

THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAMS ON BLACK STUDENTS'  
COMPLETION OF COLLEGE PROGRAMS: A CASE STUDY

by

Tony R. Ryals

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study is to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. The theory guiding this study is Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design. This theory was used to determine the motivation of former college readiness program participants and their persistence to college completion. Keller's ARCS model of motivational design will act as the framework of this research to answer the research questions: How does participation in a college readiness program impact participant persistence through college and how do participants describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college? Purposeful criterion sampling was used to select participants who will share their experiences in CRPs. Data was collected through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis. From the data, I described the participants' perceptions within CRPs and developed common themes. Study findings, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research is also discussed. This study also addressed the overall gap in research that makes this dissertation relevant to the field of education.

*Keywords:* college readiness, achievement gap, higher education, persistence, post-secondary.

## Dedication

To all of my family and friends, I want to say thank you. I dedicate this to all of you. To those of you who listened to me go on and on about doctoral coursework, research, and writing. Thank you all for your prayers, acts of kindness, and for being there for me. To Jonathan, Gia, Jeremiah, Peyton, Micah, Mya, Ziyana, Aubri, Josiah and all of my future nieces, nephews, and cousins...I dedicate this to you. Never stop dreaming, the world is yours and I believe in you!

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**List of Abbreviations**

College Readiness Programs (CRPs)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study was to investigate the impact of college readiness programs (CRPs) on the persistence of Black college graduates. Participants of this study were located throughout the southern United States. Chapter one of the present study provides an in-depth background of the problem that will lead to informing the overall purpose of this study and how I am compelled to describe these experiences. The chapter will also include the proposed research questions that will guide the study. The chapter concludes with definitions that are relevant to the study.

### **Background**

To understand the purpose of this case study, it is important to provide historical, social, and theoretical background for understanding the impact of CRPs on former participants. This section will provide the necessary context to ground this study.

### **Historical Context**

Through the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, some slaves that were caught reading or writing were punished severely or even fatally (Ruef & Fletcher, 2003). Some slaves began to rely on the church as their primary source of education (Rury, 2012). McKivigan and Kaufman (2012) quote Frederick Douglass, who said, “Education, the sheet anchor to a society where liberty and justice are secure, is a dangerous thing to society in the presence of injustices and oppressions” (p. 92). Douglass, as well as other prominent Black leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) and Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), worked to provide educational opportunities and brought attention to the injustices in education. It was not until monumental court cases, such as, Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 and Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, were

won that the American public educational system began to change its stance on educating minorities (Kluger, 2011). However, these changes came with a price as Black students and families were subject to physical and emotional abuse (Corrigan, 2018). This ill treatment of Black students was a result of desiring a better education, equal to that of their white counterparts were receiving (Corrigan, 2018).

Despite its inequities, America's educational system continues to transform in order to create more opportunities for all students. However, privilege in education is still evident (Paige & Witty, 2010). While certain communities and races can obtain a high-quality education, the marginalized continue to advocate for equal resources and access (Paige & Witty, 2010). Educational reform constantly strives to bridge the educational divide, but the fight for equal access in education continues (Blackford & Khojasteh, 2013; Kolodner, 2016).

The educational system is replete with agendas, restrictive regulations, lack of leadership, lack of quality resources, lack of quality teachers and inadequate teacher training (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2011; Paige & Witty, 2010; Strayhorn, 2011). With that, the overall idea and goal of education is still consistent; the more education our population gains, the more productive society will be (Boutte-Swindler, 2012). The educational performance of Black students' educational performance has consistently lagged behind that of their White counterparts (Nichols, Eberle-Sudre, & Welch, 2016). Some may argue that this is attributed to the lack of academic ability, but Boykin and Noguera (2011) suggested this educational disparity was due to a system built on the premise of social injustice (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Ortiz, Valerio, Lopez 2012) and Quick (2016), also claim that this system was both a physical and psychological barrier that stifled the progress of Black students from achieving academic success. According to Goodwin, Li, Broda, Johnson, and Scheider (2016), the American

educational system has perpetuated a system founded on inequality. In a 2016 annual report released by Young Invincibles, statistics show, about 33% of Black adults had at least a two-year college degree in 2015, up from about 28 % in 2007. While degree attainment for Blacks have increased, it is below the 47% average for their White counterparts (NCES, 2017; Nichols et.al, 2016). Porter and Polikoff (2012) support that this is the result of Black students not being prepared for the academic rigor of a college curriculum.

### **Social Context**

Shortly after the Civil Rights Movement, social policy and changes in the economy created a need for more creative, rigorous, and scalable school reforms (Peck & Reitzug, 2013). The main goals were for students to be prepared, competent, and to become functioning members of society after graduating high school (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2011; Taines, 2012). The proposed blueprint for success showed that a student would enter an educational institution, proceed through courses, and when ready, graduate with the needed skills and fundamentals needed in society (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). Unfortunately, America's educational blueprint was not feasible for all students (Harris, 2011; Hemmings, 2012; Spencer, 2012). Students across America were entering schools at various levels of readiness: academically, socially, and emotionally (Hemmings, 2012). It was unrealistic to expect all students to adapt, cope, and function at the same educational level; some students would undoubtedly be unsuccessful on this path (Spencer, 2012; Verdugo, 2011).

Reformers called for schools to put action steps in place to ensure all children had equal access and opportunities in education (Spencer, 2012). School reform efforts began to address the educational gap that existed between Black and White students (Hemmings, 2012; Paige & Witty, 2010). Reform efforts became the catalyst for change within inner city, low-performing

schools, with a large minority population (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2011; Hemmings, 2012; Spencer, 2012).

During the mid-1960s, CRPs were part of a national school reform effort to alleviate the achievement gap among minority students (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). This effort was two-fold as it sought to prevent high school drop-out rates and increase post-secondary attendance among minority students (Domina, 2009). Educators and policy makers began to design and implement intervention programs that would aid in closing the educational achievement gap, increase high school graduation rates, and increase college attendance and persistence (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; McDonald & Farrell, 2012). These programs became known as CRPs (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011).

While CRPs were being established, colleges and universities were still segregated; this was another call to action for policy makers and community activists (Reddick, Welton, Alsandor, Denyszyn, & Platt, 2011). This call to action resulted in a push to promote a college-going culture, which began in urban middle and high schools (McDonald & Farrell, 2012). The overall goal was to create equal opportunities and access that were mostly prevalent within suburban and predominately White-populated schools (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Contreras, 2011; Huerta, Watt, & Reyes, 2013; Ortiz, et al., 2012; Strayhorn, 2011; Walsh, 2011). The overarching plan for CRPs was to provide the necessary tools and resources to foster and promote college attendance. While the rate of college enrollment among Black students has increased since the 1980s (NCES, 2018; Nicholas et al., 2016), college degree attainment has only seen an 11.1% increase since the 1980s (NCES, 2018).

### **Theoretical Context**

According to the literature, CRPs are among the many reform efforts created to alleviate



the achievement gap (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Gandara & Bial, 2011; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; Lauen & Gaddis, 2012; Ozturgut, 2012). While these programs have had some success, further research is needed to improve program outcomes (Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Strayhorn, 2011). The main gap in literature is the lack of participant perspective as it relates to involvement in CRPs, and how that involvement relates to college completion. While there is research that analyzes CRPs quantitatively (Knaggs, Sondergeld, & Schardt, 2015; Page, Kehoe, Castleman, & Sahewo, 2017), qualitative research and the voice of the participants is limited. There is a wealth of research that focuses on CRP participants enrolled in their first few years of college (Griffin, 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Kindle, 2012; Malin, Bragg, & Hackmann, 2017; Pierce, 2015; Reed, 2017; Thomas, 2016), but the research fails to provide insight into how and if CRP participation was the motivation to college completion. Goins (2016) developed a study that provided research in career and educational program completion, but there is a lack CRP participant perspective and how it relates to persistence and college completion. Future research has been suggested to give more voice to participants and their transition through college and their motivation to not only attend but complete a college program (Bower, 2013; Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Moore, 2010; Redic, 2014; Strayhorn, 2011; Strayhorn, 2014).

A college degree is the key to academic success and financial stability. Despite the increasing college enrollment of Black students (NCES, 2018; Nicholas et al., 2016), some are not prepared and may lack support needed to help complete their programs (Castleman, Arnold, & Wartman, 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2013; Goodwin et al, 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre, Bowers, Gordner, & Lange, 2006). CRPs

were created to combat the issue of “unpreparedness” and are a way to “level the playing field” among minorities and their White counterparts (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Gandara & Bial, 2011; Knaggs et al., 2015). This study intends to study how their participation in a CRP motivated Black participants to persist and graduate from college

### **Situation to Self**

As a former participant of a CRP, I see and understand the benefits of such programs. I was fortunate to graduate with little debt and an incredible network of support. My story is not like many others. I was one of the few participants in my college readiness program who graduated. Within my CRP cohort, I may be in the single digit percentile of those seeking to obtain a post-baccalaureate degree. This was not only a problem in my program; it was, and still is, happening throughout the United States. Students are graduating from high school and are not college ready (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). While we learned the same material, and toured the same campuses, there was something missing, there was disconnect and a lack of follow through within my CRP. This research is intended to bring clarity to the perspective of the college readiness participant. While the transition moving in, moving through, and moving out of the college readiness program may be the same, there may be different components that determine a student’s motivation to persist. I described the lived experiences of former CRP participants. I know my journey, but I want to give voice to the journey of others. I did this through taking on the epistemological assumption. The epistemological assumption in a qualitative study suggests that researchers get as close as possible to the participants being

studied (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, subjective evidence is solely determined by the participants views (Creswell, 2013).

I also took on the constructivist view. Creswell (2013) describes constructivism as the ability to understand the world in which individuals live and work. Participants develop their own meanings and truths, and I described their experience through their voices. This means that my experience must be set aside to tell the story of others, not my own. This approach will bring validity and truth to the participants and their shared experience in a college readiness program, and how that is connected to their college persistence and graduation. While their views were varied, I relied solely on the participants' view through open-ended questioning to inductively generate meaning from the data (Crotty, 1998). It was through their voices and experiences that added to this area of research.

### **Problem Statement**

In 2016, only 39.7% of Black, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution, completed a bachelor's degree within six years (NCES, 2018).

Numerous researchers agree that many Black students are graduating from high schools without the knowledge and the skills necessary for success (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006) CRPs were created to encourage more post-secondary success (Gandara & Bial, 2011; Knaggs et al., 2015; Page et al., 2017; Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016). CRPs work to provide resources and strategies to prepare students for college (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). These educational intervention programs are designed to fulfill these goals and have become known as college readiness and/or college access programs (Gandara & Bial, 2011).

These programs were intended to implement strategies to reduce dropout and increase student persistence throughout college. While the rate of college enrollment has increased since the early 1980s (NCES, 2013, 2018), increases in Black degree attainment rates fall short at only 46%. (NCES, 2017; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). 2016 ACT entrance exam data indicated that Black students make up the majority of students who are not college ready. These data connect to recent research that shows the national college persistence rate of all students is 73.4%, and Black students fall behind at 66.9% (NSC Research Center, 2017).

The problem of the present study is the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). Not only does this impact the economy and individual financial stability, but it widens the achievement gap, a gap, that research says, is continually widening due to disparities in the American public-school system (ACT, 2016; Adelman, 2006; Kolodner, 2016; Noeth & Wimberly, 2002; Reid & Moore, 2008; Roderick et al., 2009; Valant & Newark, 2017). College preparatory programs work to provide resources and strategies to prepare students for college. These educational intervention programs are crafted to fulfill these goals and have become known as college readiness and/or college access programs (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). A qualitative assessment would determine whether or not these programs positively impact the motivation for college completion.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study was to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. The research sites were

located throughout the United States. This research will define college readiness programs (CRPs) as federal programs that help bridge the academic achievement gap among Black students and their White counterparts. CRPs work to better prepare Black students to transition through their college program (Bower, 2013; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Knaggs et al., 2015; Ortiz et al., 2012). Knaggs et al. (2015) found that college preparatory programs are effective regarding academic achievement and college awareness. Much less is known about the transition through CRPs and their effect on college persistence (Knaggs et al., 2015).

The theory guiding this study is Keller's ARCS model of motivational design. This model consists of 4 important components: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction, which Keller posits are the keys to effective and efficient instruction (Keller, 1983).

### **Significance of the Study**

This case study is both practically and empirically significant to the field of education, and will show that the majority of all students are not prepared for college (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). Persistence through college is also low, as research shows that roughly 40% of Black students, earn college degrees after six years (NCES, 2018); this graduation rate has only marginally improved, in spite of the national increase of college enrollment (NCES, 2013). CRPs are bridging the achievement gap and helping students adequately prepare for their transition to college (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). The study will also investigate how well CRPs are preparing students to successfully persist through college and become valued citizens in their communities and the economy (CCSSO, 2014). This

study also should add to the body of research regarding-the effectiveness of college readiness programs.

Keller's ARCS model of motivational design (1983) provides the theoretical lens which will ground this research study. The model is based on Tolman's and Lewin's expectancy-value theory (Malik, 2014). This theory assumes that people are motivated to learn if there is value in the knowledge that is being presented (Keller, 1983). This knowledge must also link optimism to the expectation of success (Keller, 1983). The model consists of four focus areas: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. According to Keller, attention and relevance, the backbone of the ARCS theory, are essential to learning (Malik, 2014). The field of research is replete with quantitative data about the impact of CRPs (Eley, 2014; Fina, 2014; Yavuz, 2016; Harris, Hines, & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016), but this study seeks to address the gap revealed in literature through qualitative research. This study seeks to be a catalyst to use the ARCS as a tool to understand the student experience and motivation in CRPs.

### **Research Questions**

This intrinsic multiple case study investigating the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates will be guided by the following research questions:

#### **Research Question One**

How does participation in a college readiness program impact Black college graduates' persistence through college?

The first research question sought to address the four components of the ARCS model of motivational design. These four components are: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction (Keller, 1983). This question is designed to explain how, if at all, these components were woven through the structure of each participant's CRP. Considering, that most college

students are not college ready (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006), how CRPs structuring their programming to ensure that participants are prepared to persist through college.

### **Research Question Two**

How do Black college graduates describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college?

The second research question was used to incorporate Keller's (1983) ARCS model of motivational design. Interview questions will be designed to incorporate the four components of ARCS. Each question will be designed to understand the impact of CRPs on Black college graduates and have a focus on attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction as a way to understand how these factors may or may not have played a role in successful college competition.

### **Definitions**

The terms listed below are pertinent to the study and are supported by the literature, theoretical framework, or overall design of the study.

1. *Achievement Gap* - A theory that occurs when one group of students (usually grouped by race/gender) outperforms another group of students that creates a statistical significance (NCES, 2015).
2. *Case Study* - A research method that empirically investigates a particular phenomenon within particular, real-life boundaries. Case study research boundaries are often, not clearly defined (Yin, 1984).

3. *College Readiness* - A level of preparation students need to matriculate successfully--without remediation--in a post-secondary institution offering a baccalaureate program (Conley, 2007).
4. *College Readiness Program (CRP)* - A school reform effort to alleviate the achievement gap among minority students. This effort was also designed to prevent high school drop-out rates and increase post-secondary attendance among minority students (Domina, 2009).
5. *Intrinsic Case Study* - A study in which a researcher seeks to gain a deeper knowledge or understanding of a particular case (Stake, 1995).
6. *Persistence* - The act of continuing in higher education until graduation (Horn, Kojaku, & Carroll, 2001).
7. *Qualitative Research* - Research that is devoted to understanding a social or human issue/problem. The researcher develops detailed reports, paints pictures, and/or gives views of participants through inductive or deductive data analysis (Creswell, 2013).

### **Summary**

Thousands of high school graduates enroll in college each year, and many are not academically prepared for success in college-level courses (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). CRPs work to provide resources and strategies to prepare students for college (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). These educational intervention programs are designed to fulfill these goals and seek to bridge the achievement gap. CRPs implement strategies to reduce attrition rates and increase student persistence throughout college. While the



rate of college enrollment has increased since the early 1980s (NCES, 2013, 2018), degree attainment rates have not increased significantly (NCES, 2017). While the national college persistence rate is 73.4%, Black students fall behind at 66.9% (NSC Research Center, 2017). The problem of the present study is the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates (Bragg & Durham, 2012; (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). Qualitative research is needed to help explain how CRPs have impacted Black participants' persistence through college.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Chapter Two offers an in-depth explanation of pertinent literature and the theoretical framework used for this study. This chapter will include four sections: (a) the Overview, (b) a Theoretical (or Conceptual) Framework section, (c) a Related Literature section, and (d) a Summary.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In order to understand the motivation behind the completion of college programs, there must be an understanding of how motivation plays a role in the learning process. The ARCS model of motivational design was created by Keller (1983). The design was created while he was researching ways to encourage the learning process with the use of motivation (Malik, 2014). The model is based on Tolman's and Lewin's expectancy-value theory (Malik, 2014). This theory presumes that people are motivated to learn if they see value in what they are learning and if there is an optimistic expectation for success (Keller, 1983). The model consists of four fundamental areas: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction (Keller, 1983). Attention and relevance are the major components of the ARCS motivational theory (Keller, 1983).

The first component, attention, was designed to show the interest displayed by learners. This component is split into three categories: perceptual arousal, which means using surprise or uncertain situations; inquiry arousal, meaning offering challenging questions and/or problems to answer/solve; and variability, using a variety of resources and methods of teaching (Keller, 1983).

The second component is relevance. According to Keller (1983), relevance is established by using language and real-world examples in which learners are familiar. The sub components

of relevance are that relevant learning must be goal oriented, motive matching, and familiar (Keller, 1983). Relevance must also show the importance of present worth and future usefulness. Learners must understand how what they are learning will help them both today and in their future (Keller, 1983). This is a valuable component regarding connecting what was learned in CRPs to the persistence of participants.

The third component is confidence. The confidence component of the ARCS model focuses on establishing positive expectations for achieving success among learners (Keller, 1983). The confidence level of learners is normally linked to the motivation and the amount of effort put forth in reaching an objective (Malik, 2014). Keller offers resources to help build confidence in students' learning. Keller (1983) lists performance requirements as success opportunities, personal control, and confidence. Performance requirements suggest that learners should have standards and evaluative criteria to establish achievement and success. Success opportunities help motivate learners through multiple, varied and challenging experiences (Malik, 2014). Personal control suggests that confidence is increased when learners can attribute their success to personal ability or effort, rather than external factors such as ease or luck (Keller, 1983). Confidence is also increased when learners feel valued through personal interest and concern (Malik, 2014).

The final component of ARCS is satisfaction. Learners must feel some type of satisfaction or reward from their learning experience (Keller, 1983). This satisfaction can be from a sense of achievement, praise, or entertainment (Keller, 1983). Satisfaction is based upon motivation, which can be either intrinsic or extrinsic (Malik, 2014). It is important that learners feel satisfied. Instruction should be designed to allow them to use their newly learned skills as soon as possible (Malik, 2014).

Keller (1983) discusses three main strategies to promote satisfaction. Intrinsic reinforcement, which is used to encourage intrinsic enjoyment of the learning process. Extrinsic rewards are opportunities to provide positive reinforcement and motivational feedback (Keller, 1983). Equity is a useful tool that can be used to maintain consistent standards and consequences for success (Malik, 2014). Motivational strategies can also be used to improve morale of learners who may finish learning objectives successfully. ARCS is a useful tool that will analyze various components of CRPs and their impact on participant persistence.

Theories of motivation help explain and impact particular behaviors (Robb, 2010). Understanding why students behave as they do may be the catalyst for changing particular behaviors. The educational field is replete with motivational theories that present a wide array of unique concepts on the relation of motivation to student learning. The attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction or ARCS model (Keller, 1983) of motivational design is deeply rooted in the expectancy-value theory (Vroom, 1964).

### **Expectancy-Value Theory**

Along with the ARCS model of motivational design, expectancy-value theory further provides an understanding on how motivation may be a leading component in college completion among former CRP participants. Expectancy-value theory has been identified as the major measurable motivational framework (Robb, 2010). Expectancy-value theory states that for effort to occur the learner must see the value in a task and must believe that he or she can be successful in accomplishing it. Value, in this context, can be defined as pride in success or the avoidance of failure (Stipek, 2002). Expectancy-value theory assumes that individuals are motivated to engage and persist in a particular activity, when the individual can see how the

activity is connected to the satisfaction of their personal need. This is considered the value aspect of the theory (Robb, 2010).

The expectation aspect of this theory assumes the individual's positive expectation of success (Robb, 2010). Therefore, when an individual is learning or participating in a new task, the information must be presented in a way that is engaging and meaningful to the learner and promotes positive expectations for successful achievement (Robb, 2010). This theory suggests that students choose behaviors based on the values they place on those expected outcomes (Robb, 2010). The behaviors are based on an individual's willingness to perform a particular task or behavior, which can be based upon: "(1) the extent to which the individual believes a consequence will follow and (2) the value the individual places on the consequence" (Robb, 2010, p. 36). There must be an attractive outcome attached to the goal; students will be more likely to engage in a particular task or behavior when this is the case (Robb, 2010).

Keller's (1983) ARCS theory uses motivation to gauge an individual's effort (which is a direct indicator of motivation) which results in increased performance or successful accomplishment of a particular task. Wlodkowski (1999) states, "The American Psychological Association's Task Force on Psychology in Education support an intrinsic motivation system to support student learning" (p.120). Intrinsic motivation is grounded in the innate human tendency to pursue interests and exercise capabilities (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Internal motivation focuses on performance of a task rather than focusing on a direct reward (Stipek, 2002). This is directly related to intrinsic motivation theory, which is based on the premise that humans are inherently motivated to develop their intellectual competencies (Stipek, 2002). This correlates to humans taking pleasure in successful completion of their tasks or accomplishments (Stipek, 2002).

Individuals will accomplish a task because they have a desire to, rather than accomplishing a task out of duty.

Students are most motivated when they are given choices in their learning and have some control over their academic work (Stipek, 2002). Educators can provide engaging and pleasurable student choices, giving them autonomy with how they may work to complete a class or group assignment (Stipek, 2002). Educators may also offer choices about how to complete a certain assignment to attain the best results.

Not only is motivation an important factor in learning, but students perform better when they feel valued as individuals and made to feel they are members of their community (Stipek, 2002). According to Anderson (1985), it is important to take a personal interest in students as a measure to promote student persistence. This can all be done by helping students overcome any self-defeat or anxiety, through their affirming their abilities, talents, and skills (Anderson, 1985). It is also important to help students understand their purpose and motivation for attending college (Anderson, 1985). Anderson, 1985 states, “Motivation to persist is related to the meaning a student associates with the college experience and how it relates to their future goals and careers” (p. 49).

### **ARCS and Motivation**

Keller’s (1983, 1987) increased interest in the field of motivation, fueled his desire to find effective ways to understand the key influences of motivation; the motivation to learn, and a need to develop systematic strategies to solve problems. These related strategies to learning motivation was the catalyst for the ARCS model (1983). The ARCS model integrated various motivational concepts from similar theories such as: expectancy-value theory, attribution theory, self-efficacy theory, and social learning theory (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000). It

also incorporated the effects of reinforcing motivation, along with an evaluation of the human cognitive process to better explain an individual's motivational tendencies (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000). Human motives were divided into four categories called attention (A) and relevance (R), confidence (C) and value or satisfaction (S) of motivation (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000). Keller's theory (1983), which will now be referred to as the ARCS model (Keller, 1984, 1987b, 1999b), is grounded in understanding one's motivation, performance, and instructional impact (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000).

The overall purpose of this theory was to highlight major variables of human behavior and instructional design that are linked to individual motivation and performance (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000). The ARCS model also focused on three types of impacts on instructional design, which are: motivational design and management, learning design and management, and reinforcement-contingency design and management. The purpose of the model focusing on instructional design is to have the educator understand and control each area of influence (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000). The motivational design process was a significant part of the ARCS model and was used for pre and post instructional analysis, instructional design and implementation (Keller, 1987, 1999b).

The ARCS model begins with the category of attention (Keller, 1983). Attention refers to gaining attention, building curiosity, and sustaining active engagement (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1999b, 2008). The second part of the ARC Model, relevance, discusses that motivation to learn is promoted when the knowledge that is to be learned can be perceived by the learner, to be meaningful and goal related (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1999b, 2008). Relevance must include content and strategies that adequately establish connections between the instructional environment and the learner (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1999a, 2008). The

third principle, confidence, is that motivation to learn is successful when learners believe they can succeed in mastering a particular task (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1999b, 2008). Confidence is linked to students' personal feelings and sense of control and how that relates to their expectancy for success (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1999c, 2008). The fourth and last principle of the ARCS model was designed to show that motivation to learn is successful when learners experience the satisfying outcomes from a learning task (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1999b, 2008).

The ARCS model (Keller, 1983, 1987b, 1999a) embodied Keller's model of motivation and provided an in-depth synthesis of motivational theories, concepts and guidance within the motivational design process (Astleitner & Hufnagl, 2003; Keller, 2008; Naime-Diffenbach, 1991; Small & Gluck, 1994). The model has had wide support in the literature, and various researchers, both in and outside the field of education, validate its reliability and validity in diverse learning environments. The ARCS model research can be seen in a traditional classroom setting (Bickford, 1989; Klein & Freitag, 1992; Means, Jonassen, & Dwyer, 1997; Naime-Diffenbach, 1991; Small & Gluck, 1994; Visser & Keller, 1990); in virtual or computer-assisted instructional settings (Astleitner & Keller, 1995; Bohlin, Milheim, & Viechnicki, 1993; Shellnut, Knowlton, & Savage, 1999; Song & Keller, 2001; Suzuki & Keller, 1996), in blended learning environments (Gabrielle, 2005), and distant learning/web based classrooms (Chyung, 2001; Song & Keller, 2001; Visser, 1998). The model provided a foundation for training educators to meet individual needs of learners and those with motivational needs, provide motivational strategies, and solve motivational problems (Wongwiwat-thananukit & Popovich, 2000). The first three principles of the ARCS model of motivation addresses the conditions needed to establish a student's motivation to learn. The last principle, satisfaction, is necessary for learners to have



positive feelings about their learning experiences, this develops the learner's motivation to continue the learning process. Extrinsic reinforcements and recognition must be aligned with any existing principles of behavioral management among learners (Skinner, 1968) and not negatively impact a learner's intrinsic motivation to succeed (Condry, 1977; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

A person's motivation to learn is defined as one's tendency to find learning meaningful and beneficial to their well-being (Wlodkowski, 1999). Wlodkowski (1999) suggested that motivation is inextricably linked to educational achievement. Individuals must be motivated to learn at various levels: however, certain human variables such as: needs, emotions, attitudes, values, personal beliefs, and expectations can potentially complicate learning. He also suggested that students have the right to fail and he places the responsibility for lack of motivation on the students themselves. However, he also states, that it is imperative that educators recognize external factors and their relationship to students' success and motivation. Those external factors may include students' cultures, perspectives and family life. It is important for Black students to explore ethnic identity through their education, this will develop and motivate students internally and provide reasons to achieve academically (Pizzoloato, Podobnik, Chaudhari, Schaeffer & Murrell, 2008). Black students that exhibit racial pride perform better academically in school (DeCuir-Gunby, Martin, & Cooper, 2012). Through education reform, schools can serve as a racial socialization hub by providing positive messages of race and academic achievement (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012). Student motivation occurs when learning makes sense and is relevant to students. This is an important component in motivating all learners.

Another significant component of the ARCS model is known as the motivational design matrix (Keller, 1999a, 2007). The motivational design matrix consists of the four categories of the ARCS model (attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction) and can be used as a tool to

gauge learner feedback and evaluate instructional design. Through the use of the ARCS model numerous motivational-stimulating guidelines, strategies, and instructional guidance have been put into place to ensure success of learners (Keller & Suzuki, 1987). Not only has the ARCS model continuously changed to fit the traditional classroom setting, but the model is now being formatted and integrated into various e-learning designs and development applications, so the ARCS model is at a user's fingertips and remains up to date.

The ARCS model has also contributed to aiding educators in the identification of various components of instruction that either increase or decrease a student's motivation to learn (Robb, 2010). The ARCS model provides motivational strategies and design implementation to ensure instruction is directly related to the interests and the needs of students (Robb, 2010). Keller (1984) stated that: "[T]he ARCS model allows for educators to create a number of motivational strategies, it does require some experience and judgment to create unique solutions to achieve the desired goal of the instruction" (p 102).

### **Related Literature**

The first institution of higher education in the United States was established in 1635 (Clarke, 2012; Wakefield, 2011). Harvard University was established to educate Christian White men, and produce upstanding political and religious figures in society and create an ongoing legacy for future generations (Clarke, 2012; Mraz, 2010; Thelin, 2011). The success of Harvard University was the catalyst for establishing more institutions of higher education (Thelin, 2011). Between 1690 and 1775, more than two dozen other higher education institutions were established (Thelin, 2011). Similar to Harvard, these institutions were seen as both reputable and notable institutions that would produce sound and innovative members of society within the United States (Clarke, 2012; Mraz, 2010).

Considering the rise of higher education during the post-colonial America, the meaning of higher education has drastically changed since that time (Clarke, 2012). The American educational system has perpetuated a system founded on inequality and has favored the wealthier and privileged (Clarke, 2012; Thelin, 2011). Anderson (2002) explained that during the 19th and 20th centuries, southern state governments instituted restrictive laws that prevented the education of Blacks; these laws prohibited Black students from attending institutions of higher education (Span, 2014). Black students were only deemed fit for elementary schooling (Span, 2014). Northern states were different in terms of law and legal practices, but still saw Blacks as unequal in education (Span, 2014). Northern states were almost identical to their Southern counterparts through their use of institutionalized racism (Span, 2014).

During slavery, fewer than 5% of Blacks attended school and 90% were considered illiterate (Span, 2014). South Carolina became the first state to enforce the law which prohibited Blacks from learning to read in 1740. Georgia became the second state in 1770 (Span, 2014). Fear was used as a tactic by many southern states as a restriction that prevented Blacks from learning to read (Span, 2014). This fear was fueled by thoughts that literacy would lead to Blacks finding alternate ways to seek freedom (Anderson, 2002; Margo, 1990; Span, 2014). If Black slaves were caught reading or writing, there were punishments and fines for both slaves and individuals teaching the slaves (Span, 2014). Many slaves gave harsh accounts of being severely punished and/or disfigured for seeking to learn to read or write; this was the reality for countless Black slaves (Reece & O'Connell, 2016; Ruef and Fletcher, 2003). Blacks were not given the opportunity to have a formal education, due to the strict laws and repercussions of that time (Reece & O'Connell, 2016). Some slave owners and others volunteered their services in order to teach Blacks to read and write, but doing so was personally very costly, often with the threat of

death if caught (Kluger, 2011; Rury, 2012). Such inequalities continued to plague the Black community through the 18th and 19th centuries (Blackford & Khojasteh, 2013; Kluger, 2011; Rury, 2012).

Many Blacks' first, and sometimes only, lessons in education were in sharecropping or domestic work (Span, 2014). These restrictions formed a mindset and belief that Blacks were inferior (Span, 2014). This way of thinking perpetuated and encouraged legal tactics that imposed the ideology that Blacks were incompetent (Anderson, 2002; Margo, 1990; Span, 2014). This sense of inferiority was evidenced in the 1856, U.S. Supreme Court case, *Scott v. Sandford*, that ruled Blacks were not eligible for civil and political rights as stated in the U.S. Constitution. Unfortunately, this was viewed as fair at the time. The Constitution referred to slaves as property, not people. This stripped Blacks, not only of their freedom, but their humanity. (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003). Change began to take place in 1867, when the Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibited slavery. Aguirre and Martinez (2003), cited the Thirteenth Amendment's rights of all citizens which states that all persons, whether born or naturalized in the United States, are citizens of the United States and no state shall make or enforce any law that may deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.

While this law propelled change from a judicial perspective, attitudes toward Blacks academic abilities were slow to change (Span, 2014). Due to this constant push of inferiority toward Blacks (Span, 2014), activists such as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B DuBois, and Booker T. Washington, took a stand against the inequality and misguided ideologies of that time (McKivigan & Kaufman, 2012; Moore, 2003). Frederick Douglass said: "Education, the sheet anchor to a society where liberty and justice are secure, is a dangerous thing to society in the

presence of injustices and oppressions” (McKivigan & Kaufman, 2012, p. 88). Douglass’s main goal was to undergird the importance of education as the foundation to live and succeed within society. Douglass believed this was impossible to reach without education (McKivigan & Kaufman, 2012). Similar activists of that time fought the superiority ideologies of that time by advocating the importance of education and determination within the Black community (Oldfield, 2012; Rury, 2012).

The determination of Blacks continued to overcome the odds. Approximately 5-10% of Black slaves learned some literacy skills from other slaves who learned to read early in life. Other slaves learned from slave owners’ children (Span, 2014). After the Civil War, Blacks who possessed reading and writing skills began to teach freed slaves (Span, 2014). Blacks were learning a great deal; however, barriers were still in place. Although Blacks were legally allowed to learn basic literacy skills, they still had little access to formal education (Span, 2014). After the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted in 1863, Blacks began to assimilate within a new society, where they began to attend schools and churches.

In their pursuit of education, some Blacks were attacked, some school buildings were attacked, and some teachers were attacked (Ruckner & Jubilee, 2007; Schwartz, 2005). However, this opposition did not stop Blacks in their pursuit of education. Span (2014) cited Booker T. Washington as he described the experience of Blacks during the mid-1860s in their pursuit of education:

Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for education.... It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn. (pp.30-31)

By 1870, nearly 10,000 teachers from northern states migrated south to help educate a quarter of a million Blacks in 4,300 schools (Span, 2014). These schools were called “Freedom Schools” and these schools were self-governing and were paid for and implemented by former slaves. These former slaves also served as educators within these schools (Span, 2014). Blacks continued to progress and by the end of the 1800s, nearly 60% of Blacks could read and write (Span, 2014). These improvements in literacy led to more opportunities. While Blacks were finally learning the basics, their education lacked quality and they were not being educated in the same manner as White Americans (Span, 2014).

The lingering effects of slavery continued to impact the educational opportunities for Blacks (Kluger, 2011). The unjust educational system that favored White students’ educational pursuits, was seen greatly throughout the Civil Rights Movement (Paige & Witty, 2010; Ortiz et al., 2012; Thomas, 2016). These ideologies perpetuated that Black students were not fit for education (Anderson & Moss, 1991; Reece & O’Connell, 2016; Tthesis, 2012). Over 200 years of laws and practices continued to impose subtle and hidden injustices within the Black community (Rury, 2012; Walsh, 2011). While the Thirteenth Amendment was a milestone in the Black community, there were many more battles to fight in the name of equality.

### **Civil Rights Movement and Higher Education**

Landmark cases such as *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education* were the starting point of educational equality for Blacks (Exkano, 2013; Kluger, 2011). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 established the precept for federal involvement in education, which historically had been a state responsibility (U.S Department of Education, 2017). Due to the legislation of the mid-1960s, lawmakers expanded and enacted new student financial aid programs and academic support programs. These programs were TRIO

programs (Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and Talent Search) (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003).

President Johnson (1965) said while signing the Higher Education Act of 1965, “[W]e need to do more...to extend the opportunity for higher education more broadly among lower and middle-income families” (p. 1102). The 1970s provided more access and opportunities through the federal government’s expanded investment in education, particularly the Pell Grant. In 1992, there were significant changes to the Higher Education Act (Wolanin, 1998). More programs were established that increased financial aid and unsubsidized loan programs (Wolanin, 1998). The 1990s created more federal expansion and access as the need became greater for highly skilled and educated individuals. (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003). Boykin and Noguera (2011) highlighted various disparities in education and brought awareness to the gap in education. The disparities in education were seen in testing scores, graduation rates, college matriculation, and overall educational achievement of Black students in comparison to their White counterparts (Nichols, A., Kotchick, B.A., McNamara-Barry, C., Hasking, D.G., 2016; Paige & Witty, 2010). For decades, the image of Black students lagging behind their White counterparts was apparent (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Black’s educational performance was attributed to a lack of academic ability, which researchers suggested, was due to a societal system that continued to perpetuate the notion of social inequality among Blacks (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination against people of color and required institutions to implement affirmative action programs (Barr, 2003; Harper, 2015).

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 also stated, “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal financial

assistance” (Howard-Hamilton, Phelps, & Torres, 1998, pp. 51-52). It was these words that began to change the scope of education and move in the direction of equality. Blacks were no longer viewed as inferior, and they were given full access to their rights and the pursuit of education. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act also required institutions of higher learning to “follow not only the programmatic and technical requirements of each program under which aid is received but also various civil rights requirements that apply generally to federal aid programs” (Kaplin & Lee, 1995, p. 544). This not only broke the racial barrier within education, but also aided in breaking financial barriers as well (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). These barriers have created subtle changes in today’s education system.

### **The Current State of Education**

The educational system is replete with personal agendas, restrictive testing and common core standards, federal and state regulations, the lack of quality resources, qualified teachers, and issues with providing quality and accessible education for every student (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2011; Paige & Witty, 2010; Strayhorn, 2011). All of these problems have negatively impacted the quality of education for Black students (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Strayhorn, 2011). Despite these issues, the idea and goal of education has remained constant: the more education the people of a society attains, the more productive society will be, and this will ultimately lead to more opportunities within society (Boutte-Swindler, 2012; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011). Additionally, leaders from both the state and federal level, believe that free formalized public education has maintained order within society (Domina, 2009; Taines, 2012; Walsh, 2011). Today, free and formalized education is regulated by each state (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Each state decides what is appropriate and ensures the education is based on



the four basic subject areas: math, English, social studies, and science (Contreras, 2011; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Roderick et al., 2009).

While most schools in America are free and formalized, privilege in education is still evident in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). Certain communities and races have access to high-quality education, while some Black communities continued to fight for equal resources and access (Boutte-Swindler, 2012; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Blackford & Khojasteh, 2013). Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were founded with the purpose of educating Black students due to the lack of educational opportunities available in other institutions of higher education (Flores & Park, 2013). One of the first HBCUs, Cheney University, was influential as an institution that allowed its Black students to have a voice and enhance their standing; therefore increasing their ability to compete and thrive in society (Flores & Park, 2013; McDaniel, Prete, Buchmann, & Shwed, 2011). In 1968, 80% of Black students earned their undergraduate degrees from HBCUs (Allen & Jewell, 2002). However, the landscape of higher education shifted between 1967 and 1975 (Gasman & Hilton, 2011). HBCU's remained the primary institution of higher education for Blacks until the 1970s (Duster, 2009). After this time, Black college students began enrolling in public White institutions (PWIs) (Duster, 2009). Blacks continued to increase their enrollment in institutions of higher education (Anderson, 2002). From 1986 to 1996, the rate of Black student enrollment increased by 74.3% (Anderson, 2002).

As more jobs require a post-secondary degree, an educational gap has been created in the race for better jobs and opportunities (Lumina Foundation, 2018). This educational gap has widened over time (Goodwin, Li, Broda, Johnson, & Schneider, 2016; Kolodner, 2016). A growing body of research demonstrates that many black, low-income high school graduates

encounter barriers to college enrollment, which indicates that most black graduates are not prepared for college (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Harley-Permenter, 2017; Leal, 2015; Butrymowicz, 2017; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Rhinesmith, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). While researchers (Reynolds-Perez, 2017; Welton & Williams, 2015) agree with the premise of students not being prepared for college, there is a lack of insight into what can motivate students to not only be prepared for college, but persist through college (Corrin, 2013).

The realization of the large number of Black students not prepared for college should be the turning point for educators. Valant and Newark (2017) believe that the gap among White and Black students and college completion should trigger a public response to change how students are preparing for college. There are many disparities in college preparation (Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Roderick et al., 2009; Strayhorn, 2014, but educators must continue to encourage students who have demonstrated the skills and initiative for successful college completion (Rall, 2016).

Since 2000 there has been a 30% increase in the number of students enrolling in college (NCES, 2017), however educational disparities among college enrollment rates for black students still exists (Choy, 2001; Martinez & Klopott, 2005; Adelman, 2006; Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Reynolds-Perez, 2017; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). Minority student enrollment (Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) among undergraduates increased from 18% in 1984 to 32% in 2004 (Ramsey-White, 2012). While college readiness programs for traditionally underrepresented students have been reported to be successful (Gandara & Bial, 2011), other statistics overwhelmingly reveal a widening gap between Black students and White students in that traditionally underrepresented students in postsecondary institutions are the least prepared to

succeed in this environment (ACT, 2016; Adelman, 2006; Kolodner, 2016; Noeth & Wimberly, 2002; Reid & Moore, 2008; Roderick et al., 2009; Valant & Newark, 2017).

### **Education Reform**

Education reform was established to ensure that every individual--no matter gender, race or economic status was literate, able to learn valuable life skills and be a member of a universal system that could be utilized by all (Peck & Reitzug, 2013). Education reform set goals to prepare students to be valuable, competent, and functioning citizens within society (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2012; Taines, 2012). All students should enter an educational institution at a particular level, gain all necessary skills and absorb the essence of the fundamentals surrounding the American educational system (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). Reform efforts also sought to address the performance gaps between Black and White students (Hemmings, 2012; Paige & Witty, 2010; Valant & Newark, 2017). Reformers implemented systems and provided necessary resources to address the identified economic and social issues which affect the educational maturation of historically disadvantaged Black children, who were also living in lower socioeconomic communities (Contreras, 2011; Peck & Reitzug, 2013; Walsh, 2011). These efforts were the catalyst for reforming lower-performing schools with a majority Black population (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2012; Hemmings, 2012; Spencer, 2012).

School reform efforts began to address the educational performance gap that existed between minority and White students (Valant & Newark, 2017). Reform efforts became the catalyst for reforming low-performing schools located in the inner cities of America, with a large minority population (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010; Harris, 2012; Hemmings, 2012; Spencer, 2012; Peck & Reitzug, 2013). However, even with the implementation of reform efforts, Black students continued lag behind White students, this created a large educational gap (better known

as the achievement gap) (Valant & Newark, 2017). Yes, efforts were put into place to create change, and there has been significant progress, but some efforts have fallen short (Valant & Newark, 2017).

Inequities and disparities between various populations has been a consistent problem of the American education system and there is a continuous need for reform (O'Day & Smith, 2016). This is more than a minority issue of education, it is a community issue (O'Day & Smith, 2016). The education reform movement was not always well received (Warren, 2014). Many researchers noted that buy-in to education reform would be an arduous task among most White citizens due to the lack of information about the disparities within the public education system. (Kozol, 1991; Roza, 2010; Warren, 2011). One of the first education reform efforts that fought for educational equality was The Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 (McLaughlin, 1975). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was the foundation of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" (McLaughlin, 1975). This act was influential in targeting national poverty and its impact on education (Jeffrey, 1978). ESEA sought to provide equal access to quality education and shed light on the unknown disparities in education (Jeffrey, 1978). As educators realized some of the deeper flaws in education reform, efforts began to change and there was a recognized need for racial equity in education (Levin, 2004). More reform efforts were put in place, such as federal money and programming, however these efforts were not as effective in closing the achievement gap amongst Black students and White students (Valant & Newark, 2017).

### **The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA)**

Former teacher, President Lyndon B Johnson, was an advocate for education and believed that education was the key to fighting ignorance and poverty, all in all it was the

foundation of living the “American Dream,” especially for minorities (Iorio & Yeager, 2011). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was put in place to address the economic condition of the students not the need of the schools themselves (Iorio & Yeager, 2011). ESEA was one of the first acts of legislation to address inequitable education within the educational system and high minority populations (Harris, 2011). The ESEA provided the necessary funding for schools to provide resources that would, essentially, level the educational playing field (Price, 2010).

### **A Nation at Risk**

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk*, was published (Iorio & Yeager, 2011). This report addressed the inadequacy of K-12 public education throughout the country (Iorio & Yeager, 2011). The report stated, “The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity” (p.5). *A Nation at Risk* was a call to action throughout the country (Iorio & Yeager, 2011). While ESEA was a helpful component in education reform, it fell short of its goal in creating better resources for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). President George W. Bush, created a revision to the ESEA, which became known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b).

### **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

NCLB was initiated to create change within the American public education system (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). NCLB and its policies were one of the more controversial reform efforts in education (Peck & Reitzug, 2013; Reese, 2011). NCLB was established to address a major disparity in the school system, the academic achievement gap (Gamoran, 2013). The goal of NCLB was to hold school districts and schools more accountable in student performance (Gamoran, 2013). This was going to be achieved by encouraging schools to

implement more quality, engaging, and productive instruction to promote student success (Dee & Brian, 2011; Goldstein, 2011; Harris, 2011; Price, 2010).

Under the NCLB, lower performing schools were provided with additional resources and particular guidelines necessary for schools to improve performance scores over a period of time (Gamoran, 2013; Heinrich, Meyer, & Whitten, 2010). While low performing schools were given particular resources, some schools experienced little to no change, which led to school closures (Koyama, 2012). NCLB continued to require specific performance measures to ensure that schools were reaching standards necessary to show adequate educational performance (Heinrich et al., 2010; Koyama, 2012). NCLB legislation continued to receive critical feedback in regards to the strict restrictions and performance measures (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). School systems argued the lack of applicability and feasibility of NCLB measures (Goldstein, 2011; Price, 2010). According to Dee and Brian (2011), NCLB legislation did more harm than good. NCLB was created as a “one size fits all” approach in education (Spencer, 2012). This “one size fits all” approach was the catalyst for much of the confusion and frustration around NCLB and the continuous lack of quality instruction measures, the lack of feedback, and overall lack of resources to educate a wide array of student populations (Spencer, 2012).

While the frustrations of NCLB were vast, the required testing measured outlined in the legislation began to shed light on the underperformance of minority and low-income students (Dee & Brian, 2011). For this reason, some school districts began to reevaluate their systems and the achievement gap that existed among minority and White students (Lauren & Gaddis, 2012). The achievement gap garnered attention among educators as a high need that demanded change (Hanushek, 2010; Lauren & Gaddis, 2012). The achievement gap and the educational inequities that contributed to it, have been considered a huge disservice to urban students and communities

(Rabinovitz, 2016). Alongside the achievement gap, minorities are faced with other factors that impact inner-city, low-income students (Koeniger, 2016). Previously desegregated schools have been re-segregated as income drops due to financial strains and the diversity of cities continues to change (Michael-Luna & Marri, 2011). Further contributing factors such as, parental education and household income lend to the disparity of test scores (Miranda et al., 2009). NCLB has now been superseded by the Race to the Top Educational Initiative (RTT).

### **Race to the Top (RTT)**

President Barack Obama's initiative, Race to the Top (RTT), focused primarily on closing the achievement gap through grant incentives. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). This was done through a scoring rubric which allocated federal money to states willing to make significant education reforms, particularly with the goal of increasing racial minority students' access to highly effective teachers, programs, and resources (Lohman, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). This helped not only provide the necessary resources for Black students, but it also focused on closing the achievement gap (Lohman, 2010). The initiative is also part of the latest act in education reform.

### **The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

The latest act in education reform was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015 and is called The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This bipartisan act replaces NCLB and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the nation's foundational education law that sought to provide equal opportunity for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). President Obama stated, "With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamentally American ideal—that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make of their

lives what they will” (2015, p. 2). ESSA builds on key reform areas that have shown great progress in recent years (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). These reform efforts were made possible by forward thinking educators, community partners and stakeholders, parents, and students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This act also upholds the commitment to close the achievement gap (U.S. Department of Education, 2017; Valant & Newark, 2017), which is also imperative to this study.

While these reform efforts make strides in education, the achievement gap continues to persist (Valant & Newark, 2017). Reform efforts have sought to close the achievement gap, and provide the best opportunities for students of all races and socio-economic backgrounds (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2012; Taines, 2012). Throughout the years of education reform, there is little information given about how these efforts are motivating students through school and successful college completion. Education reform is more than just implementing various laws and practices, it is about addressing the needs of all students and providing needed resources (Goertz, Floden, & O’Day, 1996). My study will show how and if one of these reform efforts is closing the achievement gap and working to improve students, particularly Black students, throughout their collegiate endeavors.

### **Achievement Gap**

Martin Luther King Jr. (1968) presciently noted, “The discount education given Negroes will in the future have to be purchased at full price if quality education is to be realized” (p. 6). The Civil Rights Movement gave insight to the injustice within educational practices that perpetuated differences in testing scores, graduation rates, college matriculation, and educational aptitude of minority students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Ortiz et al., 2012).



Much of the research on Black students focuses on dropouts, literacy gaps, and educational delinquency (Charmaraman & Hall, 2011). An example to arguing the disparity of access and resources, is the Critical Race Theorists' argument that official school curricula are designed to maintain a "White supremacist master script" and they are "culturally specific artifacts" (Delgado, 1995, p. 21). Delgado (1995) suggested that the "current instructional strategies presume that Black students are deficient" (p. 22). When Blacks are tested, Gould (1981) argues, that it is solely a way to legitimize and shed light on Black students' deficiency. Tate (1997) discussed that within the United States, the multicultural paradigm, exists to benefit Whites. However, Bell (1980) posits that Whites are simply promoting the advancement of Blacks only when Blacks promote White interests, an interracial give and take. Ozturgut (2012) and Valant & Newark (2017), suggested that the achievement gap between the Black and White student populations in the U.S. is due to the lack of a diverse curriculum and the overall monopoly of middle class and mostly White female teachers.

### **Factors related to the Achievement Gap**

A major environmental factor that contributes to the achievement gap is the high crime in underprivileged neighborhoods (Gregory et al., 2010). Beck and Muschkin (2012) also found that students from these high crime neighborhoods are disproportionately suspended from school. These are prevalent issues that impact the lives and education of many black students. Jordan and Konstandini (2012) found that the same achievement gap that has been identified within the urban community has also been identified within rural environments as well.

Historically, educators may have had a role in the widening achievement gap (Natesan & Kieftenbeld, 2013). Educators may have arrived at urban schools with preconceived notions about inner-city students and their abilities (Natesan & Kieftenbeld, 2013) and behaviors, which

lead to a lack of trust among educators and students (Shaunessy & McHatton, 2008). Overall, inner-city schools have primarily been educated by White females (Logan, Minca, & Adar, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This fails students as they rarely see individuals who look like them as role models or mentors (Logan et al., 2012).

Between 1992 and 2015, the achievement gap in reading between Black and White students in the 12th grade students expanded 6 points (NCES, 2015). The 32 point gap has been consistent between 1992 and 2015, as it relates to the achievement gap in mathematics between Black and White students (NCES, 2015). Researchers have also examined differences between various racial-ethnic groups in 12 motivational and psychological factors (Graham, 1994), conflicts that exist between school and home values (Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, & Fulmore, 1994), lack of quality instruction in poor communities (McLaren, 2007), lack of quality education (Cokely, 2003), and racial identity (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Research notes multiple factors contributing to achievement gaps between Black and White students (Hayes & Berdan, 2013). While this research may be vast, it fails to address the disparities in institutions of higher education. These disparities prevent the overall success and equity between Blacks and their White counterparts (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Currently, schools in the United States reflect the cultural and racial norms of middle-class European Americans, this in turn places emphasis on competition and individualism (Maryshow, Hurley, Allen, Tyler, & Boykin, 2005). Research suggests that the disparity in academic achievement can be attributed to a lack of understanding among Black students and their White counterparts, considering students are only privy to their value system, this system may not see the divide in racial equity (Good, Dweck and Aronson, 2007; Maryshow et al., 2005). The disparities continue in college and university enrollment with 55.7% of Black high school graduates attending institutions of higher education, compared to

71.7% of White graduates (APA, 2011). Oyserman, Brickman and Rhodes (2007) found that within the Black community a strong racial identity is connected to higher academic performance. Additionally, Black students tend to thrive in academic settings when they are connected to their school communities and feel valued within them (Good, Dweck & Aronson, 2007; Oyserman, Brickman & Rhodes, 2007).

The achievement gap between Whites and Blacks likely has consequences as it relates to political equality as well. (Campbell, 2006; Gutmann, 1999) American public education has long been responsible for training and influencing model citizens (Campbell, 2006; Gutmann, 1999) and the level of educational attainment stands apart as the most influential predictor for whether an individual actively participates in politics (Kam & Palmer, 2011; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Sondheimer & Green, 2010; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Public education plays a special role in providing citizens with the necessary tools and intrinsic motivation that is pertinent in American democracy (Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 2003). Verba, et. al, (2003) also suggested the educational inequalities that exist between White and Black students can be a catalyst that fuels and perpetuates the existing inequalities within political participation among races.

It is important for this study to build upon the foundation of the achievement gap. Reform efforts were purposed to close the achievement gap and provide all students with adequate resources (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Resources such as, college readiness programs, were implemented to close the achievement gap and provide the best opportunities for all students (Domina, 2009). My study will provide an understanding as to how these efforts played a role in the lives of the students it directly impacted. Not only did the inequalities cause a divide

(Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Ortiz et al., 2012), but there was little to no motivation involved in encouraging and preparing students to complete a collegiate program.

### **History of College Readiness**

Research on the importance and need for college readiness programming is an important topic for educators and policy makers (Hansen, 2013). A college degree has a direct link to both social and economic advantages within any community (Baum & Payea, 2004). Since the 1980's, there has been a marked increase of federal, state, and local initiatives designed to mentor, prepare, and motivate students to attend college (Turner, 2004). However, there are numerous barriers to college completion, especially for low-income, minority, and first-generation college students (Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Valant & Newark, 2016; Wintre, Bowers, Gordner, & Lange, 2006). These barriers prompted the rise of college readiness programs (McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Moore et al., 2010). These programs were designed to remove the barriers, among Black, low-income, and first-generation college students, in their attempt to attend college (Le et al., 2015).

In 1970, over 80% of students enrolled in high school graduated, with a dropout rate of 15% (U.S Department of Commerce, 2011). Also, in 1976, 1.6 million students enrolled in two- or four-year colleges/universities (NCES, 2018). 84% of that number were White, 10% of that number were Black, 4% were Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander were 2% and Native Americans made up .7% of the data. (NCES, 2018). These types of statistics shed light on the inequitable distribution of educational attainment among Black and White students (APA, 2011). This encouraged reformers to reevaluate the state of education and change the landscape of the educational reform agenda (Sablan, 2013). Due to Bower's (2013) research and attention to the consistent dropout rates and low visibility of Blacks students in institutions of higher education,

educators and policy makers honed in on specific programs and interventions for at-risk minority students. They developed specific intervention programs that focused on decreasing the widening educational achievement gap, increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college matriculation rates for Black students (Bower, 2013; Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011). These intervention programs, which established goals of Black student achievement and equitable educational access, became known as college readiness and/or college access programs (Domina, 2009). Educational policy makers and civil activists recognized that both colleges and the workforce were still segregated (Reddick et al., 2011). As a result CRPs were established to encourage a college-going culture in urban middle and high schools (McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Moore et al., 2010). The goal of CRPs were to create equitable educational opportunities and necessary resources that were on par with suburban and predominately White-populated schools (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Contreras, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013; Ortiz et al., 2012; Strayhorn, 2011; Walsh, 2011). The foundation of CRPs were to restructure the injustice within education (Domina, 2009) decreasing high school dropout rates, promoting high school graduation and postsecondary attendance, and eventually breaking the continuous cycle of generational poverty (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013). CRPs sought to be the answer to the widening achievement gap by providing the necessary tools, resources, curriculum, and quality staff to foster, encourage, and promote successful college matriculation (Bower, 2013; Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011). The first step of each CRP was to ensure that every student graduated high school with the necessary skills needed to compete with other students as they applied for higher education (Fletcher & Tienda, 2010) Along with federal government support, CRP efforts led to the establishment of several other programs in the United States (Bower, 2013). Not every

CRP was the same and each CRP operated in varying capacities at the local, state, and federally funded levels (Reddick et al., 2011). Additionally, some CRPs operated as nonprofit, educational institutions (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2012; Thomas, 2016). CRPs that operated at nonprofit and educational levels were: Project GRAD, AVID, I Have a Dream, MESA, CROP, and Puente (Contreras, 2012; Huerta et al., 2013; Strayhorn, 2011, Walsh, 2011). Currently, thousands of CRPs exist with various program focuses, such as writing, social justice, and the arts (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011). Other CRPs, such as Mathematics, Engineering, Science, Achievement (MESA), focus on increasing the number of Black students in math and science careers (Contreras, 2011; Harris, 2012).

After the implementation of NCLB in 2001, educators and policy makers began to design and implement intervention programs that would aid in closing the educational achievement gap, increase high school graduation rates, and increase college attendance and persistence (Bower, 2013; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Bragg & Durham, 2012). College preparatory activities like Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and the TRIO Programs (i.e., Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Educational Opportunity Centers) have a long history of targeting underrepresented populations with the intent of nurturing them towards college matriculation (Bower, 2013; Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011). In a study of 4,445 first-time college freshmen, researchers found that participation in pre-collegiate programming decreased the probability of dropping out by 42% in the second year and 55% in the third year of college (Ishitani & Snider, 2006). Another study was done in the state of Pennsylvania. In a Philadelphia high school, research showed that students who participated in college readiness activities showed greater aspirations and expectations of college attendance and graduation (Furstenberg & Neumark, 2007). This was

in comparison to students who were not participating in college readiness activities (Furstenberg & Neumark, 2007) only one in four high school seniors meets the four benchmarks designed to qualify as being college ready, according to the 2012 ACT college-readiness test (Hansen, 2013).

A 2012 study showed that about 50% of the pre-collegiate interventions were funded by the government, 17% were funded by universities, and 14% were funded by private philanthropies (Swail, Quinn, Landis, & Fung, 2012). As noted by Gandara and Bial (2011) and Swail and Perna (2002), most evaluations of pre-collegiate interventions are researched within government-sponsored programs, such as Upward Bound or GEAR UP and university sponsored programs (Carrell & Sacerdote, 2013). There is a lack of both community and school-based college readiness programs. Barnett et al., (2012) suggested that this reflects a community operating with a lack of funding or resources to produce a quality program for students. Further, in comparison to government-sponsored or university-based programs, there is a need to provide evidence of program effectiveness (Le, et al., 2016). How are these programs motivating participants without the right resources, community and school based programs cannot operate effectively? While there is research on various college readiness programs and their effectiveness (Griffin, 2016; Jones, 2011; Thomas, 2016) they do not focus on how program effectiveness has impacted student persistence through completion of college. Blacks continue to enroll in college programs, and while there is an array of quantitative research (Davis, 2013; Griffin, 2016; Smoot, 2013) and qualitative research (Boyer, 2014; Pope. 2015; Ramsey-White, 2012) on Blacks in college readiness programs, there is a lack of data on how, if at all, the college readiness programs motivate students to persist to college graduation.

College readiness programs are available to Black communities, but there is a lack of research on how these programs motivate students. Programs that focus on differences in

achievement motivation among students provide educational support (Pralspero, Russell, & Vohra-Gupta, 2012). It is important that these programs address necessary barriers and understand student motivations to go to college and complete a collegiate program (Stephens, Hamedani, & Destin, 2014). The issue is, how are these programs not only preparing and providing resources to students for college, but developing motivation to complete a college program?

### **Summary**

Chapter two synthesized current-literature and reveals the gap in literature as it relates to understanding the impact of CRPs on the motivation of Black students to graduate college. Through the literature, there is relevance to why CRPs help bridge the achievement gap and provide resources and access to historically disadvantaged populations (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). Despite the strides that Blacks have made in education, most students are not prepared for their transition into college or the college curriculum (Castleman et al., 2012; Castleman & Page, 2015; Deming et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2016; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Valant & Newark, 2017; Wintre et al., 2006). There is currently no research that shows how CRP participation motivated students to complete their college program. Redic (2014) whose study focused on high school completion, suggested a study that gives voice to CRP participants who have completed a college program. A similar quasi-experimental study (Knaggs et al., 2015) was completed, but only focused on CRP participants at the high school level. While necessary steps are taking place to promote equity in education, little research has been done that addresses the motivation behind students successfully completing college programs or whether or not successful completion of college programs can be attributed to CRPs or other factors. Currently there is little research that gives voice to Black college graduates and the impact of their CRP on



their persistence through college. A similar quantitative study was done on college persistence and completion (Page et al., 2017), but did not seek to gain perspective from participants through qualitative methods. This research intends to fill that gap and understand the motivation behind Blacks' completion of college programs.

From slavery to today's classroom, Blacks have torn through barriers to be equal alongside their White counterparts (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Knaggs et al., 2015). Education reformers have taken notice of the achievement gap, and have created programs to help close the gap and provide opportunities for all students (Bower, 2013; Domina, 2009). Understanding the impact of CRPs and how each program motivates participants (Corrin, 2013), should be relevant to continued improvement efforts in the field of education. This case study sought to understand the impact of CRPs on Black participants and their persistence in college. This study could also potentially be useful to the motivational design of future CRPs.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this case study was to understand Black college graduates' experiences in a college readiness program through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis. College Readiness Programs (CRPs) will be generally defined as federal programming created to bridge the gap for underrepresented individuals and their preparation for successful college matriculation. Chapter three provides a detailed description of the research design, data collection and analysis methods, participant selection process, and the sites in which the research will take place. Chapter three also includes the methods that will be used to ensure trustworthiness and validity within the research. This chapter concludes with several ways in which ethical considerations were addressed within the research design and process.

### **Design**

The design of this study was qualitative in its approach. The qualitative approach is necessary when the purpose of the proposed research questions requires exploration (Stake, 1995). It is important for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding "of what is going on"-relative to the topic (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 1998). Stake (1995) states, "Most contemporary qualitative researchers nourish the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. The world we know is a particularly human construction" (p. 99). It is important to understand that throughout this study, the role of the researcher is to play the gatherer and interpreter of the data. This qualitative case study will take on a constructivist lens, which Stake (1995) defines constructivism as a belief that knowledge is made up primarily of social interpretations rather than an awareness of an outward reality.

A case study is described as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and researchers collect detailed information using various data collection procedures over a period. (Stake, 1996). This in-depth qualitative study will be composed of Yin's (2009) five components of case study research. These five components include: (1) research questions; (2) propositions or purpose of study; (3) unit analysis; (4) logic that links data to propositions; and (5) criteria for interpreting findings. Yin (1994) referred to the research design as "an action plan for getting from here to there, where 'here' may be defined as the set of questions to be answered, and 'there' is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions" (p. 24) The overall design of this qualitative case study was an intrinsic multiple-case study. Intrinsic case studies are designed to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Stake, 1995). This research was a multiple case study, which was used to compare each participants experience at their particular CRP site. This case study included semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis. All data collected from semi-structured, open-ended interviews was recorded on digital recording devices. The researcher will transcribed all of the recorded data, using Temi, an online transcription platform.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this case study:

#### **Research Question One**

How does participation in a college readiness program impact Black college graduates' persistence through college?

#### **Research Question Two**

How do Black college graduates describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college?

### **Setting**

Sites for this multiple case study were CRPs located throughout the United States. Each CRP site was identified by the participant through demographic data and labeled separately (See Table 1). 5 CRPs were identified. The first CRP, Upward Bound/TRIO programs is a federally funded program located throughout the United States, within this study 8 separate Upward Bound/TRIO program sites were identified among participants. Toledo Excel is a standalone CRP, located in the Midwest and is affiliated with a state university. AVID is another federally funded program located throughout the United States, one West Coast site was identified by a participant of this study. I'm A Star Foundation is another standalone site that is located in the South. Finally, College Bound is one site that operates and is as located in the Midwestern and Southern part of the United States. Both I'm A Star Foundation and College Bound are funded through private philanthropies. The identified CRP sites also included further data that relates to requirements for satisfactory completion, retention rates, and program funding. This data was sought through online research.

Table 1

*Prospective College Readiness Program Site Data*

| <b>Site</b> | <b>Demographic Data</b> | <b>Site Statistics</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A           | ___% Black              | Non-Profit             | Federal Government    |
|             | ___%                    | ___% Retention         |                       |
|             | Hispanic/Latino         | ___% Program           |                       |
|             | ___% Male               | completion             |                       |
|             | ___% Female             |                        |                       |
| B           | ___% Black              | For-Profit             | State University      |
|             | ___%                    | ___% Retention         |                       |
|             | Hispanic/Latino         | ___% Program           |                       |
|             | ___% Male               | completion             |                       |
|             | ___% Female             |                        |                       |

Research also sought to provide in depth information on how the CRP sites successfully prepares students for college. College trips, mentorship, financial aid assistance, and an overall persistence data, was also included in this research. Leadership among these various CRPs may consist of one or two site leaders, various staff mentors, tutors, and assistants that devote their time to helping participants. While all sites may be different in their approach, their goal is to bridge the achievement gap, and create an environment which prepares participants to successfully transition and manage the academic rigor of a college or university.

## Participants

Participants were selected through a combination of purposeful criterion and snowball sampling based on their participation in a CRP and the completion of their college degree. Purposeful sampling is noted as most appropriate for a case study (Russell, Gregory, Ploeg, DiCenso, & Guyatt, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, "Sampling is almost never representative or random but purposive, intended to exploit competing views and fresh perspective as fully as possible" (p.276). Transferability will be increased using maximum variation as a tool to document variations throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Criterion sampling will also be used to ensure that all participants (1) participated in a CRP, and (2) possess a college degree that has been obtained within the last five years. This was done by reaching out through various professional social media networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and MeetUp to identify past Black CRP participants who are college graduates. I used Liberty University's IRB Social Media Template to explain the purpose of the research and participant privacy. Upon receiving participant agreement, a decision was made on participant selection for the study. Final selection for participants was done by ensuring all of the participant criteria were met, prior to participant selection. Twelve participants were selected for this study. Selected participants were sought out to ensure diversity in gender, profession, and increased educational attainment. The selection of 12 participants was chosen as Patton (2002) does not quantify a specific number. Demographic information was collected through an introductory demographic questionnaire, which asked each participant basic questions. Given the nature of qualitative research, pseudonyms were used for further reliability and demographic data will also be recorded (See Table 2).

Table 2

*Prospective Participant Data*

| Name          | Age | Degree Attained | CRP (Site A, B, C) |
|---------------|-----|-----------------|--------------------|
| Participant A | 99  | BA              | A                  |
| Participant B | 99  | BS              | B                  |

All participants were given notice about their participation in semi-structured, open-ended interviews and one focus group interview, all components of case study data analysis (Stake, 1995).

### **Procedures**

Once approval was received from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I created a profile on professional social medial platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and MeetUp. I used Liberty University’s IRB Social Media template, to message Facebook, LinkedIn, and MeetUp groups. Use of the IRB Social Media template was the first level of interaction within the Facebook, LinkedIn, and MeetUp groups. I then employed the snowball sampling technique to ask for knowledge of past Black CRP participants who have now received a college degree, or Black CRP participants themselves. Contact was made via email or continued through Facebook, LinkedIn, and/or MeetUp to all identified participants. Selected participants signed consent forms before research began. Once each of the 12 participants identified and selected, I then emailed each participant a consent form. Selected participants signed consent forms that informed them about the research and their rights as participants. Each participant had their right to anonymity and member checks. Member checks gave each participant the opportunity to preview all responses that were included in the research. Individual interviews were done via Zoom. I acted as the human instrument through examining documents

and interviews (Creswell, 2013). I gathered data through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis. I recorded all interviews on two recording devices and transcribed the interviews using Temi, an online transcription platform. College readiness program data was retrieved from websites for mission statements, vision statements, board meeting information and news articles. College readiness program data was assessed to find the foundation and purpose of each CRP. Focus group interviews took place on GoogleDocs, another online platform.

I analyzed all data through the triangulation of the collected data. I then searched for themes that resulted from this process. Triangulation of data and developing themes are both credible and trustworthy methods within a body of research (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Due to the multiple case study design, I compared the data collected from all sites. Yin (2003) states that multiple case studies can be used to either, “(a) predict related results or (b) predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons” (p. 47). I found those results through cross-case analysis, which analyzes data from each specific case (Yin, 2003). All data was kept on a password protected computer and on a flash drive that will be kept in a password protected safe. Data was regularly maintained and backed up on my computer and flash drive (Creswell, 2013). Data collection was continued until saturation was achieved (Moustakas, 1994).

I had no previous experience or relationship with selected participants. I worked as the sole instrument of this study, which creates an opportunity for me to develop an in-depth understanding of the proposed case, a strategy that is considered inductive and the outcome, descriptive (Merriam, 2002). I took on a constructivist perspective in this research. Constructivist researchers focus on understanding and reconstructing the meanings that individuals hold (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997; Jones, 2002).



### **The Researcher's Role**

As the human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for this study, it was important for me to describe the experiences of college graduates and their experience in a CRP. While in high school, I was part of a CRP in the Midwestern United States. I gained many friendships that continue today, but I did not graduate from college with everyone that began in the CRP. Due to my experiences, it will be important that I bracket myself through reflective journaling. These journal entries will be included as part of my research. Bracketing is necessary to set aside my own personal assumptions and experiences as it relates to CRPs. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2002) state that bracketing is a method “which occurs when the researcher’s own feelings and attitudes or the researcher’s gender, race, age, and other characteristics influence the way questions are asked or interpreted” (p. 382).

During my time in a CRP, I had no idea the achievement gap between Black and White students existed. It was evident that the participants, including me, needed to understand the rigors of college. Throughout the CRP, we were exposed to diverse cultures and people. I visited South Africa and Jamaica for an ethnographic field study. I sat in on college courses and took two summers of creative writing. All of this created well-rounded individuals in the CRP, but it was not enough to maintain persistence among the participants throughout college.

Each group in any of the CRPs can have upwards of 50-60 students during induction as freshmen in high school. Throughout the course of high school and high school graduation numbers may decrease. However the number of CRP participants who complete the CRP and attend college drops dramatically. My experience developed a bias that most CRPs are not as successful as they portray. While students are completing CRPs and going to college, the impact of CRPs seems to fade away when students enter college. CRPs also seem to not provide as

much support to failing college students. I must set this bias aside throughout my research. I currently have no affiliation or relationship with the proposed sites and participants.

Throughout this Ed.D Program, I reviewed countless articles about CRPs that supposedly provide access and equity to student participants and prepare them for college, but there is little to no research about former CRP participants and their experience and their motivation to persist through their college program. I know my reasons for persisting in college, but this research is designed to describe and give voice to the experience of many of the participants.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this qualitative study began once IRB approval was received from Liberty University. As the human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I contacted past Black CRP participants via Facebook, LinkedIn, and MeetUp, who have graduated from college. Research was completed through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program data analysis. I triangulated the collected data to form themes and add credibility and trustworthiness to the study (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

### **Individual Interviews**

Patton (2002) states the purpose of interviewing “is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (p. 341). All interview questions were designed to gain an understanding of the participants experience in their CRP and how, if at all, it played a role in college persistence and completion. I probed participants to elaborate on their answers, to ensure that data collection is “information rich” (Patton, 2002). Some interviews lasted from between 30 minutes to over 90 minutes and were all recorded using two devices and transcribed using Temi, an online transcription platform.

### Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
2. What does the word, worldview, mean to you?
3. How would you explain your worldview to a colleague?
4. How has your worldview impacted your life?
5. Describe your experience as a high school student?
6. Describe your experience as a participant of a CRP?
7. Describe conversations or communication from CRP directors or participants after completion of the CRP.
8. What were some of the most significant lessons you recall from your CRP?
9. What were some motivational concepts taught within you CRP? Which of these concepts stood out to you most?
10. Describe how your CRP kept you invested and made learning exciting?
11. In what ways did your CRP make attending college relevant to your life?
  - a. Describe how the CRP made attending college relevant to your future
12. Describe how, if at all, participating in your CRP built your confidence as a student
13. Rate your rate of satisfaction as a participant of a CRP on a scale of 1-10
  - a. Explain your score
14. Describe a time you were rewarded for your achievements in your CRP
15. Describe, the impact your participation in your program had on your persistence through college
16. What were some of the motivating factors in your life that lead you to complete your college program?

17. Describe a time you wanted to give up or quit while in college

18. In times that you wanted to quit, what was your motivation to persist?

19. Describe how your CRP encouraged self-efficacy

Questions 1-4 were designed as “ice-breakers” and ways for me to get know the participants and make them feel comfortable.

Questions 5-9 were used as a way to understand each of the participants’ personal experience in a CRP and how, if at all, it had an impact on their college persistence.

Question 10 focuses on the first part of Keller’s ARCS model of motivation, Attention. “Capturing the interest of learners; stimulating the curiosity to learn” (Keller, 2010, p. 45), this question is intended to gain an understanding of how each CRP captured the participants attention.

Question 11 focused on Relevance, the second part of the ARCS model of motivation. Relevance is defined as “meeting the personal needs/goals of the learner to affect a positive attitude” (Keller, 2010, p. 45).

Question 11a will start the transition of having participants think about the CRP experience and begin to relate it to present day.

Question 12 focused on the third concept within the ARCS model of motivation. “Helping the learners believe/feel that they will succeed and control their success” is the definition of confidence (Keller, 2010, p. 45). This question was asked to probe into how each participants CRP made them feel and how may have played a role into college competition. This question was also meant to understand if confidence derived from their CRP on other factors.

Satisfaction is defined as “reinforcing accomplishment with rewards (internal and external)” (Keller, 2010, p. 45), this is the foundation of Questions 13 and 14.

Questions 15-19 were used as a way to have participants reflect on their CRP and how various factors, including those in ARCS model of motivation, helped them persist and complete college.

### **Focus Group Interview**

The focus group interview took place after the individual interviews and upon the initial emergence of themes. I created an online focus group, using GoogleDocs, with five participants (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of the focus group interview was to have the selected participants engage in various prompts throughout the research process. Some examples of prompts were:

- 1) Write about an experience in which your CRP taught you the value of college?
- 2) Describe a moment of pressure or overwhelming circumstances within your college journey, what caused you to persist through college?
- 3) Describe your family dynamic? Describe the support you received from your family?

These prompts were used to provide context to the lives of the participants and to provide further in-depth understanding (Yin, 2014). Additionally I used the focus group as a tool to member-check descriptions and data from interviews and CRP document analysis, this increased the credibility of my research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were encouraged to write at least a paragraph for all prompts pertaining to their CRP experience. Participants were given two weeks to complete the prompts.

### **Documents**

Various documents were used to gain perspective on each CRP. I gained access to mission and vision statements, scholarship and financial aid information, charts and data that show student persistence throughout college, and overall academic achievement data. This data was useful in providing background to what each CRP focuses on and how that impacted the

shared experience and persistence of the participants. Public documents such as, newspaper articles, brochures, official reports, organizational charts, and budgets were also collected (Creswell, 2013). Official reports, college persistence data, mission statements, and vision statements, were sought out specifically for my research. These documents provided an in-depth understanding of how each CRP is organized, how each CRP motivates and impacts their participants, how each CRP is organized, and how each CRP measures success. These documents were also useful to the theoretical framework of this case study, some components of Keller's (1983) ARCS: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction, were found within the CRP document analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Due to the intrinsic multiple case study design of this study, data collection followed the necessary guidelines to ensure validity, similar to quantitative research (Creswell, 2003). As Yin (2009) states, it is important to develop an analytic strategy and analysis throughout the data collection process.

While qualitative analysis is subjective, I formed interpretations from semi-structured, open ended interviews by taking apart pieces of the data and then putting them back together. I then took the time to look through the transcribed data for different meanings that describe the impact of CRPs on Black college graduates and I sought not to have an immediate answer or outcome. Throughout this process, it was important to set aside any of my own personal biases as they relate to CRPs. I set aside my personal biases through bracketing. I took notes throughout the data collection process and used these notes minimally throughout the analysis process. I will also use bracketing as a tool to note my own experiences, analyze them, and do the same for each participant.

A primary method of analysis between multiple cases is the use of tables to display information and compare cases (Yin, 2014). I used various pieces and parts of my data (semi-structured, open ended interviews, focus group interview, and college readiness program documents, such as mission statements, vision statements, website information, etc.) and display them in charts, memos, and diagrams (Yin, 2014). I then used the “ground-up” method (Yin, 2014, p. 136) and analyzed my data through reading, rereading, highlighting themes and open coding. I then examined the data to find any patterns or relationship pathways (Yin, 2014).

Coding of data was used to produce specific data key codes, these codes were identified through using NVivo Software. The codes were then used to show common themes among various cases to show if there was any impact on participation in CRPs on Black college graduates. Another method of data analysis will be done through categorical aggregation. Categorical aggregation was useful while looking at the focus group interviews and college readiness program documents, as way to breakdown potentially complex data (Creswell, 2013). This was beneficial to understanding if CRPs documentation aligns with the participants’ experience. Considering the nature of this multiple case study, it is necessary to go back and forth between inductive and deductive thinking. I then organized the data collected in tables using NVivo Software. Through this table, I continued to analyze the data through pattern matching, explanation building, time series analysis, and replication logic (Yin, 2009, 2014). Replication logic is best used within a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2014). After a cross-case analysis, I looked through the collected data for more themes and patterns across all cases (Yin, 2014).

## **Trustworthiness**

It is imperative, as a qualitative researcher, to have trustworthiness within a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness was utilized in various forms for this study. It was used through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Credibility ensured that the findings of this study were checked for accuracy through certain procedures (Creswell, 2013). Dependability and confirmability maintained that the appropriate internal methods are utilized throughout the study and all results can be confirmed (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I intend for this study to be transferable, which will allow this study to be replicated in similar conditions with comparable results (Creswell, 2013).

### **Credibility**

I achieved credibility within the research through triangulation of data. This is an effective way to find the consistency of different data within one method (Patton, 2002). This was achieved through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It was also imperative to filter out any misinformation that may occur through data analysis or data collection (Creswell, 2013). Prolonged engagement is another qualitative research tool to achieve credibility. Prolonged engagement allowed me to build trust among the participants through in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. Prolonged engagement also allowed me to build trust among the participants (Creswell, 2013).

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

Audit trails were utilized to maintain dependability, which is important because audit trails provide accurate tracking of the research study, helps organize and outline the research, and provides accountability. This trail followed all the necessary procedures and was followed



throughout the study (Rossman & Marshall, 2010). Dependability and confirmability was also utilized through rich, thick descriptions of themes.

Member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were used throughout this study. Participants of the study will have the opportunity to view final transcripts and check for accuracy. This was important because it allowed participants to feel like they were truly a part of this study and gave them ownership over their answers. I also explained to participants the overall transcription process.

### **Transferability**

This study employed thick, rich description of the research design, data collection, data analysis, and bracketing through reflective journaling. I hope that this will aid in this study being replicated in similar conditions to achieve comparable results (Creswell, 2013). To achieve maximum transferability, I presented all data collected and analyzed in a way that is easy for future researchers to duplicate. However, it is possible that maximum transferability will only be for those who have completed CRPs not currently enrolled in CRPs.

### **Ethical Considerations**

I was unable to engage former CRP participants ahead of time as a way, to identify good participants. As I sought to recruit former participants through Facebook, LinkedIn, and MeetUp, I ensured the privacy and safety of participant information by using Liberty University's IRB Social Media template. For participants' safety, I would always have a hard copy of the overall study. Participants were informed that their data will be kept as a hard copy in my personal safe. The data will be destroyed after a period of three years. The electronic copy will be kept on flash drive and placed in the same safe. The flash drive will not be destroyed but will always remained locked and safe. I also used pseudonyms for participant anonymity.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study was to understand the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. Chapter Three outlined the case study design proposed for the study, the participant selection criteria and process, and the reasoning for each site selection. To ensure that this study maintained trustworthiness, this chapter described how this study maintained credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. This chapter concluded by addressing the ethical considerations that were employed to protect the participants and their identities.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study was to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. This chapter begins with a brief description of each participant of this study; pseudonyms have been used to protect participant anonymity. Participants were located throughout the United States and all participants identified as Black, participated in a college readiness program (CRP), and completed a college program. During the interview process, the researcher asked questions to research participants to gain an understanding of the impact of their CRP on their motivation to persist through college. Direct quotations from research participants are used to provide rich descriptions of their experience in a CRP and directly support the themes that were developed in this research. After the experience of each participant was described through semi-structured interviews and one focus group, the results were analyzed to develop themes to answer the research questions. This chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Participants**

It was important that this study included a diverse group of participants, to ensure maximum variation (Creswell, 2013). Twelve former CRP participants agreed to participate in this study. Of the 12 participants, five participants agreed to participate in the focus group. Pseudonyms have been used to identify the 12 participants and maintain participant anonymity. The 12 participants, six men and six women, participated in the semi-structured interview and had varied experiences in their respective CRPs. Ayden, Brittany, Chelsea, Erica, and Frederick participated in the focus group. The focus group asked each participant ten questions (See Appendix C), the focus group questions were designed to have the participant delve deeper into

their experiences as former CRP participants. Each participant had one week to complete the prompts. Lastly, through the participant data given in the introductory demographic questionnaire (See Table 3), CRP documents were collected for analysis. In an effort to triangulate the data, documents were researched and collected via the internet, these documents included mission statements, vision statements, annual reports, and news articles.

Table 3

*Participant Data*

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Degree(s) received</b> | <b>CRP Program/Location</b> |
|-------------|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ayden       | 32         | BS, MA                    | NASA College Bound/ OH-TN   |
| Brittany    | 30         | BS, M.Ed                  | Upward Bound/OH             |
| Chelsea     | 40         | BA, M.Ed                  | Toledo Excel/OH             |
| David       | 45         | BA                        | TRIO/AL                     |
| Erica       | 31         | BA, M.Ed, Ed.S,<br>Ed.D   | Upward Bound/OH             |
| Frederick   | 31         | BA, M.Div, Ed.D           | I'm A Star Foundation/FL    |
| Gina        | 33         | BA                        | CTE/OH                      |
| Harrison    | 27         |                           | AVID/CA                     |
| Irene       | 32         | BA, MA                    | Upward Bound/WA             |
| Jason       | 34         | BA                        | Upward Bound/NY             |
| Kevin       | 29         | BA                        | Upward Bound/VA             |
| Lisa        | 42         | BA, MCIS                  | Upward Bound/NJ             |

**Ayden**

The first participant of this study is 32 years old. Ayden was a College Bound participant. This site is located in Southern and Midwestern part of the United States. Ayden obtained his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and obtained a dual master's degree in education and criminal justice. Ayden is a first-generation college student and was one of the participants who critiqued various components of his CRP.

**Brittany**

The second participant graduated from an arts high school. She also graduated from high school a year earlier than her classmates. Brittany, a first-generation college student, recently earned her master's degree in educational technology. Brittany's first language was German, which brought some challenges in learning. Furthermore, she is the mother of a 1-year old son. She currently works at a large healthcare company in the Midwest. Her experience in her CRP, Upward Bound, was somewhat positive.

**Chelsea**

The third participant of this study is currently finishing her second year in her doctoral program. Chelsea, whose CRP was Toledo Excel, currently serves as a director at a private suburban college, this college was ranked in the 2019 U.S. News Best Colleges list. She is 40 years old and has worked in the field of college readiness/preparedness for most of her adult career. She is an advocate for CRPs and cites her CRP as one of the motivating factors in her life.

**David**

David works in K-12 education as a truancy attendance officer and has done this work for four years. David was and continues to be an active member of his community and is a member

of various notable organizations. He is from the South and holds to his values of family and community. While he was involved in his CRP site, Upward Bound/TRIO, over 20 years ago, David sees CRPs as influential programs for students of color.

### **Erica**

The fifth participant is a 31-year-old charter school principal. Erica graduated from high school a year early and has obtained her doctorate in education. She has also received a master's in education and earned her educational specialist degree. Erica, has had over 10 years in the field of education. Her CRP site, Upward Bound, was located in the Midwest and she credits many other factors in her life as her motivation for success and college completion, not her CRP participation.

### **Frederick**

The sixth participant received his doctorate in educational leadership and policy from a large public research university. He also obtained his master's of divinity from a prestigious theological seminary and received his bachelor's degree from one of the oldest historically black colleges in the United States. Frederick is the superintendent of a charter school that he leads with his wife. Frederick was part of a CRP located in the South. The CRP, I'm A Star Foundation, has grown substantially since his time in the program, but 100% of his cohort members attended and completed college.

### **Gina**

Our seventh participant is a wife and mother of two. Gina was a member of two different CRPs, but she decided to focus on her participation in Upward Bound. Her CRPs taught business, communication, and technical concepts. Through her CRPs, Gina has had opportunities

to travel, present, and receive awards for her work. Gina works in the school system and develops curriculum for a local academy.

### **Harrison**

The eighth participant of this study, Harrison, is a first-generation college student and currently works in higher education, specifically student affairs. He does outreach and recruitment for a public university. Harrison, who resides on the West Coast, has familial roots in the southern parts of the United States, which gives Harrison a unique perspective on civil rights and access and how it pertains to the field of education. He credits his family and the values they instilled in who he is today. Harrison was a former participant in the AVID program. He will soon begin a program that will allow him to obtain his MBA and JD.

### **Irene**

The second West Coast participant was Irene and her CRP was Upward Bound. Irene was the ninth participant of this study and is also a doctoral candidate in the midst of her research. Irene, a sociologist, is also a researcher on the topics of racism, religion, social movement, sports, higher education, and pop culture. Irene has not only maintained relationships with her cohort and program directors but has also worked in the same CRP in which she completed years earlier.

### **Jason**

The tenth participant was born and raised in the northern part of the United States. He is a marketing and branding professional. Shortly after college, Jason started his own business. He has been in the marketing and branding field for 11 years. Jason is active in his community and is sought after for his inspiring story of motivation. Jason also maintains communication with his

CRP cohort and staff. He is the father of two and values his participation in his CRP, which was Upward Bound.

### **Kevin**

Kevin, the 11<sup>th</sup> participant of this study, graduated from high school with honors and attended a public university in the southern part of the United States. He was a first-generation college student and a participant of Upward Bound which is located in his hometown. Kevin is a husband and father to a newborn baby girl. He currently works as a director in the sporting industry, which was his field of study in college. Kevin credits his CRP participation to his success and the man he is today.

### **Lisa**

The final participant, Lisa, trains students in television broadcasting at a public research university. Lisa is currently a doctoral student who will soon begin work on her dissertation. As a Black woman, Lisa seeks to remain positive in the face of challenges that may present themselves to this particular demographic. As a high school student, she attended a predominately white high school. Her CRP, Upward Bound was a unique opportunity to cultivate relationships with students who looked like her. Lisa participated in her CRP in the early 90's, and still remains in contact with teachers, staffs, and fellow participants.

## **Results**

This section is organized thematically according to the two research questions. The two research questions were formed based on Keller's ARCS model of motivation. The first research question sought to determine how, if at all, CRP are effective and linked to college persistence and graduation among Black participants. The second research question explored the motivation of college persistence.



## **Theme Development**

The data in this research study were collected through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis. The semi-structured, open-ended interviews varied in length. Some interviews lasted 30 minutes, while other interviews went over 90 minutes. Each interview was recorded on an online platform called Zoom. I then used Temi, an online transcription service, to transcribe the data. I listened to each interview two to three times and took notes on things I may have missed during the interviews. Each focus group participant had one week to complete their prompts. While I waited for the focus group participants to complete their given prompts, I began researching each of the CRP websites to begin the process of CRP program document analysis. This included reading information on each of the participants' CRP, such as annual progress reports, funding mandates, vision/mission statements, social media pages, etc. This was also in an effort to triangulate the data of the CRP experience.

After all of the data were collected, I gathered codes from each data collection. The codes were organized through NVivo coding. Saldana (2013) states that NVivo coding, "uses words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes" (p. 264). I then triangulated the NVivo codes and data into groups to find meaning. I then went back and forth with analyzing the data, rereading notes from listening to interview audio recordings, and comparing the data with the research questions. I then used NVivo to categorize the data codes into common themes. The frequency of data codes are seen in Table 4.

Table 4

*NVivo Codes*

| <b>NVivo Data Codes</b> | <b>NVivo Count</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Access                  | 42                 |
| College                 | 37                 |
| First                   | 22                 |
| Generation              | 17                 |
| Impact                  | 37                 |
| Family                  | 21                 |
| Program                 | 16                 |
| Resources               | 15                 |

**Exposure and the realities of college.** The first theme derived from data codes: college, program, access, and resources. Many of the participants described how their CRP opened their eyes to the realities of college. During her interview, Irene stated:

It exposed me to new topics, my Upward Bound program was structured like college. We started our days with a lecture from a true college professor, then we broke off into smaller group/quiz section type styles and I remember being like, this is intense, but it was exciting. “Saved by the Bell” was one of my favorite shows, so I was feeling like, oh

my gosh, I'm finally in college. I'm learning Latin, I'm learning about psychology, I'm learning about the brain, the hypothalamus...it was exciting for me.

Brittany, who was in the same program as Irene but located in the Midwest, shared a similar experience. She discussed how exposure to college life really influenced her. She mentioned, "Our college trips...we ate lunch there to give you a feel of campus life in a sense, so that was exciting. It was also exciting to interact with other peers who looked like you." Jason was also involved in the same program in the north. He stated, "walking around campus, staying in a college dorm, this experience made it. I was getting smarter; I was going to be the first person in my family to graduate from college." Kevin also discussed how college trips provided him with both exposure and access to future resources. Kevin stated:

I was a latchkey kid, my mom really didn't have the opportunity to take me to different schools. That welcomed the opportunity to visit different schools in Virginia, Georgia, Florida, and DC. We really got a great opportunity to see what was available to us. Even as seniors, we were able to apply to those different schools and have some of those application fees waived. So, I owe a lot of my success to Upward Bound.

Chelsea discussed how her program did not paint college as a far-fetched fantasy that was too distant to achieve, she stated, "It made college just the next step, it made college just two weeks away and not a lofty goal." Gina discussed how her CRP was influential in providing exposure into the reality of a college schedule and routine. Gina stated the following:

It helped me be prepared, it got me used to a routine and a schedule. It also helped me not be used a routine or schedule, basically it let me know things would not always go as I planned but I would still need to be flexible and to stick with my goal and my dream....It made me almost feel like I knew I could do anything at that point. Going through those

little experiences, it separated me in high school, it let me know that if I did work hard, there are great things in store.

While reflecting on his overall experience in his CRP, Harrison stated, “I’d say holistically, I knew what the mission was and I feel that they did all they could to get me the access I needed.”

Many of the participants mentioned the importance of college trips and visits and how that exposure was monumental in their lives. David stated:

We did campus tours of four-year schools. They took us on different sites and to larger cities. The very best part about it, like I said, was getting to see other cities and four-year universities. And being given an opportunity to know what was needed to make it to the next level of college.

Frederick shared a unique perspective of how his CRP provided him with access and exposure to not only college, but future success. He stated the following:

[The program] challenged us to look at the world differently, in my opinion that program has and continues to shape and mold worldviews. Growing up, the stereotypical ideal of success-and I’m from Florida- for an African-American male, was you got a Chevy on 24’s, nice paint job, money in your pocket, nice system and everybody knows and loves who you are. This program, it forces you to understand that there are things that you can’t even begin to imagine as far success goes and ideals of success; it transcends this limited view.

An interesting concept taught in his program was, “Taking It to the Turquoise.” This concept encouraged participants to think beyond what they could see. Frederick then went on to discuss how the director of the program did this. He stated that:

The director would put you in contact with people who are government officials, with people who are entrepreneurs, with people who are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. She puts you in places to slowly tweak and change perspective so that you know what you believe is successful or what you see or what they want you to believe that success is, is not quite the actual definition or ideal of success. If that is, you at least have something to compare it to. So she gave you options by allowing you to see that if you think far, if you see far...if you don't want to go for that's your choice, but you can't take back the knowledge that you've gained.

Erica's experience was different. As she reflected on how her CRP helped prepare her for the reality of college testing, she stated:

In high school, if you got an A both quarters, you didn't have to take an exam. So if you did fairly well in school you didn't have to take any type of exam. So moving forward going to college they didn't prepare us for what it would be like to take mid-term exams or final exams, because we didn't have to do it in high school. That is one thing I wish they would have taught us how to do.

Harrison discussed a similar frustration with his CRP: He stated the following:

I wish AVID had prepared me for the real nitty-gritty stuff. About what's real, what's about to really happen. Especially if you're coming from a single-parent household and your parents are not all the way behind you and [expletive]. Yeah, that's the stuff I wish AVID prepared me for because it didn't.

In contrast, some participants stated that their CRP provided access to a college campus, the college experience and many of the CRPs exposed participants to more about their own culture. Chelsea stated:

This program exposed me to being around people that were outside of my comfort zone, who came from different backgrounds than me, we may have had similar visible identities, but we had very different socioeconomic and even geographic backgrounds.

Exposure to others was very valuable to me.

In his focus group prompt, Ayden wrote: “[My program] taught me that college was obtainable. Growing up in the neighborhood that I was raised in-College was something that white and rich people did. My CRP showed me there were ways to achieve what the ‘white rich people’ had.”

**Life-Changing Opportunities.** The code word “impact” related to the second theme. Some participants’ CRP experience varied within this theme. Jason stated, “Constantly repeating that education is vital for success in the real world.” This was a constant reminder in his CRP. He still values that rhetoric today. Kevin stated:

I am a liver and believer in preparation and Upward Bound truly prepared me for post-secondary education. It truly prepped me for being able to function freely without people watching you or telling you what to do. I was truly prepared for the college structure.

Brittany’s CRP impacted her in a much different way. Brittany discussed:

One thing I wish was, upon getting closer to graduation there was someone to say, ‘Hey this is what college is like.’ No one really said this or [mentioned] a more appropriate way to study for college or this is what’s going to make it easier. One thing I was under the impression of was what the advisor said, that’s what you had to do to get through your program and that was not always the case, so there was times I had to retake classes.

As Chelsea discussed her CRP, she shared how her program impacted the trajectory of her life.

She stated:

I will simply say, it was life changing, it was life impacting. The academic preparedness I received through those experiential ethnographic studies, even the summer intensive study as a high school student on a college campus, earning college credits even through some of the academic activities and opportunities. I will never regret that, there is nothing I can take away from that program or any of the persons who poured into making that program what it was and poured into individual students.

Chelsea also shared a unique opportunity she had in her CRP, that helped develop her confidence. She stated:

There were two summer team leaders named from my group of 50 and that was a high honor, not necessarily an award, but it was an honor and a position that many sought after, but I was actually offered the opportunity without seeking it.

This opened many opportunities for the once shy Chelsea. She goes on to say:

I was asked to present at large scale events such as an annual conference where, at the time, there were 1000 people in the room and as 15, 16 year old student being asked to present and to speak on that large of a stage that taught me confidence that taught me that I had the confidence.

Gina stated, “It did instill a lot of professional and corporate concepts into my life. I would suggest [the program] to anyone. It builds opportunity. It built me, It built me professionally as a woman, as a sister, as a friend. It helped me in all of the right areas, not just in college but in my career too.”

Lisa shared an interesting experience and during her interview she stated, “It instilled pride in Black culture and the arts. One thing they attempted to do was give students opportunities they probably wouldn’t have had without Upward Bound, such as attending Broadway shows.”

While Ayden was a confident high school student, he discussed how his participation in his CRP helped build his confidence a bit more. He states the following:

For me to be a young 13 to 17 year old going away every year, getting a break from my community to be somewhere else, I was walking on campus with other college students, being able to go back and boast and brag to other people that I was doing the college bound program and you had to be smart to do it (. . .) I felt like I was being awarded for my authentic commitment to my involvement in my academic pursuits.

During the beginning of his CRP, Harrison did not see the future impact of his participation. His view eventually changed throughout his years in the program. He stated:

My junior and senior year, I began to see the payout of it. Just the former years, I didn't see a payout. I didn't see, I truly didn't see it. I just did it because, oh this is what I'm supposed to do. But as I got older it made me- not necessarily made me confident-but it gave me the tools to make me feel secure in my ability to learn, and to go after the things I wanted.

**The Motivation of Family.** “First” and “generation” both relate to the third theme of the motivation of family. Family and support systems were the core of all 12 participants’ CRP experience. Ayden stated the following:

My mom had ten children and my father had a number [of children] as well. So I am one of many children, but I'm the first in my family to obtain a degree. That was always appealing to me. Not like to be competitive or whatever, but I wanted to be the person that made my parents proud. My father is deceased, but like even in the back of my head I knew that he would be happy with me. I graduated from college and [I'm] pushing my



other family members to do the same thing, because [my father] was also a very intelligent person.

Jason explained how his mother encouraged him to attend college at an early age. During his interview he stated:

I knew I was going to college; it was something my mother instilled in me as a young child, early. Being the oldest out of all the children in my family and I was going to be the first one to enter into the college phase, I knew that I had to go just to set the precedent for anybody who was under me. Upward Bound just gave me that extra push.

Jason went on to mention:

As a young child my mother made me tell myself every day before I went outside, 'I am a leader not a follower, I'm the best of the best, and I'm a champion, so by the time I was 16 you couldn't tell me nothing different from that.

Irene discussed how both her CRP and her family were motivating factors in her life. She stated:

Coming from a first generation background, where neither my mom nor my dad have a bachelor's degree, at the time the thing that was most motivating and inspiring was- obviously my mom is going to tell me that you can do anything you want-but having these other people really encourage me and believe in me, that was definitely motivating. It extended my community of people that believed [college] was attainable for me (...) Before I even started Upward Bound, I really had the foundation already from my mom, this idea that education is the key to success and as long as I continue to focus on school and good grades I will truly be able to do what I want to do. I remember having those type of talks with her from a very young age.

## Research Question Responses

The following section provides participant answers to the research questions introduced in Chapter Three; all responses were a result of the collected data. To negate ambiguity, all responses given will pertain to the research questions. Direct quotations used from participants' semi-structured, open-ended interview questions and focus group answers are also included in the responses.

**RQ1:** How does participation in a college readiness program impact Black college graduates' persistence through college?

Many participants did not solely attribute their participation in their CRP to their college persistence. While 9 of the 12 participants ranked their satisfaction as ten, ten being the most satisfied, their link to their participation in their CRP and college persistence did not add up.

When asked how his participation in his CRP impacted his college persistence, Ayden stated:

I don't know if it did, actually, I am sure that it didn't. When I got to college all of that went out the window. CRPs covered me completely, but like, going to college having to fend for myself, having to pay rent, for books and things of that sort. It's a different ball game (. . .) its two different experiences, one is actual, and one is preparatory and they can't really prepare you for the future. Especially if they're not covering the expenses or whatever else is needed for you to be in college.

Erica shared a similar view. During her interview she stated:

Honestly, I don't really think it had an impact. I really can't correlate what they did for me continuing throughout, because no one was really there to help navigate or guide. It was more so, once I was there, I was on my own.

It took Brittany some time to think on her answer, when asked about how her CRP participation linked to college persistence. She stated, “I don’t want to say it didn’t, but I really don’t feel like it did. I really can’t say that Upward Bound had any influence in that sense.”

During Jason’s interview, he stated the following:

I wouldn’t say that Upward Bound made me want to graduate from college, it definitely gave me the extra push, like, oh I am going to college. What made me graduate from college was my willingness to make my mother proud and my willingness to finish a goal that I set for myself. I wouldn’t say that Upward Bound didn’t have anything to do with it but it wasn’t a driving force for me graduating. It was more or less making my mom proud and accomplishing my own goal.

Harrison stated:

I can't contribute that to AVID. I can't, I don't even remember conversations about being persistent. Well, I don't recall that. I think on my own, praise be to God, that I had that ability to say, I'm going to push through, no matter what. Even if it means I don't get scores I want, I'm going to try to persist through. I would say AVID gave me the affirmations, but it didn't plant that seed in me, I already had it.

While Irene did not contribute her persistence wholly to her CRP, she did include her CRP. She stated the following:

I think Upward Bound got lumped with a lot of other people and entities that were in this cohort of like, this is not an option not to finish. Upward Bound did allow me to realize that this is just the first check, this is just the beginning. I put Upward Bound in the cohort with my family, my scholarship providers, and with my other support systems.

Lisa also combined her CRP with other factors, but she placed her CRP at the top of the list. She mentioned, “It was a combination of things, but Upward Bound is at the top of the list.” Other participants felt this way about their CRP. In her interview, Chelsea stated the following:

Attending and graduating college was an expectation and that not only was instilled in me because of my family and my family’s background, but as well as being a participant of that program. It placed a higher stake of expectation on me because now there was a community that was supporting me and expecting me to persist. A community of mentors, and teachers, and staff, and faculty. My biggest fear was disappointing them, there was never a thought in my mind that I would not finish college, because they had built in me the skills and capacity to do so. So no matter how hard it was and how many challenges or barriers or setbacks I had, and there were many. I still knew I was going to finish college and I was going to persist, even if it took me two, three, four major changes, I knew I was still going to persist and finish that degree.

**RQ2:** How do Black college graduates describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college?

Family, friends, and other support systems were the primary motivators in college persistence for many of the participants. Erica stated the following:

Family, fear of failure, wanting to leave a legacy and be the first to achieve things in my family and break generational curses. It was something that was embedded in me from a young age, it was always in the back of my mind. I watched my parents have exceptional parents but not achieve what they could’ve achieved, and my ultimate goal was to be the direct opposite.

Gina discussed many other factors outside of her CRP that led her to persist through college.

Gina stated:

I was my support system honestly, and my son and God, my spiritual beliefs. It was really what was almost instilled in me. I can't give credit to the program because it depends on, like I said, your upbringing, your support and you know all of that. It was really determination and the will in myself to not to ever give up and to always want better.

Kevin stated:

[It was] because my sister did it, she was really my biggest motivator. Another was my mother; she started college, went for two semesters and never completed her degree. I wanted to do that-you know how you get the sense that parents live vicariously through their children-I think she wanted it for me and I wanted to give her that satisfaction.

During his interview, David mentioned the following:

I would say that even though the program helped, it was my upbringing as well. On my mother's side, I was the first to complete my undergraduate degree. I wanted to, if I were to have kids, I wanted to give them something to shoot for as far as going beyond what I received in my education.

Jason shared a very personal story about his motivation. Jason shared:

I got kicked out of college. Two things I told myself, I would never go to jail and I would never get kicked out of college, both things happened. I was depressed for 3 months. I felt like I failed myself. I had to tell myself you can't let this situation stop you from being who you're supposed to be, I had to pick myself up. It had nothing to do with

Upward Bound. I am not trying to be cocky, but people looked at me as a standard for a successful young black male, especially in our city.

During Chelsea's interview, she stated:

(...) being from an underrepresented group who attended predominately white institutions, there is a different level of family being part of that motivation. I come from a long line of educated and educators. My great-great grandfather was a college president [at a historically black college] in 1888, so I was always motivated to continue that legacy and not let my family down because it was now my turn. I have family members who, one generation removed from slavery, could achieve education. I had no excuse.

Harrison stated the following:

I've had a lot of people in my life help me and in turn I've helped a lot of people. I don't know where it's at in the Bible, but I know it's real, to whom much is given much is required. So since I've been given all this help I have to show up and show out and achieve, I have to. I can't say me alone, it's all those that invested in me to go the distance. Granted, I've made the choice because at the end of the day, we all have choices... we can either do it or not. I chose to do it because of those who chose to help me.

### **Summary**

The themes identified in the study were, the exposure and realities of college, life-changing opportunities, and the motivation of family; and, they helped in answering the two research questions. In this study, it was found that while most participants were satisfied with their CRP experience, all of them noted other motivating factors that led them to persist through college. This is an important component to consider as CRPs were designed to aid in college

attendance and persistence. Many participants cite their CRP as eye-opening programs that exposed them to travel, culture, and college life. However, participants discussed that once their college career began, other factors aided in their persistence. This is perhaps why the link to CRP participation and the motivation to persist is not as apparent in this study or in prior research. Family and self-motivation seem to be the catalysts for persistence and college completion.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study was to investigate the impact of college readiness programs (CRPs) on the persistence of Black college graduates. The following section provides a summary of this study's findings by briefly restating the answers to the research questions presented in Chapter One. This chapter summarizes the relevancy of this study from a theoretical and empirical perspective and how this influences the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. Along with the summary, the delimitations and limitations are identified and discussed, and recommendations for future research are suggested. Lastly, this chapter concludes with a summary reviewing the conclusions from this study.

### **Summary of Findings**

Data collection in this study included three different forms: semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and CRP document analysis. Interviews ranged in timing, the shortest interview was just under 30 minutes and the longest interview was over 90 minutes. The semi-structured, open-ended interviews proved to be the best source of data collection. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Out of the 12 participants, five participants were part of the focus group. CRP document analysis was collected through website research. Five CRPs were documented. Many of the participants participated in the same program, just different sites. Not much demographic data was listed, but foundational data were recorded and can be seen in Table 5.



Table 5

*College Readiness Program Site Data*

| Site          | Demographic Data   | Site Statistics   | Funding Source         |
|---------------|--|---|------------------------|
| Upward Bound  | Data not available   | To participate a student must be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-income</li> <li>• Potentially first-generation OR high risk for academic failure (US Department of Education, 2016)</li> </ul>  | Government             |
| Toledo Excel  | Data not available   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96% of participants enrolled in college</li> <li>• 84% of former participants are college graduates OR matriculating towards college graduation</li> <li>• Each student is expected to maintain a B average in his/her high school curriculum</li> </ul> | University             |
| AVID          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86% identify as a race or ethnicity historically underrepresented in higher education (avid.org)</li> <li>• 56% have parents with no college experience (avid.org)</li> </ul> | Data not available.   |                        |
| I'm A Star    | Data not available   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides opportunities for homeless students</li> <li>• Open to youth ages 12-18</li> </ul>  | Private philanthropies |
| College Bound | Data not available   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students must have between a 2.0-3.0 GPA to apply</li> <li>• STEM focus</li> </ul>   | Private philanthropies |

The interview data were coded using NVivo software. The codes showed words that were most frequently used in the participants' responses to interview questions. Through analyzing this data, three themes emerged. The three themes were: (1) Exposure and Realities of College; (2) Life-Changing Opportunities; and (3) Motivation of Family.

The first research question asked: How does participation in a college readiness program impact Black college graduates' persistence through college? The purpose of this question was to understand how, if at all, CRPs play a role in the motivation to persist. Many of the participants did not note a direct link between their CRP and their college persistence. Harrison stated, "I don't even remember conversations about being persistent." It seemed that most participants relied on self-motivation and familial structures to be their guide in completing their college program. Many of the participants compliment their CRPs on providing access and exposure to college life and the rigors of post-secondary education. Other participants say that their programs did not prepare them for the "nitty gritty" or the reality of college finances and exams. It seems that in these times, those participants relied on self-motivation, family, and friends to persist in college.

The second research question asked: How do Black college graduates describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college? All 12 participants discussed the impact of their family, friends, and intrinsic motivation. A few participants did include the lessons they learned in their CRP, but not one participant stated that their CRP was their sole motivation to persist. Eleven of the 12 participants were first-generation college students. This proved to be a huge turning point for participants. Most participants felt that they needed to stand strong for the generation before them and set a precedent for those that would come after them. During his interview Ayden stated, "People are looking up to me, if I quit, they will feel like they can quit." Many participants stated, since their parent(s) were not able to attend college, those parents encouraged and had conversations about college degree attainment with the participants at a very young age. This may have developed confidence in the participants to self-motivate and persist to graduation.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study are both theoretically and empirically grounded. The findings also relate to Chapter Two literature that reviewed the historical achievement gap that exists among Black students and their White counterparts. CRPs were designed to close the gap and provide the necessary resources needed for post-secondary education. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Keller's ARCS model of motivation. The four components of this model are: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. The following sections explain how this study relates theoretically and empirically to the literature.

### **Empirical**

Persistence through college is low, as research shows, roughly 40% of Black students earn college degrees after six years (NCES, 2018); this graduation rate has only marginally improved, in spite of the national increase of college enrollment (NCES, 2013). CRPs are bridging the achievement gap and helping students adequately prepare for their transition to college (Domina, 2009; Gandara & Bial, 2011). However, the gap that existed prior to this study did not address how CRPs were motivating students to persist through college. As it relates to CRPs, what lessons or motivating skills are being taught that would encourage participants to not only attend college, but persist?

Historically, there has been a significant amount of change among Black men and women in the pursuit of education. Through changes in laws and various acts, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Black men and women were given more opportunities to excel in their education. However, Black students have consistently lagged behind their White counterparts (Valant & Newark, 2017).

Various educational reform efforts were enacted to aid in this gap, which eventually became known as the achievement gap. College preparatory activities like Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and the TRIO Programs (i.e., Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Educational Opportunity Centers) have a long history of targeting underrepresented populations with the intent of nurturing them towards college matriculation (Bower, 2013; Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011). Educators and policy makers began to design and implement intervention programs that would aid in closing the educational achievement gap, increase high school graduation rates, and increase college attendance and persistence (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; McDonald & Farrell, 2012), this relates to the first theme, exposure and the realities of college. Many participants of this study agreed that their CRP exposed them to a college campus and even gave them opportunities to take college courses and spend a summer in a college dorm. However, some participants noted a lack of follow through once students were in college. In his focus group interview, Ayden stated:

I think it is very necessary for CRPs to keep in contact and communication with their students after they complete the programs-- especially programs that serve and represent first-generation, low-income students. Since many of these students have no other assistance/support while attending college, it would be good for CRPs to offer some of that assistance/support. Provide students with necessary resources, etc.

Another theme that was found both in the literature and this study was life-changing opportunities. Reform efforts have sought to close the achievement gap and provide the best opportunities for students of all races and socio-economic backgrounds (Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; Harris, 2012; Taines, 2012). Throughout the years of education reform, there is little

information given about how these efforts are motivating students through school and successful college completion. Participants in this study stated that their CRP provided cultural and travel opportunities that some may not have had if it was not for their CRP. However, there was still a gap in the related literature, whether or not CRPs, even with exposure to a college campus and cultural and travel opportunities, motivated students to persist. This study addressed that gap.

The third theme of this study, the motivation of family, is also supported by the literature. All 12 participants stated that someone in their family was their motivation to persist in college. This not only relates empirically, but theoretically. A person's motivation to learn is defined as one's tendency to find learning meaningful and beneficial to their well-being (Wlodkowski, 1999a). Research also states that it is imperative that educators recognize external factors and their relationship to students' success and motivation. Those external factors were students' cultures, perspectives and family life (Pizzoloato, Podobnik, Chaudhari, Schaeffer & Murrell, 2008).

### **Theoretical**

Keller's ARCS model of motivation (1983) grounds this study, as it seeks to explain the motivation behind the completion of college programs. This is supported by this study because it provides an understanding of why CRPs were not the motivating factors to persist in college. No one CRP embodied all of the components of the model. This theory presumes that people are motivated to learn if they see value in what they are learning and if there is an optimistic expectation for success (Keller, 1983). The model consists of four fundamental components: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction (Keller, 1983). All participants in this study were all successful Black college graduates, and while they all have different life experiences,

CRP experiences, and college experiences, their one shared experience was their motivation to persist.

The theme of family resonated with all 12 participants and while this was a great motivator, it did not specifically relate to their experience in their CRPs. This is why it is important to view the four components of Keller's ARCS model of motivation to see if CRPs were creating successful motivation within their participants, outside of the familial structure.

Attention is the first component of the model. Attention was designed to show the interest displayed by learners (Keller, 1983). Irene shared an interesting component of her CRP that developed interest. During her interview, she discussed how her CRP provided their students with stipends, she went on to say:

When you come from a low-income background and you know that you're going to be getting this lunch money every week, you're going to get some money at the end of the summer, and they were paying us in cash, that's always exciting too.

Relevance, the second component is established by using language and real-world examples in which learners are familiar (Keller, 1983). Frederick shared how his CRP made college education relevant. He stated that he learned the following:

Your environment does not determine whether or not you will be successful. You have kids who are from the hood and, you know, some of them believe that simply because they were from the hood that they were destined only to perpetuate the images and the lifestyles that were seen in said hood, versus the students who are from affluent backgrounds who society would believe are predestined to achieve. The students who are from more affluent backgrounds may have more access, that access or lack thereof, does

not determine the success. What determines our success is the level of work and commitment that you are willing to put into whatever goal you are seeking to achieve.

Erica reflected on a time when her CRP used the participants' desired careers as a way to reach the participants. She stated:

I wanted to be a lawyer at the time, so they let me know the importance of school.

I had to go to school if I wanted to be a lawyer. We were told in order to be successful you had to go to college, I wanted to be successful, so I had to go school, there was no other choice.

The use of language and using careers as a real-world example, show how some CRPs are reaching participants through relevant conversations and lessons.

The third component, confidence, focuses on establishing positive expectations for achieving success among learners (Keller, 1983). Some participants stated that they became participants in their CRP with a certain level of confidence. Ayden stated:

I was already confident, but people all over my city were trying to apply to this program, this NASA funded program that was all inclusive. You got stipends to eat, they paid for my tuition, and they paid for my room and board. So people were applying for this program, but they only selected the people that they selected. So, me knowing that I was good enough to get into this [program] and, like, if I wanted to go to any college, I was good to go, that was...that was the motivation, it was kind of, like, all I needed.

Gina was also similar in this way, she stated the following:

I already kind of came in with this confidence, well I already had this confidence anyways. Like I said, the programs just built on it, but I still think [confidence] was already instilled in me regardless, if that makes sense.

During Irene's interview, she discussed how the program built her confidence in an interesting way, she discussed:

I went to the university where my Upward Bound was housed. As a result, I knew that campus. I went to summer school on that campus for 3 years. I knew how to navigate the bus system, I knew the best places to eat. The [university] is a huge campus, our campus map takes three full printer size papers to see the whole school map. I remember my freshman year, one of the first few weeks of class, this poor girl she just looked so nervous and she didn't know where she was going and I remember stopping and helping her. I knew the campus.

While Ayden, Gina, and Irene were becoming confident in different areas, Erica shared a different story. She stated, "I think confidence came later on, like grad school later. I always second guessed everything. [My CRP] did give reassurance, but I wasn't confident going into it."

The final component of the ARCS model of motivation is satisfaction. Learners must feel some type of satisfaction or reward from their learning experience (Keller, 1983). When asked to rate their level of satisfaction as a participant of a CRP on a scale of 1-10, Ayden, Chelsea, David, Frederick, Harrison, Irene, Jason, Kevin, and Lisa all rated their programs 10. When asked to explain his score, Frederick stated:

All of things you learn about in the classroom do not prepare you for life, but if you get a program that couples what you learn in the classroom and challenges you to continue striving for excellence within the classroom, but they are also preparing you and molding you to become, not only the best community service-oriented individual, but a good professional as well, I don't think you can beat it.



Although Chelsea gave her program the highest score, she mentioned one component that was not taught in her CRP. In her focus group interview, she responded to the question: What roadblocks did you encounter while in college that you were not taught in your CRP? She wrote, “Navigating social networks were difficult, I did not know how to get involved in organizations.” While this did not change her score, it may be a good component to add to CRPs in the future, for participant satisfaction.

Gina rated her CRP an 8 and stated, “The program kind of got repetitive.” Both Brittany and Erica rated their CRP a 5. When asked about receiving awards or recognition in her CRP, she stated the following, “Honestly, I don’t...I don’t recall us getting awards. I guess you can say we got a pat on the back if we kept our grades up.” Erica also stated that she did not receive awards in her program, which is an important component for programming and as it relates to the ARCS model of motivation. Erica said:

It did teach me timeliness and work completion and did give me some type of exposure to higher education, but it still missed a lot of those key components that I think I needed in order to be successful and not bump my head in order to figure out my way.

This sheds new light on CRPs and how they are structured. CRPs were created to do more than just provide exposure and bring cultural awareness, these programs were designed to remove the barriers, among Black, low-income, and first-generation college students, in their attempt to attend college (Le et al., 2015). While, more than 50% of the participants of this study, give their CRPs great ratings, those same participants cannot link their CRP to their motivation to persist, and none of the participants cited their CRP as their sole motivation to persist. This also shines light on the need for a second step in current and future CRPs to focus on college persistence rather than college acceptance.

## **Implications**

Within the field of education there is an abundance of research on CRP history and impact, however, there was a lack of research on how CRPs motivate Black students to persist in college. This study attempted to fill that gap. This section addresses the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. The theoretical implications relate to the four concepts of Keller's Motivation model. Those four concepts are: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. The empirical implications of this study relate to the historical background of Blacks and education. The practical implications will discuss different ways CRPs can be structured in the future.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Keller's ARCS model of motivation was used in this study as a tool to measure motivation within CRPs and the participants. The theoretical implications relate to the four concepts of the model of motivation: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Participants were asked to reflect on their CRP experience during semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Participants were asked questions that were also grounded in the ARCS model of motivation. No one CRP embodied each of the ARCS components completely. Some CRPs excelled in attention or relevance, through college trips, access to college classes, and cultural appreciation. Most participants were confident before their participation in their CRP. Satisfaction was one concept, despite some varying CRP locations, that the majority of the participants agreed. This was the strongest component of the four, yet it did not show in the data that their satisfaction in their CRP correlated to their motivation to persist.

In this study, participants discussed their family, friends, and even themselves as motivators. Family and friends played a crucial role in all four components of the ARCS model

of motivation. All, but one participant was a first-generation college student. This may have played another role in self and familial motivation. Family played a role in showing the participants an interest in education and real-world learning, these are the first two concepts of the ARCS model of motivation. It was embedded as an expectation among many of the participants. Confidence also seemed to vary between family and self. Three of the four concepts were all motivators found outside their CRPs. During the interviews, participants had an opportunity to look back on their CRP experience. Many participants were thankful for their program and some credit their CRP for who they are today, but the CRPs were never the sole motivator in their persistence. This is not to say that CRPs must be the sole motivator, but if these programs were developed as a way to help Black students attend and persist through college (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; McDonald & Farrell, 2012), this study shows that CRPs may be failing some of its participants.

### **Empirical Implications**

Historically, Black students lag behind their White counterparts in academics (Nichols et al., 2016). This not only applies to K-12 academics, but institutions of higher education as well. This lag continues today as Black students fall behind their White counterparts in college degree attainment (NCES 2019) and college persistence (NCES, 2018). CRPs were developed to combat this deficit, yet research continues to show that not only do Black students fall behind academically but, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2018), also fall behind their Asian, Hispanic, and White counterparts in college persistence. Most of the research on CRPs does not address persistence. Research shows that CRPs will, unequivocally, get Black students to college. However, the research falls short in the area of impact and if CRPs are the motivation to college persistence. This study fills some of that gap.

All 12 participants discussed other motivating factors that led them to complete their college program. Participants also stated that when college became difficult or overwhelming, their support systems were outside of their CRPs. Some participants stated they felt as if they were on their own once they graduated from their CRP. Ayden, Brittany, and Erica stated that they had no communication with CRP directors, teachers, or fellow participants after the completion of their program. Brittany and Erica were both participants of the same CRP as David, Irene, Jason, Kevin, and Lisa, just located in different states. David, Irene, Jason, Kevin, and Lisa still maintain contact with teachers, staff, directors, and their cohort. It is important that CRPs, no matter the location, are doing what they were created and intended to do, which was to aid in closing the educational achievement gap, increase high school graduation rates, and increase college attendance and persistence (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Domina, 2009; Droogsma-Musoba, 2011; McDonald & Farrell, 2012). It is not enough that CRPs are getting students to college, there must be components of CRPs that teach, motivate, and help in college persistence. In CRP document analysis, Harrison's CRP website states that 90% of students who apply, are accepted into four-year colleges. 85% of those students persist into the second year of college, yet only 47% of those students persist and graduate from college. This is in comparison to a 56% college persistence rate from White students in the same program. Persistence is an important concept that is being overlooked in the structure of some CRPs.

### **Practical Implications**

A practical implication of this study is for CRP directors and educators to reevaluate the way CRPs are structured. Some participants discussed feeling alone, not having the right tools, or not being aware of the financial burdens of college. This is doing a disservice to the participants of CRPs and ultimately failing to address the achievement gap. CRPs should

evaluate their mission. Is the mission to get students to the front door of a post-secondary institution, celebrate high college acceptance rate statistics, and ultimately leave former participants on their own? This can all be solved by building in components and lessons of self-advocacy. This can also be part of the attention, relevance, and confidence components of the ARCS model of motivation.

Another practical implication is for CRPs to involve family. All 12 participants discussed their family as their motivation. CRPs can find ways to incorporate family and use this as a tool to motivate students throughout the college process. CRPs can hold parent forums to teach parents how to help students persist as well. For some participants who may not have similar family backgrounds, CRPs can develop family dynamics within the structure of the programs. CRPs can provide mentors who have persisted through college and may have attended the same college or university. These mentors could share the “nitty gritty” of college, especially for first generation college students. It is imperative that CRPs are seeing their participants *through* college, not just *to* college. Some participants need more than just a college tour or a summer in a college dorm; those components are integral, but if we want to see more CRP participants finish, there must be pipelines, resources, and support systems in place for every existing CRP as they matriculate and persist in their post-secondary endeavors.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

In this study, decisions were made in order to include several delimitations. In participant sampling, all participants were over the age of 18. Another delimitation was choosing this study to be a multiple case study. This design allowed me to research and understand multiple CRP sites and gain multiple perspectives in one study. Yin (2014) stated that multiple case studies are useful in research because they provide more information on the topic. Each provided a unique

viewpoint on how CRPs are being structured and how, if at all, these programs are motivating their participants to persist through their college programs. Using participants from various parts of the United States helped gain an understanding on how CRP experiences can vary within the same program, based on location. Another delimitation was selecting participants from varying backgrounds and gender, this helped establish maximum variation (Creswell, 2013).

However, this study also faced limitations such as using multiple participants from one site (Site A). It was difficult to find participants who did not participate in such a large worldwide CRP, having only one or two participants from each CRP site could have potentially provided more information. Another limitation was interviewing participants who persisted and became college graduates. It would have been interesting to gain the perspectives of former CRP participants who did not persist and graduate from college. Finally, another limitation may have been not having younger participants. It was difficult for some participants to remember various elements of their CRP, especially graduating from the program 15-20 years ago.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

College persistence among Black students is a continuing problem. Reform efforts, such as CRPs, have been put in place but the achievement gap among Black students and their White counterparts still exists. I recommend that more studies are developed that focus on CRPs structures and college persistence, not just college acceptance or attendance. I also recommend that research is done on newer or community-based CRPs, with developed mentorship pipelines or motivational programs that last throughout the participants' college career. Research on former CRP participants who did not graduate from college would also be helpful in the field of education and CRP development. Finally, I recommend that research is done on programs that

focus on motivational strategies that encourage Black men and women to persist not only in college, but life as well.

### **Summary**

Throughout this study, Participants discussed how they and their families placed a value on education. For many first-generation Black students, college is uncharted territory. It is that student blazing a trail within their families and community, and that comes with its own pressures. As a Black student, persistence in college is key. Yes, programs that provide exposure and access are imperative, but there is more to be done in the field of readiness and preparedness for Black men and women entering college. Not only do Black students fall behind in college attendance, but now the gap is continuing as it relates to persistence. CRPs were developed to combat the gap that exists between Black students and their White counterparts, but are these programs effectively training students beyond their college acceptance letter? This research has shown that some participants were not made aware of financial aid, testing, and scheduling. These are huge components of the college process. CRPs have played an important part in closing the gap that gets Black students into colleges and universities, but some of those same students are not graduating. Tackling those barriers, among many other things, may be the reason the gap of college persistence has Black students falling behind all of their counterparts, not just White students.

This study showed that when participants took time to reflect on their experience in their CRP, family and self-motivation were the major factors. Historically CRPs have played an important role in closing the achievement gap and getting Black students into colleges and universities, but those same students are not graduating. It would be beneficial for CRPs to think more creatively about using student motivations as a way to reach their participants. It would

also be useful for CRPs to consider employing components of Keller's ARCS model of motivation into their curriculum.

This study correlates with the theoretical literature that suggests students are motivated to learn when attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction are integrated in programming. This study also supports the empirical literature and research that discuss the importance of breaking down barriers among Black, low-income, and first-generation college students. From slavery to today's classroom, there has been significant improvements in the area of education reform. CRPs were the answer to breaking down these barriers of Blacks and college acceptance and attendance. Today, this study has shown, there is an additional lacking component in some CRPs. Black CRP participants are attending college, but the current focus of CRPs should be making sure that structures are in place to aid in the breakdown of yet another barrier, persistence.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

**IRB APPLICATION #:**            *(To be assigned by the IRB)*

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#### **I. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Complete each section of this form, using the gray form fields (use the tab key).
2. If you have questions, hover over the blue (?), or refer to the [IRB Application Instructions](#) for additional clarification.
3. Review the [IRB Application Checklist](#).
4. Email the completed application, with the following supporting documents (as separate word documents) to [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu):
  - a. Consent Forms, Permission Letters, Recruitment Materials
  - b. Surveys, Questionnaires, Interview Questions, Focus Group Questions
5. If you plan to use a specific Liberty University department or population for your study, you will need to obtain permission from the appropriate department chair/dean. Submit documentation of permission (email or letter) to the IRB along with this application and check the indicated box below verifying that you have done so.
6. **Submit one signed copy of the signature page (available on the [IRB website](#)) to any of the following:**
  - a. Email: As a scanned document to [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu)
  - b. Fax: 434-522-0506
  - c. Mail: IRB 1971 University Blvd. Lynchburg, VA 24515
  - d. In Person: Green Hall, Suite 1887
7. Once received, applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
8. Preliminary review may take up to 3 weeks.
9. Most applications will require 3 sets of revisions.
10. The entire process may take between 1 and 2 months.
11. *We cannot accept applications in formats other than Microsoft Word. Please do not send us One Drive files, Pdfs, Google Docs, or Html applications.*

**Note: Applications and supporting documents with the following problems will be returned immediately for revisions:**

1. Grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors
2. Lack of professionalism
3. Lack of consistency or clarity
4. Incomplete applications

*\*\*Failure to minimize these errors will cause delays in your processing time\*\**

---

**II. BASIC PROTOCOL INFORMATION**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1. STUDY/THESIS/DISSERTATION TITLE (?)</b>  |   |
| <b>Title:</b> THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAMS ON BLACK STUDENTS' COMPLETION OF COLLEGE PROGRAMS: A CASE STUDY |   |
| <b>2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR &amp; PROTOCOL INFORMATION (?)</b>  |   |
| <b>Principal Investigator</b> ( <i>person conducting the research</i> ): Tony Ryals                                    |   |
| Professional Title ( <i>Student, Professor, etc.</i> ): Student  |   |
| School/Department ( <i>School of Education, LUCOM, etc.</i> ): School of Education                                     |   |
| Phone: 919-648-5314  | LU Email: tryals1@liberty.edu                               |
| <b>Check all that apply:</b>   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online Graduate Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff   | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Undergraduate Student  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Graduate Student  | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Undergraduate Student       |
| <b>This research is for:</b>   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class Project   | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Thesis                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarly Project (DNP Program)   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Dissertation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Research  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                             |
| <b>If applicable, indicate whether you have defended and passed your dissertation proposal:</b>                        |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A   |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ( <i>Provide your defense date</i> ):   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <a href="#">Proceed to Associated Personnel Information</a> )                           |   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>3. ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL INFORMATION (?)</b>  |  |
| <b>Co-Researcher(s):</b>  |  |
| School/Department:  |  |
| Phone:  | LU/Other Email:  |
| <b>Faculty Chair/Mentor(s):</b> Constance Pearson, Ed.D                                 |  |
| School/Department: School of Education  |  |
| Phone: 423-505-1683   | LU/Other Email: <a href="mailto:cpearson@liberty.edu">cpearson@liberty.edu</a> |
| <b>Non-Key Personnel</b> ( <i>Reader, Assistant, etc.</i> ):                            |  |
| School/Department:  |  |
| Phone:  | LU/Other Email:  |
| <b>Consultant(s)</b> ( <i>required for Ed.D Candidates</i> ): Kenneth R. Tierce, Ed. D. |  |
| School/Department: School of Education  |  |
| Phone: 940-441-2378   | LU/Other Email: <a href="mailto:krtierce@liberty.edu">krtierce@liberty.edu</a> |

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>4. USE OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS (?)</b>   |                          |
| <b>Do you intend to use LU students, staff, or faculty as participants OR LU students, staff, or faculty data in your study?</b> |                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ( <a href="#">Proceed to Funding Source</a> )   |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Complete the section below</i> )   |                          |
| <b># of Participants/Data Sets:</b>  | <b>Department:</b>       |
| <b>Class(es)/Year(s):</b>  | <b>Department Chair:</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I obtained permission from the Department Chair, and attached proof to this application.                |                          |

*Note: You must submit the original Chair signature or emailed documentation to the IRB for verification.*

|   |
|---|
| <b>5. FUNDING SOURCE (?)</b>  |
| <b>Is your research funded?</b>   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ( <a href="#">Proceed to Study Dates</a> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Complete the section below</i> )                |
| <b>Grant Name/Funding Source/Number:</b>  |
| <b>Funding Period (Month &amp; Year):</b>   |

|  |
|--|
| <b>6. STUDY DATES (?)</b>  |
| <b>When will you perform your study?</b> ( <i>Approximate dates for collection/analysis</i> ):               |
| <b>Start</b> ( <i>Month/Year</i> ): August/September 2018 <b>Finish</b> ( <i>Month/Year</i> ): December 2018 |

|  |
|--|
| <b>7. COMPLETION OF REQUIRED <a href="#">CITI RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING (?)</a></b>   |
| <b>List Course Name(s)</b> ( <i>Social and Behavioral Researchers, etc.</i> ): Cultural Competence in Research, Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction, Assessing Risk, Informed Consent, Privacy and Confidentiality, History and Ethical Principles, Students in Research |
| <b>Date(s) of Completion:</b> 7/19   |

### III. OTHER STUDY MATERIALS AND CONSIDERATIONS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>8. STUDY MATERIALS LIST (?)</b>  |   |
| <b>Please indicate whether your proposed study will include any of the following:</b>           |   |
| Recording/photography of participants ( <i>voice, video, or images</i> )?                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Participant compensation ( <i>gift cards, meals, extra credit, etc.</i> )?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Advertising for participants ( <i>flyers, TV/Radio advertisements</i> )?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| More than minimal psychological stress?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Confidential material ( <i>questionnaires, surveys, interviews, test scores, etc.</i> )?        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Extra costs to the participants ( <i>tests, hospitalization, etc.</i> )?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| The inclusion of pregnant women ( <i>for medical studies</i> )?                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| More than minimal risk?*  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Alcohol consumption?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Waiver of the informed consent document?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Protected Health Information ( <i>from health practitioners/institutions</i> )?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| VO <sub>2</sub> Max Exercise?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Pilot study procedures ( <i>which will be published/included in data analysis</i> )?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>Please indicate whether your proposed study will include the use of blood:</b>               |   |
| Use of blood?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Total amount of blood:  |   |
| Blood draws over time period ( <i>days</i> ):   |   |
| <b>Please indicate whether your proposed study will include any of the following materials:</b> |   |
| The use of rDNA or biohazardous material?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| The use of human tissue or cell lines?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Fluids that could mask the presence of blood ( <i>including urine/feces</i> )?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Use of radiation or radioisotopes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

\**Minimal risk* is defined as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in everyday life or during the performance of

routine physical or physiological examinations or tests. [45 CFR 46.102(i)]. If you are unsure if your study qualifies as minimal risk, contact the IRB.

|   |
|---|
| <b>9. INVESTIGATIONAL METHODS (?)</b>   |
| <b>Please indicate whether your proposed study will include any of the following:</b>   |
| The use of an Investigational New Drug (IND) or an Approved Drug for an Unapproved Use?<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Provide the drug name, IND number, and company):             |
| The use of an Investigational Medical Device or an Approved Medical Device for an Unapproved Use?<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Provide the device name, IDE number, and company): |

#### IV. PURPOSE

|   |
|---|
| <b>10. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH (?)</b>  |
| <b>Write an original, brief, non-technical description of the <u>purpose</u> of your research.</b> Include in your description your research hypothesis/question, a narrative that explains the major constructs of your study, and how the data will advance your research hypothesis or question. This section should be easy to read for someone not familiar with your academic discipline: The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study is to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. The theory guiding this study is John Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design. This theory will be used to determine the motivation of former college readiness program participants and their persistence to college completion. Keller's ARCS model of motivational design will act as the framework of this research to answer the research questions: How does participation in a college readiness program impact participant persistence through college and how do participants describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college? Purposeful criterion sampling will be used to select participants who will share their experiences in CRPs. Data will be collected through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, one focus group interview, and college readiness program document analysis. |

#### V. PARTICIPANT INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

|  |
|--|
| <b>11. STUDY POPULATION (?)</b>  |
| <b>Provide the inclusion criteria for the participant population</b> ( <i>gender, age range, ethnic background, health status, occupation, employer, etc.</i> ): Participants include Black college graduates who were former participants in college readiness programs (CRPs). |
| <b>Provide a rationale for selecting the above population:</b> This population will allow the research to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates.  |
| <b>Are you related to any of your participants?</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Explain</i> ):  |

**Indicate who will be excluded from your study population** (e.g., persons under 18 years of age): Individuals who do not identify as: Black, former CRP participants, or have received a college degree

**If applicable, provide rationale for involving any special populations** (e.g., children, ethnic groups, mentally disabled, low socio-economic status, prisoners): Black participants will be used a way to investigate the impact of CRP on college persistence.

**Provide the maximum number of participants you plan to enroll for each participant population and justify the sample size** (You will not be approved to enroll a number greater than the number listed. If at a later time it becomes apparent that you need to increase your sample size, submit a [Change in Protocol Form](#) and wait for approval to proceed): A selection of 10-12 Black college graduates will be selected for this study, as Patton (2002) does not quantify a specific number for a case study. Participants will be included to provide a detailed investigation of the impact of CRP on college persistence. Of the participants, 5-8 participants will be selected for the focus group.

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ONLY IF YOU ARE CONDUCTING A PROTOCOL WITH NIH, FEDERAL, OR STATE FUNDING:**

**Researchers sometimes believe their particular project is not appropriate for certain types of participants. These may include, for example, women, minorities, and children. If you believe your project should not include one or more of these groups, please provide your justification for their exclusion. Your justification will be reviewed according to the applicable NIH, federal, or state guidelines:**

## 12. TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS (?)

**Who will be the focus of your study?** (Check all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Normal Participants (Age 18-65) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minors (Under Age 18)                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fetuses                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over Age 65                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitively Disabled                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University Students                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Physically Disabled                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active-Duty Military Personnel             | <input type="checkbox"/> Participants Incapable of Giving Consent    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discharged/Retired Military Personnel      | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners or Institutional Individuals      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inpatients                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Ethnic/Racial Group(s)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outpatients                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other potentially elevated risk populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient Controls                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Participant(s) related to the researcher    |

**Note:** Only check the boxes if the participants will be the focus (for example, ONLY military or ONLY students). If they just happen to be a part of the broad group you are studying, you only need to check "Normal Participants."

## VI. RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

### 13. CONTACTING PARTICIPANTS (?)

**Describe in detail how you will contact participants regarding this study** (include the method(s) used—email, phone call, social media, snowball sampling, etc.): I intend to contact site leaders from the three CRP sites by email, phone, or social media to access a database of former Black college graduates. I will then use this database to reach out to former CRP participants by email or social media.

**Note:** Please submit all letters, emails, flyers, advertisements, or social media posts you plan to use to recruit participants for your study. If you will contact participants verbally, please provide a script that outlines what you plan to say to potential participants. Submit these items as separate Word documents to [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

#### 14. LOCATION OF RECRUITMENT (?)

**Describe the location, setting, and timing of recruitment:** CRP site directors of the three selected sites will be contacted by email, phone, or social media. Site directors will be asked to provide their databases that include former Black participants. After IRB approval is granted, participant contact will be made via email or social media

#### 15. SCREENING PROCEDURES (?)

**Describe any screening procedures you will use when recruiting your participants (i.e., screening survey, database query, verbal confirmation, etc.):** N/A

#### 16. RELATIONSHIPS (?)

**Does the researcher have a position of grading or professional authority over the participants (e.g., is the researcher the participants' teacher or principal)?**

No ([Proceed to Procedures](#))

Yes (Explain what safeguards are in place to reduce the likelihood of compromising the integrity of the research, e.g., addressing the conflicts in the consent process and/or emphasizing the pre-existing relationship will not be impacted by participation in the research.):

### VII. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

#### 17. PROCEDURES (?)

**Write an original, non-technical, step by step, description of what your participants will be asked to do during your study and data collection process.** If you have multiple participant groups, (ex: parents, teachers, and students) please specify which group you are asking to complete which task(s). **You do not need to list signing/reading consent as a step.**

| Step/Task/Procedure  | Time (Approx.) | Participant Group(s) (All, Group A, Group B, etc.) |
|--|----------------|--|
| 1. Complete a demographic survey   | 10-15 minutes  | All  |
| 2. Participate in face-to-face or virtual interviews which includes semi-structured, open-ended questions. All interviews will be audio-recorded and will be used as a way to investigate the impact of college readiness programs (CRPs) on the persistence of Black college graduates. | 60-90 minutes  | All  |
| 3. Participate in an online focus group via Blackboard. Participants will answer the given prompts that delve deeper into each   | 30-45 minutes  | Focus Group  |

|   |               |                 |
|---|---------------|-----------------|
| participants experience in their CRP. Participants will have three weeks to complete the prompts.         |               |                 |
| 4. Review transcription of semi-structured, open ended interviews to verify or modify any of the content. | 25-30 minutes | Interview Group |
| 5. Review all focus group prompt data to verify or modify any of the content                              | 25-30 minutes | Focus Group     |

**Note:** Please submit all instruments, surveys, interview questions or outlines, observation checklists, etc. that you plan to use for your study. Submit these items as separate Word documents to [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

## 18. STUDY LOCATION (?)

**Please describe the location(s) in which the study will be conducted.** Be specific (*include city, state, school/district, clinic, etc.*):

University of Toledo, Toledo OH  
Lynchburg City Schools, Lynchburg, VA  
Richmond City Schools, Richmond, VA

## VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

### 19. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS/DATA SETS (?)

**Estimate the number of participants to be enrolled or data sets to be collected:** 10-12

### 20. ANALYSIS METHODS (?)

**Describe how the data will be analyzed and what will be done with the data and the resulting analysis, including any plans for future publication or presentation:** Interview and focus group transcripts will be analyzed for common themes that show the impact of CRP on Black college graduates. College readiness program documents will also be analyzed to see if documents align with the participant's experience.

## IX. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

### 21. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT REQUIREMENTS (?)

**Does your study require parental/guardian consent?** (*If your participants are under 18, parental/guardian consent is required in most cases.*)

- No ([Proceed to Child Assent](#))  
 Yes (*Answer the following question*)

**Does your study entail greater than minimal risk without the potential for benefits to the participant?**

- No  
 Yes (*Consent of both parents is required*)

## X. ASSENT FROM CHILDREN

### 22. CHILD ASSENT (?)

**Is assent required for your study?** (*Assent is required unless the child is not capable due to age, psychological state, or sedation OR the research holds out the prospect of a direct benefit that is only available within the context of the research.*)

- No ([Proceed to Consent Procedures](#))



Yes

*Note: If the parental consent process (full or part) is waived (See XIII below) assent may be also. See the IRB's [informed consent](#) page for more information.*

## **XI. PROCESS OF OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT**

### **23. CONSENT PROCEDURES (?)**

**Describe in detail *how and when* you will provide consent information (If applicable, include how you will obtain consent from participants and/or parents/guardians and/or child assent.):** Informed consent forms will be included in all participant emails that will need to be signed and emailed before interviews can begin.

## **XII. USE OF DECEPTION**

### **24. DECEPTION (?)**

**Are there any aspects of the study kept secret from the participants (e.g., the full purpose of the study)?**

 No

 Yes (describe the deception involved and the debriefing procedures):

**Is deception used in the study procedures?**

 No

 Yes (describe the deception involved and the debriefing procedures):

*Note: Submit a post-experiment debriefing statement and consent form offering participants the option of having their data destroyed. A debriefing template is available on our [website](#).*

## **XIII. WAIVER OR MODIFICATION FOR REQUIRED ELEMENTS IN THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS**

### **25. WAIVER OF INFORMED CONSENT ELEMENTS (?)**

 N/A

**Does the research pose no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., no more risk than that of everyday activities)?**

 No, the study is greater than minimal risk.

 Yes, the study is minimal risk.

**Will the waiver have no adverse effects on participant rights and welfare?**

 No, the waiver will have adverse effects on participant rights and welfare.

 Yes, the waiver will not adversely affect participant rights and welfare.

**Would the research be impracticable without the waiver?**

 No, there are other ways of performing the research without the waiver.

 Yes, not having a waiver would make the study unrealistic. (Explain):

**Will participant debriefing occur (i.e., will the true purpose and/or deceptive procedures used in the study be reported to participants at a later date)?**

 No, participants will not be debriefed.

 Yes, participants will be debriefed.

*Note: A waiver or modification of some or all of the required elements of informed consent is sometimes used in research involving deception, archival data, or minimal risk procedures.*

## **XIV. WAIVER OF SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

### **26. WAIVER OF SIGNED CONSENT (?)**

 N/A

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Would a signed consent form be the only record linking the participant to the research?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, there are other records/study questions linking the participants to the study.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, only the signed form would link the participant to the study.</p>  |
| <p><b>Does a breach of confidentiality constitute the principal risk to participants?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, there are other risks involved greater than a breach of confidentiality.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the main risk is a breach of confidentiality.</p>  |
| <p><b>Does the research pose no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., no more risk than that of everyday activities)?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, the study is greater than minimal risk.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the study is minimal risk.</p>  |
| <p><b>Does the research include any activities that would require signed consent in a non-research context (e.g., liability waivers)?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, there <u>are not</u> any study related activities that would normally require signed consent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, there <u>are</u> study related activities that would normally require signed consent</p>   |
| <p><b>Will you provide the participants with a written statement about the research (i.e., an information sheet that contains all of the elements of an informed consent form but without the signature lines)?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, participants <u>will not</u> receive written information about the research.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, participants <u>will</u> receive written information about the research.</p> |

*Note: A waiver of signed consent is sometimes used in anonymous surveys or research involving secondary data. This does not eliminate the need for a consent document, but it eliminates the need to obtain participant signatures.*

## **XV. CHECKLIST OF INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>27. STATEMENT (?)</b></p> <p><b>Submit a copy of all informed consent/assent documents as separate Word documents with your application.</b> <a href="#">Informed consent/assent templates</a> are available on our website. Additional information regarding <a href="#">consent</a> is also available on our website.</p> |
|---|

## **XVI. PARTICIPANT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>28. PRIVACY (?)</b></p> <p><b>Describe what steps you will take to protect the privacy of your participants (e.g., If you plan to interview participants, will you conduct your interviews in a setting where others cannot easily overhear?):</b> All face-to-face interviews will be done in a private setting that can be chosen by the participant. Virtual interviews will also be conducted in private and securely saved.</p> |
|--|

*Note: Privacy refers to persons and their interest in controlling access to their information.*

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>29. CONFIDENTIALITY (?)</b></p> <p><b>How will you keep your data secure (i.e., password-locked computer, locked desk, locked filing cabinet, etc.):</b> For participant safety, I will have a hard copy of the overall study. Participants will be informed that their data will be kept as a hard copy in my personal safe. The data will be destroyed after a period of three years. The electronic copy will be kept on flash drive and placed in the same safe. The flash drive will not be destroyed but will always remained locked and safe.</p> |
|--|

**Who will have access to the data** (i.e., the researcher and faculty mentor/chair, only the researcher, etc.)?: I, the researcher, will be the only individual who has access to the data

**Will you destroy the data once the three-year retention period required by federal regulations expires?**

No

Yes (Explain how the data will be destroyed): All transcribed data will be shredded, flash drive data will be maintained in a secure safe and not destroyed.

*Note: All research-related data must be stored for a minimum of three years after the end date of the study, as required by federal regulations.*

### 30. ARCHIVAL DATA (?)

**Is all or part of the data archival** (i.e., previously collected for another purpose)?

No ([Proceed to Non-Archival Data](#))

Yes (Answer the questions below)

**Is the archival data publicly accessible?**

No (Explain how you will obtain access to this data): The data will be accessed via flash drive that will remain locked securely in a safe

Yes (Indicate where the data is accessible from, i.e., a website, etc.):

**Will you receive the raw data stripped of identifying information** (e.g., names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, social security numbers, medical records, birth dates, etc.)?:

No (Describe what data will remain identifiable and why this information will not be removed):

Yes (Describe who will link and/or strip the data—this person should have regular access to the data and should be a neutral party not involved in the study): I will use pseudonyms throughout the study to maintain participant anonymity

**Can the names or identities of the participants be deduced from the raw data?**

No (Place your initials in the box: I will not attempt to deduce the identity of the participants in this study): TR

Yes (Describe):

**Please provide the list of data fields you intend to use for your analysis and/or provide the original instruments used in the study:** I will be the sole human instrument of the study

*Note: If the archival data is not publicly available, submit proof of permission to access the data (i.e., school district letter or email). If you will receive data stripped of identifiers, this should be stated in the proof of permission.*

### 31. NON-ARCHIVAL DATA (?)

**If you are using non-archival data, will the data be anonymous** (i.e., data does not contain identifying information and cannot be linked to identifying information by use of pseudonyms, codes, or other means—for studies involving audio/video recording or photography, select “No”)?

N/A: I will not use non-archival data (data was previously collected, [skip to Media](#))

|  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No ( <a href="#">Complete the “No” section below</a> )  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <a href="#">Complete the “Yes” section below</a> )   |
| <b>**COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED “NO” TO QUESTION 31**</b>   |
| <b>Can participant names or identities be deduced from the raw data?</b>   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Describe</i> ): I will know the names of the participants in the interview and focus group.  |
| <b>Will a person be able to identify a subject based on other information in the raw data (i.e., title, position, sex, etc.)?</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Describe</i> ): While pseudonyms will be used to maintain participant anonymity, gender will be revealed through pseudonyms .   |
| <b>Describe the process you will use to collect the data and to ensure the confidentiality of the participants (i.e., you may know who participated, but participant identities will not be disclosed or pseudonyms will be used):</b> Pseudonyms will be used to maintain participant anonymity.            |
| <b>Do you plan to maintain a list or codebook linking pseudonyms or codes to participant identities?</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Please list where this list/codebook will be stored, whether it will be separate from your study data, and who will have access</i> ): All lists will be stored safely on a password protected computer and flash drive that will be stored securely in a safe. |

|   |
|---|
| <b>**COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO QUESTION 31**</b>   |
| <b>Describe the process you will use to collect the data to ensure that it is anonymous:</b><br>Pseudonyms will be used to maintain participant anonymity |
| <b>Place your initials in the box:</b> I will not attempt to deduce the identity of the participants in this study: TR                                    |

*Note: If you plan to use participant data (i.e., photos, recordings, videos, drawings) for presentations beyond data analysis for the research study (e.g., classroom presentations, library archive, or conference presentations) you will need to provide a materials release form to the participant.*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>32. MEDIA USE (?)</b>  |   |
| <b>Will your participants be audio recorded?</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Will your participants be video recorded?</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Will your participants be photographed?</b>                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>**COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO ANY MEDIA USE**</b> |   |

**Include information regarding how participant data will be withdrawn if he or she chooses to leave the study\*:** A participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study all collected data will be destroyed. Any collected data will not be used as part of the study.

**Will your participants be audio recorded, video recorded, or photographed without their knowledge?\*\*\***

No

Yes (*Describe the deception and debriefing procedures*):

*\*Note on Withdrawal:* Add the heading "How to Withdraw from the Study" on the consent document and include a description of the procedures a participant must perform to be withdrawn.

*\*\*Note on Deception:* Attach a post-experiment debriefing statement and a post-deception consent form, offering the participants the option of having their recording/photograph destroyed and removed from the study.

## **XVII. PARTICIPANT COMPENSATION**

### **33. COMPENSATION (?)**

**Will participants be compensated (e.g., gift cards, raffle entry, reimbursement)?**

No (*Proceed to Risks*)

Yes (*Describe*):

**Will compensation be pro-rated if the participant does not complete all aspects of the study?**

No

Yes (*Describe*):

*Note:* Research compensation exceeding \$600 per participant within a one-year period is considered income and will need to be filed on the participant's income tax returns. If your study is grant funded, Liberty University's Business Office policies might affect how you compensate participants. Contact the IRB for information on who to contact for guidance on this matter.

## **XVIII. PARTICIPANT RISKS AND BENEFITS**

### **34. RISKS (?)**

**Describe the risks to participants and any steps that will be taken to minimize those risks.** (*Risks can be physical, psychological, economic, social, or legal. If the only potential risk is a breach in confidentiality if the data is lost or stolen, state that here*): This study is minimal risk and will have no greater risk.

**Will alternative procedures or treatments that might be advantageous to the participants be made available?**

No

Yes (*Describe*):

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ONLY IF YOUR STUDY IS CONSIDERED GREATER THAN MINIMAL RISK:**

**Describe provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the participants** (e.g., proximity of the research location to medical facilities, or your ability to provide counseling referrals in the event of emotional distress):

### 35. BENEFITS (?)

**Describe the possible direct benefits to the participants.** (If participants are not expected to receive direct benefits, please state "No direct benefits." Completing a survey or participating in an interview will not typically result in direct benefits to the participant.): N/A

**Describe any possible benefits to society:** This study may be useful to the future of college readiness programs and they impact they may have on participants.

**Evaluate the risk-benefit ratio.** (Explain why you believe this study is worth doing, even with any identified risks.): The benefits of this study will outweigh minimal risk because this study seeks to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on Black students' completion of college programs. This study may have a greater impact on current and future structures of college readiness programs.

## Appendix B

## Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
2. What does the word, worldview, mean to you?
3. How would you explain your worldview to a colleague?
4. How has your worldview impacted your life?
5. Describe your experience as a high school student?
6. Describe your experience as a participant of a CRP?
7. Describe conversations or communication from CRP directors or participants after completion of the CRP.
8. What were some of the most significant lessons you recall from your CRP?
9. What were some motivational concepts taught within you CRP? Which of these concepts stood out to you most?
10. Describe how your CRP kept you invested and made learning exciting?
11. In what ways did your CRP make attending college relevant to your life?
  - a. Describe how the CRP made attending college relevant to your future
12. Describe how, if at all, participating in your CRP built your confidence as a student
13. Rate your rate of satisfaction as a participant of a CRP on a scale of 1-10
  - a. Explain your score
14. Describe a time you were reward for your achievements in your CRP
15. Describe, the impact your participation in your program had on your persistence through college

16. What were some of the motivating factors in your life that lead you to complete your college program?
17. Describe a time you wanted to give up or quit while in college
18. In times that you wanted to quit, what was your motivation to persist?
19. Describe how your CRP encouraged self-efficacy



## Appendix C

### Focus Group Prompts

- 1) Write about an experience in which your CRP taught you the value of college?
- 2) Explain how your CRP meet the needs of participants
- 3) What was the best lesson your CRP taught you about college?
- 4) What roadblocks did you encounter while in college that were not taught in your CRP?
- 5) Describe a moment of pressure or overwhelming circumstances within your college journey, what caused you to persist through college?
- 6) Describe your family dynamic? Describe the support you received from your family?
- 7) Were you the first person in your family to attend college?
- 8) Describe how your family supported you through college?
  - i. If you were the first person in your family to attend college, how did this make you feel?
- 9) What is one word of advice you would give to future CRPs
- 10) What does it mean for you to have a college degree? Why do you feel this way?

## Appendix D

## Participant Solicitation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Tony Ryals and I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University in the School of Education. I am conducting research as a partial requirement for earning a Doctorate of Education. My research topic is *The Impact of College Readiness Programs on Black Students' Completion of College Programs: A Case Study*. The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study is to investigate the impact of college readiness programs (CRPs) on the persistence of Black college graduates.

I am writing to request your participation in my research study and share your experience as a former college readiness program participant.

Your participation in this study will include:

- Share brief demographic information (*age, degree received, college readiness program site*)
- Participate in a 60-90 minute face-to face or virtual, audio-recorded interview about your college readiness program experience.
- If selected, participate in a 30-45 minute online focus group. The focus group will be approximately ten prompts to delve deeper into your college readiness experience. You will have three weeks to answer the prompts in detail.
- Review transcription of interviews and focus group documents to verify and/or modify content.

Informed consent information will be provided prior to your participation. Participation is voluntary, and you may decide at any time to leave the research study. Pseudonyms will be used and all identifying information will be confidentially maintained.

Thank you for your consideration of my request to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, additional information regarding the study and a consent form will be provided. If you have any questions or need more information please email [tryals1@liberty.edu](mailto:tryals1@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

Tony R. Ryals  
Doctoral Candidate

## Appendix E

**CONSENT FORM****THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAMS ON BLACK STUDENTS'  
COMPLETION OF COLLEGE PROGRAMS: A CASE STUDY**

Tony Ryals  
Liberty University  
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on the impact of college readiness programs on Black students' completion of college programs. You were selected as a possible participant because of your prior participation in a college readiness program. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Tony Ryals, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this intrinsic multiple case study is to investigate the impact of college readiness programs on the persistence of Black college graduates. The theory guiding this study is John Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design. This theory will be used to determine the motivation of former college readiness program participants and their persistence to college completion. Keller's ARCS model of motivational design will act as the framework of this research to answer the research questions: How does participation in a college readiness program impact participant persistence through college and how do participants describe their motivation as it relates to persisting through college?

**Procedures:** If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Share brief demographic information (*age, degree received, college readiness program site*)
2. Participate in a 60-90 minute face-to-face or virtual, audio-recorded interview about your college readiness program experience.
3. If selected, participate in a 30-45 minute online focus group. The focus group will be approximately ten prompts to delve deeper into your college readiness experience. You will have three weeks to answer the prompts in detail.
4. Review transcription of interviews and focus group documents to verify and/or modify content.

**Risks:**

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

**Benefits:**

Benefits to society include providing an understanding of the impact of college readiness programs on Black college graduates.

**Compensation:**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private, which includes all interview and focus group responses. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. All digital records will be stored on a password protected computer and a securely kept flash drive. After three years all transcribed data will be destroyed. Selected participants for the focus group must agree to not share responses with individuals outside the focus group. Pseudonyms will be used as a way to maintain participant anonymity.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Tony Ryals. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [tryals1@liberty.edu](mailto:tryals1@liberty.edu). If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

---

Signature of Participant

Date