options for them. These findings suggest that the college should actively pursue ways to engage these students earlier in their high school careers by allowing these students more opportunities to pursue dual-enrollment options that may help them better understand the academic and career choices that are available to them at their local community college as well as the significantly lower costs of those choices compared to universities or as compared to waiting until after high school to pursue those choices. Meetings with career coaches, counselors, and the high school liaison came to similar conclusions on how best to provide clearer outreach to prospective students. The recommended approach from these inquiry partners was to develop clear program pathways for potential students that included labor market data for the jobs available in those academic fields and to develop more career and technical education (CTE) certificate programs that will allow more high school students the opportunity to pursue dual-enrollment options.

Phase III of this study developed and implemented CTE certificate programs and 9-14 pathways designed for the dual enrollment of high school students. Programmatic marketing tools should include defined high school through college pathways that map how students, specifically high school students, can plan their career training and/or college transfer course work to reduce any uncertainty that students or parents may have when considering the community college as a viable option. These pathways can also show students that there are choices when considering many of the college courses. This opportunity "to choose" appears to be something that study respondents feel is missing. Additionally, the college should include up-to-date labor market data in the marketing and pathway materials to help promote the programs that lead to local, livable wage careers for local students. Jackson (1982) discusses that one way to influence college choice is to improve "available information about specific colleges and jobs,

so that student perceptions are accurate (or at least favor college choices)” and to utilize specific and select recruiting tactics that maximize program efficiency rather than low-focus tactics that waste money and effort. The use of clearly established academic program pathways that help potential students see the choices available within and between programs and the inclusion of up-to-date job market information may help remove some college enrollment barriers discussed in the literature and presented by study participants. Educational pathways have become the buzzword over the past decade. Cotner et al. (2021) explain that a well-developed pathway can offer students "a clear blueprint for educational and employment advancement." A basic pathway shows students various entry and exit points (with marketable credentials at each exit point) and shows how each credential earned will build upon the previous credential.

Creating CTE certificates that do not include college transfer courses opens career exploration opportunities for high school students with unweighted GPAs of 2.2-2.79. It can help those students enter the pathways and begin to earn college and/or career credentials before graduating from high school. This represents a large group of students who have not had these opportunities before. Not all the potentially impacted students are in the target market segment of this study, but this entire group (regardless of demographics) has been largely underserved since the implementation of CTE certificate opportunities at the college.

Edgecombe Community College had robust on-campus visit strategies before the Novel Corona Virus pandemic. *Career Cluster Showcases* were held several times per year. These events allowed local high school students to visit the campus and tour facilities, learn about programs, and meet the faculty of those programs and local professionals who had careers because of those programs. This allowed small groups of students to have dedicated time to learn more about programs they were interested in and speak with professionals working in the fields

supported by those programs. The college also participated in *Community in Schools* events several times per year. During these events, middle school students were brought on campus to tour the college and learn about many of the available programs.

Additionally, the college regularly sent recruiters, program chairs, and other representatives to the local high schools and middle schools during school events to help promote the opportunities available at ECC. Unfortunately, the pandemic ended all those programs (from mid-Spring 2020 through Fall 2021), and it was apparent that the Phase II participants "noticed" their absence. As the pandemic wanes (beginning in the Spring of 2022), the college will continue to pursue on-campus and high school recruiting visits. Those visits will include area professionals, specifically, area professionals "that look like" the target audiences of the recruiting efforts (whenever possible) to help those potential students "see themselves" in those types of careers. This is supported by the work of Goodrich et al. (2018), who assert that while higher education marketing is much more challenging than the marketing of typical products, the primary goal of marketing in any context is to "better match consumers (students) with products (universities) to best fit their needs." Suppose Edgecombe Community College's marketing and recruiting strategies can help potential students "see themselves" in the various programs and subsequent professions that the college offers training for. In that case, the college may better serve those underrepresented groups. Finally, college recruiters, career coaches, and marketing strategies must incorporate more financial aid awareness to help potential students understand what financial aid opportunities are available and help students (and parents) understand and navigate the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA[®]) process. This supports the findings of Long and Riley (2007), who identified "the financial aid process" as one of the three major barriers to college access and success.

The intervention strategies that were borne out of this study reflect the assertions of Hossler and Bontrager (2014); the execution of these strategies (just like Strategic Enrollment Management) is “everyone’s responsibility.” These curriculum strategies will be developed through the college division of instruction (faculty, staff, career coaches, and students). The Public Information Office at the college will assist with branding and publishing the strategies. Student services will continue facilitating campus visits, tours, and FASFA outreach. Finally, the career coaches, high school counselors, and high school liaison will make sure these strategies make it to the hands of the students we are trying to reach.

Limitations of the Study

I expected my ability to establish rapport and relational trust with the study participants who are significantly younger than me and "who look different" than me to be a significant limitation to this study, but I was wrong. My introductory script and the "small talk" that occurred before the interview sessions helped to reduce that potential obstacle. Additionally, using group interviews, as opposed to individual interviews, appeared to help the students quickly become at ease in the session because they were among peers, classmates, and friends.

The primary limitation of this study was related to the Novel Coronavirus. As previously stated, the restrictions in the spring of 2020 forced my Phase I study to change from semi-structured interviews to surveys. Extended restrictions through the Fall of 2020 and most of Spring 2021 caused Edgecombe County public school students to remain in remote learning through March 2021. I contacted the high school principals, guidance counselors, and career coaches in April of 2021 to start the recruitment process. The group interviews were conducted in early May of 2021. However, many students opted to remain remote for the school year, meaning that a large portion of the potential study participants were not available to be recruited.

This accelerated timetable and smaller pool of students to recruit led to much smaller sample sizes than I anticipated. My goal was to conduct group interviews at each of the three Edgecombe County public high schools with 6-12 participants in each group (for a total of 18-36 total participants). However, I was only able to secure participants from two of the three high schools for a total of eight participants.

The small sample size most likely contributed to the limited sample profile of the study participants. Each of the study participants met the demographic goals of the study. However, all eight participants were relatively privileged (Flowers, 2020) compared to similarly situated peers and had clear goals for life after high school. Seven of the respondents planned to attend college, and one planned to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. None of the participants would have been considered "first-generation college students." They had close and/or immediate family members who had completed college or were currently attending a college or university. A larger sample that included students with no clear goals for life after high school and potential first-generation college students may have had a significant impact on the study findings. Even with these advantages, participants expressed uncertainty and frustrations with the college choice process. This leaves space for improving connections and marketing with socially and culturally more connected students to colleges and indicates a greater need to reach those without those advantages.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

These findings present opportunities for Edgecombe Community College to bring about real change in the lives of Edgecombe County high school students, especially African American male high school students. First, this study helped inform the development of certificate programs that will allow many more African American male high school students (as well as

many other groups of underserved students) the opportunity to pursue college credentials while still in high school. This strategy, alone, has the potential to impact hundreds of local high school students by allowing them the chance for career exploration and the opportunity to build the confidence they may need to realize that they can be successful in college; and they will be able to do this while still in high school.

Secondly, this study was the first at Edgecombe Community College. A study that utilized current, African American, male college student, and high school student voices and input and the contributions of their career coaches and counselors to develop proposed strategies to improve the Edgecombe Community College enrollment rates of African American, male high school students. The 9-14 pathway template developed with the help of African American male students has set a precedent of bringing all the stakeholders to the table at the formative stage of strategy development. Historically, the impacted stakeholders of new strategies must adapt to those new strategies. However, in this study, the new strategies were developed with direct input from the impacted stakeholders. As a leader at Edgecombe Community College, it is my goal to continue the momentum this study has created. This momentum involves reliance on data analysis and stakeholder input when proposing changes. Finally, the findings and strategies that have been borne out of this strategy will help other areas of Edgecombe Community College as we continue to develop ways to improve African American male enrollment at the college.

The college has just been awarded (as of Fall 2021) a U.S. Department of Education, Predominantly Black Institutions Program - Formula Grant that is being called *Providing African American Males the Edge to Succeed* (PAAMES). This project has three objectives. Objective 1 focuses on increasing African American male enrollment, while objectives 2 and 3 focus on increasing persistence and retention. The goal of the enrollment objective is to “increase by 7%

annually the number of African American males whose academic skill sets are developed to a level that will enable them to be successful in college credit-bearing courses." In addition, objective 1.1 involves implementing community outreach programs that involve high school counselors and career coaches.

I believe the findings of this study and the strategies developed because of this study, can help the grant team, high school counselors, and career coaches prepare for ways to mitigate much of the uncertainty that their African American male students may be facing when considering college and career choices as well as programs available at Edgecombe Community College and how to pay for college. In addition, the pathways being developed and the updated CTE certificates, will create more opportunities for career exploration and dual enrollment options for these students and many other groups of underserved students who may think that college is not for them.

"FAFSA days" is a tool being used by one of our area high schools (the area charter school), and the grant team intends to expand this initiative to include all the county high schools and the area charter school (Northeast Carolina Prep) that is already hosting a similar event. ECC staff (including the grant team) will assist high school counselors and career coaches during these events to help students and families navigate the sometimes-overwhelming task of completing FAFSA forms. Understanding how much college costs and many of the financial aid opportunities available to students may help ease some of the uncertainty that area high school students (and parents) may be facing when considering college. For example, completing the FAFSA allows many ECC students to qualify for the Pell Grant. In addition, in the fall of 2021, ECC introduced the "Edgecombe Pledge." This initiative is a last-dollar scholarship designed to help ensure free tuition and fees for any student (enrolled in a curriculum program that qualifies

for financial aid). However, to qualify for financial aid, a student must complete a FAFSA. Anecdotally, our admissions counselors have encountered a notable number of in-state students enrolled for the Fall 2021 semester who were "not interested" in taking advantage of the Edgecombe Pledge because they refused to complete a FAFSA. Perhaps the FAFSA days at the local high schools can help dispel some of the uncertainty and misconceptions surrounding the FAFSA, which may help more parents and students complete the FAFSA and help make college more appealing and accessible to more students, which could also help increase enrollments at ECC.

The sample size of the primary research group was small. However, the findings did align with the current body of knowledge concerning many of the real and perceived barriers to higher education enrollment that African American male students face. I believe the themes from this study warrant further investigation to better understand the collective challenges those potential students face as they consider college and life after high school. As enrollment challenges continue to be an issue, colleges and universities must find ways to refine their marketing and outreach strategies to better understand the specific needs of specific groups of potential students and develop more comprehensive (and cost-effective) strategies to meet those enrollment challenges. More, market segment-specific research, including meeting with larger groups of potential students and discussing their goals, fears, uncertainties, and frustrations, can help illuminate even more opportunities for small rural colleges to reach underserved demographics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to determine some of the real and perceived barriers that African American, male Edgecombe County high school students face when considering college enrollment and develop marketing and outreach strategies that Edgecombe

Community College staff and faculty can use to help remove many of the barriers this underserved group of students face. The enrollment data for Edgecombe Community College shows the disparity in African American male enrollment compared to other demographics, and the college president has made understanding and addressing those challenges a top priority. The findings of this study and subsequent meetings and conversations with key stakeholders and inquiry partners show that there are opportunities to improve the college approach to recruiting students from this demographic (see Appendix I). Clearly defined educational pathways (from high school through college) that allow students to see options and choices can help remove some of the uncertainty and frustration students face when considering college. More inclusive career and technical education (CTE) certificate programs will allow more high school students the opportunity to take college classes while still in high school. These opportunities will allow students to explore career options and earn college credits while still in high school. These opportunities may also help build students' confidence and allow them to realize that they too can be successful in college. The possibilities are endless for students who have the access, the opportunities, and the support to succeed in college. The strategies that have come from this study will help Edgecombe Community College create more possibilities for many more African American, male Edgecombe County high school students, as well as other groups of underserved students than ever before and it is my sincere hope that the strategies allow the college to help more students realize their academic and career potential.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

10/15/21, 8:52 AM

<https://epirate.ecu.edu/App/sd/Doc/0/34103QKRH48UNT0LAI00LI000/fromString.html>



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Bruce Panneton](#)
CC: [Crystal Chambers](#)
Date: 4/12/2021
Re: [UMCIRB 21-000293](#)
EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COLLEGE INTENT AND CHOICE FOR MINORITY MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) occurred on 4/9/2021. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6 & 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

As the Principal Investigator you are explicitly responsible for the conduct of all aspects of this study and must adhere to all reporting requirements for the study. Your responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring changes to the approved research (including the UMCIRB approved consent document) are initiated only after UMCIRB review and approval except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All changes (e.g. a change in procedure, number of participants, personnel, study locations, new recruitment materials, study instruments, etc.) must be prospectively reviewed and approved by the UMCIRB before they are implemented;
2. Where informed consent has not been waived by the UMCIRB, ensuring that only valid versions of the UMCIRB approved, date-stamped informed consent document(s) are used for obtaining informed consent (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the ePIRATE study workspace);
3. Promptly reporting to the UMCIRB all unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others;
4. Submission of a final report application to the UMCIRB prior to the expected end date provided in the IRB application in order to document human research activity has ended and to provide a timepoint in which to base document retention; and
5. Submission of an amendment to extend the expected end date if the study is not expected to be completed by that date. The amendment should be submitted 30 days prior to the UMCIRB approved expected end date or as soon as the Investigator is aware that the study will not be completed by that date.

<https://epirate.ecu.edu/App/sd/Doc/0/34103QKRH48UNT0LAI00LI000/fromString.html>

1/2

APPENDIX B: PILOT STUDY QUESTIONS

ECC College Choice Survey_Pilot Study

The purpose of this pilot study is to analyze the factors that influenced college choice for current, Edgecombe Community College freshmen. The data collected and analyzed in this study will be used to construct a larger, more comprehensive study of college intent and choice for high school students in Edgecombe County; a rural, severely economically distressed county in eastern North Carolina.

The purpose of the larger study (later this year) will be to develop a clearer picture of how to better market to, recruit, and serve the career and post-secondary educational needs of area high school students, especially minority male high school students, who exhibit the lowest post secondary enrollment of all demographics.

A second, yet equally important, goal of the larger study is to develop more targeted and meaningful marketing and recruitment opportunities for ALL service area high school students and to help increase enrollment at Edgecombe Community College and serve the short and long-term career building needs of our constituents. Additionally, the results of this study will be shared with Edgecombe County Public Schools.

I need to know what "questions to ask" and this pilot study will help me figure some of that out.

Please be as candid and honest as you can. All of your responses, demographic information, and personal information will be kept completely confidential. All responses to this study will be coded (removing personal identifiers) in order to protect the privacy of the respondents.

When this pilot is completed, I'll be happy to share the results if you are interested.

Thank you so very much for your willingness to assist with this study.

* Required

Email address *

Your email



Where did you go to high school?

Choose

What is your intended major here at ECC?

Your answer

Did you consider any other majors before choosing your current major?

Yes

No

IF you answered "yes" what other majors did you consider (please list all)?

Your answer

Are there any majors, here at ECC, that you did NOT know were available before you enrolled?

Yes

No



IF you answered "yes," please list those majors here?

Your answer

What are your favorite things about attending Edgecombe Community College?

Your answer

What are your least favorite things about attending Edgecombe Community College?

Your answer

If you could change one (1) thing about your college experience so far, here at ECC, what would it be?

Your answer

What are your long-term college and career goals?

Your answer

How important was ECC's location in your decision to attend?

Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important



How important was ECC's cost (compared to other institutions) in your decision to attend?

1 2 3 4 5

Not Important Very Important

Were you aware of the financial aid opportunities (like Pell Grant, Edge Scholars, etc) available to ECC students BEFORE you chose to attend?

- Yes
- No
- A little

How important was course offerings (majors) in your decision to attend Edgecombe Community College?

1 2 3 4 5

Not Important Very Important

How much did you use Edgecombe Community College's website when you were considering attending ECC?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all I used it a lot



How important was ECC's cost (compared to other institutions) in your decision to attend?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Important

Were you aware of the financial aid opportunities (like Pell Grant, Edge Scholars, etc) available to ECC students BEFORE you chose to attend?

- Yes
- No
- A little

How important was course offerings (majors) in your decision to attend Edgecombe Community College?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Important

How much did you use Edgecombe Community College's website when you were considering attending ECC?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I used it a lot



If you used Edgecombe Community College's website (when you were considering attending ECC) what did you like and dislike about the website?

Your answer

Why did you choose to attend Edgecombe Community College? Be sure to include as many reasons as possible.

Your answer

If you considered other colleges and universities please list those here?

Your answer

Do you follow ECC on social media?

Yes

No

Do you have any high school friends who did not choose to attend ECC (or any other college)?

Yes

No



APPENDIX C: PHASE II GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Phase II Group Interview Questions:

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate my note-taking, I would like to record our conversations today. Please sign the release form. For your information, only researchers on the project will be privy to the recordings, which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet our human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

We have planned this interview to last no longer than 2 hours. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

1. Introduction

My name is Bruce Panneton. I have worked at Edgecombe Community College for 15 years. Currently, I am the Dean of Health Sciences and Public Safety. Prior to this position, I was the Department Chair for Science, Health & PE and before that I was a biology instructor and a part-time biology instructor.

I have started working on my doctorate in Education Leadership. My program requires that my dissertation be a "dissertation in practice" meaning that I have to address a particular problem at my institution for my dissertation research. I met with Dr. McLeod, the president of ECC in the summer of 2019 and asked him what he thought I should focus on and he, very quickly, responded that we need to figure out more effective ways to market to minority male high school students.

The data shows that African-American male, Edgecombe County high school graduates are the least likely group to attend college. I am interviewing small groups of African American male high schools from Southwest Edgecombe high school, Tarboro high school, North Edgecombe high school, and North East Carolina Prep. The data collected and analyzed in this study will be used to develop a clearer picture of how to better market to, recruit, and serve the

career and post-secondary educational needs of current, Edgecombe County minority male high school students.

2. Tell me a little about yourself: Your grade in high school? Do you play sports? Do you work and go to school?
3. When you think about life after high school (and/or college)
 - a) what 3 things are you most excited about?
 - b) What 3 things are you most concerned/worried about?
4. How many of you are planning to go to college? Undecided? Not planning to go?
5. If you're **not** planning/**undecided** to go to college, what are your plans?
 - a) *Probe for motivation, confidence, cost issues... perceived and real barriers to college choice & marketing and outreach strategies.*
6. If you **are** planning to attend college, where are you planning to go? What major?
7. If you're **not** planning/**undecided** to go to college, what made you choose _____?
8. If you **are** planning to go to college, what made you choose _____ college & _____ major
 - a) *Probe for motivation, confidence, cost issues... perceived and real barriers to college choice & marketing and outreach strategies.*
 - b) *Probe for effective and ineffective marketing strategies (what marketing techniques do the students remember and prefer...)*
9. If you're **not** planning/**undecided** to go to college. What might help you change your mind?
 - a) *Probe for motivation, confidence, cost issues... perceived and real barriers to college choice & marketing and outreach strategies.*
10. If you **are** planning to go to college, how are planning to pay for it?
 - a) *Probe for understanding of financial aid and scholarships*

11. If you are planning to go to college OR if you are not but your mind could be changed, what would you want to learn about a college and how would you like to learn about it?

- a) *Probe for marketing and outreach strategies. MOST importantly find out what participants want to see/hear and how they prefer the information to be delivered.*
- b) *Probe for possible ways to improve recruitment strategies.*

APPENDIX D: PARENTAL PERMISSION CONSENT FORM



Parental [*Legal Guardian, Legally Authorized Representative*]

Permission to Allow Your Child to Take Part in Research

Information to consider before allowing your child to take part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: TARGETED MARKETING TO THE UNDERSERVED: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COLLEGE INTENT AND CHOICE FOR MINORITY MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Principal Investigator: Bruce E. Panneton, Doctoral Candidate (Person in Charge of this Study) Institution, Department or Division: College of Education

Address: 2009 W. Wilson Street, Tarboro, NC 27886

Telephone #: 252-618-6606

Study Coordinator: Dr. Crystal Chambers PhD, JD Telephone #: 252-328-4649

Participant Full Name: _____
Please PRINT clearly

Participant's ECPS student email address: _____

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why is my child being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this research is to try to learn why some high school students choose to attend college after high school and why some do not. Your child is being invited to take part in this research because Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students are the focus of this study. The decision for your child to take part in this research will also depend upon whether your child wants to participate. By doing this research, we hope to learn What Edgecombe Community College can do help increase African American male enrollment in college.

If you and your child agree for him/her to volunteer for this research, your child will be one of about 36 people to do so.

Are there reasons my child should not take part in this research?

If your child is uncomfortable talking with a group of classmates about his/her plans after high school graduation.

What other choices do I have if my child does not take part in this research?

Your child can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

This study will take place at your child's high school and will last about 2 hours. If we are unable to meet in-person we may meet remotely through google meets, or other virtual meeting program.

What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will be asked to participate in a group interview with other students from their high school. They will be asked questions concerning their plans for college and after high school.

Our interview sessions will be recorded. The recordings will be stored in a secure location. These recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if your child will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to your child but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will my child be paid for taking part in this research?

Your child will not receive any money or gifts for being in this research study.

Will it cost me anything for my child to take part in this research?

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

The principal investigator, your child's high school counselor, high school career coach, high school principal, and classmates participating in the group interviews will know that your child took part in this research and may hear information about your child that is normally kept private.

How will you keep the information you collect about my child secure? How long will you keep it?

All of the responses given during the interviews will be kept confidential (this means that no one will know who said the things in the study). At the end of the study, the results (with everyone's names

removed) will be shared with Edgecombe County Public Schools in hopes that this information will help future students as they plan for college or careers after high school.

What if my child decides he/she doesn't want to continue in this research?

Your child can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if he/she stops and he/she will not be criticized. Your child will not lose any benefits that he/she would normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at 252-618-6606 (Monday through Friday, 8am-6p).

If you have questions about your child's rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm) If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914

Is there anything else I should know?

Your child's information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future studies.

The results of the research will be available to you and your child if you would like to receive them.

I have decided my child can take part in this research. What should I do now?

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that my child can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, my child is not giving up any of his/her rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Parent's Name (PRINT)

Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E: ASSENT FORM 12-17 YEARS OF AGE



Assent Form

Things You Should Know Before You Agree To Take Part in this Research

IRB Study # UMCIRB 21-000293

Title of Study: TARGETED MARKETING TO THE UNDERSERVED: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COLLEGE INTENT AND CHOICE FOR MINORITY MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Person in charge of study: Bruce E. Panneton

Where they work: Edgecombe Community College & East Carolina University Doctoral Candidate

Study contact phone number: 252-618-6734

Study contact E-mail Address: pannetonb@edgecombe.edu

People at ECU study ways to make people's lives better. These studies are called research. This research is trying to find out why Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students choose to (or not to) attend college after high school.

Your parent(s) needs to give permission for you to be in this research. You do not have to be in this research if you don't want to, even if your parent(s) has already given permission

You may stop being in the study at any time. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you.

Why are you doing this research study?

The reason for doing this research is to learn why some high school students choose to attend college after high school and why some do not.

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

We are asking you to take part in this research because Edgecombe County, African American, male high school students are the focus of this study.

How many people will take part in this study?

A total of about 36 people from 3 high schools will take part in this study, including about 10 people from your high school.

What will happen during this study?

- You will be asked to participate in a group interview with other students from your high school.
- You will be asked questions concerning your plans for college.
- Our interview sessions will be recorded. The recordings will be stored in a secure location.
- These recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.
- This study will take place at your high school and will last 2 hours.

Who will be told the things we learn about you in this study?

All of the responses given during the interviews will be kept confidential (this means that no one will know who said the things in the study). At the end of the study, the results (with everyone’s names removed) will be shared with Edgecombe County Public Schools in hopes that this information will help future students as they plan for college or careers after high school.

What are the good things that might happen?

Sometimes good things happen to people who take part in research. These are called “benefits.” The benefits to you of being in this study may be that you learn something about college that you didn’t know.

What are the bad things that might happen?

Sometimes things we may not like happen to people in research studies. These things may even make them feel bad. These are called “risks.” There are no known risks to this study. You should report any problems to your parents and to the researcher

Will you get any money or gifts for being in this research study?

You will not receive any money or gifts for being in this research study.

Who should you ask if you have any questions?

If you have questions about the research, you should ask the people listed on the first page of this form. If you have other questions about your rights while you are in this research study you may call the Institutional Review Board at 252-744-2914.

If you decide to take part in this research, you should sign your name below. It means that you agree to take part in this research study.

Sign your name here if you want to be in the study

Date




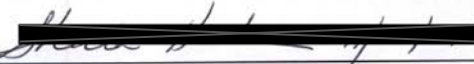

Print your name here if you want to be in the study

Signature of Person Obtaining Assent

Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Assent

APPENDIX F: NEW HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE SAMPLES

	<p>EDGECOMBE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</p> <p>REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE ACTION</p> <p>SIGNATURE PAGE</p>		
<p>Required paperwork: 1) Outline of the proposed change is to be included with this page. These should clearly identify the change(s) being made along with justification explaining the need for the change. 2) Include a copy of the current NCCCS Curriculum Standard. 3) For new courses, a copy of the NCCCS CCL course title, hours and description must be included, make sure the <i>active course</i> is selected. 4) Include any local prerequisites and/or corequisites to be added (including NCCCS required ones). 5) For new programs, the completed program application must be submitted with this document.</p>			
Curriculum Title	Agribusiness Technology		
Curriculum Code	15100	Proposed Effective Date:	Fall 2022
Concentration Title	Agribusiness Technology - Management Certificate		
Check Appropriate Items:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Curriculum Program (AAS, Diploma, or Certificate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SACSCOC Notification Required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Program of Study Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	Program of Study – New
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course – Addition/Deletion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Program of Study - Revision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curriculum Standard Revision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requisite Revision
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Describe): New Certificate – Regular and High School		
Approvals (Internal Use Only)			
Divisional CRC Approval Dean Signature and Date:	 <small>Date: 2021.11.12 09:46:05 -05'00'</small>		
Assistant to the VP Approval Signature and Date:			
Director of IE Approval Signature and Date:			
CRC Approval VP of Instruction Signature and Date:			

Request and justification: Describe the specific change requested and the reason(s) for the change (include information such as system CIP, advisory board recommendation, etc)

I would like to add an Agribusiness Technology – Management Certificate for regular and high school students:

AGR 112 Farm Business Management- 3

AND 110 Animal Science - 3

BUS 110 Introduction to Business - 3






BUS 137 Principles of Management – 3

Total: 12 hours

This change is to give those who want more management experience and those who want the option to transfer to a four year university transfer courses to choose from.

Resource Implications: Will this change require additional equipment and/or personnel?

NONE

		EDGECOMBE COMMUNITY COLLEGE REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE ACTION SIGNATURE PAGE	
<p>Required paperwork: 1) Outline of the proposed change is to be included with this page. These should clearly identify the change(s) being made along with justification explaining the need for the change. 2) Include a copy of the current NCCCS Curriculum Standard. 3) For new courses, a copy of the NCCCS CCL course title, hours and description must be included, make sure the <i>active course</i> is selected. 4) Include any local prerequisites and/or corequisites to be added (including NCCCS required ones). 5) For new programs, the completed program application must be submitted with this document.</p>			
Curriculum Title	Medical Assistant Certificate (High School)		
Curriculum Code		Proposed Effective Date:	July 1, 2022
Concentration Title	Medical Assisting		
Check Appropriate Items:			
	New Curriculum Program (AAS, Diploma, or Certificate)		SACSCOC Notification Required
	Program of Study Change	X	Program of Study - New
	Course – Addition/Deletion		Program of Study - Revision
	Curriculum Standard Revision		Requisite Revision
	Other (Describe):		
Approvals (Internal Use Only)			
Divisional CRC Approval Dean Signature and Date:			
Assistant to the VP Approval Signature and Date:			
Director of IE Approval Signature and Date:			
CRC Approval VP of Instruction Signature and Date:			

Request and justification: Describe the specific change requested and the reason(s) for the change (include information such as system CIP, advisory board recommendation, etc)

N/A

Resource Implications: Will this change require additional equipment and/or personnel?

Yes. This certificate will require some medical equipment for MED 140 as this is a lecture and laboratory course. We have devised a plan for the time being, to teach this certificate on the Tarboro campus and online. No additional instructors will be needed at this time.
The courses below are already offered at the college within the medical assisting program.

Medical Assistant Certificate

Fall

MED 114 Professional Interactions in Health care	1 credit
MED 118 Medical Law & Ethics	2 credit
MED 121 Medical Terminology I	3 credit

Spring

MED 122 Medical Terminology II	3 credit
MED 140 Laboratory Procedures I	5 credit

Total Credits: 14

SAMPLE: BUSINESS 2

High School to College Pathway (Sophomore, Junior, Senior)

Pathway: Business Administration 2020-2021

Associate of Applied Science Degree

High School Plan

Grade	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	Required Courses (*) or Recommended CTE Electives	Career and Technical Courses
9	English I	Math I	Earth Science	World History	*Health/PE	Microsoft Word & PowerPoint
10	English II	Math II	Biology	Civics & Economics	*Career Management/PLTW	Principles of Business & Finance Business Law
11	English III	Math III	Physical Science	American History I	Entrepreneurship I BUS 115 Business Law (FA)	Microsoft Excel
12	English IV	4 th Math Course		American History II	BUS 137 Prin. of Management (FA) MKT-120 Prin of Marketing (FA)	BUS 110 Introduction to Business (SP) ACC 120 Princ. Of Financial Acct I (SP)

Community College Plan

Year 13						
Fall Semester	ACA 111 College Student Success	ACC 120 Principles of Financial Acct I	BUS 110 Intro to Business	ECO Survey of Economics OR ECO 251 Microeconomics	ENG 111 Writing & Inquiry	CIS 110 Intro to Computers
Spring Semester	ACC 121 Princ. Of Managerial Acct	BUS 125 Personal Finance	BUS 121 Business Math	ENG 114 Prof Research & Reporting	MAT 143 Quantitative Literacy	
Year 14						
Fall Semester	BUS 115 Business Law I	Humanities/Fine Arts elective	BUS 137 Prin. of Management	BUS 139 Entrepreneurship I	MKT 120 Principles of Marketing	CTS 130 Spreadsheet I
Spring Semester	ACC 131 Federal Income Tax	ACC 150 Acct Software Applications	BUS 225 Business Finance	BUS 260 Business Communications	Program Elective	Social Science Elective

Required Credit Hours for Degree: 68
Hours Remaining to complete Degree: 46
Red Articulated Credit: 6 Hours
Yellow Recommended CCP: 16 Hours

Career Opportunities: Business Manager, Financial Services Representative, Entrepreneur, Business Office Supervisor
Average Salary: \$37,200

Upon Completion of the pathway, the student will be awarded a Certificate in Business Administration

High School To College Pathway Welding Technology

Sophomore Start

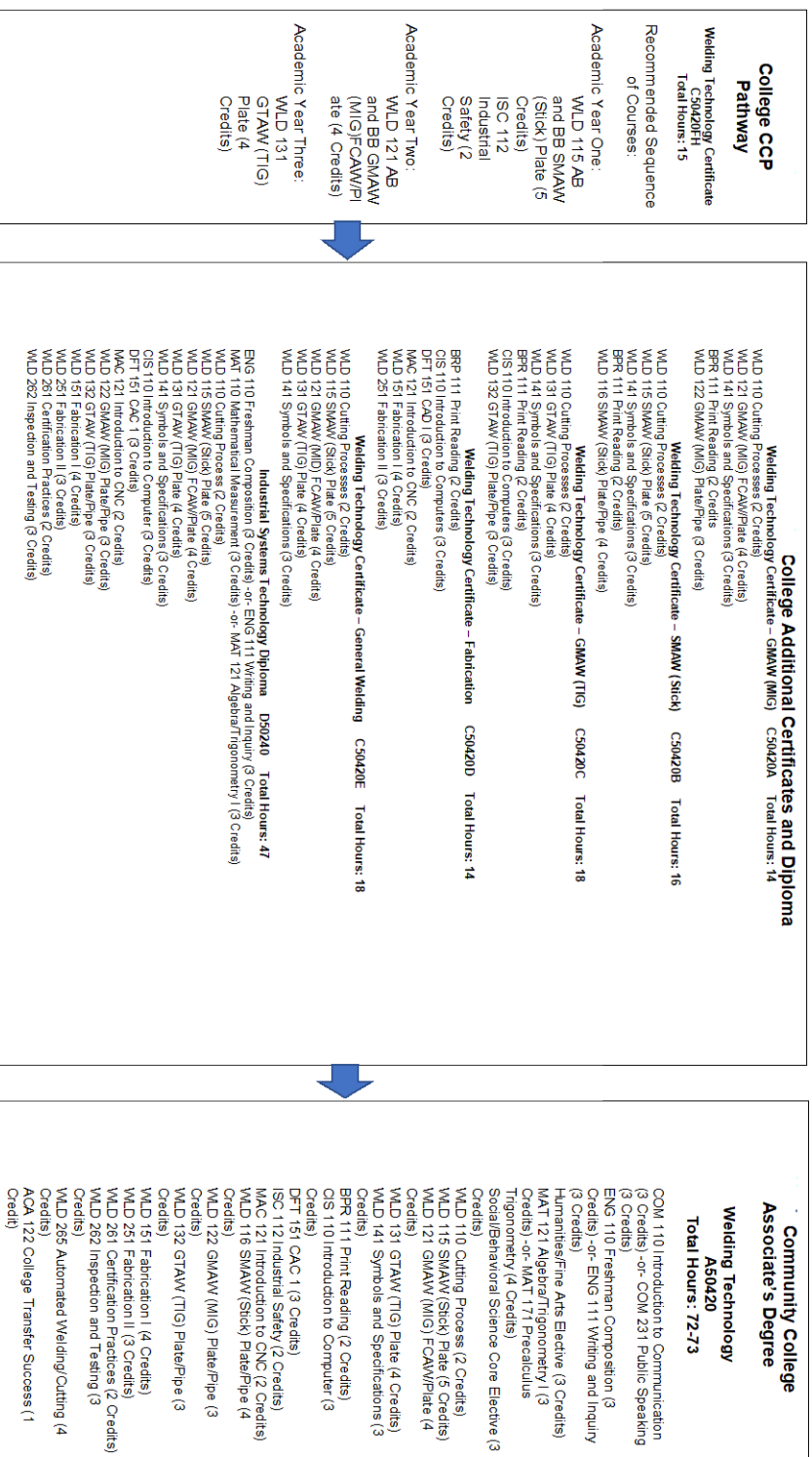
Grade	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	Other	Foreign Language	CTE	Recommended College Courses				
Grade 9	English I	Math I	Earth / Environmental Science	World History	Health/PE	Level I						
				Am History: Fndg Prin, Civics, and Economics		Level II						
Grade 10	English II	Math II	Physical Science	American History I								
Grade 11	English III	Math III	Biology	American History II								
Grade 12	English IV	Fourth Math Course										
Post-Secondary	Summer Term		Fall Semester				Spring Semester					
			WLD 215	WLD 261	ACA 115 or ACA 122	CIS 110	ENG 112 or COM 231	WLD 151	WLD 231	WLD 262	2 Electives (Humanities, Soc Sciences)	
Certificate Courses Diploma Courses Degree Courses												

WELDING

SAMPLE: WELDING 2

The Welding Technology curriculum provides students with a sound understanding of the science, technology, and applications essential for successful employment in the welding and metalworking industry. Instruction includes consumable and non-consumable electrode welding and cutting processes. Courses may include math, print reading, metallurgy, welding inspection, and destructive and non-destructive testing providing the student with industry-standard skills developed through classroom training and practical application.

Career Opportunities: Graduates of the Welding Technology curriculum may be employed as entry-level technicians in welding and metalworking industries. Career opportunities also exist in construction, manufacturing, fabrication, sales, quality control, supervision, and welding-related self-employment.



SAMPLE: ALL CTE

OPTION II—WORKFORCE CONTINUING EDUCATION

All required paperwork, test, and verification processes **MUST be complete and turned in before registration.*

- High School**
- Pharmacy Technician
 - Emergency Medical Technician

- High School**
- Pharmacy Technician

- High School**
- Pharmacy Technician
 - Nurse Aide I
 - Firefighter Block I
 - Firefighter Block II
 - Firefighter Block III

**OPTION II - Career-Technical Education Pathways (ALL) OR
OPTION III - Career-Technical Education Pathways for Freshmen and Sophomores *****

To be completed by an approved high school official

(PLEASE SELECT ONE)

____ **Accounting: Small Business Accounting
(C25800HA)**

- ACC 120 – Principles of Financial Accounting
- ACC 131 – Federal Income Taxes
- ACC 150 – Accounting Software Applications
- BUS 115 – Business Law I
- BUS 139 – Entrepreneurship
- CIS 111 – Basic PC Literacy

____ **Automotive: Electrical/Electronics (C60160HB) *****

- AUT 163 – Advanced Auto Electricity
- AUT 163A-Advanced Auto Electricity Lab
- AUT 181 – Engine Performance I
- AUT 181A – Engine Performance I Lab
- TRN 110 – Intro to Transport Tech
- TRN 120 – Basic Transport Electricity

____ **Automotive: Undercar (C60160HC) *****

- AUT 141 – Suspension & Steering
- AUT 141A – Suspension & Steering Lab
- AUT 151 – Brake Systems
- AUT 151A – Brake Systems Lab
- AUT 181 – Engine Performance I
- AUT 181A- Engine Performance I Lab
- TRN 110 – Intro to Transport Tech

____ **Business Administration: Customer Service
(C25120HF)**

- BUS 110 – Introduction to Business
- BUS 115 – Business Law I
- BUS 137 – Principles of Management
- CIS 110 – Introduction to Computers
- MKT 120 – Principles of Marketing
- MKT 223 – Customer Service

____ **Business Administration: Transfer Prep
(C25120HH)**

- ACC 120 – Principle of Financial Acct
- ACC 121 – Principles of Managerial Accounting
- BUS 115 – Business Law I
- BUS 137 – Principles of Management
- CIS 110 – Introduction to Computers

____ **Computer Aided-Drafting: Intro to CAD
(C50150HA)**

- BPR 111 – Blueprint Reading
- DFT 121 – Intro to GD&T
- DFT 151 – CAD I
- DFT 152 – CAD II
- DFT 153 – CAD III
- DFT 154 - Introduction to Solid Modeling

____ **Computer-Integrated Machining Technology-
Basic Machinist (C50210HA) *****

- MAC 111 – Machine Technology
- MAC 121 – Introduction to CNC
- MAC 122 – CNC Turning
- MAC 124 – CNC Milling
- BPR 111 – Blueprint Reading

____ **Criminal Justice: BLET Transfer Prep
(C55180HE)**

- CJC 111 – Introduction to Criminal Justice
- CJC 112 – Criminology
- CJC 113—Juvenile Justice
- CJC 121 – Law Enforcement Operations
- CJC 141 – Corrections
- CJC 212 – Ethics and Community Relations

____ **Early Childhood Education: Child Development (C55220HA)**

- EDU 119 – Intro to Early Childhood Education
- EDU 144 – Child Development I
- EDU 145 – Child Development II
- EDU 146 – Child Guidance

____ **Early Childhood Education: Introduction to Early Childhood (C55220HE)**

- EDU 119 – Intro to Early Childhood Education
- EDU 145 – Child Development II
- EDU 146 – Child Guidance
- EDU 153 – Health, Safety and Nutrition

____ **Electronics Engineering Technology: Introduction to Electronics (C40200HA) *****

- ELC 131 – Circuit Analysis I
- ELN 131 – Semiconductor Apps
- ELN 133 – Digital Electronics
- ISC 112 – Industrial Safety

____ **Electronics Engineering Technology: Communications Equipment Repair (C40200HE)**

- ELC 131 – Circuit Analysis I
- ELN 131 – Semiconductor Apps
- ELN 133 – Digital Electronics
- ELN 234 – Communication Systems

____ **Entrepreneurship (C25490HA)**

- ACC 120 – Principles of Financial Acct
- BUS 110 – Introduction to Business
- BUS 139 – Entrepreneurship
- CIS 110 – Introduction to Computers
- ETR 220 – Innovation and Creativity

____ **Industrial Systems:**

____ **Mechanical Maintenance (C50240HA)**

- ELC 117 – Motors & Controls
- ELC 131 – Circuit Analysis
- HYD 110 – Hydraulics/Pneumatics I
- MAC 121 – Introduction to CNC
- MEC 111 – Machine Processes I
- WLD 112 – Basic Welding Processes

____ **Industrial Systems Technology: Facilities Maintenance (C50240HB)**

- BPR 111 – Blueprint Reading
- ELC 131 – Circuit Analysis
- ISC 112 – Industrial Safety
- MEC 111 – Machine Processes I
- MNT 110 – Intro to Maintenance Procedures
- MNT 111 – Maintenance Practices

____ **Information Technology: Security + Prep (C25590HJ)**

- CTI 120 – Network and Security Foundations
- NOS 110 – Operating Systems Concepts
- SEC 110 – Security Concepts
- SEC 160 – Security Administration I

____ **Information Technology: A+ Prep (C25590HM)**

- CTI 120 – Network and Security Foundation
- CTS 120 – Hardware/Software Support
- NOS 110 – Operating Systems Concepts
- NOS 230 – Windows Administration I

____ **Information Technology:**

____ **Entry-Level Computer Technician (C25590HQ)**

- CTI 110 – Web, Programming, and DB Foundation
- CTI 120 – Network and Security Foundations
- CTS 120 – Hardware/Software Support
- NOS 110 – Operating Systems Concepts
- SEC 110 – Security Concepts

____ **Mechatronics: Intro to Mechatronics (C40350HB)**

- ATR 112 – Introduction to Automation
- ATR 115 – Introduction to Mechatronics
- ELC 131 – Circuit Analysis
- ISC 112 – Industrial Safety
- MEC 130 – Mechanisms

____ **Information Technology: Productivity Software (C25590HB)**

- BAS 120 – Business Analytics I
- CIS 110 – Introduction to Computers
- CTS 130 – Spreadsheet
- CTS 240 – Project Management
- DBA 110 – Database Concepts

____ **Health Information Technology (C45360HA)**

- CIS 110 – Introduction to Computers
- HIT 110 – Fundamentals of HIT
- HIT 112 – Health Law & Ethics
- MED 121 – Medical Terminology I
- MED 122 – Medical Terminology II

____ **Medical Assisting (C45400HA)**

- BIO 163 – Basic Anatomy and Physiology
- MED 110 – Orientation to Medical Assisting
- MED 118 – Medical Law and Ethics
- MED 121 – Medical Terminology I
- MED 122 – Medical Terminology II

____ **MOA: Medical Office Receptionist (C25310HG)**

- CIS 110 – Introduction to Computers
- MED 121 – Medical Terminology I
- MED 122 – Medical Terminology II
- OST 131 – Keyboarding
- OST 148 – Medical Coding, Billing & Ins
- OST 181 – Intro to Office Systems

____ **Welding Technology: Entry-Level Welding (C50420HA) *****

- WLD 110 – Cutting Processes
- WLD 115 – SMAW (Stick) Plate
- WLD 121 – GMAW (MIG) FCAW/Plate
- WLD 131 – GTAW (TIG) Plate
- WLD 141 – Symbols and Specifications

Student Name: _____

SAMPLE: COLLEGE TRANSFER 1
 Student ID#: _____

Associate in Science Pathway (P1042C): Pathway Checksheet

The CCP College Transfer Pathway Leading to the Associate in Science is designed for high school juniors and seniors who wish to begin study toward the Associate in Science degree and a baccalaureate degree in a STEM or technical major.

English Composition

✓	Course:	Course Name:	Credit Hour(s):	Prerequisite:	Corequisite:	Notes:
	ENG 111	Writing & Inquiry	3	DRE 098		Prereq met through admission to CCP.
	ENG 112	Writing & Research in the Disciplines	3	ENG 111		

Total: 6

Humanities & Fine Arts: Select 2 courses from 2 different areas below.

✓	Course:	Course Name:	Credit Hour(s):	Prerequisite:	Corequisite:	Notes:
	ART 111 ART 114 ART 115	Art Appreciation Art History Survey I Art History Survey II	3 3 3	DRE 097 for all courses.		FALL & SPRING Only Intermittently
	COM 120 COM 231	Introduction to Interpersonal Communication or Public Speaking	3 3	DRE 097		FALL & SPRING Only
	DRA 111 ENG 231 ENG 232 ENG 241 ENG 242	Theatre Appreciation American Literature I American Literature II British Literature I British Literature II	3 3 3 3 3	DRE 097 ENG 112, 113, or 114 for all courses.		FALL & SPRING Only Intermittently Intermittently
	MUS 110 MUS 112	Music Appreciation Introduction to Jazz	3 3	DRE 097		FALL & SPRING Only
	PHI 215 PHI 240	Philosophical Issues Introduction to Ethics	3 3	ENG 111 ENG 111		Intermittently Intermittently

Total: 6

Social/Behavioral Sciences: Select 2 courses from 2 different areas below.

✓	Course:	Course Name:	Credit Hour(s):	Prerequisite:	Corequisite:	Notes:
	ECO 251 ECO 252	Principles of Microeconomics Principles of Macroeconomics	3 3	DRE 097 & DMA 050 for all courses.		FALL Only SPRING Only
	HIS 111 HIS 112 HIS 131 HIS 132	World Civilizations I World Civilizations II American History I American History II	3 3 3 3	DRE 097 for all courses.		FALL & SPRING Only FALL & SPRING Only FALL & SPRING Only
	POL 120	American Government	3	DRE 097		FALL & SPRING Only

	PSY 150	General Psychology	3	DRE 097		
	SOC 210	Introduction to Sociology	3	DRE 097		FALL & SPRING Only

Total: 6

Mathematics: Select 2 courses below.

✓	Course:	Course Name:	Credit Hour(s):	Prerequisite:	Corequisite:	Notes:
	MAT 171	Precalculus Algebra	4	DMA 080 or MAT 121		Prereq met through admission to CCP. Dependent upon enrollment. FALL & SPRING Only Dependent upon enrollment. Intermittently. Dependent upon enrollment.
	MAT 172	Precalculus Trigonometry	4	MAT 171		
	MAT 263	Brief Calculus	4	MAT 171		
	MAT 271	Calculus I	4	MAT 172		
	MAT 272	Calculus II	4	MAT 271		

Total: 8

Natural Sciences: Select 2 courses below. Choose 1 set of courses (highlighted) or 2 separate (not highlighted) courses.

✓	Course:	Course Name:	Credit Hour(s):	Prerequisite:	Corequisite:	Notes:
	BIO 111 BIO 112	General Biology I General Biology II	4 4	DRE 097 BIO 111		Both courses must be taken to satisfy requirement.
	CHM 151 CHM 152	General Chemistry I General Chemistry II	4 4	DRE 097 & DMA 080 CHM 151		Both courses must be taken to satisfy requirement.
	PHY 151 PHY 152	College Physics I College Physics II	4 4	MAT 171 PHY 151		Both courses must be taken to satisfy requirement. Intermittently (PHY 151&152)
	PHY 251 PHY 252	General Physics I General Physics II	4 4	MAT 271 PHI 251 & MAT 272	MAT 272	Both courses must be taken to satisfy requirement. FALL & SPRING Only (PHY 251&252)
	AST 151 AST 151A	General Astronomy I General Astronomy I Lab	3 1		AST 151A AST 151	
	BIO 110	Principles of Biology	4	DRE 097		
	GEL 111	Introductory Geology	4			
	PHY 110 PHY 110A	Conceptual Physics Conceptual Physics Lab	3 1	DRE 097 for all courses.	PHY 110A PHY 110	

Total: 8

Other Required Course:

✓	Course:	Course Name:	Credit Hour(s):	Prerequisite:	Corequisite:	Notes:
	ACA 122	College Transfer Success	1			

Total: 1

SAMPLE: COLLEGE TRANSFER 2
2021-2022 College Catalog

Associate in Science, CCPP

Program Code: P1042C

(2021*03)

*High School Students in the CCP College Transfer Pathway Leading to the Associate in Science must complete the entire pathway before taking additional courses in the Associate in Arts Degree.

General Education (34 SHC)*

English Composition (6 SHC)

- [ENG 111 - Writing and Inquiry](#) Credits: 3
- [ENG 112 - Writing/ Research in the Disc](#) Credits: 3

Communications and Humanities/Fine Arts (6 SHC)

Communication (3 SHC)

- [COM 231 - Public Speaking](#) Credits: 3

Humanities/Fine Arts (3 SHC)

- [ART 111 - Art Appreciation](#) Credits: 3
- [ART 114 - Art History Survey I](#) Credits: 3
- [ART 115 - Art History Survey II](#) Credits: 3
- [ENG 231 - American Literature I](#) Credits: 3
- [ENG 232 - American Literature II](#) Credits: 3
- [ENG 241 - British Literature I](#) Credits: 3
- [ENG 242 - British Literature II](#) Credits: 3
- [MUS 110 - Music Appreciation](#) Credits: 3
- [MUS 112 - Introduction to Jazz](#) Credits: 3
- [PHI 240 - Introduction to Ethics](#) Credits: 3

Social/Behavioral Sciences (6 SHC)

Select *two* courses from the following from at least *two* different disciplines

- [ECO 251 - Prin of Microeconomics](#) Credits: 3

- [ECO 252 - Prin of Macroeconomics](#) Credits: 3
- [HIS 111 - World Civilizations I](#) Credits: 3
- [HIS 112 - World Civilizations II](#) Credits: 3
- [HIS 131 - American History I](#) Credits: 3
- [HIS 132 - American History II](#) Credits: 3
- [POL 120 - American Government](#) Credits: 3
- [PSY 150 - General Psychology](#) Credits: 3
- [SOC 210 - Introduction to Sociology](#) Credits: 3

Mathematics (8 SHC)

Select two courses from the following

- [MAT 171 - Precalculus Algebra](#) Credits: 4
- [MAT 172 - Precalculus Trigonometry](#) Credits: 4
- [MAT 263 - Brief Calculus](#) Credits: 4
- [MAT 271 - Calculus I](#) Credits: 4
- [MAT 272 - Calculus II](#) Credits: 4

Natural Sciences (8 SHC)

Select 8 SHC from the following courses

- [BIO 111 - General Biology I](#) Credits: 4
- and [BIO 112 - General Biology II](#) Credits: 4
- [CHM 151 - General Chemistry I](#) Credits: 4
- and [CHM 152 - General Chemistry II](#) Credits: 4
- [PHY 151 - College Physics I](#) Credits: 4
- and [PHY 152 - College Physics II](#) Credits: 4
- [PHY 251 - General Physics I](#) Credits: 4
- and [PHY 252 - General Physics II](#) Credits: 4

Other Required Hours (1 SHC)

- [ACA 122 - College Transfer Success](#) Credits: 1

Total Associate in Science, CAPP: 35 Credits

High School Students in the CCP College Transfer Pathway Leading to the Associate in Science must complete the entire pathway before taking additional courses in the Associate in Science Degree.

For more information:

SAMPLE: COLLEGE TRANSFER 3

Career & College Promise College Transfer Pathways

All classes with a () indicate a prerequisite class is required*

Pathway for Associate in Arts (P1012C)	Pathway for Associate in Science (P1042C)
<p>General Education (32-41 SHC)</p> <p>English Composition (6 SCH) <i>The following two English composition courses are required.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENG 111 Writing & Inquiry (3 SHC) • ENG 112 Writing/Research in the Disciples (3 SHC)* <p>Communications/Humanities/Fine Arts (9 SHC) <i>Select three courses from the following in at least two different disciplines:</i></p> <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 120 Intro to Interpersonal Communication (3 SHC) • COM 231 Public Speaking (3 SHC) <p>Humanities/Fine Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ART 111 Art Appreciation (3 SHC) • ART 114 Art History Survey I (3 SHC) • ART 115 Art History Survey II (3 SHC) • DRA 111 Theatre Appreciation (3 SHC) • ENG 231 American Literature I (3 SHC)* • ENG 232 American Literature II (3 SHC)* • ENG 241 British Literature I (3 SHC)* • ENG 242 British Literature II (3 SHC)* • MUS 110 Music Appreciation (3 SHC) • MUS 112 Introduction to Jazz (3 SHC) • PHI 215 Philosophical Issues (3 SHC)* • PHI 240 Introduction to Ethics (3 SHC)* <p>Social/Behavioral Science (9 SHC) <i>Select three courses from the following in at least two different disciplines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO 251 Principles of Microeconomics (3 SHC) • ECO 252 Principles of Macroeconomics (3 SHC) • HIS 111 World Civilization I (3 SHC) • HIS 112 World Civilization II (3 SHC) • HIS 131 American History I (3 SHC) • HIS 132 American History II (3 SHC) • POL 120 American Government (3 SHC) • PSY 150 General Psychology I (3 SHC) • SOC 210 Introduction to Sociology (3 SHC) <p>Math (3-4 SHC) <i>Select one course from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAT 143 Quantitative Literacy (3 SHC) • MAT 152 Statistical Methods I (4 SHC) • MAT 171 Pre-calculus Algebra (4 SHC) <p>Natural Sciences (4 SHC) <i>Select one course with lab from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AST 111 Descriptive Astronomy & AST 111A LAB (4 SHC) • BIO 110 Principles of Biology (4 SHC) • BIO 111 General Biology I (4 SHC) • CHM 151 General Chemistry I (4 SHC)* • GEL 111 Introductory Geology (4 SHC) • PHY 110 Conceptual Physics & PHY 110A LAB (4 SHC) <p>Academic Transition (1 SHC) <i>The following course is required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACA 122 College Transfer Success (1 SHC) <p>Additional Hours (0-8 SHC) <i>Up to 8 SHC of a <u>single</u> foreign language with lab from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPA 111 Elementary Spanish I & SPA 181 Spanish Lab I (4 SHC) • SPA 112 Elementary Spanish II & SPA 182 Spanish Lab II (4 SHC) <p>NOTE for both the AA and AS pathways: Receiving universities will determine whether Additional Hour courses will count as general education, pre-major, or elective credit.</p>	<p>General Education (35-43 SHC)</p> <p>English Composition (6 SCH) <i>The following two English composition courses are required.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENG 111 Writing & Inquiry (3 SHC) • ENG 112 Writing/Research in the Disciples (3 SHC)* <p>Communications/Humanities/Fine Arts (6 SHC) <i>Select two courses from the following in at least two different disciplines:</i></p> <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 120 Intro to Interpersonal Communication (3 SHC) • COM 231 Public Speaking (3 SHC) <p>Humanities/Fine Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ART 111 Art Appreciation (3 SHC) • ART 114 Art History Survey I (3 SHC) • ART 115 Art History Survey II (3 SHC) • DRA 111 Theatre Appreciation (3 SHC) • ENG 231 American Literature I (3 SHC)* • ENG 232 American Literature II (3 SHC)* • ENG 241 British Literature I (3 SHC)* • ENG 242 British Literature II (3 SHC)* • MUS 110 Music Appreciation (3 SHC) • MUS 112 Introduction to Jazz (3 SHC) • PHI 215 Philosophical Issues (3 SHC)* • PHI 240 Introduction to Ethics (3 SHC)* <p>Social/Behavioral Science (6 SHC) <i>Select two courses from the following in at least two different disciplines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO 251 Principles of Microeconomics (3 SHC) • ECO 252 Principles of Macroeconomics (3 SHC) • HIS 111 World Civilization I (3 SHC) • HIS 112 World Civilization II (3 SHC) • HIS 131 American History I (3 SHC) • HIS 132 American History II (3 SHC) • POL 120 American Government (3 SHC) • PSY 150 General Psychology I (3 SHC) • SOC 210 Introduction to Sociology (3 SHC) <p>Math (8 SHC) <i>Select two courses from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAT 171 Pre-calculus Algebra (4 SHC) • MAT 172 Pre-calculus Trigonometry (4 SHC)* • MAT 263 Brief Calculus (4 SHC)* • MAT 271 Calculus I (4 SHC) * • MAT 272 Calculus II (4 SHC)* <p style="text-align: center;">*NOTE: See criteria on the last page for direct placement into MAT 271.</p> <p>Natural Sciences (8 SHC) <i>Select 8 SHC from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIO 110 Principles of Biology (4 SHC) • BIO 111 General Biology I & BIO 112 General Biology II (8 SHC) • CHM 151 General Chemistry I* & CHM 152 General Chemistry II* (8 SHC) • GEL 111 Introductory Geology (4 SHC) • PHY 110 Conceptual Physics & PHY 110A LAB (4 SHC) • PHY 251 General Physics I* & PHY 252 General Physics II* (8 SHC) <p>NOTE: Students planning AS or BS degrees are advised to select sequence courses in the same discipline, grouped here as 8 SHC</p> <p>Academic Transition (1 SHC) <i>The following course is required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACA 122 College Transfer Success (1 SHC) <p>Additional Hours (0-8 SHC) <i>Up to 8 SHC of a <u>single</u> foreign language with lab from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPA 111 Elementary Spanish I & SPA 181 Spanish Lab I (4 SHC) • SPA 112 Elementary Spanish II & SPA 182 Spanish Lab II (4 SHC)

APPENDIX H: ECC PATHWAY TEMPLATE



High School to College Pathway

Pathway: _____ 2022-2023

Associate of Applied Science Degree

	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	Other	Foreign Language	CTE			
Grade 9										
Grade 10										
Grade 11										
Grade 12										
Summer Term										
Post-Secondary Year 1										
Fall Semester										
Post-Secondary Year 2										
Spring Semester										

Certificate Diploma Courses Degree Courses

Career Opportunities:
Average Starting Salary:

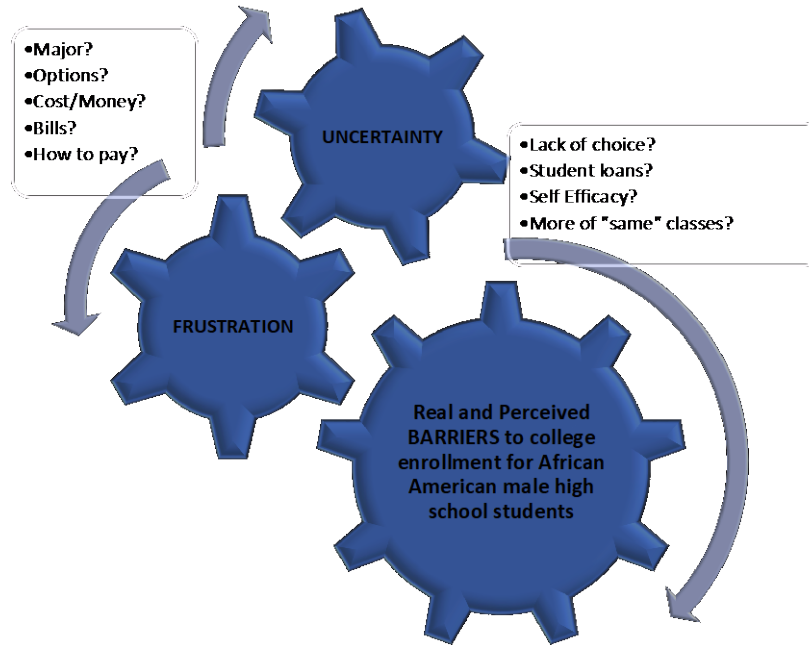
APPENDIX I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

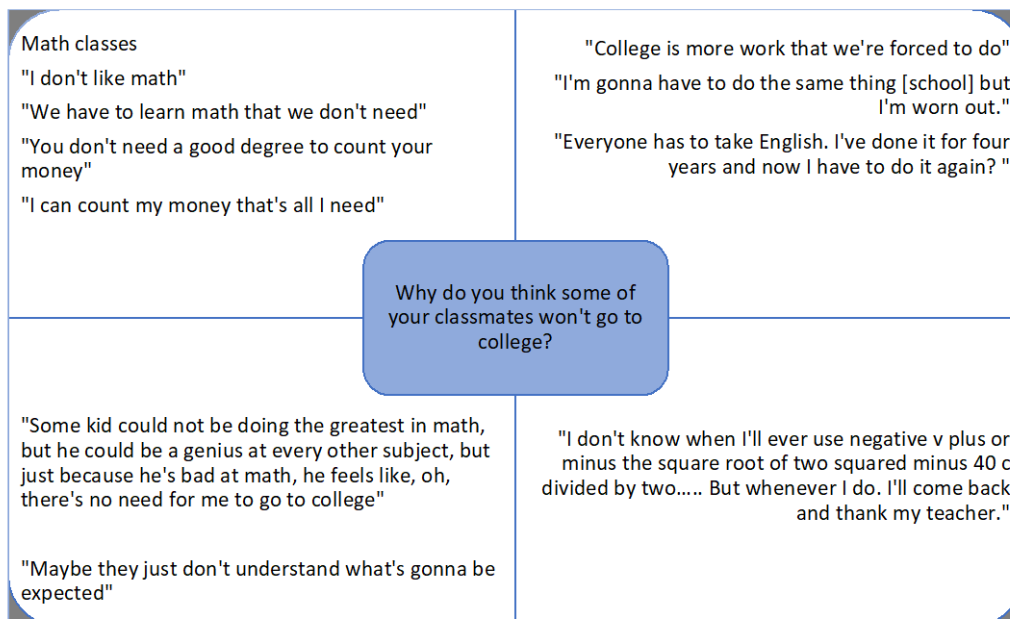
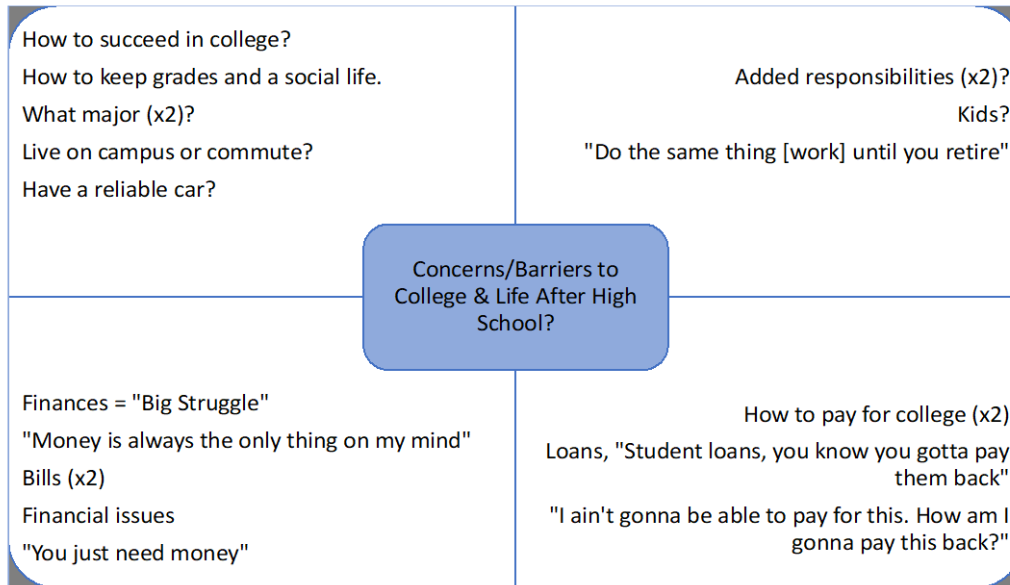
TARGETED MARKETING TO THE UNDERSERVED: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COLLEGE INTENT AND CHOICE FOR MINORITY MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enrollment at Edgecombe Community College has suffered steady declines since 2011. African American males exhibit the lowest enrollment rates, even though African American males are the largest demographic in the county.

ECC Enrollment Year	Unduplicated Annual Headcount (all demographics)	Black Male Enrollment	Black Female Enrollment	White Male Enrollment	White Female Enrollment
2006-07	2,489	360	1,024	445	771
2010-11	4,852	770	2,481	499	1,116
2018-19	2,967	305	1,245	269	697





The goal of the following interventions is to increase African American male engagement and enrollment at the college, but these interventions will strengthen our ability to better market to, recruit, and serve all students.

Intervention 1

Timeline: Fall 2022

Create and curate dual enrollment CTE certificates that enable more high school students (those with unweighted GPAs below 2.8) the opportunity to participate in the CCP/CTE certificate programs.

Intervention 2

Timeline: Fall 2022 for most popular programs. Fall 2023 for ALL programs.

Clearly defined 9-14 educational pathways (from high school through college) that enable students (and parents) to see options and choices can help remove some of the uncertainty and frustration students may face when considering college.

Intervention 3

Timeline: Fall 2022 for most popular programs. Fall 2023 for ALL programs.

Up-to-date labor market data should be included in the marketing and pathway materials to help promote the program interest and enrollments.

Intervention 4

Timeline: Ongoing

Outreach, marketing, and recruiting strategies should help prospective students “see themselves.”

Intervention 5

Timeline: Ongoing

College recruiters, career coaches, and marketing strategies must incorporate more financial aid awareness to help potential students understand not only what financial aid opportunities are available, but also to help students (and parents) understand and navigate the FAFSA process.

Intervention 6

Timeline: Fall 2022

Students rely heavily on college website searches during the pre-application phase. An introduction to the ECC website during recruiting events could assist students in locating information.

