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An Examination of the Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Student Engagement at
Northeast State Community College

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education of Educational Leadership

by

Barbara J. Lowe

December 2015

Dr. Virginia Foley, Chair

Dr. James Lampley

Dr. Rick Osborn

Dr. Pamela Scott

Keywords: Traditional, Nontraditional, Student Engagement

ABSTRACT

An Examination of the Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Student Engagement at Northeast State Community College

by

Barbara J. Lowe

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between student engagement and overall satisfaction of traditional and nontraditional students at the community college level at Northeast State Community College.

Three professors, 2 staff, 2 administrators, 5 traditional students, and 5 nontraditional students from Northeast State Community College comprised the sample for the study. A descriptive case study was the qualitative approach used. Data were collected in individual in-depth interviews with participants.

The findings of this study could provide community college administrators, staff and faculty with an understanding of traditional and nontraditional students' engagement and satisfaction and experiences on campus. This information can assist administrators, staff and faculty in identifying needs and priorities on campus along with developing learning environments that are effective for traditional and nontraditional students. Recommendations for future research are presented.

Results of the research revealed positive overall perceptions of engagement and satisfaction from students, faculty and administrators. A theme that emerged was the strong focus on student

centered, student focused, educational practices at Northeast State Community College. Additionally, it was evident that the community college continuously strives to improve their student support services as well as the academic learning environment to increase student engagement and satisfaction. Further, the findings revealed a need for more advising on the importance of utilizing student email and additional modes of communication from student support services to students and from faculty to students.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Gary and our children: daughter, Caroline Elizabeth, her husband Specialist Ryan Miklosovic, and our granddaughter, Dawson Ellaouise; our daughter, Emily Rachel; and our son, First Lieutenant Daniel George Lowe and his wife, Arika.

To my husband Gary: thank you for always being there for me and supporting me through the good times as well as the difficult times. It has been a long journey and I am beyond blessed. You have encouraged me to finish what I started and to be all that I can be spiritually, personally and professionally. You are and always have been instrumental in everything I have accomplished.

To my children: I hope you understand that the time I have had to spend away from you was intended to not only complete this dissertation, but to set an example for each of you. I have to believe that every minute I sacrificed that time with you will be well worth it in reflecting that you too can dream your dream and accomplish whatever you set out to achieve in your life. I want you to know that the writing of this dissertation was something I had to finish to ensure that I was making an investment in myself for the future. It also proved a point for me in that I have never started anything, no matter how difficult the task, that I have not finished. I did let life events get in the way, but I always kept plugging along. But the most important thing that I can tell you is this, there is nothing, not my work, not this dissertation or anything else in God's world that can compare to have being blessed to be your mom. It has and always will be my first priority and a journey that has made me value God's plan for my life more than ever. To Caroline and Ryan: thank you for giving me a place to stay every weekend during your first year of marriage. You not only waited up on me at night to offer valuable and much needed

conversation to let me unwind, but you were there to encourage and lift me up after some very long days. To Emily: you have shown me an unconditional love through some very difficult times, but we have continued to love each other through it. I will always be your biggest supporter and encourager as you have been mine. You are an overcomer. To Daniel and Arika: your love and support has meant the world to me. At a critical time your phone conversations each week asking, "are you working on your dissertation" pushed me through some very challenging days.

To my granddaughter and my future grandchildren: To Dawson Ellaouise Miklosovic: you pushed your Granna to set a priority and stick to it because nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, was going to be on my mind other than you on the date you are welcomed into this world. To my future grandchildren: I love you already! And this was as much for you as for your Granna!

To the special people in my life, my mother, Freeda Davidson, and Judge Eddie and Carolyn Beckner: To my mother: thank you for encouraging me to value my education, for believing in my potential, and for loving me unconditionally. You have been a rock in our family for 90 years and you leave with me such a legacy of love and family; To Judge Eddie and Carolyn Beckner: thank you for always being there for me. There are not words that can tell you what it has meant to have you both in my life.

To my dad and grandparents: I wish you were here to share in the joy and accomplishment of seeing me complete this final leg of my educational journey. You were and are a big part of who I am today.

There are countless teachers, family, friends, mentors, and others who have touched my life and the life of our family to allow this journey to happen through their support – thank you!

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Lastly I wish to thank Dr. Pam Goodman, former Vice-President of Student Affairs at Walters State Community College, for a message from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities that was prominently displayed on the wall of her office that have inspired me throughout my career at WSCC.

Students are

. . . the most important people on campus.

. . . not cold enrollment statistics but flesh and blood human beings with feelings and emotions like our own.

. . . not people to be tolerated so we can do our own thing.

They are our thing.

. . . not dependent on us. rather, we are dependent on them.

. . . not an interruption of our work but the purpose of it.

Without students, there would be no need for this institution.

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OPENING VIGNETTE

The decision to review traditional versus nontraditional postsecondary education was based on my personal experience. I have attended college as both a traditional and nontraditional student and I was both a fairly young nontraditional student and an older nontraditional student. I attended Walters State Community College for one year after high school, left to join the military, returned home to again attend Walters State, and received my associate's degree in 1981. I attended East Tennessee State University and graduated with my Bachelor's Degree in 1983 before going on to the University of Tennessee to complete my Master's degree in 1985. Between receiving my master's degree and beginning my doctoral work, I was out of school for 21 years. Currently I am an employee of Walters State Community College in the position of Assistant Director of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Services through the Center of Workforce Development. In this position, I work with Career Specialists to assist them in advising and counseling traditional and nontraditional students to be successful in their postsecondary education, training and careers.

Both my love of learning and my position at a community college initiated my decision to pursue a doctoral degree in education. I did not realize the challenges that I would encounter after a 21-year absence. Marriage to a police officer working varied shifts, holding a job of my own, financial concerns, aging parents, family crises, and raising three children encountering their own major life events – high school and college graduations, weddings, moving away from home, and one with serious health issues – all contributed to a difficult return to academia. Completing my dissertation was a priority for me, but my family was and will always be the most important thing in my life, taking precedent without fail. I spent years trying to balance those school, work, and personal responsibilities on top of dealing with rusty focus,

concentration, and writing skills which all combined to make completing my doctoral dissertation a huge challenge.

My own struggles with being a nontraditional student piqued my interest in student engagement and the overall satisfaction of traditional and nontraditional students returning to college. This was the first time in my life that I had begun something related to school, work, personal life, or my college experience that I was in danger of not following through to the very end. Knowing that I was so close to achieving my doctorate yet unable to spend the time and attention required to make it happen lingered constantly in my mind for the past 5 years. All but dissertation (A.B.D.) became my mantra as I finally fell into position to resume progress toward completion. I wanted to know what pushed an individual to complete a degree, whether or not there were huge obstacles standing in his or her way. Are there significant differences between traditional and nontraditional students when it comes to student engagement? Why is a traditional student participating in campus activities and staying involved and graduating? What are the obstacles for traditional students, if any, that get in the way of completing their college education? Why do nontraditional students stop or drop out? These questions began to frame the research encompassed in this study. This qualitative study focused on an examination of the perceptions of traditional and nontraditional student engagement at Northeast State Community College.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Context Setting and History of the Issue

In 1991, J. W. Gilley stated:

Despite serious problems and impending changes precipitated by the challenges of a new century, American colleges and universities represent an accumulated resource unparalleled in the world, an extremely valuable asset in the national quest for economic excellence. (p. 132)

Unfortunately, since that time, higher education institutions' resources and rates of student success have both declined, largely due to the fluctuating economic state of the nation and the American people. The United States, once the pinnacle of high college graduation rates and a thriving educational system, is no longer considered a global leader in college completion and degree attainment (ACCSFA, 2012). Postsecondary graduation rates for students in the United States have declined and seemed to flat-line at about 40%, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in their 2011 Education at a Glance report, causing the nation to be ranked much lower now than it has been in the past in the number of adults ages 25 to 34 with college degrees (de Vise, 2011).

Furthermore, for 24 - 34-year-olds in America, the rate of attainment of their bachelor's degrees is lower currently than for 35 - 44-year-olds, which is a reversal of past numbers according to the 2010 report *State of Metropolitan America* (Berube et al., 2010). In contrast, several other developed nations around the world are maintaining college graduation rates that are continuously climbing (de Vise, 2011). If these trends in global college completion rates

continue, then consequently, so will the imbalance of global income distribution and competitiveness (ACSFA, 2012). Desai (2012) stated that as a whole, the system of higher education is charged with not only providing individuals with postsecondary education, but preparing students for employment and creating an informed population of knowledgeable citizens.

With the high priorities of accessibility and persistence in postsecondary education, Congress reauthorized the Advisory Committee in 2008 and mandated that it provide yearly reports through 2014 per the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-315 sec. 135). In accordance with that act, data on the sufficiency of grant aid must be included in the annual reports, along with the enrollment numbers and graduation rates of low to moderate-income college students (ACSFA, 2012). The focus on higher education was amplified in 2009, when President Obama proposed his own plan to increase college graduation rates and made a commitment to America's youth, announcing that from the combined efforts of the Advisory Committee and the funds arranged in his 10-year plan, the United States would persevere and again have greater numbers of college graduates than any other country in the world (ACSFA, 2012).

The Advisory Committee compiled information on the availability of educational access and endurance required by college students today, hoping to encompass the great list of tasks and barriers that would be encountered prior to achieving President Obama's goal. The Committee reported on traditional and nontraditional students in their third annual report, in relation to their respective issues and demands (ACSFA, 2012).

In regard to traditional students, the report claimed that due to the economic status of many students' families, fewer high school graduates are enrolling in four-year colleges than in

the past. The shift toward community colleges is relevant because according to past studies, the institution that students begin their postsecondary education in often predicts their amount of determination and success throughout their college career. Students that begin and end at 4-year institutions are historically more likely to attain their degree in the allotted time than those that begin at community colleges (Bound, Lovenheim, & Turner, 2007). The results from the Committee's 2010 report, *The Rising Price of Inequality* (RPI), estimated that over 3 million potential bachelor's degrees were not attained between the years 2000 to 2009 as a direct consequence of familial financial situations (ACSFA, 2012).

The RPI (2010) also reported on data pertaining specifically to the nontraditional student population. A major instigator of part-time and delayed enrollment are monetary complications, thus students graduating high school and facing financial barriers form the foundation of nontraditional students (ACSFA, 2012). It is imperative to acknowledge that an increasing number of college attendees are now nontraditional students who are less likely to continue or complete degree programs than traditional students in order to understand the changing needs of the postsecondary system and students. According to analyses by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1996 54% of traditional undergraduates attained a bachelor's degree within five years and only 16% dropped out of school in the first year of college, while not more than 31% of nontraditional students achieved college completion and as much as 38% dropped out in their first year (Horn & Carroll, 1996). By 2014, those percentages had not changed much with only a 1% increase in graduation rates for traditional students and approximately the same for nontraditional students, though due to the complex guidelines for what classifies a student as nontraditional, that number is not as clear (OECD, 2014). The rates of traditional and nontraditional students' degree attainment combined makes up the national

college completion rate of 40%. With such declining degree completion rates, both current and projected, the Advisory Committee that was charged by Congress to report on higher education issues dedicated their narrative to covering nontraditional students' barriers and challenges to success based on findings in RPI (ACSFA, 2012).

History of Community Colleges

Community college beckons to many of America's poor as a path to a better life through education. Accessible postsecondary education is perceived as an opportunity to reach for their personal American dream (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). Current and past research tells us that due to the economy, many students will be attending community colleges (NCES, 2013). It also tells us that the number of nontraditional students is increasing rapidly while graduation rates are declining (Kasworm, 2003). Further, studies have shown that a student who is engaged, or involved, in campus activities is more apt to persist to graduation (Astin, 1984). This study explored which activities keep nontraditional and traditional students engaged so that they reach graduation and identified the differences in engagement between those populations. In particular, it explored the activities that Northeast State Community College provides that encourage or discourage student engagement.

Northeast State Community College

This study is based on data and personal interviews gathered from Northeast State Community College, (NeSCC). NeSCC is a comprehensive 2-year community college in northeast Tennessee and was founded in 1966 to serve college students in the Tri-Cities area of the state. The institution was originally named Tri-Cities State Area Vocational-Technical

School, guided by the State Board for Vocational Education. Over the past five decades, the school's mission and available programs have changed and expanded to meet the growing needs of students in that area and on July 1, 1983 its control was passed to the Tennessee State Board of Regents and joined the State University and Community College System of Tennessee. On July 1, 2009, the college's name was changed to Northeast State Community College to support the wide and varied range of services provided by the institution. NeSCC currently offers programs created for students to easily transfer to a four-year institution with university parallel courses, vocational programs for students entering the workforce after graduation, and community service and continued education curriculum (NeSCC, 2015).

Current Enrollment Information

NCES forecasted a 21% increase in enrollment for students ages 25 to 34 and a 16% increase in students ages 35 and older between 2009 and 2020 (NCES, 2002). Increased adult participation in secondary education seems to be due to the increasing importance of a college education in the view of today's society, along with the relationship between a college degree and employment, stability, wealth, and opportunities (Kasworm, 2003). College credentials are viewed as a sign of excellence in particular skills and dedication to a field of interest, traits valued more and more by society and employers (Maehl, 2004). Adult learners reportedly choose to enter community college more often than a 4-year institution because community colleges are often more affordable, closer to home, comfortable, and more supportive of nontraditional student entry. Students enrolling in 2-year institutions also claimed to view the schools as an avenue of academic progression to help prepare them for transferring to a 4-year college later on (Kasworm, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

While enrollment in community colleges continues to rise, so do dropout rates, more so for nontraditional students than traditional students (Weissmann, 2014). Consequently, graduation rates have dropped. Over half of community college students seem to fit into the nontraditional category, yet the institutions historically cater only to traditional students, a likely contributor to low levels of persistence and attainment for nontraditional students. The difficulty of engaging adult learners in ways that would surely lead to their success has, legitimately, hindered the level of engagement that nontraditional students report having in their college experience (Astin, 1984). America's community college education system was not designed to support the level of nontraditional students in attendance today and student success rates seem to be proving it (Weissmann, 2014). Macdonald and Stratta (1998) found that increased accessibility and a change in the college culture were needed to benefit all students in higher education. Research is needed to evaluate and compare the causes of low college attainment for nontraditional students and the services and engagement efforts that both traditional and nontraditional learners receive at community colleges as it becomes increasingly evident that change is needed in the supports offered by the United States' postsecondary institutions.

Purpose of the Study

In 2001, Aslanian declared that in order to effectively serve the millions of adults entering undergraduate programs each year, institutions must try to understand how an adults' busy life schedules amplify their need for learning. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between student engagement and overall satisfaction of traditional and nontraditional students at the community college level at Northeast State Community College.

Research in this area is scarce and with the growing number of nontraditional students, this is an area that needs examination. This study focused on traditional and nontraditional students and the degree to which they participate or are involved in community college campus activity.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the specific student support service programs and offerings for traditional and nontraditional students at Northeast State Community College?
2. What is the relationship between engagement and success at Northeast State Community College?
3. What strategies does Northeast State Community College employ in order to increase or enhance student engagement among traditional and nontraditional students on campus?
4. What are the perceptions of faculty members and administrators, whether talking about traditional or nontraditional students, regarding engagement and success at Northeast State Community College?
5. What is the definition of a supportive campus environment? What role does it play in the success of traditional and nontraditional students at Northeast State Community College?
6. What are the differences in traditional and nontraditional students' overall satisfaction with Northeast State Community College?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be advantageous in offering community college administrators with a sounder understanding of nontraditional students' engagement, satisfaction, and experiences on campus. This in turn will help administrators with making improvements and setting priorities in needed areas. Research on theories of student engagement can be used by institutions to assist in developing more effective learning environments for both traditional and nontraditional students (Astin, 1984). This study provides insight on traditional and nontraditional students and their engagement in the community college experience. This will put a spotlight on programs or activities that could or do help these students to be successful at Northeast State Community College.

This study also has significance to nontraditional students. Findings from this study may illuminate ways for nontraditional students to help themselves succeed in college by being informed of what barriers they face and how to seek help from their institutions in overcoming those challenges. Since programs and services available to nontraditional students and their effectiveness were reviewed in this report, students could base their decision to pursue assistance in certain departments or not based on these results, depending on what applies to the individual learner.

Essentially, this study could have significance to the entire nation by way of eventually improving economic status as more college students graduate with degrees and begin fruitful professions. Increased numbers of not only college graduates but successful adults will improve the United States' reputation as a leader in education once more if findings from this study and others like it are taken to heart by students and community colleges in an effort to improve nontraditional students' success. Expanding quality education opportunities for nontraditional

students will allow for more US citizens to reach their full potential to serve the nation and “the greater good,” (ACSFA, 2012, p.79). If the specific issues of nontraditional students are addressed more consistently by institutions, it would mean ascending college completion and degree attainment rates nationally and progressing toward President Obama’s goal.

Definition of Terms for this Study

Nontraditional student – a student in college at age 25 years or older with accompanying other factors that traditional students are not concerned with, such as being financially independent, having delayed college entry, being enrolled part-time, having a full-time job, and having families of their own. Students can have any or all of these characteristics in order to be considered nontraditional (NCES, 2002). The term adult learner can be used interchangeably with nontraditional student for the purposes of this study.

Postsecondary – refers to education that takes place after secondary education. In other words, college, vocational school, or tertiary education (Putnam, 1981).

Student engagement – engagement or involvement that has to do with the time and the physical energy that students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside of the classroom and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities (Kuh, 2009).

Successful – graduating with an associate’s degree (Nitecki, 2011).

Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) – the governing body of higher education systems in Tennessee (TBR Online, n.d.).

Traditional student – an undergraduate student 18 to 24 years of age who is entering college directly after finishing high school and has characteristics that coincide with other students the same age (NCES, 2002).

Delimitation and Limitations

While there is sizeable amount of information documenting student engagement in general, research documenting the nontraditional students' engagement on a community college campus is scarce, as is research regarding nontraditional students altogether (ACSFSA, 2012). This study was limited because there is much more relevant research available on traditional and nontraditional learners at 4-year colleges. The study was delimited to a small sample of second-year students at one community college, Northeast State Community College, divided into two groups, traditional and nontraditional. It is assumed that those students who participated in the study did so voluntarily and without coercion. It was further assumed that participants were honest in their responses. It was also assumed that the sampling of students is fairly representative of the traditional and nontraditional student population at the community college.

Because I have been a nontraditional student, there may be some research bias, but I take the necessary steps to not allow that to interfere with my research. I further acknowledge that I work at another local community college, but I put forth every effort to listen to each student with an open mind, looking to improve all services to both traditional and nontraditional students.

Chapter Summary

Community colleges began as an extension of high schools to assist those students who were not academically capable of beginning college at a four-year institution. However, they quickly evolved into multi-purpose institutions that could provide vocational and remedial training as well as their original goals, serving not only traditional students but nontraditional students, a population that emerged largely from the greater accessibility and availability of community college education. The purpose of this study was to investigate nontraditional vs. traditional students at Northeast State Community College in the State of Tennessee to determine their engagement and success at a community college. This study provides educators with an awareness of how well the institution is meeting the needs of traditional and nontraditional students. This study is related to the goals of the institution and students, factors related to student engagement and student success, and is potentially beneficial to the institution in assessing its services provided to traditional and nontraditional students, and to the students in assessing available services that they may need to explore. It also involves student, faculty, and administration feedback.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

General Context Literature

History of Community Colleges

In 2014, Cohen, Brawer, and Kisker reported that community colleges in America arose in the early 20th Century due predominately to social forces and needs at the time. Industries required trained workers to operate their rapidly expanding factories and other jobs, and more accessibility of higher education to achieve social equality was at the forefront of the driving forces in educational leadership. During that time children began staying in adolescence, and therefore their mothers' care, for longer periods of time and also contributed to the demand for postsecondary education that was less specific than 4-year universities.

Two federal acts provided the funding that allowed the schools to be created, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. Higher education was greatly changed after the Morrill Act of 1862, which provided federal lands as grants to every state for the purpose of building public institutions on those lands that would teach skills related to classical studies, agriculture, mechanics, and military tactics to the working class. This act allowed students to attend college that had never had the opportunity to do so before, along with providing material to be taught that was nonexistent previously in higher education. In 1890, a second Morrill Act was put into place that expanded on the subjects that could be taught at such schools, referred to as land-grant schools. Later the act established qualifications for states funding and required that discrimination in admitting students based on race would not be permitted at land-grant schools (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). Today's foundation for federal aid in the field of

higher education is based mostly on the Morrill Acts. From the early land-grant institutions, society's needs and the continual increase in the value and interest in higher education throughout the country has caused the community colleges to grow and evolve (Baker, Dudziak, & Tyler, 1994). As time progressed and more community colleges were established the schools were also relied on to assist students with any social or personal problems as educational responsibility shifted from families to institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

There were several individuals who influenced the evolution of community colleges in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Henry P. Tappan, William Watts Folwell, David Starr Jordan, Alexis Lange, and William Rainey Harper are regarded as leaders in the history of American education and all had a hand in redeveloping the structure of educational institutions. All were either presidents or deans of their respective universities and studied aspects of higher education that were successful in Europe and attempted implementing similar practices in American community colleges (Diener, 1986).

Though Tappan and Folwell both had ideas for what would later become community colleges, Harper was the first person to obtain the funds that would allow for those ideas to be put to action. He divided the University of Chicago's courses into upper and lower departments according to how basic or specific the classes were and coined the term "junior colleges." Harper went so far as to plan the spread of junior colleges across America, but other educational and government leaders were needed to help implement the creation of successful institutions (Witt, Wattenbarger, Gollattscheck, & Suppiger, 1994).

Jordan was a good friend of Harper's and the president of Stanford University. The two men agreed on the usefulness of limiting the curriculum of smaller colleges to the first two years, in favor of the belief that university education should properly begin at the start of junior year

(Ratcliff, 1987). Harper advocated that weaker universities in existence discontinue the junior and senior years and become junior colleges (Witt et al., 1994). Lange, once the Dean of the University of California at Berkeley, was also an advocate for the development of junior colleges in California and pushed for the institutions to offer technical subjects (Diener, 1986). Harper's influence in Joliet, Illinois was important to public community colleges and still stands today. He successfully ensured that two years were added to the high school program there in 1901, making Joliet Junior College the oldest existing public junior college. Harper is recognized by many as the founder of junior colleges in America. Modern community colleges are different from Harper's visualization, but he is an important figure in the history of higher education (Beach, 2011).

California passed legislation in 1907 that allowed high schools to offer college courses as an extension past secondary education (Tollefson, 2009). This legislation authorized the development of local junior colleges, but provided no funding. In 1917, California passed legislation, the Ballard Act, to provide state and county funding for junior college students, just as it did for high school students. State financial support was authorized by this act in areas with existing taxable property of at least \$3,000,000 (Tollefson, 2009; Witt et al., 1994). In 1921, independent junior college districts with their own boards, budgets, and operating procedures were developed in accordance with California legislature. The first two years of junior college could now be equated with the first two years of university work and local control was possible. This legislation extended public education past the 12th grade to the 13th and 14th years, making higher education attainable in most communities. California became a national model for the creation and development of other public junior colleges (Diener, 1986).

Junior colleges, as community colleges were known in the early years, allowed students to obtain affordable postsecondary education that would later allow them an avenue to transfer to a 4-year university (Bailey & Averianova, 1999). Junior colleges soon grew and expanded throughout the country, and many community colleges were built to serve a group of students who might otherwise have been unable to attend college at all.

Community College Missions

Dougherty and Bakia (1999) stated that many students were not yet prepared or academically ready to attend 4-year colleges directly after high school commencement. Community colleges served as further scholastic training for underprepared students to assist them in moving on to higher education at institutions by helping them conquer financial, locational, and personal challenges. During the last half of the 20th Century, public community colleges began offering associate degrees connected to available employment opportunities and other degrees that were transferable to 4-year colleges. Mission statements detailed extending educational offerings to include further geographical and financial access, mental and physical handicap assistance, and centers for workforce development to serve a larger population of prospective students (Tollefson, Garrett, Ingram, & Associates, 1999). Community colleges were also the only places that continued to offer remedial education services, a necessary function of postsecondary institutions due to the increasing amount of students entering college who lacked basic academic skills (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The number of community college enrollees needing remedial classes ranged from 25-78% in the early 1990s (Grubb & Kalman, 1994). The needs of the labor market, the community, and the students' educational goals demanded flexibility in the development of the community college system as it progressed

(Levinson, 2005). Levin (2007) found that community colleges often serve people with diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities or limited English proficiency that never received the help they needed in high school which lead to a lack of high school diploma or delayed enrollment.

More community colleges were built and gained recognition throughout the 20th Century and the services offered continued to change. Buchman and DiPrete (2006) noted an increase in individuals attending college after World War II due to the GI Bill of Rights. Congress passed the GI Bill of Rights, also titled the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, in 1944. The GI Bill was basically a scholarship for veterans and provided financial access to higher education for many Americans. This bill broke through many social and financial barriers, further disregarding a history of only academically gifted and wealthy students being able to attend college (Baker et al., 1994). The GI Bill also introduced direct student aid and made a huge impact on community college attendance due to improved availability of financial aid (Beach, 2011). Forest and Kinser (2002) stated that as a result, over two million aspiring students enrolled in postsecondary education in the 1940s and 1950s, and approximately five million people enrolled in non-degree programs (Levinson, 2005).

At the end of World War II, the Truman Commission proclaimed that for America to be successful, the barriers to higher education for the common people must be overcome. The Commission then sought to establish a network of community colleges all over the U.S. in order to reach as many prospective students as possible. These community colleges would offer not only general and technical education, but programs for public service and recreation to fill community needs as well (Witt et al., 1994).

From there, the development of community colleges was motivated by the nation's economy expanding overseas, increasing immigration into the country, and the reshaping of the labor market, in addition to the widening gap between socioeconomic classes (Levinson, 2005; Ratcliff, 1994). From 1945 to the 1970s, there were three times as many community colleges in the U.S. as there had been before WWII (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Veterans, the Truman Commission, and the growing needs of industry brought community colleges to the forefront of focus in higher education as they began offering unprecedented services to the community. A strong leader in education to address the new roles of community colleges was needed. The American Association of Junior Colleges looked to Bogue, former president of Green Mountain Junior College in Vermont, to articulate the development of modern community colleges. In 1950, Bogue addressed community colleges as comprehensive institutions that were replacing junior colleges (Beach, 2011). Bogue was also an advocate for the schools to offer community service (Baker et al., 1994).

In the 1960s, the U.S. was showing rapid growth at community colleges, which was only furthered by the Higher Education Act of 1965. This act provided work-study programs, student loans, and grant opportunities, causing enrollment numbers to soar (Dubrow, 2002). A shift slowly took place in the workforce from wanting employees with skills to wanting employees with college degrees in their skills, sending more and more adults to community colleges (Blustein, 2006). Another factor increasing enrollment was immigration, which increased significantly in the early 1990s, with millions of immigrants seeking education and work opportunities (Levinson, 2005). Day and Bauman (2000) stated that many researchers attributed minority education to an increase in quality of America's labor, economic strength, and global competitiveness. They suggested that U.S. community colleges must continue to educate as

many students as possible, keeping in mind the incoming amount of immigrants and the level of diversity in America in order to be successful (Day & Bauman, 2000).

As community colleges grew, so did their missions. Ultimately, their missions had to change and broaden in order to provide programs that would adapt to businesses, community, and the changing needs of students (Bailey & Morest, 2003). Besides accommodating the times, the change in purpose for community colleges meant a nationwide shift to more comprehensive missions, meaning that the institutions would focus on many trades and educational paths instead of training their students in just a few specific fields (Desai, 2012).

Therefore, according to Desai (2012), community colleges must perform four main functions to fit their varied student populations' needs. These functions are listed as education and transfer, job training, remedial skills, and community service. Another relevant duty of community colleges identified in past research but not acknowledged by Desai was development of the economy (Dowd, 2003). The comprehensiveness of the community college mission is an integral part of what they do to allow open access to all students and to serve a diverse population. However, this all-inclusive method also produces tension on the institutions' efforts to carry out their traditional core mission (Desai, 2012). Cohen and Brawer (2003) along with Dougherty (2003), stated that community colleges have a hard time maintaining their focus on the true mission of serving as an extension of high schools to prepare students, both socially and academically, to succeed at a 4-year institution. This loss of concentration is because community colleges try to serve a plethora of missions, which some researchers believe takes too many resources away from the most important function. Desai (2012) stated that this causes a "risk reward relationship," (p. 112) at the community college level. He referred to the reward as colleges continuing to keep high levels of accessibility to their education service, while the risks

encompass the negative and wearing effects of attempting to fulfill multiple missions for such a growing variety of individuals.

There are also institutions that travel a contrasting route by dropping the effort to serve anyone and everyone and instead are beginning to specialize in specific fields, which seems to be driven by dwindling funding from traditional sources. Many community colleges are making decisions based on their institution's fiscal resources, which often translates that as enrollment numbers go up and resources decline, tuitions rise (Gilley, 1991).

The most significant legislature regarding community colleges since the G.I. Bill of 1944 came from President Obama in July 2009. He proposed a federal support plan for increasing American college participation and graduation over the next ten years titled the American Graduation Initiative (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) announced that the 10-year plan included a Community College Challenge Fund intended to improve programs for jobs in high demand. The funds would also increase high school dual enrollment, transfer services. Developmental skills education, tutoring, and child care. Accompanying the Challenge Fund would be the College Access and completion Fund, to create contemporary programs aimed at increasing student access. Together, the Challenge Fund and Access and Completion Fund were projected to cost \$9 billion over ten years.

A construction and renovation fund was also created to improve physical campuses of community colleges with \$2.5 billion down from federal funds. It would be up to the institutions to cover the other \$10 billion needed to complete the projects, but they could use the federal funds as they saw fit to pay debt interest or start profit campaigns or revolving loans. The last program proposed was the creation of a National Online Skills Laboratory to provide online

courses for high schools and colleges through 20 to 25 high quality online schools. The courses were meant to be free and accessible by a collaborated effort from the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Education. Funding for this program was proposed at \$50 million over the ten years (AACC, 2009).

The AACC endorsed the American Graduation Initiative (AGI), which passed in the House of Representatives in September 2009 as part of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA). However, once it reached the Senate health care reform took priority, and in the end community colleges were budgeted to receive \$2 billion over the next few years to aid dislocated workers access training programs (AACC, 2010).

Today, community colleges appeal to both traditional and nontraditional students in many ways. One primary reason swaying the decision between 2- and 4-year institutions is that the average community college tuition is less than half of tuition at larger schools. Also, the convenience of location in students' home town is as attractive trait of community colleges, especially to those students not living on campus. Community colleges often offer classes in the evenings and on weekends, which appeals to nontraditional students who often work full or part-time jobs. In addition to increased physical class schedule availability, many community colleges provide a wide array of online classes that 4-year institutions expect students to attend in a classroom with a professor (Kane & Rouse, 1999).

While the accessibility of community colleges and the range of services they offer entice both categories of students into enrollment, more than half of the institutions' students meet some criteria that classifies them as nontraditional students (Rouse, 1998). Since a majority of those students may not have ever attended a 4-year institution without beginning in community college, it appears that 2-year institutions overall have increased college degree attainment (Kane

& Rouse, 1999). However, researchers such as Porter (1989) believe that more efforts to ensure the success of nontraditional students could and should be made in community colleges.

In 1989, Porter stated that most student activities in higher education cater to traditional college students. Porter urged institutions to focus on the need of the growing numbers of adult learners for support programs and quality out-of-class activities directed at nontraditional students.

Activities created specifically for older students could assist in incorporating nontraditional students into the campus environment, addressing concepts such as raising self-esteem, initiating camaraderie among the nontraditional students who share adult characteristics, and helping the students maneuver responsibilities between home, work, and school that they face upon entering college.

History of Community Colleges in Tennessee

The Pierce-Albright Report on Tennessee Higher Education was presented in 1957 to Tennessee legislators. This report showed the need for average Tennesseans to receive access to higher educational opportunities. Access to institutions of higher education and funding were not available at the time of this report to the citizens of Upper East Tennessee or the surrounding areas (Nicks, 1979).

In 1963, The Tennessee General Assembly designated \$200,000 in response to the Pierce-Albright Report to be distributed over a 2-year period. Commissioner J. Howard Warf of the State Board of Education began working to establish a network of community colleges to serve these areas in Tennessee that had little to no feasible access to higher education (Walters State Community College, 2015). The goal for the Upper East region of Tennessee was to place a community college within a 30-40 mile commuting distance of all Tennessee residents. These

community colleges were to serve the entire community, from ages 18 and up, not limiting admission to recent high school graduates (Nicks, 1979).

The organization of the first three of these community colleges, one in each of the state's Grand Divisions, was endorsed by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1965, under the authority of Governor Frank G. Clement and the State Department of Education (Nicks, 1979). The first community college in Tennessee opened in Columbia in 1966, followed shortly by Cleveland and Jackson in 1967. In 1969, sites were designated for the next two community colleges, in Dyersburg and Tullahoma. Three more community colleges were approved by the General Assembly in 1969, and the amount of community colleges continued to grow until reaching a total of 13 schools in 65 different locations in operation in Tennessee today (Walter State Community College, 2015). Northeast State Community College, the focus of this study, was one of the most recent institutions approved to join the Tennessee Board of Regents education system (NeSCC, 2015).

The Tennessee Board of Regents State University and Community College System

Tennessee's governing body for the State University and Community College System is the Tennessee General Assembly. The General Assembly created the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) in 1972 to organize and maintain uniformity in programs offered by public higher education institutions. There were 6 state universities and 10 community colleges initially included in the TBR system that were former members of the Tennessee Board of Education. The technical institutes and vocational schools of the area, now known as Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), also became a part of the TBR system in 1983 (TBR, 2007). There are now 45 institutions in the TBR system. Four-year universities, 2-year community

colleges, and the technology centers serve Tennessee residents through academic programs, community service, vocational training, and research departments (Wood-Wyatt, 2008). The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) coordinates the Tennessee Board of Regents and the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees. The TBR system enrolls more than 80% of all Tennessee students attending public institutions of higher education and is the sixth largest public education system in the United States, partially due to upgrading the state's 27 technical centers to community college status (TBR, 2015).

Function and Responsibilities. The responsibility of the TBR is to provide guidance and management in postsecondary education administration and operation. There are many different aspects of responsibility for the TBR and among them are: procuring the Chancellor and the Chancellor's job description; handling the employment of the institutions' presidents; approving tenure and promotions, along with other institutional decisions; reviewing curricula and graduation fulfillments; approving operating budgets of the schools; setting fiscal policies; establishing policies and procedures regarding campus environments; and being otherwise responsible for the operation of each institution in the system. The TBR delegates the responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the institution and authority for operating their institution and programs to the institutional presidents (TBR, 2007).

Beyond their listed responsibilities, improving the education and skills of Tennesseans is the ultimate mission of the TBR. The TBR website stated that TBR must provide opportunities and assistance to meet the needs of all types of students in all situations to improve Tennessee higher education (TBR, 2015). The TBR defines success by the number of Tennessee citizens who have raised their education or level of vocational training past high school graduation. TBR

aims to persuade increasing numbers of Tennessee citizens to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them through higher education for the personal enrichment of their lives (Wood-Wyatt, 2008).

TBR School Systems. There are six 4-year institutions governed by the TBR. In addition to those, the TBR oversees 13 community colleges and 27 technology centers throughout Tennessee. The state is divided into three Grand Divisions: East, Middle, and West. The community colleges in the East Grand Division are Chattanooga State Community College, Cleveland State Community College, Northeast State Community College, Pellissippi State Community College, Roane State Community College, and Walters State Community College. Those in the Middle Grand Division are Columbia State Community College, Motlow State Community College, Nashville State Community College, and Volunteer State Community College. Those in the West Grand Division are Dyersburg State Community College, Jackson State Community College, and Southwest Tennessee Community College. TBR Fall 2014 enrollment for the 13 community colleges was approximately 87,000 students. TBR Fall 2014 enrollment for the 27 technology centers was approximately 17,350 students. Total Enrollment for all TBR institutions, including the six 4-year institutions, was approximately 240,000 students (THEC, 2015).

Northeast State Community College

For the purpose of this study I focused on Northeast State Community College. Tri-Cities State Area Vocational-Technical School was established in 1966 in Blountville, TN. The school's first president was James M. Pierce and the institution was governed by the State Board

for Vocational Education in Gray, Tennessee. Thirty-five students enrolled in March of 1966 in six diploma programs and by the fall enrollment had increased to approximately 100 students (P. Chandler, personal communication, August 25, 2015). The mission of the school was expanded to a regional center for vocational and technical training in 1970. Evening and special programs were initiated and included training for businesses, industries, and governmental agencies to meet the needs of working students. Classes were held in elementary schools, church buildings, and industrial sites until new buildings could be constructed on campus to meet the demands of the growing student population. In 1978, the school mission was expanded again to include issuing one-year certificates and associate degrees in technology and the school changed its name to Tri-Cities State Technical Institute befittingly (NeSCC, 2015). Mr. Pierce retired in 1983, just before the school was placed under the direction of the Tennessee State Board of Regents. Dr. Anne S. McNutt served as Interim President until Dr. H. James Owen was selected as the school's second president. During his tenure the school became part of the State University and Community College System. A 9,000 square foot student center was added to the campus in 1985 and enrollment grew to thousands of students who were served in conventional classrooms and vocational training in the years before Dr. Owen left the College to accept the presidency of another school in 1987 (P. Chandler, personal communication, August 25, 2015). Dr. R. Wade Powers took over as the institution's president in 1987. In 1990, the school added a university parallel program, changed their name once more to better reflect their new status as a community college and the programs they offered, becoming known as Northeast State Community College (Tunnel, Spangler, Walsh & Associates, 2013). During his tenure as president of NeSCC, the college increased enrollment by 110%, added five new buildings, increased campus size from 18 acres to 100 acres, and collected a foundation endowment of over

\$1million Dr. Powers retired in 1996 with president emeritus status and the mathematics-science building named in his honor (P. Chandler, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

Dr. William W. Locke assumed the presidency at the college in 1996 and while he served, enrollment increased over 60% and the Northeast State Foundation increased in value by more than 800%. Four new off-campus learning centers were opened and allied health programs in cardiovascular technology, dental assisting, medical laboratory technology, nursing, and surgical technology began. Also during his tenure, the main campus doubled in size and a library, humanities complex, and performing arts center were constructed. Locke helped developed the Academic Village, a \$20 million five-building campus in Kingsport. The College Fast Track Program was created to offer college technical education courses to high school students. Relationships with various organizations in the surrounding area resulted in the college gaining recognition as the regional leader in workforce development and training. Dr. Locke was key in establishing the Educate and Grow Scholarship Program for area high school graduates. Dr. Locke retired with emeritus status in 2009 (P. Chandler, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

Today, Northeast State is a 2-year, comprehensive public community college that provides affordable quality higher education opportunities for the residents of upper East Tennessee. Approximately 6,200 students enrolled for credit during the fall 2015 semester according to Chandler, Assistant to the Dean of Enrollment Management at NeSCC (2015). The college offers programs of study that lead to an associate's degree in a variety of programs. Many students attending NeSCC transfer to 4-year universities, participate in career programs to obtain employment immediately upon graduation, or continue their education or community service for professional enhancement purposes. NeSCC embraces the area's history and

changing educational needs of its students in the five counties it serves: Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington. Through the years, NeSCC has expanded to include five off-campus teaching sites in Gray, Elizabethton, Kingsport, Johnson City, and Bristol (NESCC, 2015).

Dr. Janice Gilliam is the current President at Northeast State Community College, the school's first female president. Since her leadership began in 2009, articulation agreements with 4-year institutions have increased to ten and reverse transfer agreements have increased to seven. She also launched the school's largest capital project ever, generating thousands of additional scholarship dollars and NeSCC was recognized for having the highest graduation rate of all Tennessee community colleges. Through Dr. Gilliam's efforts, two additional sites were opened and an amphitheater was built on the main campus (P. Chandler, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

A Changing America

There are no better institutions than our nation's community colleges to help the U.S. rebound and emerge from the recession smarter, stronger, and more competitive. Now more than ever, our nation's community colleges are at the epicenter of our economy.

(Snyder, 2009, p. 2)

Community colleges came to the attention of America again during the late 2000s. The Recession of 2008 negatively affected the nation's economy by way of factory closures, layoffs, and large numbers of displaced workers (Boggs, 2011). People who found themselves jobless turned to the local community colleges hoping to acquire new employable skills. Many

institutions began offering discounted tuition, midnight classes, and unemployment counseling. Community colleges saw masses of students enrolling in their institutions, largely as a result of the affordability, open-admissions policies, and the downturned economy (Bailey & Morest, 2006; CCSSE, 2007). Of the United States' estimated 8 million undergraduate students in 2010, 43% attended one of the 1,173 community colleges (AACC, 2010). Enrollment at community colleges continued to increase, and by the fall of 2010, students who would have attended a 4-year college in more lucrative times chose to attend community colleges. AACC (2012) stated that community colleges had potential to instigate economic growth and a thriving democracy through the education of society, but to accomplish that would require the institutions to revamp their missions, facilities, and the educational experiences of students.

Because of the economic recession of the past few years, students and their parents are more often considering attending state schools and community colleges (Santora, 2009), where tuition and fees are typically less than half that of public 4-year institutions (NCES, 2008). Many parents' dream is for their children to have a better life and standard of living, but for the baby boomers, that dream may no longer be attainable. The economy continues to fluctuate and the "American Dream" is not as easy to reach as in the past (AACC, 2012, p. vii). The median income in the United States began a downhill slide in 1972 that has continued to decline. Children born in poverty in the United States today are more likely to remain poor than at any other time in the nation's history. The middle class seems to be disappearing as other nations overtake the U.S. in educational attainment and economic drive. The Associated Press reported in 2011 that an unprecedented number of Americans, almost half the population, had either dropped to the poverty level or earned wages that were low enough to be classified as low

income. Research also indicates that younger generations will likely reach lower levels of education than older generations did (AACC, 2012).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) reported that individuals who attain a bachelor's degree earn considerably more income than people with high school diplomas or GEDs, \$60,000 compared to \$32,000. Individuals with master's degrees and above earn about \$69,000 annually, almost four times more than those people who do not have a high school diploma or GED (\$19,000). In 2012, 34% of jobs were in fields that require some form of postsecondary education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Researchers from Georgetown University reported that between 2010 to 2020, there would be 55 million job openings in America, and 65% of them would require employees to have a college degree or other training past high school. Further, it was predicted that jobs demanding an associate degree would rise at twice the rate of jobs requiring just high school diplomas or GEDs (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2009).

Currently, failure to persist to college completion is one of the primary challenges facing community college students. Bailey and Morest (2006) indicated that 80% of students entering community colleges are pursuing a bachelor's degree, but only 18% of those students meet that goal within eight years. It appears that despite the financial gain related to obtaining a college education, fewer students are graduating from community colleges. Greater numbers of students are dropping out prior to reaching their goals of completion of an associate's degree, an advanced or technical certificate, or transferring to a 4-year institution (CCSSE, 2007). According to Harper and Quaye (2009), approximately only 50% of students who attend community colleges after high school earn associates degrees or certificates within six to eight years of entering college. It is critical for community colleges to encourage student persistence

through student engagement in order to meet the demands for educated workers in the labor market (Carnevale et al., 2009).

Themes of the Research

Characteristics of Nontraditional Students

Nontraditional students have become a common sight on most college campuses over the past two decades. The adult learner over the age of 24 is the fastest-growing population of undergraduates in the U.S. (Kasworm, 2003; Sales, Drolet, & Bonneau, 2001). Nontraditional students have accounted for between 30% and 50% of the national undergraduate population over the last 10 years (Sales et al., 2001).

Nontraditional students are those who are 25 years of age or older, attend college on a part-time basis, commute to school, or are students with concerns beyond those that are usually distinctive of the traditional student (Horn & Carroll, 1996). Such concerns could include being parents, caring for elderly parents, being veterans, returning to college after a period of time in the work force, and having a full or part-time job while attending school. The most significant characteristic that differs between traditional and nontraditional students is the multiple roles adult learners must fulfill in order to attend college (Kim, 2002). The jobs, families, level of community involvement, and financial situations of a nontraditional student often compete with the time needed for academic involvement. These students are continually maneuvering clashing priorities. A main responsibility outside of school for many nontraditional students is to nurture their families, which is in direct contrast with many traditional students, who coincide distancing themselves from their families with the start of their college careers (Porter, 1989).

Nontraditional students typically maintain a serious attitude about their college education, particularly regarding their time and money, and they rarely have opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities (Graham & Gisi, 2000). Nontraditional students also have less time and availability to interact with other peers and faculty or to become engaged in the campus atmosphere. Engaging nontraditional students could be problematic because of the responsibilities outside of school in which they are already involved (Graham & Gisi, 2000). Nontraditional students consistently show academic success in higher education institutions in spite of facing many challenges to degree completion, including a system that is designed for traditional students rather than adult learners. Varied life experience and the ability to persist in such circumstances are relevant points showing that the growing nontraditional student population should be recognized and accommodated instead of ignored as they have been in the past (Fairchild, 2003). Therefore, if colleges intend to maintain competitiveness, they must reevaluate if nontraditional students are engaged on their campuses and make an effort to increase nontraditional students' overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

Nontraditional students are defined in many varying ways and often categorized by researchers using distinct age ranges such as 25 and older, 27 and older, or 30 and over (Graham & Gisi, 2000). Dill and Henley (1998) defined nontraditional students as those holding many responsibilities such as parenting and working full time in addition to attending college, and having waited at least 1 year between graduating from high school and entering college. Kim (2002) reviewed research on nontraditional students and concluded, "(1) at least three distinct definitions have been used by researchers and policymakers to identify the nontraditional community college student population, and (2) cumulatively, these definitions include the majority of students within the community college," (p. 74). Kim's research suggested that the

term nontraditional covered too many demographical aspects to accurately define one large population of students, considering that much of the literature defined nontraditional students as having certain background characteristics and risk factors on top of being age 25 or older. Age has historically been used as the main standard when evaluating the unique characteristics and programmatic needs of nontraditional student population. Kim (2002) emphasized that researchers- Metzner and Bean (1987), Butler (1998), Ely (1997), Hazzard (1993), Nora, Kraemer, and Itzen (1997), O'Keefe (1993), and Sunberg (1997)- all considered students who are age 25 or older to be nontraditional students.

Ely (1997) elaborated on the particular needs of students 25 years of age and older by identifying the additional responsibilities these students may encounter. Balancing school, a job, family, and adult responsibilities complicate the completion of their educational objectives and success. Nontraditional students rarely have time for activities on campus outside of the classroom and spend most of their time there (Ely, 1997).

Kim (2002) further remarked that the title of nontraditional had been used to indicate various student backgrounds, such as country of origin and socioeconomic status. Apling (1991) analyzed the characteristics of nontraditional students using the *National Postsecondary Student Survey of 1986* comparing five different groups of nontraditional students. Apling's (1991) classification included students who were 24 and older, attended part-time, independent of parental support, were single parents, or did not have high school diplomas. Rendon (1994) included low income, first-generation students, and employment status as a part of her definition of the nontraditional student to encompass those students who face many competing demands (Kim, 2002).

The third definition Kim (2002) discussed was at-risk students, or those who attend college with external factors that may escalate the risk of not completing their education. Many of the at-risk factors are subject to change and have opportunities of intervention by an advisor, counselor, or faculty member at some point in the student's college career. NCES has identified seven risk factors, which are (1) not enrolling within a year of high school completion, (2) attending part-time, (3) being financially independent, (4) being employed full-time, (5) having children, (6) being a single parent, and (7) having less than a high school diploma (NCES, 2012). 75% of students in 2-year institutions have at least one of those characteristics according to Kim (2002).

The Institute of Education Sciences' definition of nontraditional student listed additional traits to include ethnic minorities, underprepared students, and historically underrepresented groups in postsecondary education (ERIC, 2015). Schuetze and Slowey (2002) specified principles in their research that are essential to defining nontraditional students which include education biography or an individual's reasons for attending higher education, method and time of college entry, and students' study habits based on time allowed by their other responsibilities. Hadfield (2003) stated:

Remember that nontraditional students range in age from twenty-five to eighty. Many are working adults, but many others are unemployed adults, suffering from the most recent downsizing, "right sizing," or any of the other new-age terms for firings. Some have been absent from formal education for twenty years, and others recently completed an associate's degree. Nontraditional students are engineers, nurses, secretaries, CEOs, production line workers, teachers, parking-lot attendants, dog walkers, and exotic dancers. They are immigrants, displaced homemakers, professionals changing careers,

individuals seeking personal growth and development, grandparents, single parents, and married couples. (p. 18)

Heery (1996) stated that nontraditional students included those individuals over 25 years old, attending part-time, distance learners, living overseas, with special needs, or on a franchised or access course of education.

Yarbrough and Shaffer (1990) described nontraditional students as individuals over age 24 who are either beginning higher education for the first time or returning to college to continue their undergraduate studies. Lane (2004) stated that age and enrollment status typically classify a student as nontraditional, but that financial independence, employment, and having dependents should also be taken into consideration.

Although there are a variety of definitions for nontraditional students, most institutions, including Northeast State Community College, use essentially the same working definition, which is simply that nontraditional students are older than 24, part-time, or travel daily to school instead of living on campus. Attending college is only one of the many activities that occupy nontraditional students. Nontraditional students frequently work full-time, are responsible for small children, teens, or elderly parents, attend school on a part-time basis, and commute to campus (Fairchild, 2003; Kasworm, 2003). Most nontraditional students do not have a cohort or companion in college to partner with on projects, studying, or even walking across campus. They are normally only on campus for classes, attending few social or athletic events, if any (Fairchild, 2003).

The review of the literature shows that nontraditional students can be defined in multiple ways. Because age is the most common descriptor of nontraditional students, for this study, 25 years of age or older will determine whether a student is considered a nontraditional student.

Characteristics of Traditional Students

Traditional students are generally viewed as ages 18-22, residential on campus, enrolled in college full-time immediately following high school graduation, dependent on financial support from parents, and either do not work or only work part-time (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Gohn and Albin (2006) classified the following subpopulations as traditional students: Greek (members of a fraternity) students, residence hall students, honor roll students, and athletes. Greek students refer to those who belong to a national fraternity or sorority and live in the organizations' respective houses on campus. Residence hall students live in college dorms or residence halls provided by the college. Students in honors programs are usually attending college on academic scholarships earned for outstanding test scores and academic performance. Student athletes are those students participating in collegiate athletics and are mostly of traditional age.

Whereas nontraditional students are often the first generation of their families to attend college or even graduate high school (NCES, 2002), traditional students are the exact opposite. They are often enrolled in college simply because the act of attending college is, itself, a tradition. Some traditional students report that their enrollment in college sparks from external reasons, such as parental expectations or social relationships, in contrast to nontraditional students, who possess internal motivations to improve their education, such as the need to boost self-confidence or to satisfy their intellectual interest (Justice & Dornan, 2001). They tend to

take their education less seriously, not realizing the importance of earning a degree quickly to get a head start in their careers (Gohn & Albin, 2006). Traditional students frequently have more time and opportunity to partake in campus activities unrelated to their educational objectives, since they tend to be financially dependent on their parents, not having jobs of their own. Traditional students may interact with other students and faculty easier and more often than nontraditional students due to a sense of camaraderie on campus, feeling that they have much in common with the people there (Kuh, 2001). Dill and Henley (1998) stated that traditional students do not normally fulfill multiple roles and attend college directly after graduating high school.

Heery (1996) defined traditional students as between 18-22 years old, attending full-time, living away from their home, maintaining good grades, majoring in one or two fields, and participating in traditional higher education, along with having good study habits and level of contact with college faculty.

Nontraditional vs. Traditional

There are several distinct differences between nontraditional students and traditional students. The nontraditional students instinctively rely on life experience to assist them with their approach to learning (Knowles, 1984). According to Graham and Gisi (2000), “[a]dults enroll in college for reasons that are different from traditional-age students, often to address work or life transitions; and they often report low self-confidence, rusty study skills, and fears about returning to college” (p. 102). Kasworm (1995) suggested adult learners may assuage their fears and insecurities regarding higher education by acknowledging their specific purpose in

attending college, by carrying life and work experiences into class, by forming relationships with the faculty, and by taking education more seriously than traditional students.

The adult learner may correlate life experience with new knowledge. By making these connections to their vast knowledge banks, learning is a more multidimensional process than that of younger students (Donaldson & Graham, 1999). The older student is much less enmeshed in campus activities because most are involved in family and work-related matters. In contrast, the younger student interacts with peers on a regular basis in and out of class and participates in numerous campus activities that involve even more networking among students (Donaldson & Graham, 1999). Considering this information, Carney-Crompton and Tan's research from 2001 revealed that older students demonstrated academic growth equal to or greater than traditional students in review of 26 academic and intellectual development measures. The research found that nontraditional students earned higher grades on schoolwork than traditional students, despite handling a variety of extracurricular responsibilities (Carney-Crompton & Tan 2002). Adult students' level of interaction with professors and advisors was presented as a possible compensation for the lack of time spent on campus studying or participating in other activities (Donaldson & Graham, 1999). According to Donaldson and Graham (1999), depression and anxiety seemed to be no more prevalent for nontraditional students than traditional students. Hermon and Davis (2004) acknowledged that according to student reports, nontraditional students tend to procrastinate on homework more often than traditional students.

Bean and Metzner (1985) suggested documenting the differences between nontraditional and traditional students to overcome the difficulty in creating a standard profile of nontraditional students due to their complex diversity. Moreover, research recommended limiting age level to that of 25 or older to define such a group that shares several common characteristics so different

from traditional college students (Choy, 2002; NCES, 2002). Kasworm (2003) listed several ways to differentiate between nontraditional students and traditional students. For instance, nontraditional students are largely attending part-time, 69%, compared to 27% of part-time traditional students. Approximately 50% of nontraditional students are employed full-time in contrast to 36% of working younger students (Kim, 2002). Nontraditional students are also more likely to fund their own education and have major family responsibilities, resulting in unique pressures compared to those of traditional students (Morgan, 2001).

Fifty-six percent of nontraditional students have a spouse, compared to 6.5% of traditional students. Many nontraditional students are re-entering college rather than being continuously enrolled after high school and are typically not as prepared for the additional role of student, therefore more likely to experience role conflict (Kim, 2002). Many nontraditional students believe that they are unable to keep up with younger students because of their years out of school. Many of them have low-esteem and are unsure of their abilities. Nontraditional students are also twice as likely as traditional students to drop out of college in the first year (Brown, 2002). The last comparison and possibly most overlooked is the fact that nontraditional students are more likely to have higher grade point averages than those of traditional students (Kasworm, 2003).

Fairchild (2003) claimed that one of the biggest differences between traditional and nontraditional students is how they view higher education. For traditional students, college is perceived as a major life experience that builds on an individual's personal foundation. Adults typically have established families, careers, and community roles, however, and regard postsecondary education as an avenue to meet a requirement, learn new job skills, and move up the career ladder. Eppler and Harju (1997) found that adult learners are more inclined to want to

improve their knowledge and abilities for the sake of their own desires, while younger students are often motivated externally to meet the expectations of others and form social relationships, which may relate to the differences in academic performance between the two populations.

Student Enrollment

Hadfield (2003) remarked that: “[a]dult learners, long the stepchildren of colleges and universities, have nearly become the norm and they spend billions of dollars each year on education. Have colleges and universities alienated this rich market pool” (p. 17)?

According to the 2010 census, people ages 25 and over make up approximately 66% of the United States’ population, with numbers over 200 million (US Census Bureau, 2015). Of that approximate number, 116 million have no education beyond high school, and only about 66 million have completed a formal education beyond an associate’s degree (NCES, 2012). In 2013, the NCES reported that there are approximately five and half million students over the age of 25 enrolled in postsecondary institutions, meaning 2.6% of the nation’s people over 25 are currently nontraditional students. Based on total college enrollment numbers for fall 2013 according to NCES, nontraditional students account for 31.2% of undergraduates in the United States (NCES, 2013). Kasworm (2003), estimated that soon, students 25 and older will make up over 60% of college student bodies as more and more high school graduates make the financial decision to enter college later in life.

Snyder and Dillow (2009) reported that enrollment in postsecondary education increased by 14% from 1987 to 1997. In the following ten years, enrollment increased more rapidly, at a total 26%. The expansion between 1997 and 2007 was mostly in full-time enrollment at 34%, while part-time enrollment increased by 15%. Though enrollment increases could theoretically

be attributed to population growth, the number of people in the U.S. aged 18 to 24 increased by 16% between 1997 and 2007, but college enrollment of people that age during the same period increased by only 2%. The traditional student population has grown faster than the number of older students in the past, but this is expected to reverse. Enrollment of students ages 25 and older increased 13% from 1995 to 2006. Between 2006 and 2017, NCES projected a rise of 10% in student enrollment under 25 years of age and 19% in adult learner enrollment (Snyder & Dillow, 2009).

According to Lipka (2012), college enrollment numbers in the US were strong in the fall of 2010, with over 18 million undergraduate students enrolled in colleges and universities around the country. Furthermore, 41% of college students enrolled in 2010 were 18 to 24 years old while the rest were over 25 years of age and therefore considered nontraditional students (Lipka, 2012). Additionally, in the fall of 2013, NCES reports showed that approximately 5.4 million of the college students enrolled were comprised of individuals over 25 years old, or nontraditional students (NCES, 2013).

According to Lipka (2012), Baime from the American Association of Community Colleges stated that community college enrollment is up by 22% since 2007, possibly as a result of the recession that began in late 2007. Lipka (2012) further quoted Baime, “[t]here’s always a flattening after some especially bad economic downturns” (p. 2).

In 2012, *The Chronicle for Higher Education* reported that almost half of recent high school graduates in the U.S. were enrolled in postsecondary education, which is an increase from 33% in 1980. Full-time undergraduates at community colleges accounted for 3,870,000 students in 2010. Seventy-three percent of those students were younger than 24 and 27% were 25 or older. Part-time undergraduates at community colleges that year totaled 2,035,000 students, 48%

of which were considered traditional students and 52% that were considered nontraditional based on age alone (Lipka, 2012).

There are multiple reasons that more and more nontraditional students are enrolling in community colleges. The appeal of community colleges over 4-year institutions has already been reviewed, but the increase in recent enrollment numbers must be addressed. Aslanian (2001) attributed the increase to the perception that adult learners have of higher education, which is as a way to move from their current situation in life onto better opportunities and the privileges of holding a college degree.

More students are seeing the need to expand their knowledge in fields they have already begun careers in so that they may move up in status at their jobs or be eligible for new jobs. Many companies now put emphasis on employees' college credentials due to increasing competitiveness from job applicants, and community colleges answer that need with convenient vocational programs and degrees that can be obtained in 2 years or less (Desai, 2012). As more technologically sophisticated skills are required in positions flooding the workforce, more adults are returning to college to learn new skills to meet the needs of those positions (Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006).

Additional reasons for increasing enrollment in community colleges by nontraditional students are related to family life. Over the past several decades, it has become uncommon for women to stay at home as wives and mothers as it is unfeasible in most family's economic outlooks (Compton et al., 2006). Therefore, the number of women in college continues to rise, and the fact that community colleges are mostly local, meaning easy to commute from home, to school, to daycare, etc., often appeals to those women. From 1997 to 2007, the number of females enrolled in college increased by 29%, compared to 22% in the number of males enrolled

(Snyder & Dillow, 2009). Other family issues such as divorce, death of spouse, or children leaving home can send adult learners back to college (Kane & Rouse, 1999). In these situations, students report that community college is less intimidating than 4-year institutions, driving 2-year institutions' enrollment numbers even higher (Kasworm, 2003).

Student Engagement

Student engagement is an important topic for community colleges. The concept has received ample attention in the literature for the past few decades because it relates to many positive outcomes in academic, behavioral, emotional, and social areas for high school and college students (e.g. Kuh, 2001; Tinto, 1993). The research demonstrates the importance of the relationship between student engagement and persistence towards achieving educational attainments.

Student behaviors that can be witnessed, analyzed, and measured, are defined as student involvement, or student engagement (Graham & Gisi, 2000). Student engagement, as a theory, dates back to 1932 with the work of Tyler and has been furthered by Pace, Astin, Kuh et al., and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (as cited in Kuh, 2001, 2009). Physical and psychological time, effort, and energy that students dedicate to both in-class and out-of-class events are categorized as student engagement, or involvement in the most modest terms (Astin, 1993).

Astin, (1984) described the difference between involved or engaged students and uninvolved students. Engaged students expend significant amounts of energy on studying and time on campus, actively participate in student activities and organizations, and have frequent contact with professors, counselors, and peers. In contrast, students who are not engaged neglect

their academic responsibilities, rarely spend time on campus, avoid out-of-class activities, and have little interaction with faculty or peers (Astin, 1984).

CCSSE (2007) defined student engagement as the degree to which students are involved with college faculty, other students, and learning outcomes. Preferred outcomes in education include increased learning, persistence in college, and ultimately graduation. The broad amount of research suggests these all can be tied to student engagement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Studies on student engagement concentrate on when, why, and how students participate in activities relevant to their academic goals (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). The more engaged a student is in college, the greater the student's academic and personal development (Astin, 1993). Students who are highly involved tend to perform better academically, collaborate on projects with other students on campus, actively participate in student organizations, and interact frequently with faculty members and other students (Kuh, 2001). Research showed that positive student engagement in educational activities is closely related to improved student overall development and retention, not only while in college, but also carries forward to community and business achievements (Astin, 1993). Student engagement entails the level of involvement students have with quality experiences in their education and related activities (Marti, 2009). Though engagement is defined in many regards, practitioners, organizations, and researchers concur that learning absorbs the majority of college students' time and energy (Kuh, 2003). Most research supports that student engagement is positively related to learning outcomes (Gellin 2003; Kuh, Hu, & Vesper, 2000; Pascarella et al., 1996; Pike & Kuh 2005; Pike et al., 2003).

Extensive amounts of research on institutional student engagement encompassing 4-year colleges and universities has been reported (Kuh, 2008; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, &

Associates, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1997), but notice of student engagement in community colleges has only taken place in the last two decades. Less than 10% of postsecondary engagement research has included community college students in their samples according to CCSSE (2006). In 2,600 studies reviewed by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) only 5% focused on community college students (Pascarella, 1997). Townsend, Donaldson, and Wilson (2004) studied approximately 2,300 articles published between 1990 and 2003 and found that in five major higher education journals, community colleges were only mentioned in 8% of the articles. As the nontraditional student population continues to enlarge, it is the college administrators' duty to determine whether the extensive volume of research completed on traditional college students is applicable to nontraditional students as well.

Student engagement and success in the role of the institution is further explained by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005): "Since individual effort or engagement is the critical determinant of the impact of college, then it is important to focus on the ways in which an institution can shape its academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement" (p. 602). For better comprehension of the role and range of influences of student engagement, Astin (1993) described campus environment as not only the physical location where learning takes place, but encompassing every experience a student has during their college career that might have an effect on the educational objective, such as the course work, faculty, services and programs, teaching methods, facilities, and social climate of the educational program or institution.

Stakeholders in higher education are insisting upon more accountability of higher education institutions. Focusing on student engagement has unveiled a new dimension of excellence in higher education, according to Kuh (2001). With the increasing demands of

postsecondary education and dwindling school resources, college administrators are more motivated to validate their roles in improving higher education, such as by seeking more information on the value of student engagement and how to promote it (Hernandez et al., 1999). College campuses that actively pursue student engagement with their enrollees are populated by staff committed to student learning, expressing clear expectations for students, encouraging participation and institutional allegiance, and positively contributing to learning outcomes by teaching the importance of engaging students in and out of class (Graham & Gisi, 2000; Kuh, 2001; Morgan, 2001; Whitt, 1994).

Strong evidence suggests that the undergraduate educational quality is improved by advancing student engagement on campuses (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gamoson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Hu & Kuh, 2002). Numerous reports indicate clearly positive results of student engagement includes advances in student learning and development (Graham & Gisi, 2000). Increased involvement with other students and campus activities, in and out of class, is associated with emotional and perceptual growth, which then relates to higher collegiate success rates (Graham & Gisi, 2000; Kuh, 1981; Terenzini, Pascarella & Bliming, 1996; Schroeder & Hurst, 1996).

Astin (1993) and Tinto (1997) stated that there is a better student outcome when there is greater student engagement. According to Kuh (2001), “the level of academic challenge, time on task, and participating in other educationally purposeful activities, directly influence the quality of student learning and their overall education experience” (p. 12). He also concluded that “systematic assessment of the activities in which students engage is also needed to identify where and how faculty and students might change their behavior so that students engage more frequently in good practice” (p. 30). From there, Kuh expanded on Tinto’s perspective to

develop the model of student engagement with reference to empirically effective educational outcomes, as assessed by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2008; Kuh, 2001, Tinto, 1997).

Assessing student engagement has been beneficial to colleges throughout the country. Student engagement necessitates assurance from both the institution and the student to encourage involvement (Avendano, 2003). The level and quality of student engagement correlates with the range and depth of faculty and student participation (Kuh, 2001). Student incentive to participate in objective-related or extracurricular activities can also have an effect on engagement. Active learning is a result of faculty engaging attentive students in a dynamic and challenging classroom environment (Wyatt, 2011). Wyatt also discussed the significance of impressing upon students that they are valuable members of a population focused on improving their chances of attaining a respectable lifestyle through education. This may be especially true for nontraditional learners who use life experiences to relate to ongoing instructional methods.

Benefits of Student Engagement for Nontraditional Students

Student engagement has long been acknowledged as a valued process by researchers in the field of higher education. The highly involved student puts considerable effort into their studies, working on-campus, student activities, and staying in contact with institution staff and other students (Jacoby, 2000). Student engagement is not restricted to traditional students. There are multiple populations on college campuses that could benefit from more involvement in groups and activities (Moore et al., 1998). Students are more likely to benefit in knowledge and personal development when they are engaged in their educational environments. Participation in opportunities that promote thinking and motivation, challenges, and exposure to diversity

qualifies as student engagement and could result in student growth and development (Morgan, 2001). Whitt (1994) posited that involvement in meaningful extracurricular experiences enhanced the education, growth, and satisfaction of adult learners. Improved self-confidence and time management skills along with feelings of relatability to the institution are shown in engaged nontraditional students who are active in life on campus (Morgan, 2001).

Academics, communication, networking, participating in or attending athletic events, joining student organizations, earning honor roll status, participating in student government, and completing community service projects are all examples of student engagement opportunities found on typical community college campuses (Morgan, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). To understand the minimalized effects of the college environment on nontraditional students, consideration must be taken for the smaller amounts of time nontraditional students spend on campus, therefore missing opportunities or not having time to partake in them. Most nontraditional students experience the majority of their involvement through class-related learning and interactions with faculty. Educational engagement has also been shown to lower dropout rates and increase student accomplishments (Chaves, 2006). For traditional students, positive engagement is more of a result of connecting with peers and peer-related activities, however this is another aspect of the nontraditional learner that impedes success as they rarely interact with other adult students due to time constrictions (Graham & Gisi, 2000; Kasworm, 1995; Kasworm & Pike, 1994). Several studies support the theory that extracurricular engagement positively influences academic goals, degree attainment rates, and the decision to continue education in graduate school. Further, this research discovered that students engaging in activities on college campuses tended to aim for higher educational career goals than students who were not as involved (Moore et al., 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

College campuses across the nation should offer opportunities to nontraditional students oriented around building self-confidence, encouraging interaction with peers, and helping them deal with the multiple demands on their time. Taking these steps would help alleviate some of the pressures challenging nontraditional students and simultaneously ensure that they have more access to becoming engaged. Nontraditional students report having desire to fit in and serve a functional purpose at their respective postsecondary institutions. Clubs and organizations related to their majors are especially enticing to nontraditional students because of the opportunities for experience in the field that are often presented to career-oriented clubs. When nontraditional students become actively involved on campus, some of the activities they show interest and success in are student orientation, homecoming, student government, and volunteering in campus daycare centers when they are available (Morgan, 2001). Studies have shown that being involved in extracurricular activities helps develop long-lasting success skills and also increases the appeal of students to business in the market to hire in many fields just as much or more than grade point averages (Astin, 1993; Moore et al., 1998). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) extracurricular activities significantly enhance the interpersonal and leadership skills that are necessary for success in the workforce.

Retention is the most sought-after result of student engagement because it indicates that a student was active and engaged enough in his or her educational program to be persistent to completion of a degree at a given institution (Moore et al., 1998). Stebleton and Schmidt (2010) proposed that community colleges must put more effort into creating services and an environment that promotes retention and engagement as they serve a greater number of nontraditional students who are more likely to dropout.

Many institutions already use successful programming for the nontraditional student. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) (2005) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide institutions of higher education and other stakeholders with references and strategies to form practical and effective solutions for lifelong learning. This nonprofit organization developed an evaluation for institutions to assess their effectiveness of serving adult learners consisting of eight Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners. These concepts included reaching out to students to provide lasting educational opportunities and overcome barriers to their education, helping them outline their education and career goal, and providing multiple financing and payment options for learners responsible for paying for their education. CAEL's principles went on to suggest that institutions evaluate experiential skills of adult learners combined with the material obtained from the curriculum to assign college credits, that professors use catered methods of instruction with adult learners to shine light on the usefulness of the material being learned, and take advantage of technology's capabilities to provide the most updated information at all time. CAEL recommended providing student support systems that encourage lifelong learning and forming strategic partnerships with businesses and organizations to improve career and educational opportunities for adults (CAEL, 2005).

Instrument for This Study

The renewed interest in community colleges that has surfaced recently is attributed to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The CCSSE is the established frame of reference to evaluate student engagement which essentially relates to the quality of

2-year institutions. The CCSSE serves community colleges by providing comparisons and analyses of their operational methods, shining light on areas in which the schools could improve student experiences, learning, and retention by increasing levels of engagement (CCSSE, 2006; Marti, 2004).

The CCSSE, established in 2001 at the University of Texas at Austin, was funded by many different organizations that held interest in community college practices for success. The Pew Charitable Trust and the Lumina Foundation for Education were primary, followed by two cosponsors, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning. The MetLife Foundation and the Houston Endowment, Inc., also contributed to funding in an effort to assist the community college population (McClenney, 2007). The CCSSE is in an effective partnership with Indiana University, which developed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) for 4-year colleges and universities and therefore offers experiential guidance. A National Advisory Board provides strategic and policy guidance to the CCSSE and is comprised mostly of community college leaders, higher education researchers, and foundation partners (CCSSE, 2006).

The CCSSE provides information on student engagement by a wide variety of assessments. The survey consists of elements that evaluate practices and student behaviors at the institutions that relate closely to student learning and retention. Based on reliable research, the assessments can be used in many ways. Having a thorough understanding of students' goals, external responsibilities, and time management habits can serve multiple purposes to the institutions, including providing an environment designed to enhance learning, growing, and succeeding (CCSSE, 2012).

The CCSSE asks students to elaborate on their experiences in college regarding how they spend their time, how much they feel they have learned in class, their assessment of their communication with others on campus, how their institutions support them, and more. The CCSSE also offers faculty surveys for those institutions who wish to provide further information, called the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE). The survey is available online to all faculty members teaching credit classes at the participating colleges. This allows faculty to relay their view on student engagement. The CCFSSE's purpose is to obtain data from staff regarding their teaching practices, how they spend their professional time, and what they think of their students' experiences at community college (CCFSSE, 2012).

The CCSSE enables the long-awaited expansion research beyond 4-year colleges to the ascending amount of community college students. Community colleges obtain valuable information to assist them in concentrating their efforts to improve student services and programs by providing an inside look at student engagement in community colleges.

Student Success

Community colleges are facing numerous challenges as they attempt to increase student success. In pursuing a degree to completion, student engagement and persistence are dependent upon one another (Astin, 1984; Silverman, Aliabadi, & Stiles, 2009). Nitecki (2011) classified success as graduating college with a degree, transferring to continue education, or obtaining employment. Snyder and Dillow (2009) related that student success needs to be addressed because 40% of the undergraduates in the United States are pursuing a postsecondary education by attending community colleges, 52% when taking all public higher education institutions into

consideration. Research showed that community colleges acknowledge low success rates and are implementing programs and services to correct the issues.

Upgrading student support services, increasing professional development skills, and unifying academic and social assessments are some of the programs being implemented to address student success (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Calcagno, Bailey, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2008; Driscoll, 2007; Dougherty, 1994). Faculty members are working to create an atmosphere conducive to student success by increasing one-on-one time with students (Cain, 1999; Dickinson, 1999; Karp, Hughes, & O’Gara, 2008; Shaw, Valadez, & Rhoads, 1999). Even with the extra efforts by practitioners in community colleges, low transfer and graduation rates persist. Academics have a huge influence and therefore potential to boost the success of students. Student majors or fields of study can impact retention, graduation, and transfer rates. Career focused programs such as law enforcement, paralegal studies, and nursing have a high rate of student success at community colleges and are in a position to increase student success because employment after graduation is almost guaranteed (Nitecki, 2011). Students in these three programs have high completion rates (Badway & Grubb, 1997; Phillipe & Sullivan, 2005). Jenkins et al. (2006) and Karp et al. (2008) reported that some institutions have established small student cohort models to promote student integration, collaboration, and support from similar peers.

Success at the community college is difficult to define due to the numerous missions and roles they maintain and the variety of individuals they serve. Personal achievement, vocational training, graduation or certificate completion, and transfer to a 4-year institution all signal success at a community college. The graduation rate is standardly used to define success at most community colleges. The number of students who reach degree attainment at the community

college level within a specific time frame has been debated by researchers and labeled somewhat deceptive (Borden, 2004; Jenkins et al., 2006; Townsend, 2002). Students at community colleges often do not graduate within the traditional amount of years allotted to be considered successful, but a majority of them do graduate eventually, therefore it may be considered unfair to base success on a limited amount of years to graduate. Situations that hinder or slow graduation in community college students include the tendency to earn large amounts of credits before deciding on a major and completing a degree, losing credits upon transferring to a 4-year institution, attending part-time due to responsibilities at home or work, or leaving school and returning later (Nitecki, 2011). Community colleges across the country are making significant efforts to improve student success despite the differing opinion on legitimate outcome measures. Colleges are strengthening many of their integrated programs such as: tutoring, advising, student workshops, transfer programs and student support services (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Calcagno et al., 2008; Dougherty, 1994; Driscoll, 2007). Such efforts confront low graduation and transfer rates by offering solutions in-house. The lingering low success rates are then blamed on the trials of students' personal life, demographics, and character (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Clark, 1960; Dougherty, 1994). Review of the literature on community colleges uncovered a subpopulation of students with ambitions that have been lowered and diminished and consequently do not reach success, which reflects negatively on community colleges and demands accountability (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994; Herideen, 1998; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996; Zwerling, 1976). Vocational and technical students or those in career focused programs demonstrate steady retention rates and often are not only graduating but transferring to 4-year universities (Badway & Grubb, 1997). According to Provasnik and Planty (2008),

one-third of graduating high school seniors in 2004 enrolled immediately after high school completion in a 2-year college program with the intention of graduating. Further by 2006, 47% of the graduating seniors decided to pursue a 4-year degree (Provasnik & Planty, 2008).

Barriers to Persistence and Student Engagement

According to Tharp (1988) nontraditional students generally show interest in postsecondary education when they determine that there will be a return on their investment of time, money, and effort or benefit them in some other way. Upon deciding to continue their education, the demands of their numerous responsibilities and positions threaten nontraditional students' ultimate success by affecting their participation, engagement, and persistence to graduation (Fairchild, 2003). Nontraditional students must overcome hurdles of a magnitude that traditional students have never encountered. Cross (1981) referring to a study by the Commission on Nontraditional Study, identified three major barriers to nontraditional student education and participation: situational, dispositional, and institutional (Hoy, 2004; Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Situational Barriers

Situational barriers are circumstances that occur at random in a person's life with or without warning (Cross, 1981; Fairchild, 2003; Morgan, 2001). Family, career, finances, and civil commitments all contribute in determining situational barriers. One example of a situational barrier would be time, or the lack of it. Time is often considered a student's most valuable resource (Astin, 1999; Fairchild, 2003; Morgan, 2001). Nontraditional students have not only typical time demands like traditional students but also the pressures of dependents and

full-time employment. Due to demands of their multiple roles, nontraditional students have more difficulty becoming involved than traditional students (Morgan, 2001). Specifically, nontraditional students who are parents report struggling with feelings of guilt about being unavailable at times when their children need them (Fairchild, 2003; Merriam & Brockett, 1997). Carney-Crompton and Tan (2002) pointed out that women with older children are more likely to persist than women with younger children. Other family issues such as lack of support from spouse or family and caring for elderly parents also impact nontraditional student success.

Financial constraints are also considered situational barriers. Basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter take priority over educational expenses for nontraditional students. Often, the amount of financial aid awarded combined with family demographic specifics determines whether or not students continue education. Child care is another major expense that may be problematic for adult learners (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002; Fairchild, 2003; Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Responsibilities at work are additional situational barriers that many nontraditional students must work around in order to attend college. While employment has a positive effect on the psychological well-being of nontraditional students and offer financial security (Chartland, 1992) work related issues such as conflicting schedules between school and work and lack of free time may affect engagement, class attendance, and family time (Fairchild, 2003).

Dispositional Barriers

Dispositional barriers are attitudes and self-perceptions, such as lack of confidence, lack of energy, fears of being too old or incompetent, and negative past experiences. Many nontraditional students suffer from these barriers, particularly a lack of self-assurance and self-

worth, and can be unsure of their capabilities (Morgan, 2001). Anxiety related to age is a serious issue for nontraditional students who want to pursue higher education because they may feel as though they are too old to go back to school and have been out of practice in academia for too long (Cross, 1981; Merriam & Brockett, 1997; Morgan, 2001).

Another dispositional barrier that relates in particular to adult learners is the lower energy levels often associated with aging. Not only might students over 25 have less energy in general than younger students, but also their limited available energy is most likely distributed in several areas of life due to the multiple duties of mature adulthood. Therefore, they may believe that they do not have the extra energy required to enter higher education (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002). Even students fully devoted to attending school may struggle to cope with conflicting responsibilities when they begin to increase (Fairchild, 2003).

Institutional Barriers

Conventions, rules, and policies of the individual institutions which restrict nontraditional students' opportunities for participation are considered institutional barriers (Cross, 1981). For instance, office hours and the times classes are available are institutional barriers for working adult students trying to balance family, school, and a work schedule. Most courses and professor's hours are held during the day, but some nontraditional students work during those same daytime hours. Nontraditional students often have difficulty finding institutions that offer office and class hours that meet their needs (Fairchild, 2003; Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Teaching styles are also classified as institutional barriers. Pedagogy, in which the student is dependent upon the teacher for learning the foundation of a concept (Whitman, 1990) is still the main teaching strategy found in most schools today (Merriam & Brockett, 1997), and material

learned in class does not relate life experiences to the subject matter (Fairchild, 2003). Though andragogy is a teaching style meant specifically for adults to be able to take the lead in their own education and apply the knowledge immediately in their life or career (Whitman, 1990), several researchers found that nontraditional students reported experiences with inflexible professors on course work and discussion opportunities (Cross, 1981; Knowles et al., 1998; Ross-Gordon, 2003).

Other Barriers

Nontraditional students tend to feel detached and have a hard time finding fellow students who share situational similarities (Dickerson & Stiefer, 2006). Adult learners typically receive encouragement and support from friends, family, and other external sources due to having limited communication with traditional students and organizations within college environments. The most effective support groups in higher education form from communicating with faculty and peers, which comes easily to traditional students and is therefore a direct contrast to the nontraditional student's experience (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Graham & Gisi, 2000; Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). Because the in- and out-of-class experiences of adult learners are separate and competing for students' attention, their approach to participation in campus activities is much different from that of traditional students, whose educational and extracurricular experiences tend to overlap (Fairchild, 2003; Kuh, 1995).

Thus, nontraditional students often enroll in higher education for different purposes than traditional students such as in response to life changes or to allow for career changes. They frequently report doubts about returning to college and low levels of confidence in their selves and abilities (Dickerson & Stiefer, 2006). Collaborating with peers is essential to success in

college, yet is challenging for nontraditional students to accomplish (Morgan, 2001). These differences in the college experience for adult learners could negatively affect student engagement and hence success rates for nontraditional students who are not engaged in motivating extracurricular exchanges (Graham & Gisi, 2000).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study is to examine traditional and nontraditional student engagement at Northeast State Community College. Literature surrounding the topic was reviewed in this chapter from the history of community colleges to the specific details of the eventual establishment of Northeast State Community College and the people and organizations who helped it reach culmination. Other topics from the literature discussed were the changing American dream, nontraditional and traditional students' characteristics, needs, and challenges. Institutional efforts to increase student success and engagement were reviewed. Literature surrounding the type of research used in this study was also briefly reviewed. In the next chapter, research methodology will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Chapter 3 describes the research methods that were used to collect and analyze data for this study. The main purpose of this study was to determine how traditional and nontraditional students are engaged at Northeast State Community College. This study also examined whether there were any differences between traditional and nontraditional students' engagement at Northeast State Community College. It further investigated if there was a difference between traditional and nontraditional students' satisfaction with Northeast State Community College.

This study was a qualitative study and was conducted using a descriptive case study. Qualitative studies involve asking open-ended questions to encourage detailed and sincere divulgements from subjects on their perspectives of the situation at hand (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2003). The researcher chose to conduct a qualitative study because the design allows for practices to be examined and any issues that arise to be discussed. Dissertation research may scrutinize methodical issues which can help evaluate the situational experiences of individuals whose lives are governed by events out of their control, such as nontraditional community college students.

Qualitative Perspective

In a qualitative study the researcher collects the data, demanding active involvement by the researcher during interviews and investigations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Qualitative studies normally have a smaller number of participants than other types of studies

and are performed in a limited setting. The participants must be individuals who are close to or knowledgeable about the issue being examined (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This qualitative study was performed using a descriptive case study.

A descriptive case study involves conducting research to provide insight on one situation or individual in great detail. The main goal of using a descriptive case study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the internal aspects of the individual or situation being studied (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). NeSCC was the focus of this descriptive case study. The conclusions drawn from a descriptive case study conducted in a specific setting may be applicable to other individuals or situations external to the case study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). For this study, conclusions drawn regarding student engagement at NeSCC may apply in multiple areas of higher education.

In descriptive case studies, the case and its context are depicted with expansive details gathered from numerous sources of data. There are general steps established for guiding the research. The stages of descriptive case studies include choosing what to concentrate on, forming research questions, gathering and analyzing data, identifying themes in the results that relate to the issue being studied, and presenting the researcher's conclusions and suggestions for the future based on the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Descriptive case studies evaluate a situation without making any modifications (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005.) In addition to remaining consistent and thorough while conducting research, it is essential to be descriptive about the process and findings of the case study. When educators conduct this type of research, it should be important and beneficial to them, relating to what they are trying to accomplish in order to be most effective (Glanz, 1998).

Research Questions

Six research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What are the specific student support service programs and offerings for traditional and nontraditional students at Northeast State Community College?
2. What is the relationship between engagement and success at Northeast State Community College?
3. What strategies does Northeast State Community College employ in order to increase or enhance student engagement among traditional and nontraditional students on campus?
4. What are the perceptions of faculty members and administrators, whether talking about traditional or nontraditional students, regarding engagement and success at Northeast State Community College?
5. What is the definition of a supportive campus environment? What role does it play in the success of traditional and nontraditional students at Northeast State Community College?
6. What are the differences in traditional and nontraditional students' overall satisfaction with Northeast State Community College?

Researcher's Role

The researcher conducted a review of literature regarding engagement of nontraditional and traditional students in community colleges prior to designing this study. This included the history of the topic, and emphasis was placed on research regarding student graduation rates and Northeast State Community College.

The researcher collected the data for this study by conducting an in-depth interview of each individual to collect the data and made audio recordings of each interview. The interview guide questions were derived from the research questions. The interview questions were specific and open-ended to enable further information gathering necessary for the research. During the in-depth interviews, the researcher's role was to listen, observe, and provide follow-up questions to the participants. After all the interviews were completed, the researcher had the recordings transcribed to make the data available for analysis. The researcher's next steps were to use coding to analyze the results of the in-depth interviews and to identify emerging themes.

Selection of Participants

Participants were selected by sending out a flyer (Appendix A) asking for interested students to contact the researcher. Second-year students at Northeast State Community College for the academic year 2012–2013 were the population designated for the study. The flyer was issued to instructors at NeSCC so they could hand them out to the second-year students in their classes. The flyer listed two categories - nontraditional or traditional students - and asked students who fit into one of the two categories and were interested in sharing their college experiences to contact the researcher by phone or e-mail. Returning second-year students were selected rather than first-year students because they had been engaged in campus activities for an entire school year. The first ten respondents to the flyer were selected to be the student participants. There were five traditional students, five nontraditional students, three faculty members that teach general education courses, two support services staff, and two administrators interviewed for this study, which included the Vice-President of Student Services and the Vice-President of Academic Affairs.

According to the Northeast State Community College Office of Institutional Effectiveness, in the 2012–2013 school year there were many second-year students at the community college. Each member of the selected sample of second-year students was: (1) enrolled at Northeast State Community College, (2) degree-seeking or planned to transfer to a 4-year institution, and (3) were considered traditional or nontraditional, full-time or part-time students. Flyers pertaining to the study were also distributed to second-year students through the Office of Student Support Services.

The criteria for traditional and nontraditional students was established in Chapter 1 definitions, and the researcher selected five students in each category who met this criteria. Three faculty members were selected because they teach general education courses to traditional and nontraditional students. The Vice-President of Academic Affairs was selected because of her overall responsibility for the academic environment of the institution. Two student support staff members and the Vice-President of Student Affairs were selected based on their responsibilities pertaining to student services.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher obtained data through in-depth interviews with students, faculty and staff, and administrators at NeSCC. The purpose of an in-depth interview is to collect information on the topic of the study from the participant's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Using open-ended questions in in-depth interviews is not only to gain a detailed response from the subject but also to grasp the meaning of what they report. Conducting in-depth interviews is ideal when working with a smaller number of participants because time can be allotted to delve

deeper with each subject, producing more quality information than in studies that collect data from large numbers of subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

A list of open-ended questions relating to the research questions was used by the researcher to guide each conversation during the interviews in order to yield pertinent information to the study from participants. These questions were considered the interview guides (Appendices D, E, and F) and were derived from the research questions and the need for information on what leads to persistence in college for traditional and nontraditional students.

Each in-depth interview with a traditional or nontraditional student was conducted in the Center for Strategic Teaching Excellence Program (STEP) located in the Northeast State Community College library unless the student requested another meeting venue. Student interviews were scheduled at dates and times agreeable to students. During each in-depth interview, the researcher asked specific questions to generate information that would result in a session yielding a great deal of information from each participant.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher provided each participant with an informed consent statement to review and sign (Appendix B). The informed consent advised the participants that if at any time during the interview they felt uncomfortable, they could stop. The interviews were recorded on an audio device from start to finish with participant consent. Each participant was given the option to review and discuss the consent form at any time prior, during, or after the interview. Interviews were conducted in a respectable and professional format. A draft research proposal was provided for each participant's review along with a copy of his or her interview transcript prior to publishing. The interviews took an average of 55 minutes each to complete. This data provided a large amount of information on delayed enrollment and students' experiences in post-secondary education. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher

expressed gratitude to each participant for donating their time and experiences to the study. Later, all the interviews were transcribed from the recordings for the researcher's reference.

Data Analysis Methods

In-depth interviews were conducted and the data obtained from each were analyzed using triangulation, open coding, selective coding, and development of themes. Triangulation is defined as using three sources of information that can provide multiple perceptions in a qualitative study (Bowen, 2005). Open coding is generally a system of dividing the data into themes explaining the topic in questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In selective coding, the categories and subcategories of themes that developed from the data are put together in a way that explains the situation under examination. As data analysis progresses and the categories develop, it may be necessary for the researcher to return to the step of open coding to find further details in the data that are key to identifying themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Triangulation, or having three different sources of information, was incorporated in this study. The faculty, administrators and staff, and students served as the three sources of information. Each group was able to provide different insights on student engagement at NeSCC, creating a more varied range of perceptions for the study.

In the first step of coding, open coding, the transcripts of the in-depth interviews were divided into sections by topic and compared. The researcher looked for commonalities indicating themes in the data, then examined them further for specific properties to categorize the data. Categories of the data were then reviewed for connections and divided further into subcategories where necessary. The next step taken was selective coding, which for this study involved incorporating the patterns of the data to describe common student and faculty

experiences in higher education at NeSCC in relation to student engagement. The final step in this study was to develop themes that emerged regarding traditional and nontraditional student engagement at a community college level. Key components of student engagement and support services were distinguished and classified based on source and patterns of repetition. The themes that emerged were:

- NeSCC is student-centered
- NeSCC is student-focused
- Students had positive experiences with professors and staff
- Students feel supported
- NeSCC wants students to succeed
- Engagement is considered important by faculty, staff, administrators, and students
- Students had overall positive experiences at NeSCC

Trustworthiness and Credibility

According to Merriam (1998), in education and other professions that touch people's lives, it is imperative that research is trustworthy due to the potential use of the findings by practitioners in the field. Interviews in qualitative studies such as this one are designed to provide context that shows any bias that occurs and tools for addressing that bias in the findings, along with encouraging honesty from participants (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Four factors were taken into consideration to demonstrate the trustworthiness of this study based on Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The term *credibility*, or the researcher's confidence in the factuality of the study's findings, may be used in a qualitative study to authenticate data (Bowen, 2005). There are

multiple standards to determine credibility, and three of those standards were met by the researcher in this study as Creswell (1998) suggested to qualitative researchers by spending time in the field, clarifying my researcher bias from the beginning of the study, and using rich descriptions of the study details.

This study demonstrates credibility through multiple strategies. The researcher has spent time in the field of community college from multiple perspectives addressed in this study, which can be helpful to the researcher's understanding of situations described in the interviews by faculty and students. The interviews were conducted in such a way that allowed the researcher to become immersed in the details of participants' lives through detailed discussion of practices taking place at NESCC. Because participants might give false answers if they thought the researcher wanted specific results, the researcher was careful not to set expectations of answers prior to or during the interviews by limiting informal discussion of the study in order to produce unbiased answers from participants during the interviews.

The term *transferability* is the ability of other researchers to apply the findings of the study to their own research (Bowen, 2005). To provide for transferability, the steps of the research, data collection, and findings from this study are laid out in a clear, thick description of each interview question and answers to help the reader understand events exactly as they transpired. This prevents any question of credibility of the interview process or data collection and analysis.

Dependability, or the ability of the study's findings to remain relevant as time goes on, is shown in this study through the importance of the topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Student engagement being related to student success is a concept that has been discussed in many studies over several decades and will be no less true in the future.

Confirmability refers to how the data presented in the study connect to the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Readers can easily follow the path of the researcher in identifying the problem, forming hypotheses, conducting the research and interviews, reporting the findings, and making the conclusions and recommendations for this study. This is due to the researcher's dedication to precisely following the steps of conducting trustworthy qualitative research and reporting in clear, concise terms with rich descriptions for the reader's clarity.

Furthering the accuracy of the data and trustworthiness of this study, the audio recordings of the in-depth interviews were e-mailed in digital files to a transcriber when all the interviews has been completed. The transcripts were sent to the participants to review for accuracy and their approval, resulting in minor corrections being made to two of the transcripts. The researcher also listened to the recordings while reading the transcripts during the process of data analysis and found no discrepancies between the two. Through these methods, the researcher ensured that the data presented is an accurate representation of the current status of traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC.

The instrument used for reference in this study, CCSSE, has demonstrated trustworthiness by adequately representing the basis of interest in the field of higher education at community colleges in many studies. CCSSE has consistently shown that positive student outcomes are a result of institutional practices and student behaviors (Marti, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

According to Merriam (2009), a qualitative researcher must be aware of potential ethical issues in any research process and consider his or her own moral stance on those issues. Because the credibility of a qualitative study is affected by the credibility of the researcher, it is the duty of the researcher to accurately report information that reflects NeSCC's practices whether that information would be viewed as positive or negative feedback for the school.

The need for participants in this study was advertised with clear requirements. Discrimination of participants was prevented by selecting the first ten respondents to the flyer for participation in the study. The researcher provided adequate information to subjects regarding time requirements, what the study and in-depth interviews would involve, and assurance of confidentiality. Generous time constraints were allowed for participants to review the details and make an informed decision as to whether they wished to proceed with the study or not. Actual names were not used in the dissertation and all information was coded, providing added security of participants' privacy. There were no hazardous or offensive conditions involved in the interviews for this study and professionalism and courtesy were maintained at all times throughout its conduction.

Chapter Summary

In this qualitative study at Northeast State Community College, a descriptive case study was conducted. Chapter 3 presented the methodology used including the research questions, researcher's role, sample, data collection methods, and data analysis. The process of coding was compiled to analyze the data obtained from participants in this research study. The trustworthiness and credibility of the research, along with ethical considerations, were also

discussed in this chapter. Chapter 4 will cover the specific data collected in and for the sole purpose of this study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The participants in this study were interviewed in-depth by the researcher in face to face settings following the interview guides. The students were all asked the same series of questions from the student interview guide (Appendix D). The Student Support Services Staff and the Vice-President of Student Affairs were all asked the same series of open-ended questions from the student support services staff interview guide (Appendix E). The Professors and Vice-President of Academic Affairs were all asked the same series of open-ended questions from the faculty interview guide (Appendix F). The students, faculty, and administrators have different roles at Northeast State Community College which created the need for the separate interview guides so that appropriate questions could be asked of each participant. This further enhanced the triangulation aspect of the research. Each interview was scheduled at a time and place convenient for the participant and lasted an average of one hour. Pseudonyms were assigned to or selected by participants to allow anonymity. The responses from the interviews have been displayed by each question and participant's response for evaluation.

Faculty, Staff, and Administrators Descriptions

The participating professors were assigned the pseudonyms of Professor A, Professor B, and Professor C for the purposes of this study. Professor A teaches history and humanities at NeSCC and is also the director of the Center for Strategic Teaching Excellence Program (STEP), along with chairing the school's Cultural Activities Committee. Professor B teaches speech

classes at NeSCC. Professor C currently teaches learning support and Mathematical Applications at NeSCC.

The staff members who participated were assigned the pseudonyms of Staff A and Staff B. Staff A is the Dean of Student Services at NeSCC. Staff B was the Director of Student Life at the time of the interview and is now the Director of Leadership Programs.

The administrators that took part in this study were assigned the pseudonyms of Administrator A and Administrator B. Administrator A is currently the Vice President for Academic Affairs at NeSCC. Administrator B was the Interim Vice President for Student Affairs at NeSCC at the time of the interview and is now the school's Vice President for Student Affairs.

Professors and Administrator A

Interview Question 1

How did you end up at NeSCC and your current position? Follow-up question: Were you at another community college?

Professor A stated that after working in the retail music business for a few years, he thought, "you know, I'd like to get back into teaching again... I really liked that." He began as an adjunct professor at NeSCC in 1992 and was hired full-time ten years later. He did not teach at any other community colleges previously.

Professor B stated that after a few years teaching followed by over four years of working in financial training he thought, "I want to get back into education..." and after applying for various positions, decided he liked NeSCC where he has now been employed for eight years.

His previous experience teaching at a community college was at Pike's Peak Community College.

Professor C came to work at NeSCC in 1997 when her previous job as an adjunct did not have any full-time positions opened. She stated, "... it was just timing." Her previous experience teaching at a community college was at Walters State Community College.

Administrator A began as an adjunct biology instructor at NeSCC in 1991 directly after graduating from her Master's program and progressed through multiple faculty ranks until her current position became open and she stated, "I applied for it and was asked to... keep on keeping on and that's where I am today." She did not teach at any other community colleges previously.

Interview Question 2

In the time you have been at NeSCC, what changes have you seen with faculty?

Professor A stated that the changes he has seen in his time at NeSCC are an increase in students and full-time faculty, off-campus sites, and more course offerings, stating, "I mean it's just a tremendous amount of growth since I've been here." Administrator A further emphasized the physical growth of the institution's student population and off-campus sites and discussed new support services and the school's efforts to get the students "through a degree program and then put them in a position where they are successful."

Professor B discussed changes in teaching methods that now revolve around the Strategies for Teaching Excellence Program, or STEP program, to increase engagement in the classroom as the most significant change in his time working there. Professor C commented on the creation of the Learning Center and also stated that she had seen, "...a lot of changes in the

faculty both in the people who remain here and then the responsibilities,” going on to describe the current faculty as empowered, cooperative, and cohesive.

Interview Question 3

Based on your experiences here at NeSCC, what do you see as important services for traditional and nontraditional students?

Professor A listed available services for all students as Disability Services, employment services, the Career Services Center, the Student Success Center and attributes these services to the STEP program, based on student-focused learning. Professor B also listed Disability Services then went on to discuss the adult learner award as a service to specifically recognize nontraditional students and added her opinion that “one of the most valuable services that is offered is the student orientation that takes place in the summer and between semesters.”

Administrator A added academic programs, free tutoring, bookstore services, and information technology as important services but also made no clarification that the services were for one population of students over another. Professor C listed the Math Club and alternatives to physical classrooms such as attending class online by video as a beneficial service to all students.

Interview Question 4

Do you think more could have been done for your traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC? Follow-up question: Do faculty members serve traditional and nontraditional students differently at NeSCC?

Professor A identified scholarships and accessibility as areas that always need improvement and stated that traditional and nontraditional students are not and should not be served differently. Administrator A identified areas in need of improvement such as increased student activities and student involvement along with finding cohorts for nontraditional students and described staff as serving students equally by being accommodating to students' needs whether the student is traditional or nontraditional.

Professor B expressed the belief that more services could be offered for nontraditional students and that traditional and nontraditional students are "treated very similarly." Professor C suggested that more services should be offered in financial assistance such as offering childcare, emergency funds, and an Angel Tree and said that she personally tried to serve traditional and nontraditional students the same.

Interview Question 5

What type of experiences with traditional and nontraditional students left you feeling as though NeSCC served them well?

Professor B described a positive experience with students as a time when she taught a class containing both traditional and nontraditional students and they worked in groups in the class and all earned A's. Professor C shared an experience in which she had went out of her way to help a student make it through a hard time and finish her class and then later saw that same student working in the job that had been her goal. Administrator A spoke positively regarding the school's efforts toward cohort programs and their effectiveness and keeping the student to faculty ratio manageable. Professor A listed an award for the adult learner of the year and stated:

... So we have special places in our school to recognize the achievements of nontraditional students and we do this every year and... it makes you feel good when you see a student who has achieved well because of what we have done to make that possible.

Interview Question 6

What is the relationship between your faculty and the learning experiences that traditional and nontraditional students have here at NeSCC?

Professor A discussed the STEP program based on student-focused learning and its relation to student success. Administrator A also pointed toward the STEP program, adding, "...that is maybe an avenue that they're able to customize what they're teaching and how they're teaching to meet the needs of their students." Professor C commented on the interactions faculty and students have outside of class and stated, "If you (students) are willing to put forth the effort, then we're willing to spend a little extra time to help you." Professor B discussed the benefits of traditional and nontraditional students working together in the classroom under his guidance.

Interview Question 7

In what ways does NeSCC evaluate the engagement and satisfaction of traditional and nontraditional students?

Professor A listed the exit exam, IDEA, and a group called Early Implementers as evaluation tools used by the school to measure students' engagement and satisfaction. Professor B listed an ITA evaluation, a separate evaluation put on by the Honors program, and CCSSE. Professor C discussed both the IDEA and CCSSE evaluations. Administrator A expanded on a survey on student engagement for entering freshman between the second and third week of fall

semester entering freshmen called the SENSE survey and also listed CCSSE as the school's main evaluation tool.

Interview Question 8

What changes do you see as necessary in the delivery of student support services to traditional and nontraditional students?

Professor A's comments for going forward with delivering student support services consisted of continuing with STEP and Professional Development and being proactive regarding Massive Online Open Courses. Professor B described growing hybrid classes in which students may only attend class physically one day a week but have more information to review and submit online the rest of the week. He suggested, "We get them up, get them engaged, and get them doing more... rather than sitting in a chair..."

Administrator A discussed the need for improving student support services at the off-campus sites and stated, "We're also looking at some creative ways to offer advising due to schedule problems and a lot of time this is coming from nontraditional students... so we're looking at how we can better do this with maybe email or telephone. Some of the sessions have been Skyped." Professor C discussed wanting to be able to increase the use of technology in the classrooms and making sure that there are qualified people to answer student support service questions in all the increasing off-site campuses to prevent incidents of misinformation.

Interview Question 9

How do faculty members demonstrate an investment in traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC?

Professor A answered with the STEP program and noted that the faculty are all extensively trained advisors then stated, “On our year-end self-evaluation... you have to show that you are involved with students.” Professor B elaborated, “I think that the faculty members are definitely engaged in the students succeeding and that is the investment that we are willing to go above and beyond if the student is willing to meet us.” Professor C supported this notion of faculty going the extra mile by elaborating that professors answer e-mails on nights and weekends, teach online, night, and early morning classes, and work with student schedules.

Administrator A supported the emphasis of faculty’s commitment and dedication in the classroom and the many multiple organizations and activities available on campus along with his statement, “The faculty can have options to donate financial funds through foundations, foundation dollars, and scholarships, and several faculty have either endowed scholarships or they give to the foundation and that’s a financial type of giving that shows a commitment to the institution and to the students here.”

Interview Question 10

What are the significant in-class academic experiences that influence traditional and nontraditional student participation and success at NeSCC?

Professor A discussed the STEP program and elaborated on the importance of incorporating active learning in the classroom. He stated that if one class period is full of lecture then the next class period should be for reflection and engagement activities. Professor B

commented on how providing hands-on and active learning and getting students to work together keeps students engaged and successful. Professor C stated that incorporating cohorts and making the material relate back to the students' lives is imperative to making students interested and successful. Administrator A noted the importance of the faculty to student ratio at NeSCC along with varied teaching techniques aiding in student participation and stated, "...faculty throughout the year have opportunities here to learn more about teaching techniques, but they also have professional development opportunities outside the STEP to learn more about collaborative learning."

Interview Question 11

What institutional factors influence the educational success of traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC?

Professor A discussed the importance of access, completion, community, transferability and how all those things relate back to providing student-centered education. Professor B commented on how standard requirements for general courses and institutional policies affect students' educational experiences and the amount of classes they have to take or retake depending on how long they have been working on a degree. Professor B stated that if students were not made aware of the importance of advising, "it could be an institutional drawback," later on in their college career when they realize they are missing courses. Professor C discussed the importance of helping students identify their career goals and stated, "...because studies show if you have a goal, you're more likely to finish." Professor C elaborated on a checklist for career paths and advising practices at NeSCC to help students find and achieve their educational and career goals. Administrator A listed performance in the classroom, the relevance of financial aid

to achieving higher education, and interaction with faculty or advisors as institutional factors that affect student success.

Staff and Administrator B

Interview Question 1

How did you end up at NeSCC and your current position? Follow-up question: Were you at another community college?

Administrator B worked a variety of jobs and got into the community college field when a Financial Aid position opened up. He stated, "I saw it as an opportunity for me to get on campus and get involved." He came to the campus from a previous job to try to help promote dual enrollment success and was hired in 2010. His previous experience teaching at a community college was at Hayward Community College in North Carolina.

Staff A was hired at NeSCC immediately after completing graduate school initially as a counselor and held several positions before her current title. She did not work at any other community colleges previously. Staff A stated, "Well, I have worked here 19 years ...and this is the only place I've ever worked."

Staff B's career in higher education was sparked by his own college experiences and wanting to help other students based on what he had learned, so he returned to NeSCC to work where he had been a student. He stated, "...some of these people who are now my colleagues that I work with were the ones who took me and held my hand and made sure I got to where I needed to be going and showed me the ropes, and now coming back, I get to do this with other students." He did not teach at any other community colleges previously.

Interview Question 2

In the time you have been at NeSCC, what changes have you seen in your office?

Staff A commented on the “tremendous amount,” of change and constant growth at the school, especially noting departmental responsibilities and functions. Staff B discussed engagement and the progress toward student-focused education, along with the school’s change in leadership and how that affected students. Administrator B listed a major change as the oversight and organization of the Financial Aid office.

Interview Question 3

Based on your experiences what are the other student support service areas at NeSCC that offer services geared for traditional and nontraditional students?

Administrator B stated that dual enrollment is geared more for traditional students and the TRIO program and college access programs serve more nontraditional students, and no service is specifically for one population or the other besides Next Step which is an adult cohort program. He explained, “I don’t think there’s any one office that says we’re going for traditional students but we do have like our student support services... our orientations... all of those things are done in a very traditional fashion.”

Staff A listed the Student Success Center, student orientation, Disability Services, the Career Services Center, and the Trio program as available services and was adamant that, “There is not a distinction between traditional and nontraditional students. They’re all addressed by all the different offices.” Staff B listed the Student Success Center, the TRIO program, Student Support Services, student orientation, and the Learning Center as available services for all students.

Interview Question 4

How does your office demonstrate an investment in traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC?

Staff A remarked on the significance of extensive academic advising, including follow-up. Administrator B discussed student life, leadership programs, and campus and personal improvement opportunities as lasting investments in all students and noted the importance of blending traditional and nontraditional students in the classroom. Staff B furthered the notion that putting traditional and nontraditional students together “has this huge empowering effect on everybody,” and added that the staff tries to provide equal access, equal service, and a sense of belonging to all students.

Interview Question 5

Do you think more could have been done for your traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC? Follow-up question: Are services different for traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC?

Staff A identified a need for more staff to improve services for all students including through academic advising for at-risk populations and reiterated that students are served the same whether they are traditional or nontraditional. Staff B qualified that there was more that could be done for both traditional and nontraditional students because there is always room to grow. He stated, “A nontraditional student sometimes needs more guidance in some areas than a traditional student does. So I think we differentiate and try to pinpoint what the student needs and whether they’re traditional or nontraditional, we try to do that.”

Administrator B stated that he thinks more programs and services are needed to accommodate the different needs of traditional and nontraditional students such as training deliberately geared for nontraditional students and offering opportunities in different settings and places to fill out papers and do FAFSA.

Interview Question 6

What type of experiences with traditional and nontraditional students left you feeling as though NeSCC served them well?

Administrator B had only held his position for a short period at the time of the interview but commented on several programs that the school is working on improving for student benefits. Staff B indicated that the school and his office are working hard to improve in several areas of student life and stated, “We’re seeing those needs (of the students) and responding to them as fast as the system will let us...” Staff A relayed the experience that students who were helped by her office during student orientation often come back to her repeatedly for help because they associate that office with helping them find answers to any question.

Interview Question 7

What is the relationship between your office and the learning experiences that traditional and nontraditional students have here at NeSCC?

Staff B discussed the school’s numerous leadership groups and times when student affairs and administration had worked together to help students accomplish a goal. He stated, “Everybody’s on the student side and to me that’s what the difference is with success or failure in a community college.” Administrator B stated that his office provides the accessibility and

proactive advising that make the education possible and remarked upon the good relationships between staff and students. Staff A describes her office's relationship with students' learning experiences as making sure they are in the right classes to achieve their degree as smoothly as possible and further stated, "We take pride in being able to connect them (students) to the other services that they may not know about."

Interview Question 8

In what ways does NeSCC evaluate the engagement and satisfaction of traditional and nontraditional students?

Staff A listed CCSSE along with another survey of entering student engagement done with new freshman between the second and third week of fall semester. Staff B listed the CCSSE then remarked that the school does surveys on almost every event. Administrator B supported that notion by listing the type of information surveyed such as course satisfaction and benchmarks, then stated, "...if a student is involved in it... no matter what population they're a part of... they're surveyed... whether they liked an event, whether they took advantage of advising, whether they liked a class, the admissions process, the financial aid process..."

Interview Question 9

What changes do you see as necessary in the delivery of student support services to traditional and nontraditional students?

Administrator B commented on the important of preparing for Massive Online Open Courses and suggested that instead of inventing new support services the school needed to work on making sure all their current services are as good as they can be. Staff A supported the notion

of increasing technology and expanded on the importance of finding innovative ways to communicate with students online and through text messaging. Staff B also discussed technology adding that, “We already do have the Northeast State app... we have all the things leading us and going into technology... but we’re probably not quite there yet.”

Traditional and Nontraditional Students Descriptions

There were five traditional student participants and five nontraditional student participants. The students all chose their own pseudonyms for the purposes of this study. The traditional students were Sophie, Victoria, Zita Falcon, Sarah, and Chris. The nontraditional students were Vivian, Faye, Samantha, Jade Dragon, and Bronca. Whether traditional or nontraditional, all the student participants were in their sophomore year of college at NeSCC.

Interview Question 1: Personal Information

Traditional Students. Sophie was born in Nashville before moving to East Tennessee. Both of her parents and her older sister attended college. Sophie reports having a close family growing up and positive experiences in high school, particularly a teacher who was involved in trying to help her cope with her learning disability.

Victoria grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee, with her mother, father, and older brother. Her parents and some of her grandparents are college graduates. Victoria was homeschooled for her entire secondary education and described the experience positively. She stated, “It showed me how to study and how much I can take on the responsibility for me and make a difference.”

Zita Falcon grew up mostly in Bluff City, Tennessee, after moving around some due to her father’s position in the military. She has five older siblings and was raised by both parents.

Zita Falcon claimed that she did not really enjoy high school and described her experience there as good but stated, “It was a county school, so you only get so much out of that!” Almost all of her immediate family members have attended college before her, including her mother who has a master’s in education.

Sarah was born and lives in Bristol, Tennessee, with both of her parents. She has no siblings and is a first generation college student. Sarah said she was always a good student, determined from a young age to do well in school and go to college. In high school she suffered a traumatic brain injury that required her to relearn everything and affected the effort she must exert in order to learn.

Chris grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee, with what he described as “a very wholesome family... a really great neighborhood.” His parents and brother, who Chris described as his hero, have all attended college. Chris spoke positively of his high school experience, particularly a history teacher that taught not only academics but life lessons.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian grew up in Bristol, Tennessee, with both parents and one sister and is now married and lives in Fall Branch, Tennessee. She described her mother’s decision to return to college as her own inspiration to enroll. Her sister has also attended college and her father attended a trade school. Vivian stated that her high school experience was “not so great,” but that her work ethic and GPA improved her junior and senior years. She is currently married.

Faye grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee, with both of her parents and a younger sister, though she has two older siblings as well. She described being surrounded by a big, close family during her childhood and stated, “That’s impacted me because I love the sense of what is truly

valuable- family.” Faye said that she loved high school and always worked hard to be on the honor roll. She is the first person in her family to attend college. She is also married now with children.

Samantha described both her childhood and high school experiences as “basic.” She said she mostly played outside and learned to value personality over looks while growing up in Georgia with her parents and grandmother. She reported only putting in the minimal effort in high school. Samantha has one brother and only her mother and aunt have attended college before her. She is divorced with four children.

Jade Dragon was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and moved around throughout his childhood before settling in East Tennessee as an adult with his wife and four children. He was raised mostly by his mother and has four siblings. Jade Dragon said his childhood taught him to “stand firm and never give up.” He said that he liked to be able to learn at his own pace in both high school and college. He and his brother were the first members of his family attend college. Jade Dragon is married with four children.

Bronca was born and raised in Monroe, Louisiana and has two brothers. She described her childhood experiences as “not that great,” due to being in an abusive family and she was taken out of school at the age of thirteen so she did not get the opportunity to attend or graduate high school. She stated that her childhood experiences have made her a strong and caring person, proclaiming, “I can get over it.” She was the first person in her family to attend college and will be the only current college graduate if she succeeds. Bronca is divorced with three children, all of whom have attended college but have not completed degrees yet.

Interview Question 2

What are your educational goals? Follow-up question: What led you to these goals?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that her educational goals were to transfer to a 4-year school and get her Bachelor's degree. "Trial and error," trying different classes eventually led her to that goal. Victoria stated that her goal was to transfer to a 4-year school and study Mass Communications but was unsure past that. Her natural talent for writing and encouragement from her mother led her to that goal along with reinforcement from Career Services that she was on the right track. Zita Falcon listed her educational goal as studying history and later narrowing her studies to anthropology and stated that what led her to this goal was that it seemed to fit her well and, "I always found it very interesting." Sarah's educational goals were to transfer to a 4-year school and pursue her Master's in Science then apply to a physical therapist school. Her personal experience of struggling with a disability led her to this goal. Chris stated, "My educational goals are to finish here at Northeast and hopefully transfer to a major 4-year college and get my degree in Computer Engineering or Computer Science... I want people to remember me in a positive way." Life lessons and encouragement from his mother were what Chris claimed led to his goals.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian listed her educational goals as transferring to a 4-year school and getting her Bachelor's degree in education then teaching in grades K-3. She stated that experience working with young children showed her what she wanted to do. Faye stated, "I want to finish my associate's degree and I want to work full time and work on my Bachelor's

degree.” She claimed that she lost track of her goals when she was younger and now that her kids were in college she was able to return to college.

Samantha listed her educational goal as graduating with an associate’s degree in small business management and taking some culinary classes so that she may one day open her own bakery. Going through a divorce and wanting to support her children was what she described as leading her to those goals. Jade Dragon listed his educational goals as double majoring in PC Management and Networking in order to have a job helping people with IT work. He stated that fixing things was something he had enjoyed since a young child and that eventually led him to his goals. Bronca listed her educational goals as going into the medical field and helping others and described many years of admiring people that volunteered and helped others as leading her to follow in their footsteps.

Interview Question 3

Tell me a little about what life has been like for you at NeSCC?

Traditional Students. Sophie described her life at NeSCC as “very, very pleasant,” and mentioned that the campus was easy to navigate and the teachers would explain their expectations well. Victoria described her life at NeSCC as “awesome,” and stated, “Northeast State fits me like a glove.” Zita Falcon described life at NeSCC as hectic but claimed to have met some wonderful people and stated, “Northeast has been pretty much individualized, which I really like. I get to know my teachers and they actually remember my name.” Sarah was involved in multiple programs and activities at NESCC and also described student life as

“awesome.” Chris described life at NeSCC as a relaxed yet focused atmosphere that was not as social as high school.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian described life at NeSCC as supportive and claimed to have enjoyed her time there. Jade Dragon also commented on the supportive atmosphere and faculty of NeSCC. Faye stated that the responsibilities and experience she was given at NeSCC had changed her life and confidence. She stated, “I feel like I’ve grown personally, knowing that the last half of my life will be much different because of my experience here.” Samantha described life at NeSCC as hectic and further stated:

I love it. The staff is fantastic. Working here I’ve gotten to know everybody on a personal level as well as an educational level and I’ve made a lot of networking contacts and it’s been great. I’ve had a wonderful experience here.

Bronca stated that she had worked hard and missed a minimal amount of days at NeSCC but had not earned excellent grades or any awards.

Interview Question 4

What made you decide to come to NeSCC? Follow-up question: Is this the first time you enrolled in college?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that she chose to attend NeSCC because it was convenient, had a lower tuition than 4-year schools, and dual enrollment at NeSCC had been a good experience for her. Victoria chose to attend NeSCC primarily due to the low tuition and because her brother had attended NeSCC as well. Zita Falcon further supported the notion that

the affordable tuition cost was the deciding factor for her choice to attend NeSCC. Sarah stated that she chose NeSCC because of the lower cost and the academic scholarship she received from the school. This was the first time that Sophie, Victoria, Zita Falcon, and Sarah enrolled in college. Chris claimed that he chose to attend NeSCC because the faculty were nice and helpful. He stated, “Overall, Northeast State brought me in when I could see another student doing good and I could see her and knew that I could do the same thing.” This was the second time Chris had enrolled in college.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian also chose NeSCC due to its lower cost and convenient location. Jade Dragon stated that he chose NeSCC because it was local and seemed “more personal and hands-on” than another local school. Bronca stated that she saw an advertisement for the school and then researched it and thought it was a good school before deciding to attend NeSCC. This was the first time attending college for Jade Dragon, Vivian, and Bronca.

Faye stated that she decided to attend NeSCC due to her love of learning and the desire to be financially independent. Samantha listed convenience of location as her primary reason for choosing to attend NeSCC. This was the second time Faye and Samantha had enrolled in college.

Interview Question 5

Tell me about your first day at NeSCC. Follow-up questions: What did it feel like? Did you know anybody? Did you know the instructors?

Traditional Students. Sophie described her feelings on the first day as nervous, scared, and excited. She knew one friend there but no instructors. Victoria described her first day as something very different from what she was accustomed to but said, “I knew I was where I was supposed to be.” She also knew one friend but no instructors. Zita Falcon stated that her first day was hectic and she felt nervous and afraid she would not make it in college. She did know some fellow students from high school but no instructors. Sarah stated that on her first day she was nervous in the morning and by the end of the day loved the people and the atmosphere. She did know some peers from high school but no instructors. Chris stated that on his first day he went in with a positive attitude willing to learn but was late to every class and felt “like I had a giant target on my forehead.” He did know several people from high school but no instructors at first.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian described her first day as overwhelming and stated, “I felt a little behind on the technology part.” She did not know any other students or instructors. About her first day, Faye stated:

I was terrified. I cried all the way here. I was so scared. I didn’t know anybody. I didn’t have any idea what to expect and when I came in it was all I could do not to just get up and go... I was afraid I couldn’t do it.

Samantha stated that she was also terrified and kept to herself but knew that college was going to be a new beginning for her. She did not know any students or instructors. Jade Dragon described his first day at NeSCC as “brain-boggling” but stated that he was able to get the help he needed from staff. He did know two people at the college in the beginning, including a

faculty member from his church. Bronca stated that on her first day she felt scared yet happy and “so excited.” She knew one student, her daughter, but no instructors.

Interview Question 6

What makes it easy for you to be successful in college? Follow-up question: What makes it difficult?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that supportive instructors and her personal drive made it easy to be successful in college and that instructors who are not dedicated to their subject or students made it difficult to succeed. Victoria claimed that her willpower to and belief in herself helped her succeed while her poor time management made it more difficult. Zita Falcon stated that the key to her success in college was extensive planning, a notion that was supported by Chris. Zita Falcon described her limited writing ability as what made it difficult for her to be successful. Chris stated that he found distractions in class such as others using their phones during a lecture were detrimental to his success in college. Sarah listed the support from the disabilities center and her job in Campus Information as helpful to her success in college and stated that lack of preparedness from high school made it more difficult to succeed.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian stated that her driven personality made it easy to succeed in college and that what made it difficult was, “I’m always juggling quite a bit.” Faye described NeSCC’s supportive environment as what made it easy to be successful in college and stated that her own lack of confidence made it difficult. Samantha stated that extensive planning helped her be successful and what made it difficult for her to be successful in college were the days when

she felt overwhelmed and “over it.” Jade Dragon claimed that being goal-oriented helped him be successful in college and stated, “As long as you know what you want to do... it’s easier to excel.” He described everyday distractions such as the unlimited accessibility of the internet as what made it difficult for him to be successful. Bronca supported the notion that knowing her goal helped her be successful in college and stated that her struggle with depression is what made it more difficult.

Interview Question 7

What is your career goal? Follow-up questions: Why did you choose that goal? How will earning a degree help you achieve this goal? Have you ever considered leaving NeSCC and not completing your degree?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that her career goal was to become a counselor and counsel kids with diabetes because she had juvenile diabetes and wanted to help others deal with the disease. She said she needed a degree in order to get a job in that field and did consider leaving school for a while when her major was undecided but was realized she did not want to quit when she was already on her way to success.

Victoria’s career goal was to become a movie producer for several years and later teach in her field. She stated that she chose that goal as a result of her favorite class at NeSCC, Broadcast Applications. She said she needed a degree in order to get a job quickly in her desired employment and had never considered leaving school.

Zita Falcon listed her career goal as becoming an anthropologist and meeting new people and helping them because learning about people is what she enjoys. She stated, “Anthropology

is just one of those things you can't go into unless you have an extensive amount of studying and schooling and it would better propel me through my wanting or desire of that goal." She stated she had considered leaving school at times when the work was hard but always decided not to give up.

Sarah described her career goal as becoming a physical therapist due to her experience with a traumatic injury and stated that having a degree would help her keep employment while she worked on her goal. She claimed she had never considered leaving NeSCC.

Chris listed his career goal as working for Microsoft or Dell and being able to support himself and live comfortably. He claimed he chose this goal because he enjoyed fixing things and working with computers. He stated that a degree was necessary in his field and that earning it built character and he had never considered leaving NeSCC.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian's career goal was to teach in grades K-3 because she enjoyed working with children. She stated that she needed a degree to be successful in that career and that she had considered leaving NeSCC due to a financial policy but had never considered giving up on earning her degree.

Faye stated that her career goal was to work at NeSCC in the Department of Distance and Evening Services because she found that she really enjoyed the field because of her experiences. She stated that having a degree would "help me to be more confident and display that confidence and I think for an employer looking for an employee, it shows initiative, dedication, and achievement." She claimed that after her first day she had never considered leaving NeSCC.

Samantha's career goal was to own and work in a bakery because, "Baking makes me happy!" She stated that she needed a degree because, "ultimately, you just have an edge over

your competition.” She described considering leaving NeSCC when she was undecided about her career goal but said that now she is glad she continued her education.

Jade Dragon stated, “My career goal is... I just want to have IT background and working in the IT field. I wanted to be able to manage on my computer systems and networks... just build them from the ground up...that’s why I chose that.” He claimed that having a degree would show he had experience and that he had never considered leaving NeSCC.

Bronca’s career goal was to work in the medical field because she loved helping people. She stated, “I can’t do it (her desired job) without this degree.” She described considering leaving NeSCC once because she felt that she wasn’t doing her best but has been dedicated to her education ever since.

Interview Question 8

Tell me a positive story about interacting with your professors, no names, at NeSCC.

Follow-up questions: Did you have a negative experience with any professors? Can you describe for me your experiences with faculty?

Traditional Students. Sophie’s positive experience with a professor was a situation where the professor took a special interest in her and his other students and was passionate about his subject. She did claim to have one negative experience with a teacher who had a bad attitude but stated, “Overall... interaction with the faculty has actually gone very well.”

Victoria described a positive interaction with one of her professors that led to her success and involvement in programs and activities at the school. She stated, “Honestly when I was in his class, he saw a potential in me and he saw that I could do something... long before I saw that

in myself.” She did say that she had a negative experience with an adjunct professor who made it obvious that she was unhappy with her job. Victoria described her overall experiences with faculty as “awesome.”

Zita Falcon listed a positive experience as a time when her professor was willing to help her get her grade back up after she had some difficulty. She stated, “No, I don’t think I’ve had a negative experience with any of my teachers,” and said that overall several faculty felt like family to her.

Sarah discussed positive experiences with professors as times when instructors had pushed her to do her best and wanted to see every student succeed on educational and personal levels. She did list one negative experience with a professor who was not supportive and had a bad attitude. Regarding overall interactions with faculty, Sarah stated, “It’s really apparent that everybody tries to stand behind the schools motto, ‘We’re here to get you there.’ Ninety-nine percent of everybody I’ve dealt with... will help you with a smile on their face.”

Chris described a positive experience with a professor that was “really, really nice,” and showed both a knowledgeable and a fun side. He claimed he had never had a negative experience with a professor and said he liked all his teachers.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian’s positive experience with a professor was a situation where the instructor was understanding of Vivian’s concerns and gave her extra assistance so she could do well in the class. She stated that her only negative experience with instructors was that sometimes her emails were either not answered timely or not answered at all and described interactions with faculty overall as “pretty well.”

Faye listed positive experiences with instructors as times when they had been encouraging and understanding. She described a negative experience with a professor that would belittle her in front of the class but stated that besides that one professor, “All the faculty are really very positive.”

Samantha relayed a story of a positive interaction with an instructor that gave her encouragement in her abilities and advised her to study with cohorts that ended up improving her performance in the class. She claimed she did have one negative experience with an instructor that would not answer Samantha’s questions. About overall interactions with faculty she stated, “Everybody seems to be so eager to help the students get where they need to be and encourage them.”

Jade Dragon a positive experience he had with a professor because he made it fun and encouraged comfortable interactions between the students and the professor. He stated, “I’ve never had a negative experience... that’s it.” He described overall interactions with faculty as positive and supportive.

Bronca stated that she had positive experiences with professors that were willing to let her have second chances to complete assignments if she didn’t understand them the first time. She claimed she had some negative experiences with professors and stated, “...sometimes... they just don’t like me.” She stated that as a whole her interactions with faculty have been “great,” especially with Student Services.

Interview Question 9

Have you made any friends at NeSCC? Follow-up question: What about friends outside of college or other college friends?

Traditional Students. Sophie, Sarah, and Chris stated that they had made several new friends at NeSCC and have many friends outside of school that they knew before college and still interact with those friends. Victoria and Zita Falcon stated that they had made new friends at NeSCC and still knew their old friends from high school and childhood but that those relationships were harder to maintain due to their college workloads and spending most of their time at NeSCC during the school year.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian stated that she had made many acquaintances that she was friendly with at NeSCC but that she did not talk to them outside of school and in regard to other friendships she stated, "I mostly communicate with my husband and the family and things like that, but every once in a while I will go visit some of my friends." Bronca supported this notion, claiming that she only interacts with her new friends from NeSCC during class and also says she spends most of her time with her family. Faye reported making multiple new friends at NeSCC and further stated that making friends at school helped make it easier for her to make friends out of school so she had made friends from in her community as well. Jade Dragon stated that he had made several new friends at NeSCC and have many friends outside of school that he knew before college and still interacts with those friends. Samantha stated that she had made new friends at NeSCC and still knew her old friends from high school and childhood but that those relationships were harder to maintain due to her college workload and spending most of her time at NeSCC during the school year.

Interview Question 10

What out-of-class activities have you participated in at NeSCC? Follow-up question:
What have you gained from participating in these activities?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that she had not participated in any out-of-class activities because she spent the majority of her time studying. Chris stated that he did not participate in any activities other than listening to guest speakers at the school as a requirement for his class but that hearing those speakers helped him better understand respecting other people. Victoria participated in several activities, including an Honor's Research Conference, the Navigators, Phi Beta Kappa, and Fantasy Guild. She stated that being involved in these activities helped her be a finalist for student of the year, gave her a community she can go to for help, and helped her grow as a person. Zita Falcon listed her out-of-class activities as working with food sales, cookouts, and bonfires at the school and being a member of the Sci-fi Fantasy Club and the International Club. She stated, "I gained a lot of friends and I gained some people skills and being able to talk to people and try to sell them stuff." Sarah was involved in volunteer work out of school and on campus she participated in numerous activities and clubs consisting of Council for Leadership, Student Success, Phi Beta Kappa, President of Student Leadership Academy, and working at the Campus Information Center. She noted that she gained leadership skills from those experiences and stated:

I was involved in a lot of clubs here... I feel that's one thing that really made me want to here and stay here... it made me feel like a big part of the college because you definitely knew the people right up front who were involved in the clubs. I almost want to say that

being in a club or being involved in something here at the college is key to getting to stay and maybe finish a degree.

Nontraditional Students. Samantha stated that she liked to attend fun events at the school such as the Fall Festival because it helped her to feel relaxed but that she did not have time to participate in any other clubs or activities and stated, “Because employers look at your GPA now... it is more important to me than being part of a club.” Bronca claimed that she did not participate in any out-of-class activities. She stated:

I’ve wanted to... but for some reason, there’s always something stopping me... maybe it’s because I’m shy... and I think it’s a lot more younger people in them, so there’s not many my age in that kind of stuff too much.

Vivian stated that she had donated blood and attended performances at the Performing Arts Center, from which she gained entertainment and cultural information. Jade Dragon listed his out-of-class activities as a study group he participated in and some gardening work he had done on campus and stated that he gained “more insight from the person as well as the activity.”

Faye participated in the Wellness Fair, the Spring Fling, and the Honor Society. She stated that what she gained from participating in those out-of-class activities were information and positive interactions with other students.

Interview Question 11

What has been your favorite course at NeSCC and why? Follow-up question: What has been your least favorite course at NeSCC and why?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that her favorite class at NeSCC was a theater class because it was interactive and the instructor was funny and listed her least favorite class as Anatomy and Physiology due to the difficulty of the class. Victoria listed her favorite class as a Human Behavior class because she learned a lot and the instructor used collaborative learning, while her least favorite class was a lab due to having a negative instructor in that course. Zita Falcon claimed that her favorite class was US History because of her interest in the subject and her instructor was energetic. She stated that her Composition classes were her least favorite because the material “didn’t have the same energy and it wasn’t like engaging.” Sarah stated that her favorite class here was “Composition... because of the teacher,” who she felt helped her grow to love writing. She listed her least favorite class as Chemistry, also due to the teacher, and stated, “...the subject matter is very difficult by itself, and then to be complicated by embarrassment and humiliation by an instructor... it doesn’t make it any easier.” Chris claimed his favorite class was Chemistry because the teacher made the course fun and offered extra activities after class and stated that he had not had a least favorite class yet.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian listed her favorite classes as the ones that actually pertained to her desired career because she gained hands-on experience in her field. She stated that her least favorite class was Speech because she does not enjoy public speaking. Faye claimed that her favorite class was a Humanities course because of the interesting material she learned and her least favorite course was Medical Transcription. She stated, “There was a communication barrier with the teacher and the material itself...was hard for me.” Samantha stated that her favorite class was Macroeconomics because the professor was “fantastic” and the material was interesting. She listed Microbiology as her least favorite class because she liked to

be hands-on with the material she was learning and she could not be hands-on in that class. Jade Dragon claimed that his favorite classes were networking courses because that is what he was interested in and his least favorite class was Programming because it took him a long time to do the tasks. Bronca stated that Document 1 and Document 2 were her favorite courses because they taught her about using computers which is something she had never done before. Her least favorite course was Algebra because she did not like the material and had a hard time understanding it.

Interview Question 12

How do you balance the demands of college and your personal life and family life?

Traditional Students. Sophie, Zita Falcon, and Sarah all claimed that good time management helped them to stay on track with their schoolwork and balance personal life. Victoria stated that realizing her priorities at home and school helped her keep everything in balance. Chris claimed that what kept him balanced was having a healthy social life to let off steam and stated, “I feel even more motivated after being able to take a break to enjoy myself.”

Nontraditional Students. Samantha stated that good time management helped her to stay on track with their schoolwork and balance personal life and expanded on the benefits of using a written calendar so that nothing gets missed. Jade Dragon also confirmed that time management was essential to balancing his school and family life. He stated, “I’m on a schedule!” Bronca stated that realizing her priorities at home and school helped her keep everything in balance.

Faye spoke about her husband and how he handled the majority of things at home so that she could be focused on her education.

Interview Question 13

Do you feel you have support? If so, please describe who provides the support and how.

Traditional Students. Each participant reported that they did have support. Sophie listed her support as her parents and sister and stated that she spoke to each of them frequently and could go to different ones for different problems. Victoria listed her parents as well for understanding her needs as a student, letting her live with them, and helping her study. She also stated, “And then of course, here on campus, I have support from so many faculty and staff and just a general support that Northeast State gives with the information office.” Chris stated that his parents and brother provided his focus and motivation and commented that he was able to get support from other students by e-mailing other students in class for help on assignments.

Zita listed several supports including her parents, friends, boyfriend, and an advisor she called her “college mom,” by providing emotional support and helping her with her work. She stated, “They all care so much that they want to see me succeed and do the best that I can and it’s really comforting.” Sarah described her support from her parents as financial support and assisting her to find study time and also named one of the school secretaries as an emotional support for listening and understanding her. She claimed that even in her job on campus the people she worked with made sure her student responsibilities came first.

Nontraditional Students. Each participant reported that they did have support. Vivian stated that her husband provided her financial support and encouragement by reminding her it would be worth her time in the end. Faye also listed her husband as her main support by taking care of their home and supporting her financially. She also listed the support of friends in and out of school who offered encouragement and an advisor who told her she did good work. Jade Dragon also supported the notion that his spouse was his main supporter by taking care of their home and kids and keeping him on track. He also stated that his siblings and mother provided emotional support and encouragement.

Samantha stated that her family, professors, and employer all wanted her to succeed and were willing to work around her schedule, along with her parents offering to babysit so she could study. Bronca listed her children as her supports at home for understanding that her homework had to get done as the priority and also named her advisor at school as helping her with her schedule.

Interview Question 14

What student support services are you currently using at NeSCC? Follow-up questions: What have you found most helpful about these support services? Can you describe for me your experience with student support staff?

Traditional Students. Sophie used student disability services and stated they made her feel like she did not have a disability and helped her teachers understand her needs. She stated she could tell that the office wanted to help her. Victoria stated that she had used Financial Aid, Center for Teaching Excellence, and Student Life, and took a test that let her know she was on

right career path, and she stated that the services from staff were prompt. Zita Falcon described her experiences from using Admissions and Financial Aid services. She stated, “They don’t get upset when you’re asking ridiculous questions.” Sarah stated that she used several support services including the office of student life for emotional support, and also the disability center, scholarship office, and Admissions. She stated, “I couldn’t succeed in college if I didn’t have my accommodations.” Chris stated that he did not use any student support services.

Nontraditional Students. Faye reported several positive experiences with support services including the Student Success Center, Career Services, Financial Aid, and Admissions. She stated, “I took my resume to them (Career Services) and they looked it over and gave me some pointers and tips and it was a very good experience.” Samantha stated she had also used Financial Aid and Student Success Center services and described the staff as “patient... want you to succeed.” She further stated, “I’ve gotten all the help I need and they go above and beyond to help us out.”

Jade Dragon used Student Life and Financial Aid services and remarked on staff’s willingness to point students in the right direction and take the time to help. Bronca stated she used student disability services to get her handicapped tag and the Student Success Center for advising and described the staff as “really nice people.” Vivian claimed that she had only used Financial Aid but that they had laid everything out very simply for her.

Interview Question 15

What type of experience with student support services left you feeling as though the community college served you well?

Traditional Students. Sophie described the help she received from the disabilities office with getting information on a college she was considering and stated, “They have always made me feel welcome and ...they make time for me.” Victoria emphasized the help she had received from the Student Success Center that let her know she was taking the right classes and on the right career path for her. Zita Falcon stated that Admissions had always been helpful to her and seemed like they want to see students succeed and get through college. Sarah described several instances of positive interaction with support services and stated, “...the people here will help you.” Chris described an instance in which he did some work with the school’s volunteering program that inspired him to start donating items to people in need.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian listed her experience with Financial Aid and stated, “I left feeling good and that it was all taken care of and I could come back in the fall without any issues.” Faye discussed the help she had received in sorting out her college credit to see what was needed and commented that the support services always followed through with everything. Samantha stated that Student Success had been the most helpful to her by always answering any and all of her questions. Jade Dragon stated:

The thing is when I come in... there’s always a greeting, and with that greeting, they look to see if there’s a need. And when I say they look to see if there’s a need... they can

feel... that somebody is looking for something... and they always set them on the right track.

Bronca described a situation in which she had struggled to maintain her financial aid and that student support services helped her appeal and write letters so that she could stay in school.

Interview Question 16

What type of experience with student support services left you feeling as though the community college could have done more?

Traditional Students. Sophie, Victoria, and Sarah all claimed that no experiences with student support services had left them feeling that the school could have done more. Chris stated that when with blood donor truck came to the school for a day it did not receive very much attention and he felt that the school could advertise it more so that more students would be encouraged to donate. Zita Falcon remarked on a communication issue with Financial Aid when the office had sent her an e-mail regarding money she owed and she did not see the message because she does not check her e-mail as often as other forms of communication such as text messages.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian stated, "I would have liked to have seen some kind of service or program or class for people who were behind in the technology," because that is something she struggled with upon entering school at NeSCC. Jade Dragon and Bronca claimed that no experiences with student support services had left them feeling that the school could have done more. Bronca stated, "Really nothing, they've been good. They've helped me a lot." Faye

stated that she had difficulty understanding the school's financial aid eligibility policies at first but that it eventually all worked out. Samantha also commented on the difficulty of understanding Financial Aid and clarified that there was room for improvement with the communication with that department.

Interview Question 17

How can the college be more helpful in helping you be successful in college?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated, "So I think them trying to find a better way in which students can interact better in a classroom would be better..." Victoria discussed the school's e-mail system and stated, "So communication is a huge issue at Northeast State and I don't think they have addressed it very well." Zita Falcon stated that having more private student study areas would help her be more successful because they are often all taken when she tries to study on campus. Sarah described a need for tutors outside of the Learning Center due to students' schedule conflicts. Chris suggested increased interaction between student advisors and the student body to give the students someone to talk to on more of a personal level.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian stated that she holding two different orientations would be helpful, one for traditional students and one for older students. Faye recommended increased communication from the school about available programs and options since there were some she missed out on. Samantha stated, "I can't think if anything they're not already doing." Bronca suggested that the school could bring in someone to help students who try hard and still struggle. Jade Dragon stated that the school being more personal would help him be successful.

Interview Question 18

What could NeSCC do to make your time at the community college more enjoyable and enhance your learning experience?

Traditional Students. Sophie suggested encouraging the students to help each other learn instead of only relying on the teacher, which she noted has already begun with the STEP program. Victoria recommended a better way to evaluate instructors and students because in her opinion, sometimes good teachers get a bad reputation from students that did not try to make it work. Zita Falcon discussed more student space not only for studying but for socializing and relaxing with her peers. She indicated that there was one such area called the Glass Lounge but that it was located in the library next to the study rooms so students using it had to remain relatively quiet. Sarah stated that teachers that have retired and come back to teach at the school were “just not up to the change that I see trying to take place at the college or the new innovative ways of teaching and learning... try to nudge those professors to be more open... or maybe bring in some younger people.” Chris claimed that more activities on campus than they already have could have made his college experience more enjoyable.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian suggested having counseling services on campus. Faye described an instance when she wanted to join a club but could not participate due to scheduling and suggested that clubs geared toward older students would have made her experience more enjoyable. Samantha suggested that NeSCC make classes shorter. Jade Dragon suggested implementing more of the abbreviated “mini-mesters” he experienced when he first enrolled.

Bronca stated, “I think they need to take notice of ones (students) that are trying hard and try to give them encouragement... award them.”

Interview Question 19

What advice would you give to another student who plans to enroll at NeSCC?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated, “Enjoy it... go and join clubs and get involved with student life and find what works best for you...” Victoria’s advice to incoming student was to keep an open mind and get involved. Zita Falcon suggested, “Make sure to double check things... it’s worth the drive... and want to be here, you’ll get more out of it.” Sarah encouraged students to get involved. She stated, “Do your best to be involved here and you’ll be happy.” Chris stated, “Have a plan... talk to other students and get a list from your advisor of everything you need to take.”

Nontraditional Students. Vivian’s advice to incoming students was to take their education seriously and work as hard as they can. Faye stated, “Put everything into it and enjoy it!” Samantha stated:

Be prepared to not have a huge social life. If you want to succeed and do well, you’re going to have to manage your time properly and if you have a project due Monday, don’t go out with your friends over the weekend... just be responsible.

Jade Dragon encouraged students to just have fun. Bronca stated, “No matter what problem comes up, don’t give up!”

Interview Question 20

Is there any additional information or insights you wish to share about your experiences as a student at NeSCC?

Traditional Students. Sophie stated that being a student at NeSCC helped her figure out what she wanted to do with her life and said that overall her experience was “really good.” Victoria stated, “I love it here and I have had a great experience and there are a lot of really good people.” Zita Falcon stated, “I really like Northeast and will be sad to leave.” Sarah emphasized the importance of community colleges and how NeSCC prepared her for a 4-year institution. Chris suggested that NeSCC become a completely smoke-free campus.

Nontraditional Students. Vivian stated, “I like the way they acknowledge that you’re working really hard... but I think they could do better to encourage those who are lagging behind.” Faye stated, “I think there is definitely an attitude at this college of student centered... of wanting the student to be successful. I think they will continue to talk about the growth... I think that’s awesome.” Samantha stated, “It has just been fantastic here. I am so glad I chose this college versus a bigger college.” Jade Dragon stated that looking forward and not thinking back was the only way to get somewhere. Bronca stated, “I’ve enjoyed being at Northeast State...”

Chapter Summary

This chapter reports the results of the in-depth interviews conducted with two staff, two administrators, three professors, five traditional students, and five nontraditional students at

NeSCC. The data were organized by interview questions. The data represent the personal perspectives of the participants about their time at NeSCC and focused on student engagement and any disparities between the educational experiences of traditional students and nontraditional students.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The previous four chapters provided an intense view of traditional and nontraditional student engagement at Northeast State Community College. The literature review provided evidence that student success and graduation are closely related to engagement in and out of the classroom. A student is considered engaged when they are involved in extracurricular activities and college experiences that coincide with their learning experiences in class (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Student engagement has been evaluated thoroughly through extensive research pertaining to 4-year schools (Graham & Gisi, 2000; Kuh, 2008; Pace, 1984; Tinto, 1997). However, research conducted relating to engagement and community colleges is limited in comparison to the amount on 4-year institutions (Townsend, et al., 2004). This warrants the need for more research on community colleges and student engagement. An examination of the perceptions of traditional and nontraditional student engagement at Northeast State Community College used a qualitative descriptive case study design to explore the perceptions of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The findings of this study were based on the responses of two administrators, two staff, three faculty, and ten students. In-depth interviews were used to examine the perceptions of students, faculty, staff, and administrators regarding student engagement and success. The coding and extensive examination of participants' responses identified patterns and themes. This chapter presents the summary of findings, themes, conclusions, and recommendations for future research and practice.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

What are the specific student support service programs and offerings for traditional and nontraditional students at Northeast State Community College?

Participants referred to a wide array of student support service programs and offerings in the in-depth interviews. The Financial Aid office, the Student Success Center, TRIO and tutoring services, Student Services including Academic Advising, and the Admissions office were the services most predominately mentioned by faculty and administrators. The Learning Center, Financial Aid office, the Student Success Center, tutoring services, Student Services including Services for Students with Disabilities, and the Admissions office were the services most predominately mentioned by both traditional and nontraditional students. The full list of available programs and services at NeSCC can be viewed in the Guide to Campus Resources (Appendix G). The large variety of programs and services available at NeSCC supports the research of Kuh (2001) who theorized on the importance of colleges providing multiple modes of support for students to increase meaningful engagement.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between engagement and success at Northeast State Community College?

According to the administrators, staff, and faculty, the relationship of student engagement and student success are critical issues and are taken very seriously at Northeast State Community College. Persistence is the focus of the administrators and faculty at this institution. They have

attempted to engage every student who enrolls at NeSCC and it is a concerted effort from the entire administration and faculty. NeSCC shares a commitment to engaging every student both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities to help them persist to graduation. Being a commuter college with no dormitories creates a community college environment that makes engaging students difficult at times, but NeSCC is determined to meet the needs of each and every student. Administrators, faculty, and students confirmed that the goal of NeSCC is not only to get students successfully through the first week of classes but to assist them to graduation and beyond. The substantial differences in backgrounds, obligations, resources, and enrollment patterns of the students are taken into consideration by the administration and staff as they go through the process of getting to know each student and attempt to meet their needs at any time throughout their community college experience. This is supported by a study conducted by Astin (1993) who found that the quality of higher education is improved by increasing student engagement which relates to a variety of mediums besides course work and activities, for instance, the faculty, student support, teaching techniques, the physical learning environment, and social climate also impact a student success.

Research Question 3

What strategies does Northeast State Community College employ in order to increase or enhance student engagement among traditional and nontraditional students on campus?

NeSCC is continuously surveying students in all aspects of their community college life to ensure the engagement and success of every student. Faculty and administrators acknowledged that there is always room for improvement and that the school strives to be more student-focused to ensure the persistence of every student. Students did not discuss the surveys,

but administrators and faculty are proud of the efforts to get student feedback on activities at NeSCC. Utilizing survey tools in community colleges is supported by CCSSE (2012) which reported that thoroughly understanding the inner workings of students helps institutions provide optimal learning environments to promote engagement.

The Strategies for Teaching Excellence Program (STEP) is a theory of teaching and learning that consists of professors creating student-centered learning environments with the emphasis on learning instead of teaching. STEP is based on four broad themes that are inter-related and revolve around student-centered learning. The first is self-regulated learning in which students learn how to manage their learning by regularly observing where they are doing well and areas that they need to improve in. The second theme is active learning by participation in the learning process, and there are several initiatives in STEP to address active learning. The third theme is collaborative, cooperative learning which involves students working in groups to learn from each other. The fourth theme of STEP is higher-order thinking, enabling students to connect what they learn to the world outside of school. The key concepts of STEP are learning how to learn in a community college and preparing people for skills they will need in college or the workforce. Professor A stated, "It's made a difference in the way that people think about learning, and about students...not valuing the student as a test-taker but as a learner and as a creative person and that makes all the difference in the world."

Research Question 4

What are the perceptions of faculty and administrators about traditional and nontraditional students regarding engagement and success at Northeast State Community College?

Faculty and administrators are aware that there are differences in the needs of traditional and nontraditional students and strive to provide services that will benefit both groups, but the administration and faculty at NeSCC prefer to focus on the needs of individual students regardless of their traditional or nontraditional status. Faculty and administrators emphasized the importance of equal treatment of students. The faculty's perception regarding engagement and success is that they serve both populations of students well in this regard engaging students in equal yet individualized ways. This is supported by a study conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) who found that effort and engagement on the individual level are crucial to the overall college experience therefore institutions must offer services focused on promoting student engagement in educational, personal, and extracurricular levels. Since community colleges serve more nontraditional students, they must try even harder to provide support services and an engaging learning environment due to the likelihood of nontraditional student to dropout (Stebbleton & Schmidt, 2010).

Research Question 5

What is the definition and perceptions of students, faculty, and administrators regarding a supportive campus environment? What role does it play in the success of traditional and nontraditional students at Northeast State Community College?

A supportive campus environment according to the students comprised of the caring and attentive faculty, administrators, and staff of the community college campus. Several students remarked on the positive impact of having people who listened and assisted them with their needs. A supportive campus environment according to the faculty and administrators meant ensuring that the needs of each and every student were met. Staff and students provided insights that the role a supportive campus environment plays in the success of the traditional and nontraditional student is immensely important. It can make the difference in whether a student is engaged or not, which seems directly related to his or her persistence to graduation. This notion is supported by research conducted by Pike and Kuh (2005) who found that increased student engagement positively correlates with educational outcomes and success.

Research Question 6

What are the differences and perceptions of students, faculty, and administrators in traditional and nontraditional students' overall satisfaction with Northeast State Community College?

There were no differences noted in the overall satisfaction of Northeast State Community College by the students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The negative experiences of the students were minimal and it did not diminish their overall positive experience at the community college. It was noted by all students that they were happy with the education and services they had received from Northeast State Community College. The faculty and administrators felt that they were doing everything possible to be a student-focused institution and were constantly striving to improve and make changes as needed. NeSCC meets the criteria suggested by several researchers (Astin, 1993; Blustein, et al., 2000; Marti, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto,

1993) in regard to providing an educational environment that encourages student engagement. Further, NeSCC encompasses student-focused learning and a positive outlook that shows students that faculty want them to succeed and take the necessary measures to make it happen.

Themes

Seven themes emerged from the analysis of data. Themes that emerged were generalized in the conclusions and included:

1. NeSCC is student-centered. Four participants referred specifically to NeSCC being student-centered, including one student. Administrator A described being student-centered as providing education that allows the student to take the lead.
2. NeSCC is student-focused. Five participants discussed how NeSCC is focused on the students' needs. Professor A stated that being student-focused means looking at community college education from the perspective of the students and using that to help students succeed.
3. Students had positive experiences with professors and staff. All ten student participants reported at least one positive experience they had with a professor and stated that overall staff were helpful and friendly.
4. Students feel supported. All ten students reported that they had support from home and school. Five of those students discussed specific staff or professors they knew they could always turn to for help.
5. NeSCC wants students to succeed. Eleven participants discussed that the school's faculty, staff, and administrators wanted the students to be successful. Five of those

participants were students who reported knowing that their professors would help them beyond class because they wanted the students to succeed.

6. Engagement is considered important by faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Thirteen participants including seven students and six of the faculty, staff, and administrators discussed the importance of student engagement. The students reported this from the viewpoint of how being engaged had benefited them, and the faculty, staff, and administrators reported on the importance of engagement at NeSCC overall.
7. Students have had overall positive experiences at NeSCC. All ten student participants reported satisfaction with their time at NeSCC including numerous positive experiences.

Conclusions

This study examined student engagement of traditional and nontraditional community college students. The population consisted of three faculty, two administrators, two staff, and five traditional students and five nontraditional students enrolled in their second year of college with more than 30 hours of classes taken. The findings from this study revealed perspectives from multiple levels of involvement on NeSCC's campus and supported the importance of student engagement in relation to success. The following conclusions were drawn from participants' responses:

1. Faculty offered the same student engagement activities in the classroom for both traditional and nontraditional students, providing no activities particular to just one group of students. Traditional and nontraditional students were treated no differently when it came to student learning or student engagement activities in the classroom. Faculty did recognize the

strengths of each group of students and used that to their advantage in the classroom. For example, the real-life experiences of the nontraditional students are shared in the classroom with the other students as it applied to the learning experience. Faculty also noted that the traditional students had experiences to share that would be of benefit to the nontraditional students. The faculty indicated that there were clear benefits of mixing traditional and nontraditional students in group projects to create the intermingling of experience levels. Faculty as a whole related experiences of making extra efforts to accommodate student needs but clarified that their actions would be the same for traditional students and nontraditional students. The overall perception of the faculty was that they serve both populations of students well by providing equal yet individualized services.

2. Administrators implied that in the extracurricular student engagement activities, different activities should be offered for the traditional and nontraditional students. The institution made efforts to provide a variety of activities and have tried at different times to try meet the needs of the nontraditional students who may work full-time and have families. Nontraditional students need different services available to engage them because of their schedules and multiple obligations.

3. The traditional and nontraditional students interviewed had limited knowledge of the many student engagement extracurricular activities offered at NeSCC. It seemed to be a communication issue that the students just did not know of the possibilities offered through extracurricular activities. One student noted that she never checked her email, for instance, which is one avenue the school uses to advertise upcoming events and activities.

4. Both traditional and nontraditional students at NeSCC seemed engaged and headed for success. Faculty, administrators, and staff collaborate and put forth extensive efforts to

encourage student engagement on multiple levels and are constantly improving services and looking for ways to do more for their students. It was evident that if a student was not as engaged as other students in a community college environment that is so focused on being student-centered, then it was that student's personal choice or tendencies that lead to the lack of involvement and not a fault of the school itself.

5. My research supports the CCSSE results for Northeast State Community College in that they are doing well in meeting their benchmarks. The school consistently scored within a single point of the averages of similar institutions and cohorts on matters of engagement in and out of the classroom. My research supports the Graduation and Transfer information as Northeast State Community College seeks to improve their retention and transfer benchmarks. The school showed nearly annual improvement for graduation success and job placement from 2008 to 2014.

6. There were some negative comments made by student participants in the interviews, but these instances were minimal. Seven of the ten students interviewed reported that at one time or another they had experienced negative attitudes from professors. Three of the ten participants commented on the need for improved means of communication, either personally or school-wide. However, in each case the number of positive experiences at NeSCC with student support staff and faculty outweighed the negative, prompting each student to report overall satisfaction with NeSCC.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, the following practices are recommended for NeSCC and other community colleges:

1. NeSCC should continue their current efforts to enhance a student-centered, student-focused educational environment. Other community colleges should alter or expand their services to imitate NeSCC's focus on the needs of the students.
2. Community colleges should attempt to keep up with innovative ways of communicating with students by using social media formats that may be less formal but are more popular among students.
3. Student support services at NeSCC should continue to strive to be knowledgeable of all other student support services and offerings on campus so that if a student asks for help from the wrong place he or she can be directed to get the assistance needed.
4. NeSCC should not only survey those students who attend and participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, events, etc., but should also survey those who do not attend to find out why they do not attend.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Research to assess how students at community colleges taking online classes resulting in lack of face-to-face interactive student engagement impacts their success.
2. Research to determine how to best communicate to all students the variety of student activities on a community college campus, such as using tweets, text messages, and other forms of social media.

3. Research to evaluate the role of technology in increasing opportunities of student engagement for traditional as well as nontraditional students at a community college.
4. Research to analyze engagement in extra-curricular activities arranged by demographics.
5. Research to determine if a nontraditional student center would be of benefit to students based on nontraditional students' potential need for extra help with technology, remedial courses, and an environment exclusively for them.
6. Research to assess the benefits of courses relating to learning strategies and college success classes to nontraditional students, especially after long absences from the college environment or the last time in school attendance.

Summary

This study allowed me to look into the lives of five traditional students and five nontraditional students with various levels of life experience; however, they all shared a common goal of wanting to succeed in completing their education. With an ever-increasing amount of nontraditional students in community colleges, it is imperative that the institutions provide them with the support needed to be successful. A large portion of current literature focuses on student engagement in higher education in the 4-year university environment, but is somewhat limited in the community college environment (Townsend et al., 2004). The current literature further reflects the importance of student engagement in the academic classroom environment as well as the outside of classroom activities (Moore et al., 1998). The perceptions of the students, administrators, staff, and faculty that participated in this study provided a better understanding of student engagement at a community college. Throughout the study, it was evident that Northeast State Community College provides a supportive learning environment that is student-centered,

student-focused, and regards student engagement as a priority for both traditional and nontraditional students.

It is critical for educators and institutions to understand that to ensure America becomes stronger and to reach President Obama's goal of regaining the highest proportion of college graduates by the year 2020, more students, both traditional and nontraditional, must achieve degrees at an increased pace (ACSFA, 2012). The only way this goal will become a reality is to successfully serve the rising number of nontraditional students and support them in attaining a college degree. Since the majority of nontraditional students enroll in community colleges, the community colleges are going to play a major role in helping America become stronger and increasing higher education completion rates (Kasworm, 2003).

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What Is It Like

For You?

Are you a sophomore/second year student with 30+ hours?

**Are you a
Traditional Student?**
Ages 18-24
Attended college immediately
out of high school

Are you a Nontraditional Student?
Ages 25 and older

If your answer to one of these two questions is

Yes...

Share with me

What it's like for you in an interview for my research

(about one hour at a convenient location)

Help others learn

about

your unique

experience!!!

CONTACT ME:
B. J. Lowe
423-736-7852 or
bjlowe1955@gmail.com

**RESEARCH INTERVIEWS FOR
NORTHEAST STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENTS TO TAKE
PLACE IN LATE APRIL, 2013**

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

East Tennessee State University

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this research study is as follows:

To study and understand the responsibility of community colleges in successfully engaging traditional (ages 18-24) and nontraditional (ages 25 and older) adult learners in the preparation and completion of an academic career. In so doing, community colleges will gain a greater understanding of what motivates and drives traditional and nontraditional adult learners to become engaged on a community college campus. To accomplish the intent, this comparative study will focus on one community college – Northeast State Community College (NESCC).

DURATION

During the Spring 2013 semester, participants will be involved in a 60-90 minute personal interview. Prior to the interview, participants will be given ample time to read the informed consent document and review it with the principal researcher. Participants will be allowed to ask any questions regarding the research study at that time.

PROCEDURES

The procedures, which will involve you as a research subject, include:

Interviews that will be scheduled with you at Northeast State Community College Campus or at another selected location, as well as an agreed upon date and time. Interview sessions will last approximately 60-90 minutes. Participants will be asked to provide information about why they chose to attend a community college and their student engagement experience. Interview sessions will be recorded, with your

permission. Some analysis of the data will be performed in order to guide any subsequent interview sessions. The data collected from interviews will be coded and classified by categories looking for themes and patterns. An external reviewer will audit information from coded materials.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS

As this research does not involve treatment, there is no alternative treatment procedure/available to you if you elect not to participate in this study.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

The possible risks and/or discomforts of your involvement include:

A possibility that your involvement may cause risk and/or discomfort, in that you may experience anxiety as you recall and describe experiences from the past.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefits of your participation are:

To share with institutional leaders and campus student affairs professional, higher education policy makers your opinions and thoughts about traditional and nontraditional adult student engagement on community college campuses. You will receive a copy of the final research report for your review.

FINANCIAL COSTS

There are no out-of-pocket costs to you that may result from participation in this research study. Other possible financial costs to you as a participant in this research study may be the interruption from your normal daily routine, which could result in a loss of pay.

COMPENSATION IN THE FORM OF PAYMENTS TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

There will be no compensation to research participants.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. In addition, you have the right to withdraw your words from this study at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling B. J. Lowe, whose phone number is 423-736-7852. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call B. J. Lowe at 423-736-7852, or Dr. Catherine Glascock at 423-439-1000. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you cannot reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in researcher's home office. After the researcher's defense of the dissertation, all taped interviews will be erased, deleted and destroyed. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings discussing traditional and nontraditional student engagement on community college campuses without naming you as a subject. Since you will be using a pseudonym/alias in the study all reference to the participant will be by the pseudonym/alias. The only record of the alias and participant's true identity will be on the signed informed consent form. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and personnel particular to this

research, the ETSU Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, have access to the study records. All records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

PERMISSION TO QUOTE

With your permission, your words may be used in the final research report to clarify or further explain the phenomena of increasing populations of traditional and nontraditional student on community college campuses and how institutions can be successful at engaging this population of students into campus life.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you and that you are 18 years of age or older. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	DATE
<hr/>	
PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT	DATE
<hr/>	
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR	DATE
<hr/>	
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable)	DATE

Appendix C

Three Letters of Permission to Conduct Study



East Tennessee State University

Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Initial Expedited Review

April 1, 2013

Barbara Lowe

Re: A Comparative Study of Traditional and Nontraditional Student Engagement at Northeast State Community College

IRB#: c0313.16s

ORSPA #:

The following items were reviewed and approved by an expedited process:

- xform New Protocol Submission*; Northeast State Approval Email; Informed Consent Document* (no ver. date, stamped approved 4/1/13); Flyer (stamped approved 4/1/13); References; Resume

The item(s) with an asterisk(*) above noted changes requested by the expedited reviewers.

On **April 1, 2013**, a final approval was granted for a period not to exceed 12 months and will expire on **March 31, 2014**. The expedited approval of the study *and* requested changes will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

The following **enclosed stamped, approved Informed Consent Documents** have been stamped with the approval and expiration date and these documents must be copied and provided to each participant prior to participant enrollment:

- Informed Consent Document (no version date, stamped approved 4/1/13)

Federal regulations require that the original copy of the participant's consent be maintained in the principal investigator's files and that a copy is given to the subject at the time of consent.

Projects involving Mountain States Health Alliance must also be approved by MSHA following IRB approval prior to initiating the study.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.



Accredited Since December 2005



East Tennessee State University
Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Continuing Expedited Review

March 19, 2014

Barbara "BJ" Lowe

Re: A Comparative Study of Traditional and Nontraditional Student Engagement at Northeast State Community College
IRB#: c0313.16s
ORSPA#:

The following items were reviewed and approved by an expedited process:

- xform 107 (no conflict); Previously approved Narrative & ICD; protocol history

On **March 19, 2014**, a final approval was granted for a period not to exceed 12 months and will expire on **March 18, 2015**. The expedited approval of the study will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

Note: This study is closed to accrual, therefore stamped, approved informed consent documents were not returned. However, should this study ever be open to accrual, revised informed consent documents will have to be submitted and approved by the IRB before enrollment of participants can restart.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,
Chris Ayres, Chair
ETSU Campus IRB



Accredited Since December 2005



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Continuing Expedited Review

March 17, 2015

Barbara "BJ" Lowe

Re: A Comparative Study of Traditional and Nontraditional Student Engagement at
Northeast State Community College

IRB#: c0313.16s

ORSPA#:

The following items were reviewed and approved by an expedited process:

- xform 107 (no conflict); Previously approved Narrative & ICD; protocol history

On March 17, 2015, a final approval was granted for a period not to exceed 12 months and will expire on March 16, 2016. The expedited approval of the study will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

Note: This study is closed to accrual, therefore stamped, approved informed consent documents were not returned. However, should this study ever be open to accrual, revised informed consent documents will have to be submitted and approved by the IRB before enrollment of participants can restart.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,
Stacey Williams, Chair
ETSU Campus IRB



Accredited Since December 2005

Appendix D

Student Interview Protocol

The following open-ended questions will be asked to each participant who agrees to participate in this study. Some questions listed may not be asked during the interview, based on the responses from the participants and the extent to which other questions may require further elaboration that may be critical for the study. The researcher will ask participants to elaborate on specific questions.

Demographic/Background:

- Please tell me about your childhood background, where you grew up and your family.
- What do you remember about your childhood experiences? How have those experiences impacted who you are today?
- Please describe your educational experiences in high school.
- How many of your family members have attended college before?

Experiences and Meanings of a Traditional/Nontraditional Student Enrolled at a Community College:

- What are your educational goals?
- Follow up question: What led you to these goals?
- Tell me a little about what life has been like for you at NeSCC.
- So what made you decide to come to NeSCC?
- Follow up question: Is this the first time you enrolled in college?
- Tell me about your first day at NeSCC.
- Follow up question: What did it feel like?
- Follow up question: Did you know anybody?
- Follow up question: Did you know the instructor(s)?

- What makes it easy for you to be successful in college?
- Follow up question: What makes it difficult?
- What is your career goal?
- Follow up question: Why did you choose that goal?
- Follow up question: How will earning a degree help you achieve this goal?
- Follow up question: Have you ever considered leaving NeSCC and not completing your degree?
- Tell me a positive story about interacting with your professor(s) (no names) at NeSCC.
- Follow up question: Did you have a negative experience with any professor(s)?
- Follow up question: Can you describe for me your experiences with faculty?
- Have you made any friends at NeSCC?
- Follow up question: What about friends outside of college or other college friends?
- What out-of-class activities have you participated in at NeSCC?
- Follow up question: What have you gained from participating in these activities?
- What has been your favorite course at NeSCC? (Why?)
- Follow up question: What has been your least favorite course at NeSCC? (Why?)
- How do you balance the demands of college and your personal life and/or family life?
- Do you feel you have support? If so, please describe who provides the support and how?
- What student support services (such as registrar, financial aid, admissions, housing) are you currently using at NeSCC?
- Follow up question: What have you found most helpful about these support services?
- Follow up question: Can you describe for me your experience with student support staff?
- Follow up question: What type of experience with student support services left you feeling as though the community college served you well?
- What type of experience with student support services left you feeling as though the community college could have done more?
- How can the college be more helpful in helping you be successful in college?
- What could NeSCC do to make your time at the community college more enjoyable and enhance your learning experience?

- What advice would you give to another student who plans to enroll at NeSCC?
- Is there any additional information or insights you wish to share about your experiences as a student at NeSCC?

Appendix E

Student Support Service Staff and Administrator's Interview Guide

- How did you end up at NeSCC and your current position?
- Follow up question: Were you at another community college?

- In the time you have been at NeSCC, what changes have you seen in your office? Can you tell me about them?

- Based on your experiences what are the other student support service areas at NeSCC that offer services geared for traditional/non-traditional students?

- How does your office demonstrate an investment in traditional/non-traditional students at NeSCC?

- Do you think more could have been done for your traditional/non-traditional students at NeSCC?
- Follow up question: Are services different for traditional/nontraditional students at NeSCC?

- What type of experiences with traditional/non-traditional students left you feeling as though NeSCC served them well?

- What is the relationship between your office and the learning experiences that traditional/nontraditional students have here at NeSCC?

- In what ways does NeSCC evaluate the engagement and satisfaction of traditional/non-traditional students?

- What changes do you see as necessary in the delivery of students support services to traditional/non-traditional students?

Appendix F

Faculty Interview Questions

- How did you end up at NeSCC and your current position?
- Follow up question: Were you at another community college?

- In the time you have been at NeSCC, what changes have you seen with faculty? Can you tell me about them?

- Based on your experiences here at NeSCC, what do you see as important services for the traditional/nontraditional students?

- Do you think more could have been done for your traditional/nontraditional students at NeSCC?
- Follow up question: Do faculty members serve the traditional/nontraditional students differently at NeSCC?

- What type of experiences with traditional/non-traditional students left you feeling as though NeSCC served them well?

- What is the relationship between your faculty and the learning experiences that traditional/nontraditional students have here at NeSCC?

- In what ways does NeSCC evaluate the engagement and satisfaction of traditional/non-traditional students?

- What changes do you see as necessary in the delivery of services to traditional/non-traditional students at NeSCC?

- How do faculty members demonstrate an investment in traditional/nontraditional students at NeSCC?

- What are the significant in-class academic experiences that influence traditional/nontraditional student participation and success at NeSCC?

- What institutional factors influence the educational success of traditional/nontraditional students at NeSCC?

Appendix G
Guide to Campus Resources



Guide to Campus Resources

Campus Information and Services Directory

Page 79

Institutional Policy Statements

Page 101

Sanctioned Student Organizations and Programs

Page 102

STUDENT PLANNER AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

Please note that calendar events in the 2015-2016 Student Planner and Safety Handbook are subject to change at any time prior to or during the academic terms due to emergencies or causes beyond the reasonable control of Northeast State Community College, including severe weather, loss of utility service, or orders by federal or state agencies. To verify dates, times, and locations, you can contact Campus Information (Room P201, Blountville) at 423.323.0243 or email a request for information to CollegeAnswers@NortheastState.edu.

Northeast State is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the associate degree. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404.679.4500 for questions about the accreditation of Northeast State.

NeSCC-2 12-248 Rev 6/15

Campus Information and Services Directory

Many of the services available to students are coordinated through identified programs, offices, or organizational units. While referenced elsewhere in other institutional literature, the following are some of the offices/programs where students may receive information or assistance. This listing is not exhaustive of the College's programs and services and features those services of most interest to students. While the campus sites and office locations referenced in the entries are considered the main office locations, the majority of the services are offered at the various teaching sites through on-site offices or rotating personnel from the Blountville campus during select hours.

Please note that office locations are subject to change due to Northeast State's continual growth and expansion. You may wish to contact office staffs directly by telephone or email to verify location information and the specific services available at each teaching site.

Visit www.NortheastState.edu for more information on the College's programs and services by searching key words or specific office names.

Academic Affairs (Room P305, Blountville) - The Academic Affairs unit coordinates all educational programming offered by the College and provides leadership for the faculty. Reporting directly to the President, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for all aspects of credit learning experiences, distance and alternative delivery programs, and academic support services provided by the Library, the Center for Teaching Excellence, and The Learning Center. For more information, please call 423.279.7632 or email klcox@NortheastState.edu.

Academic Computing (Room H134, Blountville) - The purpose of the Office of Academic Computing is to direct the development of Internet courses and faculty training for web-based and technology enhanced instruction, provide assistance and information for academic areas relating to innovations in computing, and serve as a research source for students and faculty in the discovery and assessment of new technologies. For more information, please call 423.354.2413 or email tbwallace@NortheastState.edu.

Access and Development (Room G111, Gray) - The purpose of the Access and Development unit is to expand educational access and student completion by promoting and growing the Johnson City Teaching Site; to assess and update recruitment, enrollment, and retention strategies for underrepresented student populations; and to establish active communication and advocacy with state and local government while leading the College's innovation strategies. The Office of the Vice President for Access and Development oversees these efforts. For more information, please call 423.354.5288 or email dkstreet@NortheastState.edu.

Adjunct Faculty Information (Room T101, Blountville) - Adjunct faculty are defined by Tennessee Board of Regents policy "as professional staff members of businesses, industries and other agencies and organizations who are appointed by institutions and schools on a part-time basis to carry out instructional, research or public service functions." The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools mandate specific qualifications for collegiate-level faculty. For more information, please call 423.354.5109 or email EveDistEdu@NortheastState.edu. Please refer to the Directory on Northeast State's web site for a complete listing of Northeast State adjunct faculty email addresses.

Administrative Services (Room P315, Blountville) - The Administrative Services unit plans, directs, and coordinates the supporting services of the College. These services include Grant Development; Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness; Information Technology; Planning, Assessment, and Research; Plant and Maintenance Operations; Safety; Police; Printing; and the Theatre. The Office of the Vice President for Administrative Services coordinates these services. For more information, please call 423.354.2464 or email slmott@NortheastState.edu.

Admissions and Records (Room P203, Blountville) - The Office of Admissions and Records oversees activities relative to student admittance, enrollment, grade reporting, academic standards, transcripts, and graduation. For more information, please call 423.323.0253 or email Admissions@NortheastState.edu.

Advanced Technologies Division (Room A216, Blountville) - The purpose of the Division of Advanced Technologies is to provide academic programs designed for students who desire to enter occupational career fields in business, industry, or government immediately after graduation. The division provides instruction in Electrical Technology with concentrations in Electrical and Electromechanical and Industrial Technology with concentrations in Automotive Body/Collision Repair, Automotive Service, Engineering Design Technology, Machine Tool, Manufacturing Engineering Technology, Mechanical, Motor Sports, and Welding/Metal Fabrication. For more information, please call 423.279.7639 or email

kmtipton@NortheastState.edu.

Advancement Office (Room P316, Blountville) - The Northeast State Community College

Advancement Office is responsible for college marketing, communications, community relations, Foundation, and Equity & Compliance. For more information, please call 423.279.7630 or email calyon@NortheastState.edu.

Advising Resource Center (Room C2407, Blountville) - The Advising Resource Center provides

academic advising, career advising, and transfer advising services to students, manages a variety of outreach programs to promote student success, coordinates the academic advisement component of new student orientation programs, and assists in providing advisor training to faculty and staff. For more information, please contact 423.323.0214 or email Advising@NortheastState.edu.

Alumni Affairs (Room L301C, Blountville) - The Office of Alumni Affairs creates opportunities to

reconnect and maintains established relationships with alumni, develops innovative strategies to provide additional value and benefit to the Northeast State alumni experience, and encourages the alumni's continued association with and support of Northeast State Community College. For more information, please call 423.354.5278 or email Alumni@NortheastState.edu.

Behavioral and Social Sciences Division (Room H229, Blountville) - The purpose of the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences is to provide instruction in Criminal Justice and Criminology, Early Childhood Education, Physical Education, Psychology, Social Sciences, Sociology, Speech Communications, and Teacher Education. Courses offered by the division are designed to fulfill the general education course requirements in technical education programs and to prepare students in the University Parallel program to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. For more information, please call 423.354.2457 or email gmcullop@NortheastState.edu.

Blazier-Wilson Hall/Student and Community Services (Room BWH103, Kingsport) -

Formerly the Regional Center for Applied Technology (RCAT), the purpose of Blazier-Wilson

Hall/Student and Community Services is to coordinate and/or provide a variety of support services at the

Kingsport teaching site to enhance and promote student retention and persistence to graduation.

These services include Admissions, Business Office, Financial Aid, Career Development Services, Academic and Career Counseling, Testing Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, Tutoring, and Business and Industry Training. For more information, please call 423.354.2525 or email rldice@NortheastState.edu. Blazier-Wilson Hall is located at 222 W. Main Street.

Bookstore (Room A218, Blountville) - The Bookstore at Northeast State is operated under contract for the convenience of faculty, staff, and students. The Bookstore stocks textbooks and educational supplies. The store also maintains a supply of other items such as caps and shirts imprinted with the College name/logo. Financial Aid can be used during set times to purchase books at the Northeast State Bookstore which is operated by Follett. The dates when students can utilize this feature varies based on the each semesters' first day of class. Please check with the Bookstore or Financial Aid to learn more about the dates and details of this process. For more information, please call 423.279.3340 or email Bookstore@NortheastState.edu.

Bulletin Boards (Room A212, Blountville) - Campus bulletin boards are designated for use by specific academic programs, offices, student organizations, or individuals. Non-affiliated organizations or persons desiring to post material on a bulletin board must receive approval from the Director of Campus Activities. For more information, please call 423.354.2416 or email StudentLife@NortheastState.edu.

Business Office-Cashier (Room P203A, Blountville) - Fees, tuition, bills, and fines can be paid in the Business Office. Payments may be made at the Cashier's window located within Admissions and Records, Room P203. Normal hours of operations are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday unless otherwise posted. The Business Office will close at 5:00 p.m. each day that classes are not in session. For more information, please call 423.354.2511 or email NSCCBusOffAR@NortheastState.edu.

Business Technologies Division (Room F211, Blountville) - The purpose of the Division of Business Technologies is to provide academic programs designed for students who desire to enter occupational career fields in business, industry, or government immediately after graduation or transfer into a Computer Science or Information Technology program at a four-year college or university. The division provides instruction for Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree programs in Business with

concentrations in Accounting, Management, and Small Business Management; A.A.S. in Computer and Information Sciences with concentrations in Computer Programming, Information Assurance, Internet and Web Development, Networking Engineering Technology, and Personal Computer Management; and A.A.S. in Office Administration Technology with concentrations in General Office, Legal Office, and Medical Office. The division also offers instruction for Certificates in Accounting Technology, Customer Service and Sales, Entertainment Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Office Technology. For more information, please call 423.354.2420 or email lemcnutt@NortheastState.edu.

Campus Activities (Room A215, Blountville) - As part of Student Life, the Office of Campus Activities complements curricular programs by developing social, cultural, recreational, and intramural activities that enhance the student's collegiate experience. Programs include Student Activities, Performing Arts, Intramural Sports, Skills Competitions, and Service, as well as the Physical Education Classroom where students may acquire behaviors conducive to developing healthy lifestyles. For more information, please call 423.354.5241 or email mabeaty@NortheastState.edu.

Campus Directory (Room P312, Blountville) - The Campus Directory is a listing of full-time faculty and staff available online. A directory listing includes the name, title, photo, email, office location, on-campus extension, and direct telephone number for the employee. The directory is updated by the Office of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness. For more information, please call the HR office at 423.354.5183 or email HROffice@NortheastState.edu. For adjunct faculty emails, please refer to the Adjunct Faculty Directory.

Campus Information Center (Room P201, Blountville) - The Campus Information Center is centrally located in the Pierce Administration Building Lobby, and its staff provides general information to students, visitors, and employees of the College. Students can obtain copies of their schedules and

other important forms. This office coordinates all campus tours. To schedule a tour or for more information, please call 423.323.0243 or email CollegeAnswers@NortheastState.edu.

Campus Tours and Campus Tour Guides (Room P201, Blountville) - This program is open to all students who have an interest in providing tours to prospective students, parents, and visitors to Northeast State's Blountville campus. Applications to be a tour guide are accepted for a limited number of positions. For more information, please call 423.323.0243 or email CollegeAnswers@NortheastState.edu.

Career Services (Room C2418, Blountville) - Northeast State's Career Services Office serves the students and alumni of Northeast State Community College in all aspects of career counseling and professional planning. A dedicated staff is available to assist with resume development, cover letters, interviewing, and job search planning. Additionally, the office can assist individuals with clarifying their objectives and establishing career goals which will enable them to fulfill their personal potential. Career Services has a full range of programs and services to help you find and achieve your goals. For more information, please call 423.354.5167 or email CareerSvcs@NortheastState.edu.

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) (Room C1102, Blountville) - It is the goal of Northeast State Community College to assure equal educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the Center for Students with Disabilities provides services and academic accommodations for students with disabilities who self-identify as having a disability and who provide appropriate documentation of the disability. Documentation guidelines are available upon request. Any student with a disability wishing to arrange or obtain approved accommodations must contact the Center for Students with Disabilities. According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a student with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment; has a history of impairment; or is believed to have a disability that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities; such as learning, speaking, working, hearing, breathing, caring of oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, or walking. Services and accommodations for individuals with disabilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Distribution of book vouchers from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Assistance with pre-registration and registration
- Tutoring services for Vocational Rehabilitation clients
- Wheelchair accessible tables and ergonomically correct chairs

- Extended time on tests, quizzes, and in-class writing assignments
- Note-takers, scribes, readers, interpreters
- Adaptive equipment/technology
- Testing in alternative locations
- Tape recording of class lectures

Appropriate accommodations are determined on an individual basis as per disability and/or diagnostic documentation. It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation. To obtain accommodations, students must schedule a needs assessment with the coordinator. After receipt and review of required documentation, a letter will be prepared by the Center for Students with Disabilities, as requested by the student. Students will distribute their letters to instructors and discuss their disabilities privately with each instructor. Students must sign a written release in order for instructors to receive accommodation letters. Students are encouraged to speak with their instructors the first week of the semester relative to accommodations needed in each class. Instructors are not required to provide accommodations for students prior to the receipt of accommodation letters from the Center for Students with Disabilities. All documentation is confidential and should be submitted to:

Director, Center for Students with Disabilities
 Northeast State Community College 2425 Highway 75
 P.O. Box 246

Blountville, TN 37617-0246 Fax:

423.279.7649

For more information, please call 423.279.7640 or email CSD@NortheastState.edu. Services and academic accommodations for students registered with the Center are available at each teaching site.

Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) (Room L204, Blountville) - The Center for Teaching Excellence is a repository for student-centered learning information related to Northeast State's Strategies for Teaching Excellence Program (STEP) and the STEP's Ahead initiative which will continue researching student-centered learning as well as facilitating in-house professional development and entrepreneurial activities. STEP, which has been in place since the Fall of 2009, is dedicated to creating learning environments that actively involve students in a variety of activities designed to foster lifelong learning and career skills. For more information, please call 423.354.5162 or email jpkelly@NortheastState.edu.

College Access Programs (Room C2301, Blountville) - The Office of College Access Programs facilitates post-secondary access and success through the delivery of coordinated college preparatory support services and resources. Programs are designed to increase awareness of the demands of post-

secondary education, assist with the student's preparation for college-level coursework, and help to facilitate a smooth and seamless transition to college for high school students and adults. Specific mentoring activities include providing information to students and families regarding post-secondary education and career preparation; financial aid and college information seminars and workshops for high school students and parents; coordinating student support, retention, and transfer services; and facilitating the transfer between community college and four-year institutions. A mentor is present in service area high schools to provide these services. College Access Programs has a program (Job Ready Willing & Able Initiative-JRWA) focused on adult students in advanced technology fields, as well. This program focuses on community organizations and Adult Education Centers to bring awareness of the advanced technology fields and job opportunities. There is an Adult Transitions Counselor who assists with the specific mentoring activities mentioned above with adult students. For more information, please call 423.323.0223 or email CollegeAccess@NortheastState.edu.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP) (Room C2106, Blountville) - CLEP is a credit-

byexamination program accepted by most colleges and universities. Northeast State is an Open Test

Center for the CLEP program. Non-Northeast State students are welcome to take CLEP exams at the

College. CLEP examinations cover material taught in courses that most students take as requirements

during the first two years of college. Colleges generally grant the same amount of credit to students

earning satisfactory scores on the CLEP examination as it grants to students successfully completing that

course. Northeast State does not award letter grades for CLEP examinations, instead students receive a

“P” for passing. For more information, please call 423.323.0211 or email Testing@NortheastState.edu.

Community and Media Relations (Rooms L301A-B, Blountville) - Northeast State's Community

and Media Relations offices are the primary media contacts for the campus and also serve as the

coordinating offices for campus publications, marketing, graphic design, mascot, and promotional

materials and activities. The offices produce the academic year's Registration Guide and other major

campus publications such as brochures, viewbooks, business cards, and flyers. For more information,

please call 423.354.5143 or 423.323.0259 or email acadams@NortheastState.edu or

rccarpenter@NortheastState.edu.

COMPASS/MyMath Test Information (Room C2106, Blountville) - Degree seeking students applying for admission to Northeast State undergo placement testing in English, reading, and algebra to ensure that each student is academically prepared to enter his or her chosen field of study. Students are assessed by either ACT/SAT or the COMPASS test. ACT and SAT scores must be within three years of the first day of class in order to be valid. Students who did not take the ACT or SAT or whose scores are invalid or do not have college transfer credit in English and/or math from a regionally accredited college

will take COMPASS. Students assessed in Learning Support Math will take the MyMath Test to determine the appropriate level of Learning Support Math courses in which to register. For more information, please call 423.323.0211 or email Testing@NortheastState.edu.

Computer Resources and Guidelines (Room P216, Blountville) - Computing resources at Northeast State are managed through the Office of Information Technology. Information Technology coordinates planning and provides oversight for the implementation of new technological applications and the maintenance of all voice, video, and data applications including both administrative and academic computing. For more information, please call 423.323.0202 or email mclester@NortheastState.edu.

Counseling Services (Room C2101, Blountville) - Counseling Services provides assessment, short-term counseling, crisis intervention, and referral to community resources as needed. All services are free for students. Counseling can help students learn to:

- Identify obstacles that hinder them from reaching their goals
- Develop coping skills
- Discover new attitudes and behaviors
- Learn stress management skills
- Set boundaries
- Utilize campus and community resources
- Discover how one's learning style impacts college success by taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Counseling Services also provides support and resources for students who are parents and provides a newsletter in the fall and spring semesters specifically for students who are in "college with kids." Counseling Services are provided by a master's level counselor and graduate students completing internships in a master's level counseling or social work program. For more information, please call 423.354.2587 or email Counseling@NortheastState.edu.

Cultural Activities (Room H108, Blountville) - Each year, students have an opportunity to attend a wide and diverse variety of cultural events, from concerts and speakers to dance program and plays. The Northeast State Cultural Activities Committee plans many of these events, but many are sponsored by members of the community as well. Events are scheduled in campus venues such as the Wellmont Regional Center for the Performing Arts, the renovated Auditorium, two meeting rooms in the Basler Library, and an auditorium located in the Kingsport Center for Higher Education. Construction of an outdoor amphitheater is currently underway. Northeast State is known as one of the major centers in the Tri-Cities for concerts, plays, workshops, and other events, including the ever-popular Hot Nights, Cool Music summer music series. Northeast State recognizes that attending cultural events is an integral part of the learning experience, and many instructors regularly bring their classes to these entertaining and educational events. For more information, please call 423.279.7669 or email jpkelly@NortheastState.edu.

Degree Works (Room F103, Blountville) - Degree Works is a degree audit program and an academic advisement tool designed to help you understand the degree requirements for your major. Degree Works takes the courses from your transcript and reorganizes them to show how the courses taken fulfill the requirements for your degree or another major you may be considering. Degree Works is located on My.Northeast under the NORSTAR tab. For more information, please call 423.354.5178 or email sllawson@NortheastState.edu.

Desire2Learn (D2L) Access (Room H134, Blountville) - Desire2Learn (D2L) is an online learning

application that instructors use to teach classes, assign homework, and execute tests and quizzes. Students can submit homework, check grades, and participate in online chats. For more information or assistance with problems concerning D2L access, please call 423.354.2413 or email tbwallace@NortheastState.edu.

Dual Enrollment Programs (Rooms G106 and G107, Gray) - Northeast State's Dual Enrollment programs are cooperative efforts with local high schools. The Jump Start University Parallel Program provides qualified high school students an opportunity to get a "Jump Start" on college by enrolling in college classes while still in high school. Students may earn up to 12 hours per semester of potentially transferable college credit while satisfying specific courses required for high school graduation. For more information, please call 423.354.2586 or 423.354.5186 or email jgwidner@NortheastState.edu or swmckenzie@NortheastState.edu.

Economic and Workforce Development (Room RCAM141, Kingsport) - The purpose of the Economic and Workforce Development unit is to expand educational access and student completion by promoting and growing the Kingsport Teaching Site; to grow workforce solutions throughout the region; to facilitate economic development partnerships with industry, community, educational, and government entities; and to establish active communication and advocacy with state and local government. The Office of the Vice President for Economic and Workforce Development oversees these efforts. For more information, please call 423.354.5516 or email NSK@NortheastState.edu.

Email (Room P218D, Blountville) - Your NeSCC Email is the primary way the College communicates with all students. The student email system is available to every enrolled student at Northeast State. Each semester, accounts are established for all registered students. This is not your D2L email, but a separate email system accessed through My.Northeast. Check your NeSCC Email daily for upcoming events, important dates, job opportunities, and much more. For more information, please call 423.354.2492 or email SystemsMgr@NortheastState.edu.

Emergency Contact (Room C2401 or Welcome Center, Blountville) - Students may want to share the

telephone number where a family member or other individual may call in case of an emergency. Campus emergencies are also reported to this number. This number is:

Northeast State Police Department - 423.677.7927

Campus Police are on duty 365 days a year, 24 hours per day. For more information, please call 423.323.0255 (off campus) or extension 3255 (on campus) or email jeedens@NortheastState.edu.

Enrollment Management (Room P205A, Blountville) - The Division of Enrollment Management within Student Affairs is comprised of the offices of Admissions and Records, Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, and Veterans Affairs. The division's purpose is to deliver timely, accurate, and high quality services to facilitate and support the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students. For more information, please call 423.279.7635 or email jgstarling@NortheastState.edu.

Enrollment Services (Room P201, Blountville) - The Office of Enrollment Services is responsible for the overall recruiting efforts of the College. The office routinely visits area middle schools, high schools, and businesses in the service area. New Student Orientation is coordinated by this office. During orientation students are given essential information regarding college policies and procedures. For more information, please call 423.323.0229 or email skjackson@NortheastState.edu.

Environmental Health and Safety (Room M101F, Blountville) - Northeast State Community College recognizes its obligation to provide an Environmental Health and Safety program that ensures student and employee safety, protects our environment, and promotes sustainability. The Environmental Health and Safety Department is a resource that provides oversight, consultation, policies, training, inspections, documentation, and other services to assure that Northeast State complies with federal, state, and local health and environmental requirements. For more information, please call 423.354.5224 or email ldhatfield@NortheastState.edu.

Equity and Compliance (Room P316, Blountville) - The Equity & Compliance department is part of the College's Advancement Office. Personnel are responsible for Title IX and Affirmative Action compliance and initiatives, as well as institutional policies and procedures. For more information, please call 423.354.2490 or email complianceofficer@NortheastState.edu or EquityOfficer@NortheastState.edu.

Evening and Distance Education (Room F100, Blountville) - The Evening and Distance

Education division offers quality higher education programs, serves evening and off-campus and high school students, and provides opportunities for lifelong learning through distance education, professional development, and the Weekend College. The Division of Evening and Distance Education facilitates services for the evening students and faculty on the Blountville campus and offers classes at the off-campus sites in Bristol, Elizabethton, Gray, Johnson City, Kingsport, Mountain City, and Unicoi County.

The Office of Evening and Distance Education is open from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. on Friday. For more information, please call 423.323.0221 or email EveDistEdu@NortheastState.edu.

Evening Services (Room T101, Blountville) - Evening Services facilitates the offering of educational programs and services to evening students to provide traditional and alternative delivery credit classes in support of the College's mission to increase access to higher education. The quality of instruction governing credit courses offered during the evening is maintained at the same level as those courses offered during the day and is equivalent in all academic considerations. Admission requirements for evening students are identical with requirements for students in the regular daytime programs. When classes are in session Evening Services is open Monday through Thursday from 1:00 p.m. until 9:30 p.m., during fall and spring semesters, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday. During the summer semester the office is open until 8:30 p.m. When classes are not in session, the office is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please call 423.354.5109 or email sdbaker@NortheastState.edu or tdbartlett@NortheastState.edu.

Exit Exams (Room C2106, Blountville) - The State of Tennessee requires that all graduates receiving an associate or bachelor's degree from a state institution participate in an exit examination. Northeast State uses the Proficiency Profile/Exit Exam. Prospective graduates who will earn an A.A.S., A.S., A.S.T., or A.A. degree must take the exam to fulfill graduation requirements. Students receiving a Certificate only are not required to take the exam. There is no fee for completing this exam, and no minimum score or level of achievement is required to graduate. However, the outcome of the test affects the College's funding. The value of your diploma in the community is directly related to how Northeast State ranks in meeting its educational objectives, so please put forth your best effort. You must complete this exam before your degree will be conferred. Also, students must complete required competency examinations in specified academic majors. Students will be notified by mail about specific testing requirements. Diplomas will be withheld until the exam is completed. For more information, please call 423.323.0211 or email Testing@NortheastState.edu.

Financial Aid (Room C2406, Blountville) - The Office of Financial Aid assists students through the process of receiving Federal and State aid by informing students of current and updated financial aid opportunities available to them. The Financial Aid Office works closely with all departments of Northeast State to insure students meet Federal and State requirements for the receipt of financial aid. The Office of

Financial Aid also serves as a liaison between the student and the College by maintaining and updating information regarding the availability of financial aid funds for student accounts. For more information, please call 423.323.0252 or email FinancialAid@NortheastState.edu.

Financial Aid Help Center (Room C2406, Blountville) - The Financial Aid Help Center assists students through the process of completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The Financial Aid Help Center connects with students by providing resource information on current and updated financial aid opportunities available to them and to teach students how to navigate these opportunities. The Help Center in conjunction with the Financial Aid Office offers assistance to new students and current Northeast State students returning for additional terms. For more information, please email FAHelpCenter@NortheastState.edu.

Food Services (Room A111, Blountville) - Food service in The Courtyard cafeteria is provided by SUBWAY®, a private vendor offering a breakfast and lunch menu of different types of sandwiches, subs, and salads. Neither the College nor SUBWAY® offers any type of meal plan for students. Vending machines with snack foods and drinks are available at various locations on the Blountville campus and at the various teaching sites. For more information, please call 423.323.8973 or email Subway@NortheastState.edu.

Graduation Honors (Room P205D, Blountville) - Students receiving associate degrees with final cumulative grade point averages of 3.9 to 4.0 will be awarded Summa Cum Laude while those with final cumulative grade point averages of 3.75 to 3.89 will be awarded Magna Cum Laude. Graduates with final cumulative grade point averages of 3.5 to 3.74 will be awarded Cum Laude. Learning Support grade point averages will not count toward calculation of either semester or graduation honors. Northeast State has one commencement ceremony per year which is at the end of the spring semester. Therefore, graduation honors are calculated at the end of the fall semester. This average will be included in the graduation program, the graduation ceremony, and all news releases concerning graduation. For more information, please call 423.354.2405 or email dlclose@NortheastState.edu.

Graduation Information (Room P205D, Blountville) - Students who wish to graduate from Northeast State must complete and submit the Application for Graduation to the Admissions and Records Office. You may obtain an application in the Admissions and Records Office (Room P203) or the Campus Information Center (Room P201). Prospective graduates who will earn an A.A.S., A.S., A.S.T., or A.A. degree must take the Proficiency Profile/Exit Exam to fulfill graduation requirements. Students receiving a Certificate only are not required to take the exam. Diplomas will be withheld until the exam is completed. Students graduating in the fall, spring, and summer semesters will attend the commencement exercises in May. Students completing degree/certificate requirements at the end of the fall semester will not receive their diplomas until the commencement exercise in May, but their permanent record will be posted as of the semester they graduate.

Students completing graduation requirements at the end of the summer semester will receive their diplomas in August. For more information, please call 423.354.2405 or email dlclose@NortheastState.edu.

Grant Development (Room P317, Blountville) - The Office of Grant Development advances the mission and goals of Northeast State by providing institutional leadership and support for cultivation of external funding opportunities, proposal development processes, and grants management technical assistance. For more information, please call 423.354.5206 or email rpdugger@NortheastState.edu.

Health-Related Professions Division (Room RCHP109, Kingsport) - The Division of Health-Related Professions provides instruction in Cardiovascular Technology, Dental Assisting, Emergency Medical Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology, and Surgical Technology, which prepares students to function in the role of a specialized healthcare provider. Completion of these programs enables the student to take certification and/or licensure examinations required in these healthcare fields. To meet the growing need for healthcare professionals, the Health-Related Professions Division offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Allied Health with concentrations in the fields of Dental Assisting, Medical

Laboratory Technology, and Surgical Technology. The Division also offers the Associate of Applied Science Degrees in Cardiovascular Technology, with Invasive and Non-Invasive options, and in Paramedic. In addition, students may obtain a Technical Certificate in either Dental Assisting, EMT, AEMT, or Paramedic. For more information, please call 423.323.0238 or email cjleavitt@NortheastState.edu.

Health Services (Room C2112, Blountville) - Health Services at Northeast State is committed to helping you achieve a bright future and a long life. Health Services works with students, faculty, and staff on health issues and promotes good health practices within the College and community. Health Services provides clinic services, helps students access community health resources, facilitates health and wellness promotion, and the staff serves on campus committees related to the health and wellness of the College community.

Clinic services are provided as follows:

- A Medical Clinic staffed by licensed Nurse Practitioners is available to students two afternoons a week by same day appointment.
- Registered Nurses coordinate and provide Health Services for students, faculty, and staff that include assessment of minor illness, first aid, flu vaccines, blood pressure monitoring, and provision of over-the-counter medications. A registered nurse is available on the Blountville (C2112), Elizabethton (E112), Johnson City (J1015), and Kingsport (RCHP148) campuses.
- Self-Care Stations with supplies for first aid and minor illnesses are available at no charge. Self-Care Stations are located on the Blountville, Bristol, Elizabethton, and Kingsport campuses.

Contact the staff by calling 423.323.0212 or by emailing HealthServices@NortheastState.edu for clinic locations, hours of operation, services, and self-help resources.

High School Equivalency (HSE) Testing (Room C2106, Blountville) - Testing Services administers the Tennessee High School Equivalency Diploma examinations to residents in the service delivery area of Northeast State. For more information, please call 423.323.0211 or email

Testing@NortheastState.edu.

High School Transition Programs (Room F109, Blountville) - The purpose of the High School Transition Programs is to strengthen the linkages between area high schools and Northeast State relative to programs of study, articulation/dual credit, dual and joint enrollment, Career Days, and the administration of Perkins IV grant programs and services. For more information, please call 423.354.5166 or email cdrose@NortheastState.edu.

Honors Program (Room H203, Blountville) - The Honors Program holds as its central purpose and philosophy the stimulation and encouragement of academic excellence and intellectual growth. It strives to bring together dedicated faculty and highly motivated students who share a commitment to the finest qualities of scholarship. The Honors Program is open to new and currently enrolled students who meet eligibility requirements. Honors Program course offerings are listed in the semester schedule under the Honors heading. For more information, please call 423.354.2596 or email jbhoneycutt@NortheastState.edu.

Humanities Division (Room H129, Blountville) - The Division of Humanities provides University Parallel programs designed to transfer to senior institutions and provides general education courses required in both university parallel programs and in selected technical education academic programs. The Division provides instruction in English, Foreign Languages, Humanities (Music, Art, Philosophy, and Humanities), History, and Theatre. Courses in these academic disciplines are designed to offer students a common set of learning experiences which enhance their ability to function effectively in an increasingly complex society. For more information, please call 423.323.0218 or email dwbeverly@NortheastState.edu.

Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (Rooms P308, P312, and P313, Blountville) - Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness supports Northeast State's faculty, staff, and students with an array of personnel-related services. The office staff offers courteous and professional assistance at all times and is happy to assist you with any employment-related concerns. HR/OE focuses on advancing institutional priorities by partnering with Northeast State's leadership to create a high performance work environment characterized by fair treatment of all, open communication, personal accountability, trust, and mutual respect. Contact the HR office at 423.354.5183 or email HROffice@NortheastState.edu.

Hybrid Courses (Room F100, Blountville) - These college-credit Hybrid Courses allow students some of the convenience of an online course while offering more time in class with the instructor. If classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, classes will meet the same day and time the following week. For more information, please call 423.323.0221 or email EveDistEdu@NortheastState.edu.

iNortheast Information (Room P312, Blountville) - For the fall semester 2015, an iPad Mini 2 device will be issued to Northeast State Community College Tennessee Promise students and other first-time/full-time degree-seeking freshmen who meet established criteria. The Northeast State Foundation approved a one-time investment of about \$340,000 from federal Title III funds to underwrite the iNortheast project for the 2015-16 Academic Year. Expansion of the iPad initiative will continue over the next two to three years until fully integrated. For more information, email iPad@NortheastState.edu.

Institutional Honors (Room C2110, Blountville) - Recognizing significant milestones and celebrating accomplishments are important aspects of the educational experience at Northeast State Community College. The College administers and awards various Institutional Honors to students,

faculty, staff, and alumni that reflect their commitment to excellence in academics and service. Honors Convocation is held annually in April. Awards for outstanding students in each academic program area and the overall Northeast State Outstanding Student Award are announced during Honors Convocation. In addition, students, faculty, staff, and alumni who have made significant contributions in various programs and student organizations are honored. For more information, please call 423.354.5120 or email StudentDevelopment@NortheastState.edu.

Institutional Standing Committees (Room A103, Blountville) - Northeast State students have the opportunity to serve on various institutional standing and ad hoc committees that advise, recommend policy, generate new programs, or assess existing programs at the College. These committees are advisory rather than directive. Students are appointed to these committees by the Vice President for Student Affairs. For more information, please call 423.354.2474 or email keglover@NortheastState.edu.

Insurance (Room C2112, Blountville) - Students are encouraged to obtain student health and accident insurance. Information on the Student Health Insurance Exchange is available from the Office of Health Services. For more information, please call 423.323.0212 or email HealthServices@NortheastState.edu.

IT Help Desk (Room P216A, Blountville or Room RCHP245B, Kingsport) - Two Computer User Support/Media Services support centers exist to help students. One is located on the Blountville campus and the other is located at Northeast State at Kingsport. Center staff in Kingsport primarily supports Northeast State's downtown Kingsport operations. The Blountville campus center supports operations in Blountville and at all other off-campus sites. For more information, please call 423.354.5103 or email lbmason@NortheastState.edu (Blountville) or call 423.354.5510 or email djphillips@NortheastState.edu (Kingsport).

Kingsport Center for Higher Education (KCHE) (Room KCHE101, Kingsport) - The Kingsport Center for Higher Education or KCHE offers the core classes and prerequisite classes for degree and certificate programs from Northeast State and select baccalaureate and graduate degrees from

participating universities, as well. You can complete an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science Degree (University Parallel Program) and transfer directly into one of the senior institutions housed in the KCHE.

For more information, please call 423.354.5521 or email KCHE@NortheastState.edu. The KCHE is located at 300 W. Market Street.

Leadership Programs (Room A103, Blountville) - As part of Student Life, the Office of Leadership Programs coordinates and/or consults with various Northeast State offices to offer leadership development opportunities that engage students with the campus and their communities. Programs include the President's Student Leadership Academy (PLSA), the Tennessee InterCollegiate State Legislature (TISL), and Who We Are Counts® Journey of Significance, as well as student government and student organization development. For more information or if you are interested in developing your leadership skills or just learning more about how leadership works, please call 423.354.2474 or email keglover@NortheastState.edu.

The Learning Center (TLC) (Room L103, Blountville) - The Learning Center is a drop-in tutoring center that offers free tutoring in most subjects, as well as help with basic computer skills and online resources. Tutoring is available for select courses at off-campus sites as well. For more information, please call 423.354.5112 or email TLC@NortheastState.edu.

Learning Support Program (Room F234, Blountville) - The Learning Support Program is designed to meet the educational and counseling needs of under-prepared students and to provide instruction in English, Mathematics, and Reading to prepare students for college-level work. For more information, please call 423.323.0219 or email mbtrent@NortheastState.edu.

Library (Basler Library, Blountville) - The Wayne G. Basler Library provides a variety of multimedia materials and services for educational purposes, research and reference interests, career studies, personal enrichment, and recreation enjoyment for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Library offers a fully automated public access catalog, over 100 databases, computers available for student use, and wireless laptops that can be checked out and used in the building with the campus wireless Internet. In addition, library materials can be sent to students, faculty, and staff at the off-campus teaching sites in Bristol, Elizabethton, Gray, Kingsport, and Johnson City. The Basler Library also participates in an interlibrary loan system and borrowing agreements with the local libraries in order to provide access to resources not available on main campus. Library hours when classes are in session are: Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, please call 423.354.2429 or email csmcurray@NortheastState.edu.

Mathematics Division (Room F234, Blountville) - The Division of Mathematics offers courses in

Mathematics and Pre-Engineering. Curriculum guides are available for students who plan to transfer to a four-year school and complete a bachelor's degree in Mathematics, several Engineering fields, Industrial Technology, Surveying and Mapping, Accounting, or Business. Faculty advisors assist students with planning for completion of a transfer program in any of these areas as well students who are undecided about their future degree and want to complete a University Parallel-General major. Learning Support mathematics courses prepare students for college-level mathematics if placement scores indicate a need. For more information, please call 423.323.0219 or email mbtrent@NortheastState.edu.

Mascot (Room L301A, Blountville) - Northeast State's mascot, J. P. the Bear, is named after Northeast State's founding President, James M. Pierce. Requests for appearances by J. P. should be received at least three weeks prior to the event. Submitting a request does not guarantee an appearance. In the event that an appearance must be cancelled, the Office of Community and Media Relations must be given three days prior notice. Due to College events, academics, and time restrictions, Mascot appearances at outside events are only available on a limited basis. The Mascot is available for appearances throughout the year. However, during the summer months as well as holiday breaks it may be harder to fulfill an appearance request due to school being out of session. For more information or to request an appearance by J. P., please call 423.354.5143 or email acadams@NortheastState.edu.

MyNortheast (Room P218D, Blountville) - MyNortheast is the campus online information portal for students. Features include links to access Desire2Learn (D2L), Northeast State Email, NORSTAR Student Information, and Status Alerts. For more information, please call 423.354.2492 or email SystemsMgr@NortheastState.edu.

New Student Orientation (NSO) (Room P201, Blountville) - The Office of Enrollment Services offers orientation sessions to accommodate the needs of incoming students. New Student Orientation gives essential information regarding college policies and procedures to new students. NSO is mandatory for all first-time college students. If you are a former Northeast State student or are transferring from another college or university, please call 423.323.0229. NSO reservations are required. You must have received an acceptance letter from the Office of Admissions and Records stating "you have been admitted to the College" and completed all placement testing (if required) prior to registering for orientation. At

New Student Orientation you will:

- Meet with an academic advisor who will help you select and register for classes
- Learn how to navigate our website using your MyNortheast account
- Get your student ID and hang tag (parking permit)
- Receive information about campus resources
- Talk with a Financial Aid counselor
- Campus Tour

For more information, please call 423.323.0229 or email skjackson@NortheastState.edu.

NextStep Accelerated Studies Program (Room B327, Bristol) - NextStep is a fast-track alternative delivery program. Through this program, students may complete an Associate of Science Degree in General Studies (University Parallel) or Business Administration (TTP) in as little as 22 months. Following completion of the degree, students may transfer to a four-year institution for completion of the bachelor's degree. NextStep is a component of the Accelerated Studies Program and is organized around a cohort concept. Generally, students attend classes two nights each week, complete coursework via traditional, Interactive Television (ITV) and online modalities, and progress with the same group of students. Classes are generally held in seven week blocks, allowing students continual progress through the program. Interactive Television (ITV) Classrooms in Mountain City and Erwin make possible the delivery of general education and applied science courses to students in Johnson County and Unicoi County. For more information, please call 423.354.5187 or email igthacker@NortheastState.edu.

Northeast State at Blountville (Room P201, Blountville) - Northeast State's original campus is located on 80 acres along Tennessee Highway 75 in Sullivan County six miles from historic Blountville. The campus is near Boone Lake and is adjacent to the Tri-Cities Regional Airport. The Blountville campus includes 13 buildings with 207,573 square feet of space. For more information, please call 423.323.0243 or email CollegeAnswers@NortheastState.edu. The Blountville campus is located at 2425 Hwy. 75.

Northeast State at Bristol (3rd Floor Main Office, Bristol) - The Bristol teaching site is conveniently located in the heart of historic downtown Bristol, providing enhanced access to the College's programs and services for the citizens of Bristol, Mountain City, Bluff City, and Sullivan County. For ease of access, adequate parking is designated for Northeast State faculty and students in the Shelby Street and Bank Street parking lots. For more information, please call 423.354.5187 or email jgthacker@NortheastState.edu. The Bristol campus is located at 620 State Street.

Northeast State at Elizabethton (Main Office, Elizabethton) - The Elizabethton teaching site was the first off-campus educational facility to be opened by Northeast State. Opening in 1995 through the joint efforts of Carter County, Northeast State, and the First Tennessee Private Industry Council, it is located on the Stoney Creek Highway across from the Elizabethton Municipal Airport. The site provides enhanced access to the College's programs and services for the citizens of Carter, Johnson, and Unicoi counties. Specialized courses in continuing education can be tailored to meet the needs of the community.

For more information, please call 423.547.8450 or email jfwillis@NortheastState.edu. The Elizabethton

campus is located at 386 Highway 91 N.

Northeast State at Gray (Main Office, Gray) - The Gray teaching site is conveniently located one mile from I-26 and just two minutes away from the heart of Gray, providing enhanced access to the College's programs and services for the citizens of Kingsport, Johnson City, Sullivan County, and Washington County. For more information, please call 423.354.5141 or email drmarsh@NortheastState.edu. The Gray campus is located at 120 Dillon Court.

Northeast State at Johnson City (Main Office, Johnson City) - The Johnson City teaching site is conveniently located in the heart of picturesque downtown Johnson City, providing enhanced access to the College's programs and services for the citizens of Johnson City and Washington County. For more information, please call 423.354.5213 or email ckyoung@NortheastState.edu. The Johnson City campus is located at 101 East Market Street.

Northeast State at Kingsport (Room KCHE101, Kingsport) - Northeast State at Kingsport serves as the center for higher education and workforce development in downtown Kingsport and consists of the Regional Center for Health Professions, the Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing, the Kingsport Center for Higher Education, the Pal Barger Regional Center for Automotive Programs, and Blazier-Wilson Hall (formerly RCAT)/Student and Community Services. These facilities provide curriculum and training for health-related and nursing programs, advanced manufacturing and technology, business technology, and auto body technology programs as well as student and community support services. For more information, please call 423.354.5521 or email NSK@NortheastState.edu. The Kingsport campus is located at 300 W. Market Street.

Northeast State Bulletin (Room P218C, Blountville) - The Northeast State Bulletin is an online moderated message board for the announcement of campus programs and community events. For more information, please call 423.354.2465 or email roboman@NortheastState.edu.

Northeast State Foundation (Room P316, Blountville) - The Northeast State Community College Foundation, founded in 1986, is made up of more than 60 Board members. The purpose of the Foundation is to support academic, community service, educational scholarship, and other programs offered by the College. As the fundraising entity of the College, the Foundation exists to generate and receive gifts and donations in support of college programs. For more information, please call 423.279.7630 or email calyon@NortheastState.edu.

Nursing Division (Room RCHP208, Kingsport) - Northeast State Community College offers an

Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing with two options: the traditional track and the LPN to RN track (designed for students with a current LPN license). After completion of specific general education courses, the traditional Nursing track curriculum consists of four semesters of nursing specific coursework and the LPN to RN track consists of three semesters of nursing specific coursework. With successful completion of all course and program requirements, an A.A.S. in Nursing degree will be awarded, making the student eligible for the National Council of Licensing Examination for the Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN). Upon passing the NCLEX-RN, students will then hold the title of Registered Nurse (RN). For more information, please call 423.354.5108 or email NursingMail@NortheastState.edu.

Online Classes (Room F100, Blountville) - Northeast State's regular schedule of classes includes Internet Courses that offer students the opportunity to complete all or part of their course work via the Internet. These online courses are different from the Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) courses. Classes follow a traditional schedule or may meet only at selected times in a synchronous format throughout the semester (students may meet with instructors four to five times on campus). To complete all requirements for these courses, students must be able to access the Internet through the College's facilities or secure access on their own. For more information, please call 423.323.0221 or email EveDistEdu@NortheastState.edu.

Physical Education Classroom (Room D192, Blountville) - The Physical Education Classroom provides an environment where students may acquire behaviors conducive to developing healthy lifestyles. The Physical Education Classroom staff is committed to a campus culture that promotes wellness through healthy lifestyles that enrich the student's quality of life. A variety of exercise equipment is available for student use during open hours. For more information, please call 423.354.5158 or 423.354.5293 or email takay@NortheastState.edu.

President's Office (Room P301, Blountville) - Janice H. Gilliam, Ed. D. is the President of Northeast State Community College. The Office of the President provides leadership for the College in general and for each major unit and sub-unit of the College. In assuming responsibility for the efficient and effective operation of the College, the Office of the President addresses all directives of the Board and the Chancellor. Consistent with policies of the Tennessee Board of Regents, the Office exercises authority relative to all personnel matters and provides leadership to the faculty, staff, and students in the establishment of a shared vision, mission, and values reflecting the College community's aspirations, values, and principles. The Office, through the College's comprehensive strategic planning and continuous improvement process, provides leadership in establishing and addressing institutional priorities and in assessing institutional effectiveness. In addition to serving as a resource for internal constituencies, the Office of the President also represents the College at community/civic functions and serves as a liaison with various business and industry, governmental, and community organizations. For

more information, please call 423.323.0201 or email cschristian@NortheastState.edu.

Regents Online Campus Collaborative (ROCC) Information (Room F100, Blountville) - The Regents Online Campus Collaborative (ROCC) is a cooperative online enterprise among 6 universities, 13 community colleges, and 26 colleges of applied technology in Tennessee. The institutions in the collaboration are governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. Annually, more than 38,000 students take classes through Regents Online. Combined enrollment (online and ground) of TBR institutions is over 200,000 students. For more information, please call 423.323.0221 or email EveDistEdu@NortheastState.edu.

Regents Online Continuing Education (ROCE) Information (Room F219, Blountville) -

Northeast State and the Tennessee Board of Regents community colleges, universities, and colleges of applied technology have joined to offer the Regents Online Continuing Education (ROCE) program.

ROCE offers an extensive Continuing Education program in a non-traditional method for adults regardless of their educational background. The programs help prepare individuals for licensing exams or meet ongoing training requirements from organizations such as the:

- Tennessee POST (Police Officer Standards Training) In-Service Requirements
- State of Tennessee
- International Association of Administrative Professionals
- Human Resource Certification Institute
- American Physical Therapy Association
- Lead-Safe Tennessee Training

For more information, please call 423.354.5520 or email dlharrison@NortheastState.edu.

Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) Information (Room C2407, Blountville) -

Northeast State and the Tennessee Board of Regents community colleges, universities, and colleges of applied technology have joined to offer the Regents Online Degree Program (RODP). The Regents online course schedules are designed in interactive asynchronous formats (students will not meet with instructors). Student services are available to RODP students. Technical support for accessing course lessons and assignments are available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. RODP courses are entirely online with the exception of some proctored tests and are transferable among all the participating institutions.

For more information, please call 423.323.0214 or email RODP@NortheastState.edu.

Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing (RCAM) (Room RCAM103, Kingsport) - The purpose of the Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing (RCAM) is to promote the advanced manufacturing outreach arm of Northeast State Community College. The focus of RCAM is building the 21st century workforce through supporting existing regional manufacturers, developing a pipeline of skilled workers, and facilitating economic development. RCAM courses may be used to fulfill requirement for Associate of Applied Science Degree and/or Technical Certificate programs offered in the following areas: Chemical Process Operations, Electromechanical Technology, Electrical Technology, and Welding/Metal Fabrication. For more information, please call 423.354.5149 or email jmcyphers@NortheastState.edu. RCAM is located at 305 W. Main Street.

Regional Center for Automotive Programs (RCAP) (Room RCAP107, Kingsport) - The Pal Barger Regional Center for Automotive Programs (RCAP) offers auto body/collision repair programs to prepare individuals to repair a modern automobile that has been involved in a major or minor collision. Students are able to repair and replace front end components, body components, doors, frame, and underbody subsystems. For more information, please call 423.354.5211 or 423.354.2525 or email rmbyington@NortheastState.edu. RCAP is located at 337 W. Center Street.

Regional Center for Health Professions (RCHP) (Room RCHP102, Kingsport) - The Regional Center for Health Professions (RCHP) houses Northeast State's Health-Related Professions and Nursing divisions. For more information, please call 423.323.0248 or email dlquillin@NortheastState.edu. RCHP is located at 300 W. Main Street.

Regional Center for the Performing Arts (RCPA) (Room D161, Blountville) - The Wellmont Regional Center for the Performing Arts, opened in the fall of 2008, hosts a wide variety of cultural events, concerts, lectures, dance programs, plays, and conferences sponsored by the College and community partners. The seating capacity is 500, and the facility has access and seating for the disabled. Free parking is available on the Blountville campus grounds. For more information, please call 423.354.5169 or email tcbrooks@NortheastState.edu.

Research, Analytics, and Planning (Room N108, Blountville) - The purpose of the Office of

Research, Analytics, and Planning is to advance institutional planning, enhance data-driven decisions, and coordinate applicable external reporting. For more information, please call 423.354.2445 or email

vmvanhall@NortheastState.edu.

Scholarship Programs (Room C2107, Blountville) - Scholarship Programs creates, promotes, and administers scholarship opportunities for students while offering a range of services to enhance the scholar's collegiate experience. Students are identified for campus scholarship programs as well as for national competitions and are provided individual mentoring to produce competitive applications. Scholarship Programs works closely with the Northeast State Foundation to support academic, community service, educational scholarship, and other programs offered by the College. This includes sponsoring the Northeast State Scholars Foundation. The Scholars Foundation supports the activities of the Northeast State Foundation through student-driven initiatives that promote private giving and service learning. For more information, please call 423.279.7637 or email Scholarships@NortheastState.edu.

Science Division (Room B108, Blountville) - The purpose of the Division of Science is to provide instruction in Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science, and Health-Related Pre-Professional Programs. Courses offered by the Division are designed to fulfill the general education course requirements in technical and health-related programs and to prepare students in the University Parallel program for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. For more information, please call 423.354.2508 or email adshrum@NortheastState.edu.

Southeastern Economic and Education Leadership Consortium (SEELC) (Room G131, Gray) - Northeast State, one of six colleges that comprise SEELC, received a U.S. Department of Labor Grant targeting the development and expansion of training programs in Welding, Machining, and Manufacturing. This grant expands capacity for the colleges to offer additional courses, certifications, and industry recognized credentials in Welding, Machining, and Manufacturing. At NeSCC, SEELC is administered by the Advanced Technologies Division, and grant funds will enhance current programs, develop new curricula with increased online capability, purchase new equipment, and hire additional faculty and staff. New opportunities for stackable credentials linked to nationally recognized industry skills will be available through affiliations with national organizations such as the American Welding Society (AWS) and the National Institute of Metal Working Skills (NIMS). Partnerships with local industry will ensure new curricula and training programs are aligned with skills employers are seeking. An academic and career coach is funded through SEELC and offers additional academic and career assistance to Welding, Machining, and Manufacturing students, including preparation for the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). For more information, please call 423.354.5270 or email blmccray@NortheastState.edu.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Program (Room F109, Blountville) - Northeast State Community College's STEM Program is an effort to address the growing,

national need for increased interest and enrollment in the STEM areas of study. For many years, Northeast State has participated in partnerships to recruit students to these and other academic areas of study. STEM coursework is now available to area high school students at Northeast State's Blountville campus and off-campus teaching sites. Other efforts and strategies are being developed through regional partnerships to provide more STEM opportunities for qualified students. For more information, please call 423.354.5166 or email cdrose@NortheastState.edu.

Student Activity Fee (Room A215, Blountville) - Northeast State Community College collects a student activity fee from each student, per semester. Fees help support student activities, including, but not limited to, cultural and performing arts, institutional student honors, student health services, and graduation. Additional guidelines regulating the use of these funds are found in NeSCC Policy 03:04:00. For more information, please call 423.354.2416 or email StudentLife@NortheastState.edu.

Student Affairs (Room C2108, Blountville) - The Student Affairs unit at Northeast State Community College works to help students begin and succeed in their academic and life pursuits. Student learning does not just happen in a classroom. Opportunities for teaching and development exist everywhere and at all times on campus. The job of the Student Affairs staff is to capture these opportunities by fostering and promoting positive interactions. Staff members encourage understanding and respect for diversity, sustain a belief in the worth of each individual, and support students in their educational endeavors. Student Affairs personnel advocate for each student at NeSCC by promoting access to college and community resources. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs administers the unit. Divisions within Student Affairs are Enrollment Management, Student Development, and Student Services. For more information, please call 423.354.2529 or email jmfields@NortheastState.edu.

Student Consumer Information (Room C2402, Blountville) - The Higher Education Opportunity Act requires colleges and universities participating in federal student aid programs to make certain information easily available to consumers. Northeast State has compiled this information in compliance with federal law. For more information, please call 423.323.0233 or email warmstrong@NortheastState.edu.

Student Development (Room C2110, Blountville) - The Division of Student Development within Student Affairs implements and manages a variety of support services that enhance the overall satisfaction of students with Northeast State Community College and that increase their persistence to graduation. These include the College's Counseling and Testing Services, Health Services, Institutional

Honors, Scholarship Programs and Student Needs, and Student Life programs. For more information, please call 423.354.5120 or email StudentDevelopment@NortheastState.edu.

Student Handbook (Room C2110, Blountville) - The Student Handbook, issued by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, is published online as the College's notification of regulations that affect student life. While every effort is made to provide current and accurate information, these regulations are subject to change at any time by Northeast State Community College or the Tennessee Board of Regents. Sections are the "Guide to Campus Resources" (which includes Campus Information and Services Directory, Institutional Policy Statements, and Sanctioned Student Organizations and Programs) and "Student Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures" (which includes Campus Security, Computer Resources, Guest Speakers, Student Activity Fee, Student Conduct and Disciplinary Actions, Student Organizations, Student Right to Know, Student Travel, Student Use of Campus Property and Facilities, and Traffic and Parking Regulations). The Student Handbook is available online at the College's Catalog link on www.NortheastState.edu. For more information on specific guidelines and policies, please call 423.354.5120 or email StudentDevelopment@NortheastState.edu.

Student Life (Rooms A103 and A212, Blountville) - Student Life promotes and supports co-curricular campus activities and leadership development opportunities that enhance the student's collegiate experience. Northeast State is committed to the concept of total student development and support by encouraging participation in co-curricular activities that lead to the development of individual and team skills. The College sanctions various student organizations, programs, and academic/co-curricular committees in support of Student Life. Student Life programs and student organizations are coordinated through the offices of Campus Activities and Leadership Programs, which serve as clearinghouses and resource centers for campus programs designed to promote student involvement. Students may choose to become involved in a wide variety of Student Life activities at Northeast State based upon their individual interests. For more information, please call 423.354.2416 or email StudentLife@NortheastState.edu.

Student Needs Project (SNP) (Room C2107, Blountville) - Northeast State's Student Needs Project (SNP) attempts to address non-academic, socioeconomic factors that impact student success and retention by promoting access to campus and community resources. Focus areas include resource development, food security, transportation, student emergency funds, and an Early Alert referral program. The SNP Consortium promotes access to campus and community resources that support the health, welfare, and needs of students outside the classroom. The SNP Consortium brings together over 30 campus offices and programs to facilitate this access. A listing of over 100 community resources in the College's service area is also available online. For more information, please call 423.279.7637 or email StudentNeeds@NortheastState.edu.

Student Services (Room C2407, Blountville) - The purpose of the Division of Student Services within Student Affairs is to implement and manage a variety of support services that enhance the overall satisfaction of students with Northeast State Community College as well as increase their persistence to graduation. These services include Academic Advising, Career Counseling, Transfer Advising, Student Support Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, and Career Services. For more information, please contact 423.323.0214 or email Advising@NortheastState.edu.

Tech Track Dual Enrollment Program (Room F109, Blountville) - Tech Track Dual Enrollment is focused in A.A.S./CTE related courses and programs. This program provides qualified high school students an opportunity to get on "Track" to technical careers after high school. Students may earn six or more semester hours of college credit and satisfy specific courses required for high school graduation. For more information, please call 423.354.5166 or email cdrose@NortheastState.edu.

Tennessee Community College Space Grant Consortium (Room A216, Blountville) - The Tennessee Community College Space Grant Consortium recruits women and underrepresented groups into STEM-related associate degree and certificate programs. Northeast State is one of five Tennessee Board of Regents community colleges partnering with the Tennessee Space Grant Consortium. The TCCSGC program encourages and inspires students in the College's Engineering Technology programs, in general and robotics specifically, to persist and graduate with an Associate of Applied Science Degree or certificate in the student's chosen career field. For more information, please call 423.279.7639 or email tiberry@NortheastState.edu.

Tennessee Promise (Room C2107, Blountville) - Tennessee Promise is part of the state's Drive to 55 campaign, which aims to increase the percentage of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications to 55 percent by the year 2025. Through Tennessee Promise, graduating high school seniors are eligible to earn an associate degree or certificate free of tuition and fees. Tennessee Promise is a last-dollar scholarship—that is, it covers mandatory tuition and fees after PELL (federal) and other state assistance (except for loans and work-study) has been applied. It does not cover books, lab fees, RODP fees and/or standard cost of attendance fees, such as travel and gas expenses. Eligibility criteria and deadlines apply.

For more information, please call 423.354.5337 or email Promise@NortheastState.edu.

Testing Services (Room C2106, Blountville) - Testing Services coordinates the administration of college testing. The goal of the Testing Services staff is to provide a professional environment for quality assessment and testing within the College and community. The first stop for many students is at one of the College's Testing Centers when they take COMPASS and/or the MyMath Test for placement. Once regularly admitted Northeast State students, students may take Nursing Entrance Exams, CLEP, a make-up exam, and/or proctored RODP midterm and final exams in one of the Testing Centers. All graduates earning an associate degree must take the Proficiency Profile/Exit Exam. Northeast State also proctors Distance Education exams for non-Northeast State students for a fee. Testing Services facilitates Tennessee High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma testing to citizens in the College's five county service area. For more information, please call 423.323.0211 or email Testing@NortheastState.edu.

Theatrical Activities (Room H106, Blountville) - Theatrical Activities at Northeast State serve to identify, plan, coordinate, and present a series of dramatic performances each year. The performances are full-length productions that are open to the public. In an effort to provide a variety of programming, Northeast State offers theatre in its many forms (dramas, comedies, classics, and musicals). While the theatre program has a student-first policy when casting productions, members of the community are encouraged to audition and are frequently cast in the shows. For more information, please call 423.354.2479 or email emsloan@NortheastState.edu.

Traffic and Parking Regulations (Room C2401 or Welcome Center, Blountville) - The Northeast

State Police Department facilitates the orderly and efficient flow of traffic on the Northeast State campus.

The College's Traffic and Parking Regulations serve to provide a safe atmosphere for both pedestrians and motor vehicle operators and provide order with regard to parking within limited space. All motor

vehicles used on any Northeast State Community College campus or site must be registered with the

Northeast State Police Department as required by the Tennessee Board of Regents. The annual

registration period begins September 1 and extends through August 31 of the following year. Hangtags

will be available for issue by August 1 of each year. Parking hangtags will be issued by the Northeast

State Police Department. Students/employees are responsible for obtaining a current hang tag and must

provide proof of enrollment/employment, as well as complete the campus parking registration form.

Students/employees parked on property Northeast State owns, controls, or leases must prominently

display a current hangtag in their vehicles. For more information, please call 423.323.0255 or email

jeedens@NortheastState.edu.

TRiO Student Support Services (Room C1107, Blountville) - TRiO assists first-generation,

and/or low-income, and/or students with documented disabilities in successfully beginning and completing college. Qualifying participants receive individualized career, academic, personal, and transfer advising; tutoring; financial literacy information; and opportunities to attend cultural events/college trips. All services are geared toward helping students achieve their goals of college completion. All program services are FREE to qualifying participants.

TRiO initiatives include Cash Course, a free online financial literacy program to assist students in making wise financial decisions by learning how to budget their resources in order to pay for college expenses and for reaching other personal financial goals, such as purchasing a car or home after graduation. Access Cash Course at www.cashcourse.org.

For more information, please call 423.323.0216 or email TRiO@NortheastState.edu. Visit any of the three teaching site TRiO locations:

- Room C1107 of the General Studies Building on the Blountville campus
- Room E110 at Northeast State at Elizabethton
- Room KCHE211 at the Kingsport Center for Higher Education

Vet Center (Room A101, Blountville) - The Northeast State Vet Center serves to support the transition from military to civilian life for student veterans by providing a network of services designed to improve academic success. The Center is a fully-equipped study center, meeting room, and resource center, as well as a central gathering place for student veterans to relax and interact with each other. The Vet Center is generally open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. However, veterans may request entry to the Center from the Northeast State Police Department any time the College is open. For more information, please call 423.354.2528 or email VeteransAffairs@NortheastState.edu.

Veterans Affairs (Room A102, Blountville) - The Office of Veterans Affairs serves the educational needs of prospective and enrolled service persons, veterans, their dependents/survivors, and other persons eligible to receive education benefits under various Department of Veterans Affairs programs. We strive to administer these programs in an exemplary manner by providing program information, certifying eligible students, and serving as a liaison between the student and the VA. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Tips for Eligible Students:

- Fee Deferments. If you are unable to pay your balance by the last day to pay deadline, make sure you submit a fee deferment to our office each semester.
- Schedule Changes. If you make any changes to your schedule (drop, add, etc.) you should notify our office so we can submit the changes to the VA in a timely manner.
- Approved Courses. Very important! Follow the curriculum guide for your approved major to insure that all courses you take (including electives) are required.
- Register Early! This helps the VA to pay you in a timely manner.
- Questions? If you have any questions or concerns about your benefits, please ask!

For more information, please call 423.354.2528 or email VeteransAffairs@NortheastState.edu.

Voter Registration (Room A103, Blountville) - Students may register to vote or update their voter registration information by visiting the State of Tennessee's GoVoteTN web site at www.GoVoteTN.com. This site contains links to the Voter Registration Application and each county election commission. Voter Registration Applications must be downloaded from the site and mailed to the specific county election commission. Paper copies of the Voter Registration Application are available in Student Life. For more information, please call 423.354.2416 or email StudentLife@NortheastState.edu.

Weather-Related Information (Room C2401 or Welcome Center, Blountville) - For the most current information about weather-related class cancellations and/or campus closings, please check the Northeast State web site's main page. Students also have the option to sign up for the e2Campus Alert System and receive notifications via email and/or text message. Students may also monitor local TV and radio stations for announcements. When weather conditions are questionable, but classes are not cancelled, students should consider safety a primary factor in determining attendance. For more information, please call 423.323.0255 or email jeedens@NortheastState.edu.

Weekend College (Room F100, Blountville) - The Weekend College Program is designed to provide a variety of credit and professional developmental programs for working adult students. Courses are provided using both traditional and alternative delivery formats including: accelerated studies courses, Internet, and traditional three hour block classes. Through the Weekend College program, students may earn up to 12 hours of credit per semester toward degree/certificate completion. Classes are conveniently offered on Friday evenings, Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons to accommodate the working or non-traditional adult student. For more information, please call 423.323.0221 or email EveDistEdu@NortheastState.edu.

Wireless Access (Room P216, Blountville) - If you have a laptop computer with a wireless access card and an active Northeast State email address, you have access to wireless services. Your Northeast State userid and password are needed to access the wireless network. Detailed instructions for connecting to the wireless network are available online. For more information, please call 423.354.2447 or email

kshubbard@NortheastState.edu.

Workforce Solutions (Room F218, Blountville) - Workforce Solutions develops and delivers workforce development training for businesses, industry, healthcare, and government entities. Workforce Solutions offers continuing education and training for employees to update or upgrade their skills and knowledge, short-term career training, or customized training for organizations with specific training requirements. Both online and instructor-led classes are offered. Successful completion in a course is noted on the participant's permanent transcript. For more information, please call 423.354.5520 or email WorkforceSolutions@NortheastState.edu.

Institutional Policy Statements

Northeast State Community College (NeSCC) is a community of scholars in which the ideals of freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and freedom of the individual are sustained.

However, the exercise and preservation of these freedoms and rights require a respect for the rights of all in the community to enjoy them to the same extent. It is clear that in a community of learning, willful disruption of the educational process, destruction of property and interference with the orderly process of the College, or with the rights of other members of the College cannot be tolerated. To fulfill its functions as an educational institution, NeSCC retains the authority to establish policies and procedures.

NeSCC and the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) establish policies, procedures, and guidelines that support a framework and methodology for College administration, best practices, and campus safety. Overarching policies, procedures, and guidelines for the TBR System are located at <https://policies.tbr.edu/all>. The Northeast State Policies and Procedures Manual is located at <http://cwis.northeaststate.edu/oie/policymanual/pol.asp>.

For questions or concerns regarding policies and procedures, please contact the NeSCC Equity & Compliance Officer at ComplianceOfficer@NortheastState.edu.

Accreditation - Northeast State is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the associate degree. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404.679.4500 for questions about the accreditation of Northeast State.

Annual Security Report/Crime Statistics - In accordance with Tennessee's College and

University Security Information Act of 1989 (TCA § 49-7-2201) and the Student Right-to-Know & Campus Security Act of 1990, Northeast State Community College provides crime statistics to students, prospective students, staff, faculty, and the general public. The Annual Security Report/Crime Statistics may be reviewed at www.NortheastState.edu. For more information, contact the Northeast State Police Department located in Room C2401 of the General Studies Building and in the Welcome Center on the Blountville campus, by phone at 423.323.0255, or by email at jeedens@NortheastState.edu.

Nondiscrimination - Northeast State Community College does not discriminate against students, employees or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a covered veteran, genetic information or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Dr. Leigh Hornsby

Equity and Compliance Officer/Chief Advancement Officer P. O. Box 246, Blountville, TN 37617-0246

423.354.5255

ComplianceOfficer@NortheastState.edu

Northeast State Community College's policy on nondiscrimination can be found at

www.NortheastState.edu/AAEEO.

Safe Campus - Northeast State Community College strives to maintain an environment that is free of intimidation and encourages education of students to their fullest extent. Therefore, the College will not tolerate acts or threats of acts of sexual assault, physical assault, or any type of violence. Please refer to www.NortheastState.edu/SafeNortheast for more information on campus safety programs.

Sanctioned Student Organizations and Programs

Students may choose to become involved in a wide variety of Student Life activities at Northeast State based upon their individual interests. The College's commitment to the concept of total student development and support is evidenced by those Student Life programs that are designed to enhance the individual's collegiate experience. Assessment starts with what matters most: you, the student. You may be asked to cooperate in various surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other data- collection efforts by the College. Northeast State is a member institution of the National Council on Student Development.

Please note that advisor contacts and office locations are subject to change. To verify advisors and office locations, you can contact Student Life (Rooms A103 and A212, Blountville) at 423.354.2416 or email StudentLife@NortheastState.edu.

Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society - Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor

Society is a nonprofit organization (www.alphasigmalambda.org) devoted to the advancement of scholarship and to the recognition of non-traditional students continuing their higher education. Membership is extended by invitation in the spring of the academic year. The Nu Sigma Chi Chapter at Northeast State is one of over 300 institutional chapters throughout the United States. Maggie Flint (F232, 423.354.2591) and Mahmood Sabri (F203, 423.354.2572) serve as advisors.

American Welding Society (AWS) Holston Valley Student Chapter - Northeast State's student section of the American Welding Society (www.aws.org) promotes the application and research of welding/metal fabrication among students. Educational development, sound practices, and career opportunities are emphasized. Jon Cookson (RCAM144, 423.354.5212) and Nichole Manz-Young (F110, 423.354.5253) are the advisors.

Argumentation and Debate Society - The purpose of the Argumentation and Debate Society is to provide students with an opportunity to participate in competitive forensic tournaments. The society also provides learners with a forum for free expression and offers opportunities for students to voice their opinions on current events and matters of interest to the academic community. Dr. Rick Merritt (H215, 423.279.3691), Dr. Ruth Livingston (H214, 423.279.7657), and Dr. Laura Barnett (H206, 423.354.2556) are the faculty advisors.

Art Club - The Art Club is open to all Northeast State students, faculty and staff. Our purpose is to promote an appreciation of visual artistic expression on the Northeast State Community College campus. We seek to provide a forum through which NES students, in particular, can obtain professional skills relevant to support academic endeavors in the visual arts. This organization will also provide students, faculty, staff, and the community opportunities to develop skills in a variety of visual art media. Dr. Christal Hensley (H120, 423.354.2595) and Donna Wilt (H218, 423.354.5250) serve as advisors.

Campus Christian Fellowship (CCF) - The Campus Christian Fellowship provides opportunities for students and employees to meet regularly to enjoy Christian fellowship and fun. Meetings include a variety of activities for encouragement, fellowship, Bible and topical studies, devotions, and prayer. Activities and meetings may be held on various NeSCC campuses. The club may also sponsor speakers or musical concerts for the campus, attend area concerts, and participate in schoolwide events. CCF is not exclusive to any denomination and all are welcome to attend. Teresa Dobbs (KCHE104, 423.354.5151) and John Melendez (F231, 423.354.2452) are the faculty advisors.

Campus Progressives - The Campus Progressives serve as a source of ideas, organization, and activism directed towards supporting students at Northeast State Community College who wish to gain experience in campus, local, state, or national politics. Activities such as voter education, voter registration, and voter turn-out efforts help students gain experience by aiding candidates or campaigns aligned with the ideals found within the platform, heritage, or future directions of the Democratic Party. Andrea Frye (H124, 423.354.2519) and Francis Canedo (H107, 423.279.3694) are the faculty advisors.

The Cinema Society - The Cinema Society provides diverse options for students of Northeast State Community College to experience the culture of movies and their relevance to said culture. The Cinema Society appreciates the fine art of cinema and provides opportunities to analyze movies that are viewed from themes and meanings of greater cultural and historical relevance. Jim Kelly (H108, 423.279.7669) and Tabetha Garman (H114, 423.354.5180) are the faculty advisors.

Computer Gaming Club - The purpose of the club is to promote an increased knowledge of the

science, design, development, construction, language, and applications of modern computing machinery through the exploration of computer game development and to provide a means of communication between persons having an interest in computer programming and game software development. Dr. Kurt Kominek (F215, 423.354.2583) serves as advisor.

The Cor Group - The Cor Group is a Christian organization for members of the NeSCC community.

The name is derived from a teaching of John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Cor ad cor loquitur," meaning heart speaks to heart. This phrase embodies the vital calling of Christians to speak with more than just words and to reach out with love to the hearts of others. The Cor Group is involved with ETSU's Catholic Center, and Fr. Michael Cummins leads most of the discussions and activities. The Cor Group is not exclusive to any denomination, and members come from a variety of backgrounds. All are welcome.

Michael Pagel (H115, 423.354.2431) serves as advisor.

Council for Leadership, Advocacy, and Student Success (CLASS) - Northeast State's Council for Leadership, Advocacy, and Student Success strives to improve the quality of student life by representing the student body, providing leadership development opportunities, and promoting communication between students, administration, faculty, and staff. For more information, visit the CLASS Office in Room A103 of the Student Services Building. Keith Glover (A103, 423.354.2474) and Eric Fish (H118, 423.354.2400) are the advisors.

Criminal Justice Society (CJS) - The Criminal Justice Society serves as an organization dedicated to exposing students to critical issues of justice and equal treatment in America by agencies of the criminal justice system. To accomplish this goal, the society promotes excellence in the education of criminal justice; strives to promote better relations between local criminal justice agencies and the general public; serves as a liaison between local agencies and Northeast State, and provides members with information on the varied nature of career opportunities in criminal justice. Steve Buttolph (H216, 423.323.0227) is the faculty advisor.

Drama Club - The Drama Club is open to all students, faculty, and staff who want to expand their understanding and enjoyment of drama. Students who are interested in acting, directing, working backstage, or just watching live theatre are encouraged to join. Drama Club members raise funds to assist with travel to see top quality productions. Eric Fish (H118, 423.354.2400) and Elizabeth Sloan (H106, 423.354.2479) are the faculty advisors.

DREAM Club (Disability Rights, Education Advocacy, and Mentoring) - The purpose of DREAM is to provide students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to become involved in activities which will facilitate the growth of a campus environment supportive of academic, social, and personal success; promote acceptance, respect, and inclusion; and build leadership and selfadvocacy skills for any student with a disability. Bernice Hagaman (P106, 423.323.0208) and Robin Byrd (P106A, 423.354.2470) serve as advisors.

Echoes and Images - *Echoes and Images* is Northeast State's student literary magazine. Published in the spring, the magazine features poems, short stories, essays, and visual art by currently enrolled students. Entry deadline for submissions is at the end of the fall semester. Exact dates are posted during the fall semester. Cash prizes are awarded to the first- and second-place winners in each category. *Echoes and Images* has been consistently recognized for excellence by the Southern Division of the Community College Humanities Association. Tempy Hale (H102, 423.354.2594),

Dr. Christal Hensley (H120, 423.354.2595), Dr. Sandra Hiortdahl (H220, 423.354.5176), Josh Archer (H121, 423.354.2557), and Donna Wilt (H218, 423.354.5250) are the faculty editors.

Elizabethton Service Club - The Northeast State at Elizabethton Service Club strives to generate and foster awareness and public interest within the community for Northeast State at Elizabethton. The club provides opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to develop leadership skills and to promote civic responsibility by working together through club activities. Joan Willis (E134, 423.547.8450) serves as advisor.

Fly Fishing Club (FFC) - The Club was formed in cooperation with Trout Unlimited's 5 Rivers Program. This college fly fishing club is open to all Northeast State Community College students as well as the surrounding community members to promote the art of Fly Fishing as well as river/creek conservation. The mission of the FFC is to promote conservation as well as coordinate a variety of events, from fly tying and fly casting to streamside volunteer projects and dynamic guest speakers. The FFC also provides an outlet for fellow fly fishermen to get together on the river for fellowship and adventure. Johnny Bragg (H224, 423.354.5163) serves as faculty advisor.

Gay - Straight Alliance (GSA) - The primary objective of the Gay - Straight Alliance is to provide social and educational support outlets and to promote equality, understanding, and acceptance of all students, faculty, and staff members of the NeSCC community regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Francis Canedo (H107, 423.279.3694) is the advisor.

"Glee" Club - The Northeast State "Glee" Club is open to all Northeast State Community College students who have an interest in music. The purpose of Northeast State "Glee" Club is to create and foster fellowship by giving students an opportunity to meet with one another, exchange ideas, encourage the understanding of the cultures of all students, develop character and leadership, and promote activities that stress the love and importance of music in their lives. Tawana Teague (H208, 423.354.5164) serves as faculty advisor.

GREENS - The **GR**assroots **E**nvironmental **E**fforts at **N**ortheast **S**tate is a club for students, staff, and

faculty who are interested in helping preserve our fragile environment. The club's main focus is to foster environmental leadership and stewardship at Northeast State and beyond. GREENS accomplishes this through education and action. Everyone has a part to play, and GREENS intends to educate others on how they can participate in this worthwhile effort. Jim Henrichs (P202, 423.354.2481) serves as advisor.

Intramurals - Intramurals, athletic activities, sports tournaments, and wellness events are offered by the Office of Campus Activities to help students safely acquire behaviors conducive to healthy lifestyles that enrich the quality of life, including access to gym equipment during open hours at the campus Physical Education Classroom (Room D192). Contact Mark Beaty (A215, 423.354.5241) or Tony Kay (A213, 423.354.5293) for more information.

Los Americanos - Los Americanos strives to teach awareness and understanding of Hispanic culture and traditions, as well as of the Spanish language. The club seeks to introduce members to a variety of concerns, issues, and current events that impact the Latin community. Students are not required to speak Spanish to become members of the organization. Francis Canedo (H107, 423.279.3694) is the faculty advisor.

The Lyceum - The Lyceum is a lecture series sponsored by the Honors Program at Northeast State. Guest lecturers representing a variety of disciplines and perspectives present programs to stimulate critical thinking and to enlighten students, faculty, staff, and the community. Lectures are free and open to the public. For each semester's Lyceum schedule, contact Jane Honeycutt (H203, 423.354.2596), who serves as coordinator of the Honors Program.

Northeast State National Alumni Association - This association is open to all former students who have taken credit courses at Northeast State or the college by its former name, Tri-Cities State Technical Institute. The purpose of the association is to further interest in Northeast State and to foster communication between the College and its Alumni. The association holds several events each year that encourage alumni to renew their ties with the institution and to cultivate friendships and professional relationships. Contact Rebekah Bishop (L301C, 423.354.5278) for more information.

Northeast State Scholars Foundation - The purpose of the Northeast State Scholars Foundation is to support the activities of the Northeast State Community College Foundation through student-driven initiatives that promote private giving and service learning. As a student foundation, the organization cultivates philanthropy among campus constituencies and seeks to incorporate philanthropic campaigns within the college's mission. Membership is comprised voluntarily of students receiving Northeast State Scholarships, enrolling in the Northeast State Honors Program, or earning memberships in the campus honor societies. Contact Rayma Gibbs (C2107, 423.279.7637), Joshua Johnson (C2107, 423.354.5235), or Erin Blevins (C2107, 423.354.2507) for more information.

Northeast State Student Navigators - This organization is a community relations support group representing Northeast State. It is the Navigators' duty to promote and uphold the vision, mission, and guiding beliefs of the college to the students, faculty, and staff as well as the five-county service area. The Northeast State Student Navigators contribute valuable time and effort toward enhancing the community relations and enrollment efforts of the college. The service provided by the Navigators is not duplicated by any other sanctioned student organization. Applications and/or additional information may be obtained by contacting advisor Jim Henrichs (P202, 423.354.2481).

Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society - This organization is the international honor society (www.ptk.org) that recognizes and promotes commitment to academic excellence in two-year colleges. Phi Theta Kappa supports the four hallmarks of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and

Fellowship that are designed to give members opportunities for personal and academic growth as well as

service to others. The Northeast State chapter is Alpha Iota Chi, and it has achieved five-star status, the highest level of participation in Phi Theta Kappa activities. Jane Honeycutt (H203, 423.354.2596) is the faculty advisor.

President's Student Advisory Council - The President's Student Advisory Council provides the president of Northeast State with a student perspective on activities and/or issues prevailing on the campus and makes suggestions and recommendations as deemed appropriate. Contact Keith Glover in the Office of Leadership Programs (A103, 423.354.2474) for more information.

President's Student Leadership Academy (PSLA) - Northeast State's prestigious year-round President's Student Leadership Academy provides emerging student leaders the opportunity to identify individual leadership traits, learn how to manage conflict productively, develop critical thinking and decision-making skills, and enhance their communication skills. Eligibility criteria exist and enrollment is limited. Contact Keith Glover (A103, 423.354.2474) for application information.

Sci-fi/Fantasy Guild - The Sci-fi/Fantasy Guild is open to all students, faculty, and staff who enjoy science fiction and fantasy literature, film, games, and culture. The Sci-fi/Fantasy Guild has book and film discussions, themed fundraisers, and special interest outings. Nona Shepherd (H104, 423.279.3686) and Audrey Peters (H123, 423.354.2417) are the faculty advisors.

Student Historical Society - The purpose of the Student Historical Society is to provide positive experiences and learning opportunities within all aspects of history. Goals of the society include expansion of knowledge through activities and discussion, increase campus awareness of historical events, and foster relationships between students and faculty. Stuart Frye (H110, 423.354.5113), Sherman Patrick (H111, 423.354.2493), and Tabetha Garman (H114, 423.354.5180) serve as faculty advisors.

Student Nurses Association - With a membership of approximately 56,000 nationwide, the National Student Nurses Association mentors the professional development of future registered nurses and facilitates their entrance into the profession by providing educational resources, leadership opportunities, and career guidance (www.nсна.org). Colleges nationwide are invited to develop chapter associations to connect nursing students with each other across the State of Tennessee and across the United States. The goals of the chapter at Northeast State are to provide nursing students in Upper East Tennessee with educational enrichment, peer support, and opportunities to advance within their developing profession of nursing. Teressa Wexler MSN RN (RCHP212, 423.354.5266), Laura Jones MSN RN (RCHP213B, 423.354.5512), and Amy Brown MSN RNC (RCHP245, 423.354.5513) serve as faculty advisors.

Student Tennessee Education Association (STEA) - The Student Tennessee Education Association helps prepare the education major to assume the role of a teacher and make a smooth transition from the campus to the classroom. This pre-professional organization (www.teateachers.org/student-tea-stea) gives students a voice in education by working in conjunction with local, state, and national associations. STEA provides personal growth through community service projects and professional growth through leadership and teamwork opportunities. STEA helps prepare teachers for the challenges of the 21st century classroom.

Contact faculty advisors Mitzi Neeley (H204, 423.354.2550), Deborah Ramey (H211, 423.354.2565), and Tricia Crawford (H212, 423.354.5117) for more information.

Student Traffic Court - The Student Traffic Court hears cases of students contesting traffic citations

that result from violations of the Northeast State Traffic and Parking Regulations. A Chief Justice, an Associate Chief Justice, and a maximum of four Justices are selected from the student body through an application and interview process. Students who wish to contest a ticket must submit appeals online at www.NortheastState.edu. Contact Keith Glover in the Office of Leadership Programs (A103, 423.354.2474) for more information.

Student Veterans of America - The purpose of Student Veterans of America (www.studentveterans.org) is to provide support and assistance to transitioning veterans; provide a network for mutual support and assistance among veterans, reservists, and those on active duty; encourage those who are seriously considering military service (ROTC/DEP); assist in the social, intellectual, and personal development of fellow veterans; and to contribute to the atmosphere and development of Northeast State. John Adcox (P204, 423.354.2528), Karen Nunan (F216, 423.354.2407), and Jeremy Bryant (C2307, 423.354.2418) serve as advisors.

Students in Action Service Club - The Students in Action Service Club strives to generate and foster awareness and public interest within the community for Northeast State at Kingsport. The club provides opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to develop leadership skills and to promote civic responsibility by working together through club activities. Devin Neubrandner (KCHE106, 423.354.5541) and Rose Marie Spangler (RCHP124, 423.354.5500) serve as advisors.

Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers (TSPE) - Northeast State's Student Chapter,

a "Delta" chapter affiliated with the Upper East Tennessee Chapter of the Tennessee Society of

Professional Engineers (www.tnspe.org) and a member of the State Society of the National Society of

Professional Engineers (www.nspe.org), was recognized and certified eligible for participation in the

Program for NSPE Student Chapters in May 1999. All students interested in STEM (Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are eligible to join. Janice Lewenzuk (F229, 423.354.2549)

serves as advisor.

A Toast to Education - A Toast to Education is a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which each individual member has the opportunity to develop oral communication and leadership skills that foster self-confidence and personal growth. The purposes of the organization include helping its members improve their abilities to communicate effectively, encouraging members to read and listen analytically, and affording leadership training for its members. A Toast to Education is affiliated with Toastmasters International (www.toastmasters.org) and the District of Toastmasters International organizations. Dr. Ruth Livingston (H214, 423.279.7657) and Dr. Rick Merritt (H215, 423.279.3691) serve as faculty advisors.

TRiO CLuB - The purpose of the TRiO CLuB is to provide an opportunity for members to be involved in activities which will facilitate the development of a campus climate supportive of academic, social, and personal success; build leadership skills; broaden individual experiences; and extend benevolence to others who are in need. It is open to all Student Support Services participants, staff, and any other enrolled Northeast State Community College student who is committed to the purpose of the organization.

Virginia Reed (C1108, 423.354.2491) and Donna Addington (E110, 423.354.5227) serve as advisors.

Volunteer Northeast State - The purpose of Volunteer Northeast State is to facilitate public and community service opportunities for students at Northeast State. This program and its related student organization provide the framework for experiential-based learning opportunities that develop student leadership and increased social responsibility. Dr. Laura Barnett (H206, 423.354.2556) and Dr. Rick Merritt (H215, 423.279.3691) serve as coordinators/faculty advisors.

VITA

BARBARA J. LOWE

- Education: Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee
Associate of Science, Criminal Justice
1981
- East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
Bachelor of Science, Criminal Justice
1983
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee
Master of Science, Safety Education and Service
1985
- East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership
2015
- Professional
Experience: Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee
Assistant Director of WIOA Youth Services
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