Comparison of Students Enrolled in an Alternative Academic Program With Regularly Enrolled Students in a Research I University.

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UMI
COMPARISON OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN AN ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM WITH REGULARLY ENROLLED STUDENTS IN A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Vocational Education

by
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December 1998

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to describe an academic program, ACCESS, that was initiated to support entering freshmen students who did not meet the required admission standards for Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. The ACCESS Program offered academic support in the areas of tutoring and special classes for the first 24 credit hours of study. The second part of the study was to compare the academic and personal characteristics of the ACCESS Students to a sample of the same size of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students to determine if differences (personal and academic) existed between the two groups. Participants in the study were 244 ACCESS Students entering LSU in the Fall Semester, 1995 and a sample of 244 Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students entering the university at the same point in time.

A computerized instrument was designed for data collection and analysis. Demographic information that was used was obtained from the admission file (student data base). The demographic information identified the personal characteristics of freshmen students in the study at their time of application to the university. The academic information was retrieved from the academic file (student data base) which identified academic characteristics prior to entering LSU (high school records), and academic characteristics while enrolled at LSU. The areas of investigation were guided by the research objectives of the study.

In describing the two groups of students, ACCESS and a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen, it was found that there were significant differences among the following variables; gender, race, age, and living on or off campus.

Regarding the academic characteristics, it was found that there were significant differences among all the identifiable variables that pertained to the student's high school academic record. Once enrolled at LSU, there were no significant differences between the two groups of students in their first semester GPA, Fall 1995-1996. However, the
ACCESS Students had a significantly lower grade point average and retention percentage for the remaining semesters under investigation. It was recommended that future developmental programs continue past the first 24 credit hours of enrollment. Lengthening the program allows the necessary support and assistance that many students need to get through the most critical time in their academic careers. The researcher also recommends comprehensive assessment for incoming freshmen and a collaborative working alliance with all resources on and off campus.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

An Overview of Remedial and Developmental Education

The philosophy in the United States is that public education, regardless of the level and sophistication, should be open to all (Cross, 1971). In the last 25 years, the open door policy that has characterized higher education has increased the number of underrepresented students. Included in this group are minority students, particularly African American and Hispanic students, low-income students, students with learning disabilities, adult students over the age of 25, and part-time students. These students have joined the ranks of entering first year college students in increasing numbers (Jones & Watson, 1990; Weinman, 1995; Burd, Healy, Lively & Shea, 1996). Shrinking in the enrollment numbers are traditional students, those 18 to 24 years old (Lucas, 1996; Mortenson, 1996). According to The Almanac of Higher Education (1997-1998), traditional students composed approximately 54% of the total number of students enrolled in higher education in 1995. This is a substantial decrease since the early 1950s when traditional students made up the majority of students enrolled in college. The following is a description of the dramatic demographic shifts in higher education:

The overwhelming majority of students going to college in the postwar years were single, attended school full time, lived on a residential campus, and pursued a liberal arts degree program bounded by extensive common core course requirements. Most completed their degrees within four years... Contemporary college students are more apt to divide their time between working and attending school part time, to commute to campus instead of residing in a dormitory or fraternity or sorority house, and to require more than the usual four years to finish their degrees (Lucas, 1996, p. 18).

In 1950, most college enrollments were in the hundreds. However, in 1996, eight out of every ten students in higher education attended a college or university with
more than 10,000 students. Racial composition in higher education has also changed. In 1940, 97% of all college students were white. Figures released by the U.S. Department of Education for the academic year 1994 show that more than one student in five is a minority (Lucas 1996).

A number of studies (Carriuolo, 1994; Richardson, 1997; Walker & Coleman, 1995) have identified minority, low-income, learning disabled and adult students as those students who typically need assistance and remediation in English, reading and math. Without special programs in these academic areas, the doors of higher education would be closed for students who typically "miss the mark" on standardized test scores, in high school grades, or in specified pre-college courses (Tinto, 1996). According to Abraham (1992), the problem of underprepared freshmen students entering colleges and universities is widespread and not restricted to community and four-year colleges, but also "flagship" universities. Furthermore, Abraham asserted that when a college or university admits students with deficiencies, they need to make arrangements for the necessary support. Failure to do this suggested Abraham "questions the institution's integrity and sense of fairness" (p. 17).

Universities throughout the country face the daunting task of assisting unqualified freshman students meet the academic rigors of college life (Tinto, 1987). This challenge to educators, however, is a double-edged sword: maintain the quality and value of a college education while at the same time assisting students who do not meet the admission standards of their college (Stodt, 1987). Remedial and developmental programs, while controversial in their method of delivery, cost, and measures of success, are entrenched in community colleges and four-year colleges and universities throughout the United States (Manno, 1996).

What is remedial and developmental education, particularly as it relates to higher education? Carriuolo (1994) described remediation, "as a term that suggests that skills
have been taught, but not learned (or not learned correctly), ...therefore, the student must be retaught” (p. B1). Educators recognize that remedial education encompasses the most important, basic skills that have traditionally been held in high regard - the three “Rs” - reading, writing and arithmetic. Conversely, developmental education is seen as teaching students skills and information that they have not learned. There are many educators who see developmental programs as an effective strategy for compensation and believe that the ability of the student should not be questioned, but rather the preparation by the previous educational programs (Carriuolo, 1994).

Not all of the blame for students’ poor performance in college, however, is placed at the door of higher education. The report, “A Nation at Risk,” painted an embarrassing picture of the poor academic performance of United States (U. S.) elementary and secondary school students. Since that devastating revelation, many attempts have been made to improve the weak performance of students in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984). However, the results have been less than rewarding. For example, recently released data reported that American high school seniors scored below the international average in the areas of science and math in the 1994-1995 school year. Out of the 21 countries’ high schools participating in the study, only students from Cyprus and South Africa scored below the American students. Weak graduation requirements and unqualified teachers were to blame for the American high school students’ low score (Greene, 1996). In a similar study conducted in 1990, American students ranked seventeenth among other highly industrialized nations (Markus & Zeitlin, 1993). Given the substantial amounts of money spent on education as a whole, the public, in particular legislators and taxpayers, are disappointed in the weak performance of American students. As a consequence, the Public Agenda Foundation in 1994 reported that the American people rate the mediocre educational system as their number one concern (Manno, 1997).
**Importance of a College Degree**

In spite of the poor performance of high school students, jobs are abundant and located in rural and urban areas throughout the United States. In the high technology industries, job openings have been phenomenal. For example, in Silicon Valley alone, there were an additional 50,000 job openings for 1996 according to Brand (1997). Brand also reported a substantial increase in job opportunities at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. As the millennium fast approaches, in an age of electronic information and immediate communication, the importance of having a college degree is paramount (Finn & Manno, 1996). Heightened global competition has encouraged rapid changes in industry and business. According to the 1996-97 edition of the U. S. Department of Labor’s *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, jobs requiring the most education and training are experiencing the fastest growth in availability and pay. Occupations which require a four-year degree or more will average a 23% increase in growth rate. This is twice the growth rate as those jobs requiring less than a bachelor’s degree. Most jobs that pay above average wages will go to applicants who have a bachelor’s degree or better, and jobs requiring the least amount of education will offer the lowest salaries (U. S. Department of Labor, 1996).

One model that has valued the importance of higher education is the Human Capital Theory. The premise of the Human Capital Theory is that earning power is directly related to an individual’s level of education. Sweetland (1996) pointed to education as the basic ingredient of the Human Capital Theory: it is an investment that increases overall prosperity. Not only does education provide economic benefits to individuals and their families, but it also provides benefits to our schools, our communities and all other areas of our society (Sweetland, 1996). Mortenson (1997) conducted research that echoed the paradigm of the Human Capital Theory. Both the findings of Sweetland (1996) and Mortenson (1997) indicated decisively that people with
a more formal education live better than those without one. Research supported the following tenets:

- Individuals live in families, and family welfare is improved by the educational attainment of the adults who head the family.
- Families live in communities, and the welfare of the communities is improved with the educational attainment of the heads of families.
- Communities become villages and towns and cities, and these too are improved by the level of educational attainment among the adults who lead them.
- States consist of the individuals, families, communities and cities where these people live, and by most measures states with higher levels of educational attainment have higher living standards than do states with lower living standards.
- The country consists of the 50 states, and so too is the welfare of the country determined substantially by the educational attainment of its citizens (Post-Secondary Education Opportunity, 1997, p. 1).

**Profile of Remedial and Developmental Education in the United States**

Remedial and developmental programs in higher education are crucial for the increasing number of students who are not academically prepared for college (Hayes, 1995). In 1995, approximately 12 million students were enrolled in undergraduate education in the United States, the largest number in our history (The Almanac of Higher Education, 1997-1998). The same report cited that 54.5% of the students fell into the traditional age group category (18-24 year olds), and non-traditional students, those older than 24 years, comprised 44.6% of the total number of students in higher education. To accommodate the large number of non-traditional students enrolling in institutions of higher education, 78% of colleges and universities offer courses in at least one remedial area: math, English, or writing. The majority of remedial and developmental courses are commonly taught at community colleges. Not surprisingly, almost 99% of public two-year colleges offer remedial courses in each subject area (Greene, 1996). Many educators believe that the purpose and mission of community colleges are more flexible than most four-year colleges. Historically, community colleges have supported the philosophy and
practice of developmental education (Adelman, 1996; Hayes 1995; Tomlinson 1989). In spite of this defined role for community colleges, Adelman (1996) reported that in 1995, 78% of four-year universities offered courses and programs in this area. For the same academic year, the U. S. General Accounting Office (1997) reported the number of four-year colleges engaged in remedial and developmental programs was as high as 81%.

In examining the role and mission of various colleges, the faculty, and cost involved, much concern has been raised about providing support services for underprepared freshmen at four-year colleges. Recognizing the difficulty of providing remedial education at four-year colleges and universities, the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education has recommended selective requirements in their state schools' admission policies. Students "who do not meet the new requirements can make up only 10% of the freshman class" (Whitfield, 1992). The question that needs answering is, are colleges obligated to offer the assistance that a large percentage of students need to succeed in school? In spite of the debate about whether to provide such services to assist unqualified students, remedial and developmental programs exist in approximately 80% of all colleges and universities in the country (Boyer, 1990; Manno, 1996).

Tomlinson (1989) reported that remedial and developmental programs have increased dramatically in the last few years and will continue to increase well into the 21st century. For example, between the years 1990-91, 89% of all four-year colleges and 93.8% of all two-year colleges offered remedial or tutorial instruction. Ten years prior, 78.9% of all four-year colleges and 83.8% of all two-year colleges were delivering remediation programs or courses (U. S. Digest of Education Statistics, 1991). According to Abraham (1992), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) reported that over 90% of the public and 70% of the private institutions under their umbrella had programs in place to help underprepared freshmen students. Usually these courses are more
expensive than those that are not in the remedial or developmental category, because they involve a multitude of resources. In 1995, there were approximately 30,000 faculty members teaching remedial courses: this averaged out to 15 faculty members per institution. Instructional support is not the total personnel involved in such programs. Other support include tutors, counselors, advisors and administrators, raising this figure to 45,000 professionals engaged in learning assistance programs. That figure represents approximately 10% of the total faculty in the United States (Boylan, 1997). Manno (1996) in his highly critical article, "The Swamp of College Remedial Education," identified the hidden costs, which include, but are not limited to, counseling, tutoring, testing, and general support services. There is little doubt that the expense and time involved in teaching remedial and developmental courses is significant. The smaller states in the SREB pay anywhere from eight to nine million dollars per year while the larger states cite expenditures as high as 120 million dollars per year for remedial programs (Abraham, 1992).

**Controversy Surrounding Remedial Programs**

In addition to the high price attached to remedial/developmental programs, there is concern from the public regarding the accelerating cost of higher education in general. Not only educators, but parents and students fear that the value of a college degree is inflated, and that some graduates are not adequately prepared for the needs of the workplace (Brand, 1997). According to The Almanac of Higher Education (1997), only 20% of faculty at four-year public colleges report that "most students are well prepared academically" (p. 29). In the same survey, only 12.1% of faculty at two year public colleges believe that "most students are well-prepared academically" (p. 29). With intense pressure to assess the undergraduate education, one important question that surfaces over and over again is the ability of colleges to raise standards and remediate at the same time. Educators such as Reising (1995) and Manno (1996) suggest that these two objectives
appear to be in direct conflict with each other. They argue that remediation cannot be successfully accomplished at colleges that have selective admission requirements.

Not only are educators not satisfied that four-year colleges and universities can successfully remediate students at four-year colleges, there is a growing number of consumers, and legislators in particular, who view remediation in higher education as a waste of time and money. The opposition points to the growing evidence that many colleges are teaching course content that should have been taught to students while they were in high school. Fiscally concerned taxpayers and legislators see this as paying twice for the same product (Alicea, 1996). This movement toward accountability has raised questions about the value and efficacy of remedial programs. As a consequence, educators in some states want to be more selective in their admission standards. Officials are even considering requiring high schools to pay for the remediation cost in higher education (Lively, 1993).

According to Burd (1996), four states, Florida, Nebraska, South Carolina, and Virginia, prohibit any remedial courses at their four-year universities. By the 21st century, Georgia and California will join their ranks. Massachusetts will allow a small number of under prepared students, only 5%, to enter four-year institutions. Selective admission universities in the state of Missouri do not have any remedial courses, and do not allow access to those who need remediation. Four-year students in the states of Oregon and Oklahoma will be assessed additional tuition for remedial courses. At least 61% of private universities include some form of remediation in their curricula. Even Columbia University offers remedial courses for students whose “writing and verbal skills are not adequate for immediate placement in Logic and Rhetoric” (Yaffe, 1998, p. 1). Proponents of remedial and developmental education, according to Yaffe, ask if an Ivy League university such as Columbia can support students who need special help, why cannot state schools do the same?
Limited research has been conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of remedial and developmental education. Kulik, Kulik, and Shwalb (1983) investigated grade point averages of students involved in a developmental program and compared them to students not participating in such a program. The investigators found small differences in higher grade point averages for students in the special program. Boylan (1983) surveyed developmental students at 14 different four-year universities. In reporting grade point averages, Boylan found no difference between students who were in the experimental and control groups. The U. S. General Accounting Office (1983) in their investigation of ten developmental programs in 1982, found little differences in cumulative grade point averages between students who were involved in such programs and those who had the option of not participating.

In summary, serious and timely questions have been raised about the effectiveness and cost of remedial and developmental education particularly when housed in four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Much of this dissatisfaction expressed by the public and legislators comes at a time when programs in higher education are under a microscope to determine institutional effectiveness. Colleges are responding to this concern by limiting and even terminating remedial/developmental programs.

Remediation in the State of Louisiana

The typical 18 year old college student in Louisiana, who enrolled in a remedial or developmental program, fell into one or more of the following four categories: (1) did not take a college preparatory curriculum, (2) did not take a college mathematics course during their senior year, (3) had below-average grades or, (4) passed a weak preparatory curriculum in a school with a history of lowered standards (Board of Regents, 1996a). Although the number of Louisiana students taking remedial/developmental courses has demonstrated a small decline in the last few years, Louisiana still remains higher than the southern average (Board of Regents, 1997b).
A college degree is more important in employment security, advancement, and salary than it was three years ago. In Louisiana, a state that has one of the lowest number of college graduates and a high poverty rate, the quality of higher education is crucial in helping students compete in the fast-paced technological arena (Board of Regents, 1997a). The educational history of Louisiana is unique from many other states, certainly neighboring states, in that it has not offered a comprehensive community college system to help students prepare for four-year universities and colleges. This has prompted all Louisiana institutions of higher education to offer remediation, retention or learning assistance programs at their colleges and universities, even at the state's flagship university, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge (Board of Regents, 1997a). In 1997, the Louisiana Legislature, in an attempt to broaden access for the citizens of their populist state, approved a system of community colleges (The Almanac of Higher Education, 1997-98). The fuel for this piece of legislation was the dismal graduation rates in colleges and universities throughout the state and also the need for job skills training. The doors of the first community college were opened in the state capital, Baton Rouge, in the Fall of 1998-99. This comes at a time when published reports of ACT scores in Louisiana are some of the lowest in the country. Unfortunately, the ACT scores reported for the year 1996 are lower than they were five years ago (Thomas, 1998). Furthermore, the 45% of Louisiana students applying to the thirty-six institutions of higher education in Louisiana come from families that report incomes below $20,000 a year (Board of Regents, 1997a). Of the fifteen member states of the Southern Regional Education Board, Louisiana is ranked second to Mississippi as having the poorest population. In light of this dismal report, the need for remediation is heightened in order to increase enrollments and provide access to higher education for many Louisiana students. Thomas (1998) reported that poor reading skills are a concern for high school students, their parents and educators. Recent high school graduates in Louisiana are
reading at the 6th and 7th grade level. Proponents of remediation believe it makes good business sense to assist students in areas of math, English and certainly reading. Cities, stated Thomas, with low literacy rates are less likely to attract new business to their areas. New businesses help strengthen the economy which in turn, strengthens the school system. The Board of Regents in 1997 reported the number of first-time freshmen enrolled in developmental education by each academic institution. The institutions in higher education are divided according to the following governing boards, the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors (the LSU System), The Southern University Board of Supervisors, and the Board of Trustees (see Appendix A). The Board of Regents supports the tenet that special programs directed at retention and remediation have the potential to offer students the intellectual and social skills necessary to become productive, working adults (Board of Regents, 1997a).

**Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge**

Designated by the Louisiana Board of Regents as Louisiana’s only comprehensive university, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge (LSU), is involved in multipurpose and quality programs that relate to instruction, research, and teaching. This recognition is also valued by the Carnegie Foundation which classifies LSU as a Research I University ([LSU Catalog, 1997-98](#)). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1987 defined a Research I University as:

... a university that offers a full range of baccalaureate programs, are (sic) committed to graduate education through the doctorate, and give high priority to research. They (sic) award 50 or more doctoral programs each year. In addition, they (sic) receive annually 40 million or more in federal support (Boyer, 1990, p. 129).

Of the 3,706 institutions of higher education in the United States, only 59 public and 29 private universities in the country share this Research I designation. In addition, LSU is one of 24 other universities that are designated as both a land-grant and sea-grant institution. LSU’s admission requirements are selective and “designed to ensure that
students who show promise of academic success are admitted to the university” (LSU Catalog 1997-98, p. 35).

With an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students, the task is not easy for a large, comprehensive university as LSU to ensure the quality of its undergraduate education (LSU Admission Facts, 1998). Adding to this difficulty is a predicted growing number of high school students in Louisiana expected to enter college a year or more after high school (Board of Regents 1997b). Large classes, minimum interaction with faculty, the general bureaucracy of registration, classes taught by graduate assistants, or part-time, adjunct faculty, and Lastly, a mission that focuses on research over teaching, are some of the criticisms of large, public universities. Alarmingly, these are the same issues and problems that are addressed throughout the literature that contribute to low retention rates on college campuses (Astin, 1996; Tinto, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

The ACCESS Program

In 1988, as LSU began the process of closing its door to students who did not meet certain academic criteria, many high school students were denied access to Louisiana’s flagship university. In an attempt to consider students who were not meeting a section of the university admission criteria, the LSU Faculty Senate passed a resolution to help marginal students gain provisional admission to LSU. The LSU ACCESS Program was officially authorized by the LSU Board of Supervisors for the fall of 1994. With the endorsement of the Faculty Senate, a task force was established to formulate specific policies and procedures. These requirements differed from those in place for regular admission (see Appendix 3).

Students who do not meet one or more of the requirements for admission may be considered for enrollment in the ACCESS Program. If selected by the admission panel for the ACCESS Program, the student is offered provisional admission. The student, upon entering LSU, signs a contract with the university to follow ACCESS policies and
procedures (see Appendix C). For example, s/he is required to complete at least 24 hours of selected course work, which consists of the University's General Education Courses. Upon completion of the 24 hours or more (including six hours of English and three hours of math), and a 2.0 cumulative or higher grade point average (GPA), the student may transfer into the University as a regularly admitted student. Students who do not achieve a cumulative 2.0 grade point average (GPA) on the 24 credit hours in ACCESS, or do not satisfactorily complete the required English courses and math course, are allowed to enroll for an additional six hours in the summer. If after the summer session, the required GPA is not attained, the student will not be allowed to continue their enrollment at LSU.

The ACCESS Program is only available to freshman students who are Louisiana residents and who have no prior accumulation of college credits (another program is available for adult students returning to college). Selection of ACCESS Students is made by the office of undergraduate admissions. Indicators for admission include:

- Track record in secondary school as indicated by GPA, teacher/counselor recommendation, and course selection recorded on high school transcripts
- ACT scores
- Applicant's personal statement

Once accepted into ACCESS, students are not eligible to participate in student activities. Examples of those organizations or activities that students would not be allowed to join are the LSU Band, any sport activity that is sponsored by the National Collegiate Sports Association, fraternities, sororities, and most professional and academic organizations. ACCESS Students offered scholarships for participation in ROTC or the LSU Band would not be allowed to accept the scholarship until successful completion of the ACCESS Program.
The policy further states that “courses offered to ACCESS Students will match the academic rigor of course work generally at LSU” (LSU Board of Supervisor’s Minutes, 1994, p. 9). Intentionally, ACCESS classes are small, with a low student-teacher ratio. Regularly admitted students are not allowed in any ACCESS classes, and ACCESS Students are not allowed in regular classes. Faculty for these special general education courses are selected by their department heads, and are compensated with funds that are generated by ACCESS tuition. Approximately half of the faculty are adjunct and are appointed only to teach ACCESS Students. The ACCESS Program is funded in total through the tuition paid by their students. An ACCESS Resolution, Summary and Working Outline was developed to guide the program through policy development and implementation (see Appendix D).

Statement of the Problem

Today, remedial and developmental education is an essential part of community colleges, four-year universities, and even flagship universities. Numerous factors describe successful completion of the first year by students enrolled in retention and special programs. University administrators and state legislators are realizing the long term investment that their states gain when freshman students complete such programs. To ensure successful completion of programs by students with special needs, colleges have initiated active remedial and developmental programs. Since retention and developmental education programs use a substantial amount of funds at a time when education is reviewed under the microscope, it is essential that these programs are evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness.

The ACCESS Program, approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors in 1994, stated the outcome should “enhance the university to better serve the people of Louisiana by providing increased access to baccalaureate programs” (LSU Board of Supervisors Minutes, 1994, p. 9). In order to accommodate students who did not meet the required
admission criteria, ACCESS Students were offered remedial classes (when indicated), mandatory placement in academic courses, after-class tutoring, a counselor designated for ACCESS Students only, and an English writing laboratory.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the academic success of the ACCESS Program, a special developmental and retention program, in the General College at LSU. This study sought to determine whether any differences existed in academic achievement and retention between the students enrolled in the ACCESS Program and Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students during the semesters of investigation: Fall, 1995-96; Spring, 1996; Fall, 1996-97; and Spring, 1997. In addition, the study will compare students enrolled in the ACCESS Program to Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students on selected personal and academic characteristics.

Objectives

The following objectives guided the study:

• Describe students enrolled in an academic readiness/remediation program, ACCESS, on the following selected demographic and academic measures:
  a) Age
  b) Gender
  c) Ethnicity
  d) ACT scores
  e) Overall high school grade point average (GPA)
  f) Academic high school grade point average (GPA)
  g) Completed academic units
  h) Home parish
  i) Whether they reside on or off campus their freshmen year

• Describe a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students on the same selected demographic and academic measures listed in Objective 1.
• Compare a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program to a sample of regularly enrolled freshman on the above selected demographic and academic characteristics.

• Determine whether or not the ACCESS Students returned to college at three points in time:
  a) The beginning of Spring 1996.
  c) The beginning of Spring 1997.

• Determine the cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program at four points in time:
  a) The end of Fall 1995-1996.
  b) The end of Spring 1996.
  d) The end of Spring 1997.

• Determine whether or not the sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students returned to college at three points in time.
  a) The beginning of Spring 1996.

• Determine the cumulative GPA of a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students at four points in time.
  a) The end of Fall 1995-1996.
  b) The end of Spring 1996.
  d) The end of Spring 1997.
• Compare whether or not the ACCESS Students returned to college to a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students at three points in time:
  a) The beginning of Spring 1996.
  c) The beginning of Spring 1997.

• Compare the cumulative GPA of ACCESS Students to a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students at four points in time:
  a) The end of Fall 1995-1996.
  b) The end of Spring 1996.
  d) The end of Spring 1997.

Significance of the Study

This study represents one of the first opportunities to conduct a cohort study that will determine whether there is an impact of an academic preparedness program on the retention and academic achievement of college students at a Carnegie Research I University. There is a new era of responsiveness developing between higher education and the public. Although there appears to be some uncertainty about the description and measure of this responsiveness or accountability, it is clear that employers, legislators, parents, and students are demanding that higher education demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs. At a time when colleges and universities are asking for increased support, legislators are demanding quid pro quo. They want results that prove college programs are effective, and that graduates can demonstrate competent skills in the world of work. This study should provide useful results of a program that allows underprepared students an opportunity to gain provisional admission to the state’s “flagship university.” With this provisional admission come expectations that the students will gain the necessary resources and empowerment to be successful upon graduation and become
productive citizens of Louisiana. This research is also important because it should provide insight into a remediation program that has enrolled students who would not have had the opportunity to attend a selective admission university. This research should strengthen the body of knowledge in developmental education, and serve as a model and resource for other practitioners or administrators investigating a problem in the field of developmental/remedial education.

Limitations of the Study

Generalizations from this study to another group or population is limited because the target population of the study is restricted to a cohort of 244 full-time students enrolled in a remediation/retention program with certain demographics and academic characteristics. In particular, generalization is limited because distribution of age is not typical of most colleges and university freshman students. This group does not reflect the substantial number of older students, approximately 40%, returning to college, nor does it represent out-of-state students or international students.

Definition of Terms

- Academic performance was determined by the student's cumulative grade point average (grade point scale is 0 to 4.0), using all credit hours and grade points earned except for remedial courses and placement hours.

- ACCESS Students are LSU students, provisionally accepted, who lack meeting one or more of the selective admission criteria.

- The Board of Trustees is the governing board for all universities and colleges not under the Southern or LSU System.

- Compensatory Education takes the form of remediation activities such as preparatory and supplemental work.
• Cumulative Grade Point Average uses credit hours from the initial date of entry to present status.

• Developmental Education is a term that originally developed from college advisors and faculty members in education departments, which sought to promote growth in both the academic and personal areas. This term implies that everyone has strengths and talents in some areas and need help in others. It is teaching students information and skills they have not learned.

• Dropout indicates a student who leaves an institution of higher education before completing his or her degree.


• Fall 1996-1997 means the first academic semester, beginning in August, 1996 and ending in November, 1996.

• Full-time Enrollment is registration in a minimum of 12 college credit hours or more per regular semester.

• Highly Selective Admission describes approximately 50 universities across the country which reject more applicants than they accept because of certain highly selective admission requirements.

• Land-Grant Colleges began in 1862 when Congress originally mandated the Morrill Act which provided federal funds for colleges or universities in each state. This legislation led to the establishment of the land-grant college network.

• The Louisiana Board of Regents is the governing board for all institutions of higher education in the state of Louisiana.
• The LSU Board of Supervisors is the governing board for all universities and colleges under the umbrella of the LSU system.

• Open Admission is a policy wherein colleges accept students with the minimum of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

• Part-time Enrollment is registration in nine or less credit hours per semester.

• Persistence is full time enrollment for at least three consecutive academic terms.

• Regularly Admitted Freshmen Students are Louisiana residents who graduated from high school in 1993, 1994 or 1995, have no prior college grade point average and have been admitted to LSU for the academic year 1995-96.

• Remediation is 1) a term that suggests that skills have been taught, but not learned (or not learned correctly) and, therefore, the student must be retaught, 2) implies a more limited approach toward the student, and has primarily described programs that focus on correcting specific skill deficits.

• Research I Universities is a classification used by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching which defines the university as having a full range of baccalaureate of programs, are committed to graduate education through the doctorate, and gives a high priority to research. These schools offer 50 or more doctorates each year and receive 40 million dollars in annual federal support.

• Retention is successful continuation of students from one semester to the next with graduation as the defined objective.

• Selective Admission means 50-90% of the applicants are accepted. Approximately 200 colleges and universities across the country fall into this category. LSU engages in a selective admission policy.
• The Southern Board of Supervisors is the governing board for all universities and colleges under the umbrella of the Southern system.

• Spring 1996 means the second academic semester, beginning in January, 1996 and ending in May, 1996.

• Spring 1997 means the second academic semester, beginning in January, 1997 and ending in May, 1997.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will present a review of relevant literature beginning with a historical and philosophical perspective of special programs that involve retention, developmental or learning assistance in higher education. Following the historical perspective is a focus on the transitions that have influenced the direction of higher education during the later part of the 20th century: assessment, accountability and performance indicators, improving the quality of undergraduate education, technology, and budget constraints. The importance of student retention is visited along with research findings that support positive programs. Also addressed are the problems and issues that have plagued K-12 education with a description of students who are identified as high risk, in particular, minority students. Lastly, the effectiveness of various remediation programs in the country will be explained. In conclusion, the reader will be directed to the theories of leading retention/developmental education specialists that have contributed to the development of successful programs.

Historical Perspective

The role of history in higher education is critical as it can guide educators and administrators in the difficult task of organizing and delivering well-managed programs. The evolution of special programs to help students with academic difficulties, according to Dr. Hunter Boylan, Director of the National Center for Developmental Education, began in 1849 at the University of Wisconsin (Lively, 1995). In 1874, the faculty at Harvard University developed and administered special English classes that addressed deficiencies for incoming freshmen students. The deficiencies of students at Harvard included, but were not limited to, incomplete sentences, inaccurate spellings, and grammar mistakes (Brier, 1996). Other newly established colleges were not immune to the academic problems that faced Harvard. Vassar, Amherst, and Williams were
originally founded for those students who could not afford the higher tuition costs at Harvard and Yale (Brier, 1984). According to Brubacker and Rudy (1976), the faculty soon found out that students of lesser means were not adequately prepared for college and needed academic assistance. By 1889, according to Canfield (1889), 80% of American colleges and universities had established remedial and developmental programs. Unfortunately, for the next one hundred years this percentage has remained steady. In 1907, embarking on a new era of competitiveness for students, Columbia University in New York and Yale University in Connecticut accepted over half of their entering students knowing that these students did not meet the expected entrance requirements (Brubacker & Rudy, 1976). University administrators at both prestigious colleges lowered their admission standards in order to fill their freshman class. Comprehensive remediation programs in math, English, reading and writing were established in the United States in the 1920s (Parr, 1930). Historically, various terms have been used to describe and identify under prepared freshmen students. The following terms used to describe students who typically need assistance and support in higher education are enmeshed in the educational literature; “disadvantaged,” “non-traditional,” “high risk,” “developmental student,” “remedial student,” and “new student” (Markus & Zeitlin, 1993; Cross, 1971; Casazza & Silverman, 1966).

As a result of World War II and the subsequent passage of the G.I. Bill, men and women of all ages were offered assistance in seeking access to institutions of higher education. The emergence of non-traditional students in colleges and universities throughout the United States began during this time in history (Eliot, 1969). This trend has continued over the decades and reflects two important transitions that have occurred in U.S. society. Firstly, the U.S. is rapidly moving to a fast-paced, highly technological economy with employees requiring retraining and reeducation. Secondly, many adults in our society have experienced role changes and personal transitions in their lives that have
spurred them to return to colleges and universities to improve their lives (Kerr, 1994). According to The Almanac of Higher Education (1997-1998), students 25 and older constitute 49.7% of the total college enrollment. Adult students, who make up almost half of the student population, sometimes struggle in their efforts to compete in such courses as algebra and trigonometry, computer science and physics. In addition, these same students may have difficulty in such courses because those subjects were not taught in high school; or, at the time of graduation, they were not interested in attending college and did not take college preparatory courses (Carriuolo, 1994). Remediation in the areas of math and science is necessary to their academic success.

The "open door" admission policy encourages and promotes equal access for many students in higher education. This policy became popular during the 1970s with the passage and enforcement of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the War on Poverty which began in the 1960s (Cross, 1971). Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the most inclusive piece of civil rights legislation for the disabled, the Americans with Disability Act, 1990, support equal access and the providing of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The number of students entering colleges and universities with disabilities, i.e., learning, physical and psychological, has increased significantly in the last decade (Mortenson, 1996). In addition to disabled students and older non-traditional students returning to school, students who had previously been underrepresented, such as African Americans, women, and part-time students are now applying and being accepted to colleges in large numbers (Black Issues in Higher Education, 1997a). Because of this increased number of students from underrepresented groups, many colleges and universities are reporting record-setting enrollments for the Fall of 1998-99 (Crissey, 1997).

A review of history shows that a wide range of institutions have offered some type of academic assistance for students since the early 1800s. According to Casazza and
Silverman (1996), this awareness can help educators, administrators and the public realize the dynamics of higher education and the students that are served.

**Philosophical Influences in Higher Education**

Woven in the educational philosophy of the United States are two distinct models of education. One is the traditional model, a model that has been guiding higher education since the 1700s. The study of classical languages and literature was the main focus of early educators (Lucas, 1996). The elitists of American society governed and participated in the early colleges (Foner and Garraty, 1991). The traditional model focused on maintaining a high quality of education particularly in the vein of idealism and classical philosophy. Educators from the traditionalist school argued that in order to keep standards high, colleges and universities had to be selective in their choice of students. Traditionalists also believed the individual should take the responsibility for succeeding or failing at a university. The Traditionalist’s Principle of Self Determination was echoed in the mission of such highly prestigious colleges such as Harvard and Yale (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

In contrast, the Reconstructionist or Reformist model emerged on the educational scene during the late 1960s. This paradigm of education moved away from the traditional liberal arts model to one that embraced agriculture and technology. The Morrill Act of 1862 established agricultural and mechanical colleges and stipulated that education be directly tied to the economy. The Act also emphasized academic as well as practical subjects (Foner & Garraty, 1991). As more diverse groups of students were attracted to colleges of higher education, Cross (1971) urged higher education officials to evaluate and appreciate the needs of the non-traditional students entering the world of post-secondary education. These students are described as those who “often rank in the lowest third of their high school and having little, if any, confidence, that they can succeed at college” (Cross, 1971, p. 18). Many of them were the first in their families to seek a
college degree. The "new students," as coined by Cross in 1971, came from a wide range of socioeconomic levels as well as various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, women and older students were among the "new students" attending college. Future projections continue to show that the traditional, white and middle class college students who for so long have dominated enrollment figures are being replaced by a student population that is more economically and racially diverse (Black Issues in Higher Education, 1997).

The educational philosophy of Reconstructionism, a contemporary and progressive reform, supports the belief in diversity and access in higher education for all students regardless of age, gender, race, and socioeconomic background. Education experts, such as Devarics (1994), stated that remedial or developmental education is the important link that allows many students access to higher education. Higher education, in this day and age, according to Devarics, is the gatekeeper for many desirable jobs. Furthermore, education has the power to break the cycle of poverty for many students if they are given the opportunity to attend college, and are provided with the necessary resources to be successful (Devarics, 1994).

Casazza and Silverman (1996) reported that colleges, once they have admitted students, have a responsibility to assess students who need help, and offer them the developmental support needed for academic success. Dr. Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1990), recognized that diversity "brings with it important new obligations" (p. 76). Colleges and universities are challenged every day to respond to the increasingly varied group of students who have special needs as well as special strengths. According to Boyer (1990), there is a growing awareness on the part of faculty and administrators that their obligations extend beyond the traditional classroom walls.
In summary, tension and conflict have always existed within the philosophies of education. Traditionalists and many of their elitist views regarding the standards of classical education have influenced policies of higher education since the beginning of our nation. However, the traditional model of education has been challenged by the reformist and reconstructionist who believe education should open their doors to all. Finally, the reformists believe it is extremely important to provide the necessary academic support to maximize the potential of all students (Friedlander, 1981).

Emerging on the educational scene is the demand by the public for educational effectiveness and accountability for student learning (Mortimer & Edwards, 1990). This cry for accountability has led to some major transitions in higher education (Lawson, 1994).

Transitions in Higher Education

When Adam walked with Eve in the Garden of Eden, he was overheard to say (presumably by the angel who just arrived with the flaming sword), “You must understand, my dear, that we are living through a period of transition” (Gray, 1951, p. 213).

Higher education has experienced major movements in the last 20 years that have led to fundamental changes in the planning and delivery of education (Berube & Nelson, 1995; Stauffer, 1981; Sinnott & Johnson, 1996). The literature reflects several prominent occurrences: (1) the recent criticisms regarding the value of undergraduate education with plans to improve its quality and delivery, (2) accountability, which includes internal and external assessments and performance indicators, (3) budget constraints (Giley, Fulmer & Reithlingshoefer, 1986; Halpern, 1987; Ewell, 1987; Gaither, Nedwek & Neal, 1995) and, 4) the emergence of high technology. The importance of providing students with a quality undergraduate education is now a paramount issue with taxpayers, legislators, and educators. Finn and Manno (1996) reported that over half of the college graduates who
participated in a 1993 survey could not change a ten dollar bill without making mistakes. Nor were they able to read a map or a bus schedule. Employers have complained that college graduates lack basic skills in math and writing, and that companies spend additional money on in-service and educational training to compensate for the employees' lack of education (Haworth, 1998 & Cappelli, 1992).

**Assessment of Undergraduate Education**

While professionals in academia understand that large comprehensive research universities derive their reputation as research universities from the large number of grants, publications and graduate programs secured by an institution, not many people in the public arena are familiar with this policy (Ross & Barfield, 1995). Students, their parents, legislators, and employers are primarily concerned with effective teaching and learning that leads to successful employment. They are not always impressed with colleges that promote famous graduates or heavily endowed chairs funded by wealthy alumni (Mortimer & Edwards, 1990). Higher education, according to Mortimer and Edwards, has been criticized because it has lost sight of the value of a quality undergraduate education. When colleges focus on star faculty, star students (merit scholars), and famous and wealthy alumni, a large number of average, but talented and promising students, are excluded (Astin, 1993).

Lucas (1996) found that fueling the public's concern for quality education is the criticism that has been launched against faculty by the media, accusing them of not adequately teaching, while promoting themselves for tenure, a lifetime of self-serving employment. The following is a statement provided by Representative Patricia Shroeder during her tenure as Chairperson, Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, testifying before an educational committee:

Cutting through all of the "excellence" and "quality" rhetoric reveals one very clear point: the focus in higher education today is on research, not teaching. This fact has not been lost on the professors. If you don't believe me, go ask one yourself.
However, don’t look for a professor in a classroom; it’s unlikely you’ll find one (Boyer, 1992, p. 19).

While recognition and value are attached to research universities, particularly those ranked by the Carnegie categories in higher education, changes have begun across the country at all academic levels to examine “how and how much students learn” in higher education. A special commission to study research universities urged institutions of higher education to assess educational gains at their colleges and universities (Krueger & Heisserer, 1992). In addition, many accrediting bodies along with the National Association of Governors have urged the use of outcome measures in the process of accreditation (Halpern, 1987). Halpern also urged institutions of higher education to measure gains that students make at their institution by using outcome measures.

Outcome assessments differ from the more traditional measures as these assessments allow schools to determine a baseline. It is important in outcome assessments to know how much knowledge students have when they enter the university. Assessment is repeated again at graduation time to see how much progress the students have made over time. According to Halpern (1987), assessment is an effective measure of an institution’s educational productivity that can also be applied to remedial or developmental programs.

Three Major Types of Assessments

Halpern (1987) has identified three major types of assessments that are currently being used in higher education to measure outcome. The first category of assessment is called Program Evaluation. Information is gained from entrance and exit testing, offering faculty and administrators valuable information about the progress of students at their respective institutions. It also allows college and university officials to compare their student’s progress to those in other states. According to Vandament (1987), employing program evaluation techniques will lead to improved programs with better educated students and an improved rate of retention.
Since academic preparation prior to college admission is critical to a student’s success in college, Halpern’s second model provides a gatekeeping function. This model “ensures basic academic competencies in all graduates” (Halpern, 1987, p.7). Halpern praised the successful model, The College-Level Academic Skills Test, initiated by the State of Florida in 1983 as a gatekeeping model. This particular program, according to Ciereszko (1987), has been effective in helping identify students who have entered college underprepared so that academic assistance can be offered. Another program similar to the one in Florida is the Texas Academic Skills Program which was mandated by the Texas legislature in 1987. Its goal is to “identify and assist students who lack the basic skills required for effective performance in their college coursework” (Brattin, 1993, p. 3). The program provides the resources and assistance that are necessary for students to achieve academic success (Brattin, 1993). Both states, Texas and Florida, are also focused on addressing the issue that employers have raised for years, many graduates of higher education are simply not prepared for the world of work.

The third type of outcome assessment focuses on whether or not taxpayers and parents are getting their money’s worth from tuition (Halpern, 1987). These measures are designed to assist in budget and accountability considerations and are directly tied to performance indicators. For example, some colleges, such as the University of Tennessee, are awarded additional funds from their legislature when they demonstrate positive outcomes (Banta, 1988).

**Difficulties in Obtaining Developmental Education Assessments**

Abraham (1992) found that universities and colleges across the country have demonstrated inadequate data collection as it relates to remedial and developmental programs. According to Evangelauf (1990), to examine student retention is to study a complex human behavior. Frequently, the research conducted on such programs is narrow with limited focus and clarity. Educators and administrators incorrectly assume
students drop out of classes because they cannot pass the school work. This assumption may in part be reliable. However, there are other reasons for dropping out of college. One reason could be the unsatisfactory experience students are having at their college. However, in-depth investigative research can take a good deal of effort and time. In many cases, faculty do not have adequate time to devote to educational research, as their responsibilities are divided among teaching, research in their field and service. Always looming overhead is that critical pressure to publish and publish frequently that propels faculty members. In some cases, the demand to give quick research results can deter faculty members from longitudinal, in-depth studies that could possible reveal reliable and comprehensive assessments (Evangelauf, 1990). In spite of the pervasive need for programs for unqualified freshmen students, students who need assistance both academically and socially, higher education has not accepted nor defined remedial or developmental education as a part of its mission, particularly at four-year colleges. In his study of remedial and developmental programs in the SREB, Abraham (1992) found that less than half of the colleges and universities were able to report retention rates for these programs. Evaluations and assessments are critical in higher education as they determine whether or not special programs are successful in their efforts to retain and graduate students in a reasonable amount of time.

The Louisiana Board of Regents, the governing board for higher education in the state of Louisiana, announced in 1997 that they will evaluate all their colleges and universities using various indicators with accreditation of programs as a major criterion (Louisiana Board of Regents, 1997). This method of assessment ties college funding directly to performance. According to the Board of Regents, accountability in higher education in Louisiana is intended to accomplish several tasks:

- Strengthen the quality of higher education
• Enhance the cycle of continuous improvement within and among the state’s colleges and universities

• Inform the governor, legislators, and citizens of higher education activities

• Identify further efforts to better serve Louisiana (p. 15)

Astin (1987) urged colleges to connect their assessment of educational gains to their overall mission, the development of student potential. The terms quality and excellence should not be a reflection of the institution’s resources or reputation, but rather the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Many colleges and universities, according to Astin, are proud and boastful of the competitive rankings published in guidebooks. He reported that these highly competitive colleges fail to recognize that student learning and talent development should be higher education’s most cherished mission. Astin (1987) argued for value-added assessment or “talent based value,” which is defined as “the fullest development of student potential” (p. 95). Also, he encouraged colleges to invest in a “well-established tradition of longitudinal assessment” using the following paradigm:

Be informative rather than adversarial - assessment is primarily used for feedback to increase involvement of both faculty and students. Such assessment is active rather than passive since it is designed to facilitate and improve performance rather than merely to evaluate it. Furthermore, the information gathered is to benefit the parties involved rather than to pass judgment on them.

Build on what you already have - for example admission and placement tests can be used as assessment information, performance, and change.

Be opportunist - institutions should attempt to identify points in the student’s institutional experience where assessments are likely to be least intrusive and most acceptable to the larger academic community.

Be more absolute and less relative - multiple choice tests are used almost universally in colleges, but they do present some problems. They are not always the best way to measure a student’s level of performance. In addition, relative measures do not offer information about a student’s potential for performing well on the job, or how difficult the items were, etc.

Get more from your standardized test - obtain raw scores as well as standardized or derived scores. Such information if available from the testing companies can be valuable in providing additional information (p. 105).

Not all educators are enamored with the idea of assessment as it leads to accountability in higher education. Peters (1994) reported that assessments used for
accountability cast a "regulatory climate" over an environmental milieu that should be receptive to the challenges and excitement of learning. He also contended that the politically correct models of "micro management" and "incentive financing" are creating rules and policies that have the potential to give the federal government the power to control and manipulate higher education. According to Peters (1994), "Accountability as currently conceived cannot win widespread faculty support because it usurps our professional responsibility to decide what and how to teach and evaluate" (p. 3). In his disdain for the new movement of accountability and assessment in the United States, Peters pointed to the regulations that British educators have experienced as a result of accountability. He stated that educators in Great Britain have expressed their total disgust with the policies and regulations that have come with governmental regulated assessment practices. Peters is not alone in his scathing remarks regarding accountability. Ewell (1987) cited the inability of many state educational institutions to produce clear and straightforward indicators that demonstrate improvement. Many indicators, contended Ewell, are ambiguous and data are not easy to interpret. Secondly, Ewell found that some schools do extremely well in attacking the difficult task of self examination, while others, "problem institutions" as he calls them, do not respond well to the challenge of changing the way they do business. The University of Missouri, Columbus campus, has been cited as one institution that has resisted the need to make changes even though other institutions under the same umbrella are making progress in the movement toward accountability (Whitfield, 1992).

In conclusion, there are critics of accountability and assessment among the faculty and administration of higher education (Ewell, 1987). However, in spite of the skepticism, the demand from the public is strong for an assessment of higher education, an accounting of money spent on education, and a connection between classroom learning and the job market (Mortimer and Edwards, 1987). In addition, the literature clearly
supports the longevity of assessment measures as they apply to education, both K-12 and higher education (Bambenck, 1996; Halpern, 1987; Vandament, 1987; Walleri, 1996; Banta, 1988).

**Performance Indicators**

Formula funding is funding based on the number of students enrolled in an institution of higher education. In contrast, performance funding is funding that focuses on outcomes and results and is gaining popularity with the public (Borden & Banta, 1994). Institutional performance is a process of assessment that colleges and universities use to identify and support their mission, their professional, academic and societal obligations (Lucas, 1996). Performance indicators, used to assess university goals and achievements, according to Joy (1997), are identified as, but not limited to, subjective assessments, formative assessments, and value-added assessments. Wirt (1991) stated that performance measures are to “include gains in the mastery of basic and more advanced academic skills, gains in competency in one or more occupational areas, plus retention in school or graduation and subsequent employment” (p. 431). The transition to performance funding has encouraged many universities and colleges to develop and implement performance indicators appropriate to their mission (Banta, 1988). According to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, issues that deal with performance indicators, although complex and at times difficult to measure, have gained positive momentum which will carry on well into the 21st century (El-Khawas, 1996).

The movement to performance indicators and performance funding has come from the public outcry to develop and implement clear priorities that will attain and sustain quality undergraduate education in higher education (Astin, 1987). As early as the 1990s, eighteen states engaged in their own system of assessment (Gauthier, Nedwek & Neal 1995). *The Almanac of Higher Education* (1997-1998) reported that twenty states are
using performance indicators to either enhance or sustain appropriations. Performance indicators for universities and colleges in the south that pertain to graduation, retention, and persistence are in place in nine states: Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia (Borden & Banta, 1992). While an increasing number of states are using performance indicators and expecting a small portion of their budget to be based on performance funding (approximately 10%), the State of South Carolina, according to Schmidt (1997), is planning to ask the legislature to appropriate their entire budget based on performance indicators. Schmidt (1997) believed the message that South Carolina’s Commission on Higher Education is sending to the public is that they intend to spend university money wisely. Their goal is to be “more efficient and more effective” (p. 1). Across the country, programs that demonstrate low enrollments, programs that provide little value or merit, or programs that are duplicated are being deleted (Schmidt, 1997).

**Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education**

Concern from the public, over the last decade, has focused on the quality of undergraduate education in the United States. Still a nation that is envied the world over, doubts have risen about the effectiveness of graduates competing in a challenging and changing global market (Reising, 1995).

The public’s open criticism of higher education is well documented in the literature. Editorials, newspaper articles and popular news magazines point to graduation rates that are low and embarrassing, and remediation programs that are extremely costly with little to show in the way of results (Schmidt, 1997; Sykes, 1988; Kerr, 1994). In a poll conducted by The Washington Post in 1996, Americans surveyed lacked fundamental knowledge about their government and the people elected to run the government. Forty percent of those surveyed did not know the name of the Vice-President of the United States. Others did not know the basic facts about civics and American government
Ravitch, 1996). Ravitch believes these findings send a message to educators and the public that American students are not learning the most important concepts involved in the democratic process. In a recent study, Haworth (1998) found that 52% of college professors reported that freshmen and sophomore students lacked skills they should have learned in high school. The same study found that employers put little faith in the value of high school or college diplomas.

Educators and administrators are concerned that many students, who are inadequately prepared for college, are enrolling in colleges and universities in increasing numbers (Casazza & Silverman, 1995). As a result, remediation and retention programs have emerged on campuses throughout the United States to help those students who are admitted, but are not prepared for the coursework (Lively, 1995). In a ten-year span, 1981-1991, the number of four-year colleges offering remediation programs jumped from 78.9% to 89% (Digest of Educational Statistics, 1991). According to a survey sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation (1994), only 20% of faculty members in higher education believed that their students could handle college level assignments. A condemning report on higher education, “Literacy in America,” blamed the influence of social concerns in undergraduate education. The report argued that academic priorities engaging rigorous standards have taken a back seat to contemporary issues (Murkus & Zeitlin, 1993).

An example of this spiral fall in the quality of higher education is depicted in James Traub’s City on A Hill. It is a vivid portrayal of the City University of New York (CUNY), a once academically strong university, that is now known as one of the largest remedial high school programs in the United States (Manno, 1996). Manno cited the causes as the use of group preferences to determine admission and a weak, watered down, academic curriculum. As a repercussion of the many problems experienced in the System of Universities in New York (SUNY), beginning in the year 2000, all remediation programs and courses will be discontinued. Lucas (1996) blamed educators...
in higher education for many of the problems experienced in recent years. He asserted that academia has insulated itself from the outside world. In addition, he contends that faculty and administrators in higher education have lost touch with the importance of a practical and relevant education. Kerr (1994) stated that research, graduate education, and service are all related to each other, especially at large, research universities. Support for their many endeavors comes from ample libraries, well-equipped and sophisticated laboratories and faculty who are highly specialized. However, according to Kerr, undergraduate education is focused on the individuals involved in the process and can be a difficult task if professors are not skilled in the art of teaching and are heavily involved in research activities.

Another critic of the quality of higher education is Charles Sykes, the author of Profscam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education (1988) and his subsequent work, The Hollow Men: Politics and Corruption in Higher Education (1990). Sykes painted a negative and insensitive portrait of faculty in higher education. Sykes, a journalist, has lashed out at university professors accusing them of being “unapproachable” and “unable to communicate with students.” Sykes portrayed faculty members involvement in research as unproductive, publishing articles and books written in “stupefying and inscrutable jargon.” He, along with other outspoken critics, stated that higher education can no longer stay hidden in its ivory tower. He argued that faculty need to focus on producing and communicating useful knowledge that will benefit the students they teach (Lucas, 1996 p. 84).

Other adverse statements regarding the declining quality of higher education have pointed to the large number of freshman students enrolled in introductory courses (Astin, 1993). Consequentially, these large survey courses are the foundations of others that follow. Critics point out that many of these courses are taught by graduate assistants, who themselves are students and should not be given such a challenging task so early in
their careers. Large classes with a minimum amount of time spent with professors who are considered specialists in their fields have the potential to weaken the quality of undergraduate education. In planning and delivering developmental programs, small classes are critical to the success of such programs. The more interaction students have with professors, the higher the motivation to study (Tinto, 1996).

According to Lucas (1996), another detriment to the quality of undergraduate education is that some faculty members take their teaching responsibilities lightly, while placing the majority of time and energy on their research. He reported that in some cases faculty pursue their own agenda such as consulting jobs and show little interest in their college responsibilities or students. Ross and Barfield (1995) concluded that teaching often takes a back seat to other duties. University administration, particularly research designated schools, often encourage faculty members to “publish or perish.” Research is listed as the number one criterion for continued employment for faculty members at most four-year universities (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Barr and Tagg (1995) stated that faculty need to be encouraged to use their competent research skills to evaluate and improve undergraduate education. In spite of the large amount of research being conducted on four-year college campuses, only a minimum amount of research activity focuses on undergraduate education (Kerr, 1994). McCaughey (1992) argued that research and teaching are compatible and should be done in harmony with each other. However, according to Guskin (1994), professors are hired for their research credentials; colleges are ranked according to their mission and resources, but it is not clear that there is “a straight-line relationship between them and the fact of student learning” (p. 6). Guskin believed that the dynamics between teaching and learning are unexamined. In addition, he reported that seldom do faculty members concern themselves with the various learning styles that are prevalent in the literature and have successfully proved to be effective in helping students learn. Barr and Tagg (1995) reported that faculty members are not
educated to be teachers, nor are they trained to focus on learning styles and multiple intelligence theories. According to Tinto (1990), effective teaching leads to quality instruction which in turn promotes student satisfaction and retention. Other researchers found that effective teaching is strongly related to students’ persistence in college (Astin, 1993; McKeachie, Lin & Sharma, 1990). Astin (1993) identified effective teaching as the most important institutional variable related to student persistence. Finally, although academic counseling by faculty and trained counselors is not usually a high priority of support offered by college administrators, it has been identified as being crucial to students’ success (Tinto, 1996).

Faculty spending time with students is central to student retention and graduation (Pascarella, 1980; Tinto, 1996; Tinto, 1987). Casazza and Silverman (1996) reported the quality of undergraduate education can be enhanced significantly when students have contact with faculty members. Whether the contact is in the classroom, in tutoring sessions, in a mentoring relationship, or during regular office visits, students reported that faculty contact is vital (Stodt, 1987; Barr & Tagg 1995).

In spite of the mounting criticism surrounding teaching in higher education, 60% of the faculty surveyed said that they would rather teach than do research. Two-thirds of the faculty believe teaching effectiveness should be the basis for promotion, not research. In addition, 70% of the faculty expressed a need for a better system to evaluate tenure. Boyer (1990) predicted that positive changes in higher education are possible and are occurring throughout the United States. As an example, he cited the University of Florida’s efforts to recognize outstanding teaching by awarding them $5,000. The awards are offered to those teachers who meet designated criteria, primarily based on the quantity and quality of teaching and are regulated by the faculty, department heads and deans (Boyer, 1990). Many other colleges, such as Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, offer similar incentives for effective teaching.
In summary, there has been recent criticism of higher education, particularly directed at teaching policies, method of delivery and the inadequate outcomes. Critics have openly complained that educators have lost sight of their overall mission to help students learn. There are some signs, however, that there has been a renewed interest on developing positive and innovative measures to assist students in their quest for knowledge.

**Technology in Higher Education**

A revolution in teaching and learning is in the making in higher education. One hallmark of a quality undergraduate education is the university's investment and use of technology. This revolution has impacted not only teaching, but libraries, laboratories, business and administrative offices, and the entire architectural structure of colleges and universities in the United States. Examples of such innovation include teaching laboratories, distance education, hands-on-studios, clusters of small classes, labs, impromptu meeting rooms and the extensive use of computers, particularly the internet and electronic mail. Libraries are emerging as the central computer information center for campuses (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).

In 1995, The American Association for Higher Education began a project to stimulate the interest of professors and administrators in the use of technology. A variety of technological strategies were introduced to help faculty members improve their teaching. One simple method involved the use of electronic mail that allowed faculty and students the freedom to discuss class material outside of the classroom. A more sophisticated method was to provide grants that identified and assisted in the creation of software used to support teaching and learning (Deloughry, 1995).

Technology has even entered the domain of remedial and developmental education. Professionals who have studied the use of technology believe that it can broaden the access to higher education both in terms of cost and productivity (Neal,
Kaplan Educational Centers, a proprietary tutoring company based in the United States, has invested several million dollars in the development of Academic Systems. This new system develops and produces computer software that assists students and teachers in the areas of math, English and reading. Kaplan, along with a competitor, Sylvan Learning Center, has taken over the designing and delivery of developmental courses at more than a dozen colleges. These companies, with the help of computer-assisted technology, offer an effective and cost-efficient way to assist students in their attempt to succeed in college. The results have been positive and more colleges are likely to contract with such companies in the future (Gose, 1997).

While pressure to use technology in higher education is pervasive, not all faculty and administrators are enamored with its pervasive influence. According to Neal (1998), a consultant in the use of technology in higher education, there is a “hysteria” in favor of the use of technology. Those faculty members who do not use technology in their classroom, even if they argue that it is not relevant, are, in some cases, branded by their department heads and deans as “lazy and obtuse” (p. B4).

Although technology and progressive physical facilities are key components in colleges and universities, nothing is more crucial to student learning than a close community of student-oriented faculty and motivated students. A quality undergraduate education is synonymous with competent, dedicated faculty, state of the art equipment, and facilities designed to help students learn more effectively (Fiske & Hammond, 1997).

Budget Constraints

The financial problems facing educators both in higher education and K-12 are not so different as those faced in other sectors of the economy and business, that is, how to deliver a quality product at a fair and reasonable cost. The concern is that public funding for institutions of higher education has been declining since the 1970s while the costs of providing education are increasing. In a ten-year span, 1984-1994, the state of California
funded 21 new prisons. However, during that same decade, only one state university was built. Overall, more money was spent on prison construction than university construction during 1995 than any other time reported in history (Floyd, 1998). Another example of budget cuts is illustrated by what happened at Illinois State University after 1972. At that time, state appropriations were approximately 92%. In 1990, state support fell to 65%. Current state support is approximately 30%. Dwindling state surpluses along with state budget cuts to public universities are occurring throughout the United States. Colleges and universities are scrambling for additional funding (Wallace, 1992). Clearly, competition for funds, whether the source is federal, state, local or private, is fierce among universities, particularly when there are many located in one state (Goldschmidt, 1997).

Fund raising and the unpopular means of raising tuition have been a few of the avenues that have allowed colleges and universities to survive. However, projected tuition costs are expected to accelerate in the next ten years, and according to Guskin (1994), will push many students away from higher education. In the past, private industries have also aided universities in their funding of research, but even these funds have declined.

Although there is a high value placed on an American education throughout the world, there is also a pronounced demand by the U. S. public for universities and colleges to produce a qualified and competent graduate (Haworth, 1998). This trend toward academic accountability follows in the face of severe budget cuts (Burd, 1996). Fifty percent of public institutions have experienced mid-year budget cuts from their state legislators for the past two years. In addition to budget cutbacks, costs at colleges and universities have been escalating. One reason cited is the rising salaries and benefits for full-time, tenured professors. In an effort to reduce costs, some universities and colleges are hiring full-time professors on a contract basis at lower salaries and offering few, if
any, retirement benefits and other perks (Wilson, 1998). Costly expenditures for computers and other state-of-the-art technology involved in teaching and administration purposes are pushing some budgets into the red. In addition, abundant and expensive repairs are inevitable as the infrastructure of many colleges and universities built during a more prosperous time deteriorate. Equally costly is the competitive desire among colleges to enhance their aesthetic attractiveness primarily for recruiting purposes (Sinnott & Johnson, 1996). Lastly, the implementation of developmental and remedial programs add additional expenses to an already costly delivery system of undergraduate education. These rising costs come at a time in history when appropriations at the federal and state level have been limited (Guskin, 1994; Will 1996; O'Brien, 1997). The National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education urged colleges to cut back on costs, threatening to intervene if necessary. Further, the Commission stated that colleges need to “pursue efficiency with the same fervor that they pursue quality and excellence now” (Burd, 1997 p. 2).

In terms of funding remediation and developmental education programs, there are much debate and controversy. Critics argue that these type of programs are not appropriate for institutions of higher education and particularly four-year universities. Taxpayers contend they are paying twice for the same product, once for high school courses and then again in colleges. Parents also fear that many of these programs add time to a college degree costing parents more in the long run. According to Lucas (1996), in addition to the cost involved in delivering remedial and developmental programs, a school’s reputation can be damaged by supporting such programs, costing them a great deal more in recruitment and alumni support. As a consequence, many times these courses and offerings are not highly publicized and go unnoticed in catalogs or brochures. Furthermore, Abraham (1992) reported it is not an easy task to identify funding sources for special programs or even the total cost involved. In an attempt to define funding
patterns, the SREB reported that 90% of their institutions use state funds to finance the programs. The remaining schools use special appropriations, grants or contracts. However, the actual cost of these programs is often buried in budgets and is hard to analyze. Negative attitudes regarding these programs also increase the stigma of gathering and comparing data across regions. Unless schools are willing to open their books and formally recognize remediation, retention and other special programs, any inquiries and assessments are severely limited (Abraham, 1992).

The U. S. educational system, in spite of the controversy over remediation and special programs, provides the best post-secondary education in the world, and reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of our country. During the 1950s, more Americans were taking college classes than citizens in any other country. Geiger (1994) reported that in the 20th century, higher education touched the lives of half the young adults in our country. One important feature is that the United States post-secondary educational system is more comprehensive in course offerings than most European universities (Foner and Garity, 1991). For the most part, other countries have focused on specialized schools such as law, arts, and humanities. American colleges and universities for the most part embrace practical and diverse programs.

Importance of Retention

The importance of recruitment in higher education is paramount for funding and expansion. Institutions of higher education are economically connected to positive recruitment techniques and retention strategies as a means of increasing state revenue for operating expenses and also a demonstration of accountability (Harris, 1997). However, research efforts supporting positive retention programs have been limited. According to Boylan (1990), programs that began in the 1960s and 1970s to accommodate the special needs of students were not well organized and lacked directives. As time passed, new experiences were gained and programs began to demonstrate improved retention rates.
According to Casazza and Silverman (1996), programs that are comprehensive in design and delivery, student-centered, and based on research report a higher level of academic gains. In addition, Kulik, Kulik, and Shwalb (1983) found that the longer a program existed, the “more likely it was to show positive outcomes for student participation” (p. 4). The focus is not only what support and resources are available to retain students for the first year, but how the foundation of the first year can be constructed to promote student learning in the following years.

Casazza and Silverman (1996) described two examples of retention techniques that are comprehensive (both in design and delivery) and have proven to be successful in keeping students in college. One retention technique includes supplemental instruction that pairs a core course along with a tutorial session. A second successful technique is to connect a developmental course with a reading course. The authors advocate offering a full range of services that address the various needs of students, both traditional and non-traditional. They agree that there is not one certain formula that guarantees retention, but rather individual student needs and missions outlined by the institution should guide and direct the organization and delivery of retention and remediation programs. In research conducted by the U. S. Government Accounting Office (1982) a correlation was found between the range of services offered in the first year and the overall academic success of freshmen.

Retention policies and practices that help students stay in college and graduate have been documented. The innovative creation of “learning communities” for new college students has been especially designed to immediately connect students to their college or university. In many cases, this practice has contributed to a higher retention and graduation rate for schools (Berger, 1997). One example of a learning community is study halls and dormitories that promote similar academic and social interests of the student. In large, four-year universities that engage in lectures delivered to 300 or more
students, small discussion groups meet outside the class to interact and exchange ideas. These discussion groups can be facilitated by a graduate student, upper classman, or honor student. According to Tinto (1996), there are many creative learning communities throughout the country that are in the experimental stage and show positive retention results. The one main theme in nearly all the learning communities is that learning is best when shared. Learning connects students socially and educationally and, in the long run, will connect them to their place of learning (Tinto, 1993).

Problems That Hinder Retention Efforts

In providing special services to students, the problem that is most serious is a deficit in reading. This deficit can cause the student to experience difficulties throughout his or her college tenure. Adelman (1996) asserted that deficiencies in reading can significantly lower a student’s chance of completing a degree. He argued if this issue is not addressed immediately, when the student first enters college, problems will occur in other classes as well. Adelman (1996) cited a study that looked at the retention rates of minority students enrolled in four-year colleges in developmental reading from 1972 to 1982. He found troubling the low retention rates among the African Americans in the study. The retention rates of African American students who participated in the reading developmental course was approximately 36% for women and 44% for males. He concluded that students who have serious problems in reading and reading comprehension will have a difficult time in all their studies, and hence, will have a difficult time staying in school. One might ask the question, how do students who have problems with reading skills enter colleges and universities in the first place? According to the members of the National Commission on Excellence in Education who reported their findings in “A Nation at Risk,” colleges which enroll students with serious reading deficits are primarily concerned with increasing enrollments at their universities, and not their academic reputation. Alarmed at the high number of college dropouts, the committee...
cautioned Americans that the primary mission of our educational institutions has eroded. Furthermore, the committee concluded that if steps are not taken immediately to correct the problems, the U.S. educational system is at serious risk.

The Problems of K-12 Education

If the quality of higher education is to improve, the quality of education in elementary and secondary education must also improve. Problems encountered in the K-12 system usually percolate to institutions of higher education (Healy, 1997).

Since the publication of “A Nation at Risk,” efforts have been under way to improve and reform public education. The report scrutinized educational institutions in the United States and focused on the mediocre performance of students at all levels of education, but particularly the K-12 system of education. The report emphasized the profound risk that the U.S. creates when it supports and maintains an educational system that is riddled with problems. According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1984), the following are serious threats that have plagued the K-12 educational system and, in turn, have had a derogatory impact on the goals and mission of higher education:

- International comparisons of student achievement completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests, American students were never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last seven times.
- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
- About 13% of all 17 year olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate.
- Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40%.
- Average achievement of high school students on most standardized test is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.
- Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school.
The College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points.

College Board achievement tests also reveal consistent declines in recent years in such subjects as physics and English.

Both the number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement on the SATs have also dramatically declined.

Many 17-year olds do not possess the “higher order” intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40% cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve mathematics problems requiring several steps.

There was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17 year-olds as measured by national assessments of science in 1969, 1973, and 1977.

Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72% and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.

Average tested achievement of students graduating from college is also lower. (pp. 8 and 9).

Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling and computation. The Department of Navy, for example, reported to the Commission that one-quarter of its recent recruits could not read at the ninth grade level, the minimum needed simply to understand written safety instructions. Without remedial work they could not even begin, much less complete, the sophisticated training essential in much of the modern military (pp. 8 and 9).

The chilling observations reported by the Commission cast a pessimistic climate on K-12 education in the U.S. Immediately after the report was released, recommendations for reform were initiated through the Office of the President and the U.S. Department of Education (Healy, 1997). These efforts were to become known as Education 2000. In spite of the lofty goals of Education 2000, proposed by state governors and President George Bush, a large number of public schools in the United States have failed to prepare students for continuing education or employment in the
workforce. According to Weiser (1997), reading proficiency levels are dropping, student drug use is increasing, classroom disruptions are rising, and the percentage of secondary teachers holding degrees in primary teaching assignments is down. Kondracke (1997) observed that 30% of high school students leave school before they graduate. Students living in poverty experience higher drop-out rates, approximately 40-50% (Weiser, 1997). Kondracke (1997) cited alarming rates of reading inefficiency of 65-70% in 4th, 8th and 12th graders. Furthermore, 80% of 12th graders are below standard in math. Furthermore, Kondracke contended the public wants higher standards and a voucher system for elementary and secondary education.

The Committee on Education Reforms and Students at Risk outlined reasons why educators need to work diligently to improve education in all grades. The first reason is that everyone has a right to a basic and adequate education. Secondly, the number of low-skilled and low paying jobs in the U. S. is dwindling. The manufacturing industry is slowing fading away, and high technology and automation are influencing the world of work. Students must be able to make an adequate transition from secondary school to post-secondary school or work. The committee strongly believed that if the U. S. does not find ways to improve education at the K-12 level, the consequences to the students they have failed, and to our country, will be alarming (Stern, 1994).

Employers are vocal in their concern that schools do not prepare the young people of our country to be successful in the workplace. Supporting this belief, Riley (1995) cited a national survey illustrating that in more than 3,000 companies "employers disregard grades and school evaluations in choosing workers (p. 39)." Unable to rely on the total value of an education, employers contend that the interview becomes extremely important to the applicant. Businessmen and women are appraising and evaluating communication skills, writing skills and applicant’s attitudes about work. In
addition, employers believe prior work experience, not one's degree, is crucial in securing a job.

**Accountability in K-12**

Manno (1996) pointed to the public polls and focus groups that have demanded accountability in K-12. He outlined the strong support from parents for a core curriculum along with tests that operate as a "gateway" to higher education and the workforce. Suggestions that would help colleges and universities enact higher standards are: methods that articulate the differences between college work and high school work, define what standards will be addressed and help students achieve these results.

"Employers and parents should take the lead in demanding that schools and colleges raise standards and that schools teach what colleges require" (Manno, 1996). According to Manno, higher education officials should admit only students who are academically ready for college. Furthermore, he stated that colleges could grant a provisional or conditional admission status, but under no circumstances should they give college credit for remedial courses. In conclusion, Manno (1996), an opponent of remediation and developmental programs, reported that 40% of colleges employing remedial courses are not actively supporting activities that would reduce the need for remediation.

Even though there has been a picture of doom and gloom surrounding K-12 education, there have been some who believe that secondary education and elementary education may be improving. Mixed reviews have been coming in from the education summit held in March 1996. Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin pointed to the new standards being adopted by states to improve education, such as school report cards and the participation of large businesses as a measure of its great success. However, there is much debate and criticism regarding national testing which has been promoted by President Clinton and fellow Democrats. Most of the arguments against national testing stem from the fear of government intervention in state matters. In spite of the fact
that the momentum for national standards has slowed down in recent years because of political disagreement, states are expecting schools to develop standards for student achievement in each major subject. Officials in K-12 education are working to align teaching and methods of assessment with these standards in mind (Weiser, 1997; Weinman, 1995).

Weinman (1995) reported that the country will see the payoff for school reform which started in the 1980s. Citing an increase in the standardized scores, with particular note placed on the academic gains of minority students, schools are beginning to compile more extensive documentation of students’ accomplishments that supplement the more traditional evaluators of college preparatory work. While scores between minorities and non-minorities are still far apart, encouraging signs show the gap is closing somewhat. Active learning, independent thinking, problem solving and communication skills are some of the newer techniques that appear to help all students learn better. Hopefully, U. S. high school students will enter college better prepared and more competent than their predecessors to handle the rigors of college life.

High Risk Students

Several studies have identified a large group of high risk students who would be denied access to four-year academic institutions, particularly if schools engage in selective admission requirements and offer no special programs for remedial or developmental education (Reyes & Stanic, 1985; Tinto, 1975; Astin, 1975; Jones & Watson, 1990). “High risk” is a descriptive term used repeatedly in the literature to describe minority, academic disadvantaged, impoverished, disabled, and older students (Jones and Watson, 1990). Any one or two of these factors can place students at a high risk for having a low level of academic achievement. At risk students do not experience success in school, and as a consequence they are in constant danger of dropping out of school. The cost to society is enormous (Renchler, 1993). A loss of personal
productivity, self esteem, and financial income plague individuals who do not succeed in school. Carta (1991) linked poverty with substandard educational levels.

There appears in the literature recognition and support for high risk students (Sanchez, 1995; Cross, 1993). Border and Chism (1992) echoed this support for high risk students and the diversification they bring to the classrooms of colleges and universities. The authors contended that academically supporting students from various backgrounds can stimulate multiple viewpoints and hence, enhance learning opportunities.

**Minority Students and Higher Education**

According to Abraham (1992), remedial enrollment rates for African American and Hispanic students in higher education are one and one-half to two times higher than those for Caucasian students. Reynolds (1994) reported that students of color are often at academic risk when enrolled on “white campuses.” Furthermore, the author cited the enrollment and retention of white students in higher education have risen over the past decade, while the retention of students of color has not. According to Reynolds (1994), not only has enrollment at white colleges declined, but minority students report feelings of alienation and hostility.

The debate regarding access for all students has been called a “hot potato” by one professional in the field (Carriulo, 1994). Other critics such as Lucas (1996) and Stauffer (1981) stated that higher education is unwilling to turn away unqualified students, even many of the colleges that practice selective admission policies. According to Stauffer (1981), fear of enrollment decline, loss of tuition revenue and America’s philosophy of “equal opportunity” are some of the issues that have driven colleges to admit underprepared, high risk students. Lucas (1996) reported that many four-year colleges have “consistently demonstrated their willingness to make do with whomever applies” (p. 119).
In summary, selective admission policies in higher education have reduced the number of students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The cost of not including these students in higher education in terms of personal income and taxes paid to the communities is enormous. According to many educators, the cost of retaining high risk students in higher education, whether in developmental education or remediation, is well worth the investment in the long haul (Abraham, 1992; Astin, 1975; Renchler, 1993; Tinto, 1987).

**Programs for Minority Students that Show Results**

A number of programs designated to help minority students succeed in college have been implemented. Vassar, an Ivy League college for women, recently joined with LaGuardia Community College to help minority students successfully transfer from a two-year community college to a four-year university. Summer sessions are held at Vassar that incorporate college credit courses, and orientation programs address important issues such as financial aid and tutoring for students. The American Association for Higher Education lauds this program as a successful partnership between a predominantly white university and a community college which has a large African American student population (Haworth, 1998).

At the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, minority students spend seven weeks in the summer taking non-credit courses that help students prepare for difficult courses such as calculus. According to Hayes (1995), the 16 year-old program called Challenge has endured in spite of the initial rumblings of faculty who were at first pessimistic. The Challenge program does not hire adjunct faculty as it believes it is vital for students to start early to build a successful relationship with its students. Research has supported the program and reports a high correlation between the academic success of students in their first quarter and the overall graduation rate. The program offers a two week assistance program for freshmen at Georgia Tech University, and more
importantly serves as a model for other engineering schools across the country (Hayes, 1995).

A similar program at North Carolina State University is called the First Year College. One of their missions is to provide students with general courses that would transfer to any major at the university. Officials hoped that this would take the pressure off students and give them some direction their first semester in college. Included in this program is a weekly orientation session. Offerings include personal, social, and academic programs that focus on the transition from high school to college. Also included are tutoring and an academic skills enhancement program. A separate component for African Americans is included, and an African American administrator coordinates the efforts. The First Year College Program, introduced in the 1996 school year, is already showing a positive retention rate (Black Issues in Higher Education, 1997b).

The University of Michigan’s Comprehensive Study Program (CSP) was originally developed as a program to assist African American Students in the 1960s. It has evolved, however, into a successful program for all students needing academic help. The CSP also provides personal counseling, mentoring, and tutoring. Orientation programs are an important part of the CSP program. Graduation rates at the University of Michigan are 85% for six years, and the CSP program reports a 75% graduation rate for six years (Black Issues in Higher Education, 1997b).

Successful remedial and developmental programs provide access in higher education for many minority students. According to the Exxon Foundation's Chief Program Officer, developmental education is the fastest growth area in colleges and universities. With enthusiasm and generosity, The Exxon Foundation financially supports special programs such as the University of Michigan’s Comprehensive Study Program that helps under prepared minority students attend higher education and
graduate. Price (1998) affirms that in this age of information and high technology, the quality of U. S. graduates is paramount to U. S. productivity. Education of minority and non-minority students leads to a cohesive and competitive society and that is the "quintessential compelling state interest" in helping students succeed in college (Price, 1998, p. B4).

Socioeconomic Influences

Research has supported the tenet that academically successful college students are committed, persistent, determined and intelligent (Valencia, 1994; Wagner; 1998; Anyon, 1980; Bower, 1992). The question is how do students gain these characteristics that encourage them to do well in school. The extent to which parents and significant others influence students to succeed in school is documented in studies throughout educational and sociological literature (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Henderson, 1987; Preissle & Grant, 1998). In addition to parental influence, Caldwell and Ginthier (1996) asserted that social contacts outside the family help to shape an individual's attitude about education. Social class, according to Preissle and Grant (1998), also plays a crucial role in the development and formation of attitudes about education. Rubin (1976) researched this subject and reported that middle class families value independence, creativity, and self actualization, the same traits that make college life inviting and rewarding. Working class families, in contrast, draw on their own experiences, instill in their children conformity, punctuality, and obedience. In addition, Rubin reported that working class families do not have the educational experiences, occupational prestige, flexible work schedules, socialization connections, and patterns that can influence children in the direction of higher education. What one's family does for a living can make some people "more equal than others" (Wagner, 1998, p.2). Throughout the literature, economic influences have been cited as an important component in shaping an

Cookson (1994) noted that the majority of students in America’s public schools by 2020 will be living in deplorable situations. Poor housing and nutrition, and abuse of alcohol and drugs by family members will add to these students risk of education failure. According to other projections, by the year 2020, one-fourth of the children in the U. S. will be living in poverty. Children of color will make up more than one-half of students in the public schools. In some districts, such as those in California, children of color will comprise the majority of public school students (Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990). Renyi (1997) stated that the poor and minorities have often been excluded from institutions of higher education, and encouraged to attend trade or vocational schools. Wallace (1992) reported that public education at four-year universities is for the middle and upper middle-income families. He reported, “those individuals receiving baccalaureate degrees by age 24 between 1985 and 1989, 56.3 per cent were awarded to individuals from the top income quartile, which corresponds to family incomes exceeding $58,125” (p. 6). In addition, Wallace stated that one-half of entering freshman in 1990 who attended selective public four-year universities, had family incomes over $60,000. Twenty-four per cent of the freshmen families earned less than $35,000.

Of particular concern to educators are students who are poor and in rural areas. They are especially at risk for not attending or dropping out of the educational track. For example, Johnson and Stallman (1994) reported that there are a significant number of students in the Appalachian area of the country who place little, if any value, on higher education. The authors cited many factors that can contribute to students placing a low value on higher education such as: (1) K-12 educational opportunities for the rural poor have been mediocre as compared to private schools or schools located in middle class
neighborhoods, (2) families who are poor are interested in meeting the basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, (3) there are few resources in these rural areas that connect higher education with family and community, (4) students who are poor and located in rural areas often have a negative or limited perception of the value of higher education. Using the Human Capital Theory, suggested by Stallman and Johnson (1996), job opportunities create incentives for education, and when a community does not reward education, students lose interest in pursuing additional learning. In summary, the economic, educational and social structure in the rural and poor communities does not always support or reward higher education. As a consequence, students from these areas who do attend college are at a tremendous disadvantage and risk because they lack the support and encouragement of families and communities that is vital for academic success. The U. S. Department of Education (1996) released a longitudinal study that focused on post-secondary education and its relationship to socio-economic status (SES). The findings are as follows:

- Among the 1980 sophomores who scored in the highest test quartile in 12th grade in 1982, high socioeconomic status (SES) students were much more likely than low SES students to enroll in a four-year institution first (78% compared to 49%).

- Among the 1980 sophomore cohort in the highest test quartile in 12th grade, high SES students were much more likely than low SES students to have earned a bachelor’s or advanced degree by 1992. Forty-three percent of low SES students who were in the highest test quartile in 12th grade in 1982 had not earned any post-secondary certificate or degree.

- The way in which people started their post-secondary education and their level of attainment 10 years later were highly related. Those who enrolled full time in
4-year institutions immediately after high school were much more likely to have completed a bachelor’s degree than were students who enrolled part time immediately or who delayed their entry.

- Children of the poor and undereducated are often caught in a vicious cycle of educational failure through no fault of their own, only circumstances (p. 70).

**Variables That Influence Successful Programs**

In his most recent book, *Reconstructing the First Year of College* (1996), Tinto posited that the interest in remediation and retention programs has not slowed down in the past several years, but has accelerated. In spite of the mounting criticisms from the public, additional teaching and tutoring from the faculty, and other resources needed, remedial/developmental programs continue to flourish. Tinto (1996) reported that while, on the surface, such programs appear to be meritorious, when examined many programs fall short on producing the intended results. Universities are primarily interested in increasing the number of students in order to increase revenues. Their main mission, in Tinto’s opinion, should be to place their students’ educational and social concerns first, overriding their objective to inflate numbers. Craft and Schmersahl (1997) agree with Tinto’s philosophy, and believe that first-year students should have access to programs that help them not only to succeed in college, but programs that connect them to faculty and other members of the community.

**Comprehensive and Integrated Programs**

Sirica and Negron (1997) contend that freshman programs should extend past the traditional summer program and last throughout the freshman and sophomore years. The period of overcrowding and tense competition in higher education appears to be over, replaced with a model of consumerism and collaboration (Boyer 1990). Assistant U.S. Education Secretary David Longanecker recalled his outdated freshman orientation
motto: “look to your left and look to your right - only one in three of you will be here in four years.” (Sirica & Negron, 1997). This has been replaced by a more student-oriented approach that embraces learning in a collaborative and community milieu (Tinto, 1987). Boylan (1992) conducted a comprehensive research project funded in part by Exxon which identified seven components of an effective program. Those “commonplace” characteristics are student assessment, tutoring, academic advising and counseling and faculty interaction. Two other characteristics of effective programs are referred to as comprehensiveness and institutionalization. A program can be labeled comprehensive if it meets the diverse needs of a variety of students (Boylan, 1992). Institutionalization, according to Keimig (1983), is defined as the infusion or “integration” of remedial and retention programs into the overall culture and environment of the college. Remedial and retention programs that are not separated and isolated, but are in the “academic mainstream,” are successful and effective programs according to expert researchers in this field such as Keimig (1983), Tomlinson (1989), and Boylan (1992).

A study conducted by Henrikson (1995) reported that men and women of all ethnic groups stated that orientation programs provided by their colleges and universities helped them significantly in understanding college policies and procedures. In one particular category, a higher proportion of minority students, 46% Asians and 55% Hispanic students reported that financial aid orientations were the most important. White students, regardless of gender, did not report this as a key to orientation.

Boylan, Bonham and Bliss (1992) conducted research in the area of remediation and developmental education and reported that tutoring, when delivered by trained tutors, is the strongest indicator of academic success. However, their research also concluded that when tutors were used, but not trained, there was no correlation with academic success.
In the development of special programs, the individual and institutional needs of the students being served must be considered. Clowes (1992) stated that there are no easy solutions in developing a remedial or developmental program and the reason is the diversity of individuals served. Casazza and Silverman (1997) reported that institutions should address important questions and concerns before starting a program. For example, what is the mission of the university, what are the special needs of the students, what support systems are already in place, and how can other support offices be integrated into the program. The authors present an in-depth worksheet that can offer guidance and assistance to other professionals embarking on remedial and developmental programs.

**Faculty Involvement**

Tinto (1975) conducted multiple studies that examined retention patterns in higher education and created a model to describe student retention patterns. His research conducted during his many years working as a faculty member in higher education, suggested that commitment to the university and faculty involvement are important predictors of student retention. Astin (1975, 1991) supported Tinto's findings and concluded that students who are involved in extracurricular activities that allow students contact with faculty outside the classroom report a greater satisfaction and commitment to their college or university.

In summary, developmental and learning assistance programs can be effective in helping students succeed in school. Certain variables appear to be important in the organization and delivery of such programs: interaction of faculty, orientation programs, tutoring, assessment, academic advising, counseling, comprehensiveness, institutionalization, and an involvement and commitment to the attending college or university. The commitment to the university can be enhanced by creating an environment of community which can endure beyond the final year of study. The
appreciation of individual strengths and diversity by faculty and university staff is an effective strategy in promoting an academic environment that is conducive to cultural learning as well as academic learning (Tinto, 1996).
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The ACCESS Program, initiated in 1994, is designed to bridge the academic gap for under-prepared freshman at LSU. It provides the students with remedial classes, after-class tutoring, and an English writing laboratory. As of this date, a comprehensive study to determine the effectiveness of the ACCESS Program at LSU has not been conducted. Included in this chapter are: Population and Sample, Instrumentation, Data Collection, and Data Analysis. These procedures were used to achieve the main purpose of the study.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study was to describe students enrolled in the ACCESS Program and to compare them with regularly enrolled students on selected personal and academic characteristics. The specific objectives of this study are:

- Objective one was to describe a cohort of students enrolled in an academic readiness/remediation program, ACCESS, on the following selected demographic and academic variables:
  a) Age
  b) Gender
  c) Ethnicity
  d) ACT scores
  e) Overall high school grade point average (GPA)
  f) Academic high school grade point average (GPA)
  g) Completed high school academic units
  h) Home parish
  i) Whether they reside on or off campus
Objective two was to describe a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students on the same selected demographic and academic measures listed in Objective one.

Objective three was to compare a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program to a sample of regular enrolled freshman on the above selected demographic and academic characteristics.

Objective four was to determine the retention rate of a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program at three points in time:
   a) At the beginning of Spring 1996.
   b) At the beginning of Fall 1996-1997.
   c) At the beginning of Spring 1997.

Objective five was to determine the grade point average (GPA) of a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program at four points in time:
   a) At the end of Fall 1995-1996.
   b) At the end of Spring 1996.
   c) At the end of Fall 1996-1997.
   d) At the end of Spring 1997.

Objective six was to determine the retention rate of a sample of regularly enrolled freshman students at three points in time:
   a) At the beginning of Spring 1996.
   b) At the beginning of Fall 1996-1997.
   c) At the beginning of Spring 1997.

Objective seven was to determine the cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a sample of regularly enrolled freshman students at four points in time:
   a) At the end of Fall 1995-1996.
b) At the end of Spring 1996.
c) At the end of Fall 1996-1997.
d) At the end of Spring 1997.

• Objective eight was to compare the retention rate of ACCESS Students to a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students at three points in time:
  a) At the beginning of Spring 1996.
  b) At the beginning of Fall 1996-1997.
  c) At the beginning of Spring 1997.

• Objective nine was to compare the cumulative grade point average of ACCESS Students to a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students at four points in time:
  a) At the end of Fall 1995-1996.
  b) At the end of Spring 1996.
  c) At the end of Fall 1996-1997.
  d) At the end of Spring 1997.

Population and Sample

The target population for the study was defined as first-time entering, full-time freshmen at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Samples were drawn for inclusion in the study from each of two sub-groups in this target population. The first sub-group included freshmen students enrolled in an alternative preparedness program at the university called ACCESS. This program provides a provisional admission status at the university for students who fail to meet one or more of the standard university admission criteria. The sample of this sub-population consisted of all students entering in this program during the 1995-1996 academic year. The reason for choosing this academic year is that the elapsed time enabled the researcher to determine the students'
success in the university as measured by whether or not they continue to be enrolled at specified points in time after their enrollment in the program. The second sub-population to be sampled was a group of regularly admitted freshmen from the same academic year. To be drawn as part of this sample, the students would have had to meet all of the demographic criteria as required for entry into the alternative admission program. These criteria included: that the students should have been graduated from high school within the previous five years; should have been a resident of the state in which the university is located; and should not have had any prior credit for university courses, including advanced placement or correspondence courses. The sample drawn from this sub-population was equal in size to the sample enrolled in the alternative program, and was drawn at random from the defined frame of the sub-population.

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation used to collect data in this study was a computerized recording form designed by the researcher. Specific variables from both the university undergraduate admission data base and the academic data base were selected. Also specified was the order and format of the variables to be collected. The variables selected were those that addressed the objectives under investigation. A file, systematically organized, was established in which the specified variables for the study were downloaded from the main student data base. Academic and personal variables of both groups of students, ACCESS and a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, to be measured included:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- ACT scores
• Overall high school GPA
• Academic GPA
• Completed academic units
• Home parish
• Whether or not the student lived on campus their freshman year
• Cumulative grade point average measured at four points in time:
  a) After completion of the Fall Semester, 1995-1996
  b) The beginning of the Spring Semester, 1996
  c) The beginning of the Fall Semester, 1996-1997
  d) The beginning of the Spring Semester, 1997
• Whether or not the students returned to college at three points in time:
  a) The beginning of the Spring Semester, 1996
  b) The beginning of the Fall Semester, 1996-1997
  c) The beginning of the Spring Semester, 1997

**Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected by transferring information from the academic and admission student data base onto the computerized recording form designed by the researcher. Approval for this study was initially sought from university administrators to gain access to the necessary data. Permission for this study was granted by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (see Appendix E). Computer assistance was requested from the Office of Budget and Planning and was also approved.

The computerized recording form, designed by the investigator, was the primary instrument for data collection in this study. Specific academic and demographic variables were selected according to the objectives of the study. Variables were systematically retrieved from the mainframe computer and a file was established.
Data Analysis

The students (ACCESS and Regularly Enrolled Freshmen) were described and compared on selected variables which were measured according to their level of classification, nominal, ordinal and interval. The significance level was set a priori at .05.

Objectives 1 and 2

Variables measured on an interval or higher level of measurement were described using means and standard deviations. The variables were ACT scores, high school GPAs (overall and academic), completed academic units, and age. Those measured on an ordinal scale were described using frequencies and percentages in categories, and those measured on a nominal scale were measured using frequencies and percentages in categories. The variables were, gender, ethnicity, and whether or not the student intended to live on campus (as indicated on the admission application).

Objective 3

Personal and academic characteristics of students in the ACCESS Program were compared with those of Regularly Enrolled Freshman students at the same university. To accomplish this objective, each of the characteristics of the sample group were compared to the overall data from the subgroup of sampled freshman students. This data was available in the university data base and comparisons were made based on the level of measurement of the specific variables. Variables measured on an interval or higher level were compared using a t-test. Variables measured on an ordinal or nominal scale were compared using the Chi-Square Test. The personal variables compared were gender, ethnicity, and whether or not the student lived on campus. The academic variables compared were ACT scores, high school GPAs (overall and academic), and completed academic units.
**Objective 4**

The retention rates of students in the ACCESS Program were determined at three points in time, the Spring Semester, 1996, Fall Semester, 1996-1997, and the Spring Semester 1997. These data were available in the university data base and to accomplish this objective, the nominal variable (dichotomous), whether or not the student registered in school fourteen days after classes was measured using frequencies and percentages.

**Objective 5**

The grade point average of students in the ACCESS Program was determined at four points in time, at the end of the Fall Semester, 1995-1996, Spring Semester, 1996, Fall Semester, 1996-1997, and the Spring Semester, 1997. These data were available in the university data base and to accomplish this objective, the interval data were analyzed for means and standard deviations.

**Objective 6**

Whether or not a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students returned to the university was determined at three points in time, the beginning of the Spring Semester, 1996, the Fall Semester 1995-1996, and the Spring Semester, 1996. These data were available in the university data base. To accomplish this objective, the nominal variable, whether or not the student was registered in school the fourteenth day after class, was reported. The nominal variable was measured using frequencies and percentages.

**Objective 7**

The grade point average (GPA) of a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students was determined at four points in time, at the end of the Fall Semester, 1995-1996, the Spring Semester, 1996, the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 and the Spring Semester, 1997. These data were available on the university data base. To accomplish this objective, the data were analyzed as interval data, using means and standard deviations.
Objective 8
Whether or not ACCESS Students returned to the university was compared to a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students at three points in time, the Spring Semester, 1996, the Fall Semester, 1996-1997, and the Spring Semester, 1997. This information was available in the university data base. To accomplish this objective, the nominal variable, whether or not the student was registered in school the fourteenth day after class, was reported. This variable was measured using frequencies and percentages.

Objective 9
The grade point average of ACCESS Students was compared to a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students at four points in time: Fall Semester, 1995; Spring Semester, 1996; Fall Semester, 1996; and Spring Semester, 1997. To accomplish this objective, the interval data were examined at four points in time. This information was made available from the university data base, and the two groups of students were compared for differences using a two sample t-test. The significance level was set a priori at .05.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

The findings of this empirical investigation are presented in this chapter. The results are organized to follow the objectives of the study.

Objective One

Objective one was to describe the students in the ACCESS Program (n = 244) entering LSU in Fall 1995-1996 on selected personal and academic characteristics. The selected personal characteristics included the following: age, gender, ethnicity or race, living on or off campus and parish of residence. The selected academic characteristics included the following: American College Test (ACT) composite score, ACT English score, ACT math score, overall high school grade point average, academic high school grade point average and the number of completed academic units.

 Variables that were measured on a categorical scale (nominal and ordinal scales of measurement) were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Those variables that were measured on a nominal scale were gender, ethnicity, living on or off campus and parish of residence.

 Variables that were measured on a continuous scale (an interval scale of measurement) were summarized using means and standard deviations. These variables included age, ACT composite score, ACT English score, ACT math score, overall high school grade point average, academic grade point average and the number of completed academic high school units.

Age of Students in the ACCESS Program

The investigator used the age of the student at the time of entry into the university, Fall 1995-1996. Since actual birthdates were available to the researcher, the age measurements were made to the month rather than the closest year. This precision was perceived by the researcher to be necessary since there was a narrow range of ages
included in this study. For the 244 members of the ACCESS Program, the mean age was 18.41 years (SD = 0.72). The ages of the students ranged from 16.7 to 22 years.

**Gender of Students in the ACCESS Program**

Concerning the gender of the ACCESS Students, 48.36% were female (n = 118) and 51.64% were male (n = 126).

**Ethnic Origin of Students in the ACCESS Program**

The majority of the students enrolled in the ACCESS Program were white (n = 192 or 79.67%). Other ACCESS Students in the study were African American (n = 40 or 16.60%), Asian (n = 5 or 2.07%), and Hispanic (n = 4 or 1.70%). Three students did not report this information.

**ACCESS Students Residing On or Off Campus**

Another variable on which students were described as part of the study was whether they lived on campus or off campus during their freshman year in college. The information for this measurement was taken from the original application materials that students completed at the time they first enrolled in the university. The question actually asked on the completed form was, “Will you be living in the dormitory or off campus during your freshman year?” The responses from this question revealed that 140 (57.38%) of the students enrolled in the ACCESS Program intended to live off campus during their freshman year in college. The remainder (n = 104, 42.62%) intended to live on campus in dormitory housing.

**Parish of Residence for ACCESS Students**

The largest group of students in this study was from East Baton Rouge Parish (n = 77 or 32.08%). LSU is located in the city of Baton Rouge. The second largest number of students in the ACCESS Program was from Jefferson Parish, a predominantly white, middle class part of the greater New Orleans area (n = 42 or 17.50%). The third largest number of students in the ACCESS Program was from Orleans Parish which
includes the city of New Orleans (n = 26 or 10.83%). Four students did not indicate their parish of residence.

Examination of the data in Table 1 shows that the majority of the ACCESS Students attending LSU during the time frame under investigation were from the parishes that are the most populated and in close proximity to LSU. The majority of ACCESS Students (n = 167 or 68.44%) were from four parishes in the state: East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Orleans and St. Tammany. These four parishes are all within 76 miles of Baton Rouge.

Table 1

| Parish of Residence for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Parish          | n       | %    | Parish          | n       | %    |
| East Baton Rouge| 77      | 32.08| St. Charles     | 2       | 0.83 |
| Jefferson       | 42      | 17.50| St. Mary        | 2       | 0.83 |
| Orleans         | 26      | 10.83| Tangipahoa      | 2       | 0.83 |
| St. Tammany     | 22      | 9.17 | Terrebonne      | 2       | 0.83 |
| Ascension       | 8       | 3.33 | Washington      | 2       | 0.83 |
| St. John        | 6       | 2.50 | Acadia          | 1       | 0.42 |
| Caddo           | 5       | 2.08 | Beauregard      | 1       | 0.42 |
| Point Coupe     | 4       | 1.67 | Bienville       | 1       | 0.42 |
| Calcasieu       | 3       | 1.25 | Cameron         | 1       | 0.42 |
| East Feliciana  | 3       | 1.25 | Iberia          | 1       | 0.42 |
| Iberville       | 3       | 1.25 | LaFourche       | 1       | 0.42 |
| Lafayette       | 3       | 1.25 | Lincoln         | 1       | 0.42 |
| Livingston      | 3       | 1.25 | Natchitooches   | 1       | 0.42 |
| Rapides         | 3       | 1.25 | Plaquemine      | 1       | 0.42 |
| West Baton Rouge| 3       | 1.25 | St. James       | 1       | 0.42 |
| Assumption      | 2       | 0.83 | St. Landry      | 1       | 0.42 |
| Quachita        | 2       | 0.83 | Union           | 1       | 0.42 |
| St. Bernard     | 2       | 0.83 | Vermillion      | 1       | 0.42 |
| Total           | 240     | 100  | Note. Parish of residence was not available for four students. |

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American College Test (ACT) Composite Scores of ACCESS Students

One of the academic characteristics on which subjects in the study were measured was scores on the American College Test (ACT). The first score examined was the ACT composite score. Students enrolled in the ACCESS Program had a mean ACT composite score of 19.49 (SD = 2.74). Scores ranged from a low of 14 to a high of 30.

Examination of data in Table 2 reveals that the majority (n = 158 or 65.29%) of students had scores in the range of 16 to 20. An additional 28.51% (n = 69) of the students had scores between 21 and 25.

Table 2

American College Test (ACT) Composite Scores for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>65.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ACT composite scores were not available for two students. The mean score was 19.49 (SD = 2.74).

*Five students in the study had Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores only. These scores were converted to equivalent ACT scores using the standardized conversion table.

American College Test (ACT) English Scores of ACCESS Students

Students enrolled in the ACCESS Program had a mean ACT score of 19.36 (SD = 3.52). Scores ranged from a low of 10 to a high of 32. Examination of data in Table 3...
reveals that the majority (n = 131 or 54.13%) of students had scores in the range of 16 to 20. An additional 28.93% (n = 70) of the students had scores between 21 and 25.

Table 3

American College Test (ACT) English Scores for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>54.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ACT English scores were not available for two students. The mean score was 19.36 (SD = 3.52).

*Five students in the study had Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores only. These scores were converted to equivalent ACT scores using the standardized conversion table.

American College Test (ACT) Math Scores of ACCESS Students

ACT Math scores for students in the ACCESS Program are shown in Table 4. Students enrolled in the ACCESS Program had a mean ACT Math Score of 18.48 (SD = 3.02). Over one-half of students in the ACCESS Program (n = 144 or 59.50%) had score values in the range of 16-20. The second category of scores was in the 21-25 range (n = 54 or 22.31%). Few students had ACT Math scores in the 26-30 range (n = 4 or 1.65%). One student had a score of 31. The lowest score was a 12 (n = 1 or 0.41%) and the highest score was a 29 (n = 1 or 0.41%).
Table 4

American College Test (ACT) Math Scores for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>59.50</td>
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<td>21-25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ACT math scores were not available for two students. The mean score was 18.48 (SD = 3.02).

*Five students in the study had Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores only. These scores were converted to equivalent ACT scores using the standardized conversion table.

High School Overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students

Students enrolled in the ACCESS Program were described on their overall high school grade point average (GPA) as shown in Table 5. The GPAs of this group ranged from 1.89 to 3.68 with a mean of 2.50 (SD = 0.28). Examining the number of students who had GPAs in selected groupings or categories, the majority of students (n = 161 or 66.26%) had high school GPAs in the range of 2.1 to 2.5 category. The only other category that had a frequency greater than 10 was the 2.6 to 3.0 category (n = 68 or 27.98%). Only one student (0.41%) had a high school GPA greater than 3.5.
Table 5

High School Overall GPAs for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>66.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>27.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \geq 3.6 )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>243</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. High School Overall GPA was not available for one student. The mean GPA was 2.50 (SD = 0.28).

High School Academic Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students

Students enrolled in the ACCESS Program were described on the basis of their high school academic grade point average (GPA) as shown in Table 6. The GPAs of the students enrolled in the ACCESS Program ranged from 1.79 to 3.56 with a mean of 2.25 (SD = 0.29). Examination of the data in Table 6 reveals the number of students who had academic GPAs in selected groupings or categories. The majority of students enrolled in the ACCESS Program (n = 139 or 57.20%) had high school academic GPAs in the 2.1 to 2.5 category. The second category with 31.69% (n = 77) was for the range of 1.6 to 2.0.
Table 6

High School Academic GPAs for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>31.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>57.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. High School Academic GPA was not available for one student. The mean GPA was 2.25 (SD = 0.29).

*At LSU, the academic grade point average is calculated on the basis of the academic units shown in Appendix B.

Completed High School Academic Units of ACCESS Students

Regarding the number of high school academic units completed by the students in the ACCESS group, a majority of subjects (n = 96 or 40.00%) had completed 17 units as shown in Table 7. Overall, only 92 of the students (38.33%) had completed at least the minimum number of required academic units (17.5). The remainder (n = 148 or 61.67%) of the subjects had completed less than the required 17.5 units. None of the students had completed less than 14 units of high school credit. The mean number of units completed by the ACCESS Students in the study was 16.59 (SD = 0.83).
Table 7

Completed High School Academic Units for Members of the 1995 ACCESS Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 13.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 18.0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>28.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Completed High School Academic Units were not available for four students. The mean number of units was 16.59 (SD = 0.83).

Objective Two

Objective two called for a description of the sample of students (n = 244) who were regularly enrolled freshmen that entered LSU in the Fall, 1995-1996 on selected personal and academic characteristics. The selected personal characteristics included the following: age, gender, ethnicity or race, living on or off campus and parish of residence. The selected academic characteristics included the following: ACT composite score, ACT English score, ACT math score, overall high school grade point average, academic high school grade point average and the number of completed academic units.
Variables which were measured on a categorical scale (nominal and ordinal scales of measurement) were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Those categorical variables that were measured were gender, ethnicity, living on or off campus and parish of residence.

Variables that were measured on a continuous scale (an interval scale of measurement) were summarized using means and standard deviations. These variables included age, ACT composite score, ACT English score, ACT math score, overall high school grade point average, academic grade point average and the number of completed academic high school units.

Age of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

Concerning the age of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students, the investigator used the age of the student at the time of entry into the university, Fall 1995-1996. Since the actual birthdates were available, the age measurements were made to the month rather than the closest year. This precision was perceived by the researcher to be necessary since there was a narrow range of ages included in this study. For the 244 members of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students, the mean age was 18.30 (SD = 0.45). The ages of the students ranged from 16.75 to 21.17. The majority of students in this sample entering LSU in the Fall of 1995-1996 were 18 years of age (n = 205 or 84.01%).

Gender of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

Concerning the gender of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students, 57.37% were female (n = 140) and 42.63% were male (n = 104).

Ethnic Origin of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

The majority of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students were white (n = 196 or 81.33%). Other students in this sample were African American (n = 25 or 10.37%), Asian (n = 14 or 5.81%), Hispanic (n = 4 or 1.66%) and Native American Indian (n = 2 or 0.83%). Three students did not report this information.
**Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students Residing On or Off Campus**

Another variable on which students were described as part of the study was whether they lived on campus or off campus during their freshmen year in college. The information for this measurement was taken from the original application materials that students completed at the time they first enrolled in the university. The question actually asked on the completed form was, "Will you be living in the dormitory or off campus during your freshmen year?" The responses from this question revealed that 140 (or 57.38%) of the regularly enrolled freshmen students intended to live on campus during their freshman year in college. The remainder (n = 104 or 42.62%) intended to live off campus.

**Parish of Residence for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students**

Concerning the parish of residence for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen, the majority of the students in this study were from Baton Rouge or East Baton Rouge Parish (n = 65 or 26.64%). The second largest number of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students were from Jefferson Parish, a predominantly white, middle class part of the greater New Orleans area (n = 35 or 14.34%). The third largest number of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students were from Orleans Parish which includes the city of New Orleans (n = 18 or 7.38%).

Examination of the data in Table 8 shows that the majority of the sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students attending LSU during the time frame under investigation were from parishes that are the most populated and the closest in proximity to LSU. Of the sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, over half of them (n = 135 or 55.33%) were from four parishes in the state: East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Orleans and St. Tammany. These four parishes are all within a 76 mile radius of the LSU campus.
Table 8

Parish of Residence for Members of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Baton Rouge</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.64</td>
<td>St. Martin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14.34</td>
<td>East Carroll</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>East Feliciana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Tammany</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>Jefferson Davis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascension</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>Sabine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>St. Charles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Acadia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quachita</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Beauregard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermillion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrebonne</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>Desota</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bossier</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Iberia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberville</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Morehouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapides</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>Natchitoches</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Bernard</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>Plaquemine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangipahoa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaFourche</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Coupe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>West Baton Rouge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. James</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>West Feliciana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>244</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American College Test (ACT) Composite Scores of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

One of the academic characteristics on which subjects in the study were measured was scores on the American College Test (ACT). The first score examined was the ACT.
composite score. Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students had a mean ACT composite score of 21.73 (SD = 3.07). Scores ranged from a low of 14 to a high of 31.

Examination of data in Table 9 reveals that the majority (n = 133 or 55.19%) of students had scores in the range of 21 to 25. An additional 32.37% (n = 78) of the students had scores between 16 and 20.

Table 9

American College Test (ACT) Composite Scores for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>32.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>55.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ACT composite scores were not available for three students. The mean score was 21.73 (SD = 3.07).

*Five students in the study had Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores only. These scores were converted to equivalent ACT scores using the standardized conversion table.

American College Test (ACT) English Scores of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

ACT English scores for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students are shown in Table 10. Less than one-half of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students (n = 107 or 44.40%) had score values in the range of 21-25. The second category according to the highest frequency scored 16-20 (n = 74 or 30.71%). The next most frequent category of ACT English scores was the 26-30 range (n = 49 or 20.33%). Few students had ACT
English scores in the 11-15 range (n = 7 or 2.90%). One student had a score of greater than or equal to 10 while three students had scores greater than or equal to 31. The lowest score was a 10 and the highest score was a 32 with a mean score of 22.00 (SD = 3.90).

Table 10

American College Test (ACT) English Scores for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>44.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ACT English scores were not available for three students. The mean score was 22.00 (SD = 3.90).

*Five students in the study had Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores only. These scores were converted to equivalent ACT scores using the standardized conversion table.

American College Test (ACT) Math Scores of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

ACT Math scores for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students are shown in Table 11. Over one-half of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students (n = 121 or 50.21%) had score values in the range of 16 to 20. The second category according to the highest frequency scored between 21 and 25 (n = 99 or 41.08%). The next most frequent category of ACT Math scores was the 26-30 range (n = 13 or 5.40%). Few students had ACT Math scores in the 11-15 range (n = 7 or 2.90%). No students fell in the greater
The lowest score was 14 and the highest score was 31 with a mean score of 22.20 (SD = 3.91).

**Table 11**

**American College Test (ACT) Math Scores for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\leq 10$</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>50.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>41.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\geq 31$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. ACT math scores were not available for three students. The mean score was 22.20 (SD = 3.91).*

*Five students in the study had Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores only. These scores were converted to equivalent ACT scores using the standardized conversion table.*

**High School Overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students**

Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students were described on their overall high school grade point average (GPA) as shown in Table 12. The GPAs of this group ranged from 2.3 to 4.0 with a mean of 3.14 (SD = 0.40). Examining the number of students who had GPAs in selected groupings or categories, a plurality of students ($n = 98$ or 40.16%) had high school GPAs in the range of 2.6 to 3.0 category. An additional 34.84% ($n = 85$) of the students had GPAs in the 3.1 to 3.5 range.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>40.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>34.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The mean GPA was 3.14 (SD = 0.40).

High School Academic Grade Point Average (GPA) of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students were described on their high school academic grade point average (GPA) as shown in Table 13. The GPAs of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students ranged from 2.2 to 4.0 with a mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.03). Examination of the data in Table 13 reveals the number of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students who had academic GPAs in selected groupings or categories. A plurality of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students (n = 110 or 45.08%) had high school academic GPAs in the 2.6 to 3.0 category. The second highest category with 23.77% (n = 58) was for the range of 3.1 to 3.5.
Table 13
High School Academic GPAs for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>45.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>244</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The mean GPA was 2.94 (SD = 0.03).

*At LSU, the academic grade point average is calculated on the basis of the academic units shown in Appendix B.

Completed High School Academic Units of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

Regarding the number of high school academic units completed by the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, the majority of subjects (n = 164 or 71.00%) had completed 18 or more academic units. Only 44 of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students (19.06%) had completed less than the minimum number of required academic units (17.5). The number of completed high school academic units ranged from 13 to 18.5 units with a mean of 17.19 (SD = 0.65) as shown in Table 14.
Table 14

Completed High School Academic Units for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Value Range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 13.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥18.0</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>71.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 231 100.0

Note. Completed High School Academic Units were not available for thirteen students. The mean number of units was 17.19 (SD = 0.65).

Objective Three

The ACCESS group and the Regular Enrollment group were compared using a t-test on a total of seven continuously measured variables. The seven variables measured were high school academic GPA, high school overall GPA, ACT composite score, ACT English score, ACT math score, age and high school academic units completed. The groups were found to be significantly different on all of these measurements. The nature of this difference was such that the Regularly Enrolled group was significantly higher for
six measures; both measures of GPA, all ACT categories, and completed academic units.
(see Table 15).

Table 15

Comparison of Selected Academic and Demographic Characteristics of Students and Enrollment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS Mean/SD</th>
<th>Regular Mean/SD</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Academic GPA</td>
<td>2.25 (0.29)</td>
<td>3.00 (0.45)</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>416.07</td>
<td>-21.67</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Overall GPA</td>
<td>2.51 (0.28)</td>
<td>3.14 (0.40)</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>433.12</td>
<td>-20.36</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Academic Units</td>
<td>16.59 (0.83)</td>
<td>17.19 (0.65)</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>449.43</td>
<td>-8.84</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Composite</td>
<td>19.49 (2.74)</td>
<td>21.73 (3.07)</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>474.60</td>
<td>-8.46</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT English</td>
<td>19.36 (3.52)</td>
<td>22.00 (3.90)</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>475.46</td>
<td>-8.44</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Math</td>
<td>18.48 (3.02)</td>
<td>20.56 (3.11)</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>480.53</td>
<td>-7.46</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18.41 (0.72)</td>
<td>18.30 (0.45)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>408.85</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variables measured on an ordinal or nominal level (categorical data) were compared between groups, ACCESS Students and Regularly Enrolled Freshmen, using the Chi-Square Test for Independence. Variables measured were gender, ethnicity, and residence (living on or off campus). The variables gender, ethnicity and residence were not independent and were found to be significant at the .05 level. Tables 16 through 18 show the results of the contingency tables between the enrollment status and selected student characteristics. Table 19 shows the results of the Chi-Square Test for Independence for all three categorical variables.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Crosstabulation of Gender and Enrollment Status for Freshmen Students

The results of the Chi-Square Test revealed that the variables gender and enrollment status were not independent ($\chi^2 = 3.98$, $p = .05$). The nature of the association between these variables is examined in the contingency table (see Table 16). The association is such that the majority of the students in the ACCESS Program were male ($n = 126$ or 51.6%) while the majority of the students in the sample of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students were female ($n = 140$ or 57.4%).

Table 16

Crosstabulation of Gender and Enrollment Status for Freshmen Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>ACCESS n/</th>
<th>Regular n/%</th>
<th>Total n/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>118 48.36%</td>
<td>140 57.38%</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>126 51.64%</td>
<td>104 42.62%</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244 100.0%</td>
<td>244 100.0%</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 3.98$, df = 1, $p = .05$

Crosstabulation of Ethnicity and Enrollment Status for Freshmen Students

For the purposes of explaining the relationship between enrollment status and ethnic group, the researcher collapsed the following ethnic groups into one variable: minority students: Native American Indians, African Americans and Hispanics. Asians, however, were kept in a separate category to reflect the categories consistent with the literature in higher education.
The results of the Chi-Square Test for Independence for the variables ethnicity of students (white, minority and Asian) and enrollment status were not independent. The nature of the association between the variables ethnicity and enrollment status is examined in the contingency table (see Table 17). The nature of the relationship was such that a higher proportion of students in the ACCESS Program were minorities (African American, Hispanic or Native American Indian) and a higher proportion of students in the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students were Asians.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS n/</th>
<th>Regular n/</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>192 78.69%</td>
<td>196 80.33%</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority*</td>
<td>44 18.03%</td>
<td>31 12.70%</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5 2.05%</td>
<td>14 5.74%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>241 100.0%</td>
<td>241 100.0%</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 6.56 \quad df = 2 \quad P = .04 \]

Note. Relationship between enrollment status and ethnicity was not available for three students.

*Included African American, Hispanic and Native American Indian Students.

Table 17

Crosstabulation of Place of Residence and Enrollment Status for Freshmen Students

The results of the Chi Square Test for Independence revealed that the variables for place of residence (living on or off campus) and enrollment status were not independent.
\( \chi^2_{(1)} = 10.621, p = .001 \). The nature of the association between these variables is examined in a contingency table (see Table 18). The association is such that the majority of the students in the ACCESS Program lived in dormitory housing \( (n = 140 \text{ or } 57.38\%) \) while the majority of the students in the sample of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students lived off campus \( (n = 140 \text{ or } 57.38\%) \).

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS n/%</th>
<th>Regular n/%</th>
<th>Total n/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in Dorm</td>
<td>140 57.38%</td>
<td>104 42.62%</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Off Campus</td>
<td>104 42.62%</td>
<td>140 57.38%</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244 100.0%</td>
<td>244 100.0%</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 10.62, df = 1, p = .001 \]

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Living on or off campus.
Objective Four

Objective four was to determine whether or not the ACCESS Students returned for the following semesters: the beginning of the second semester of enrollment, Spring 1996; the beginning of the third semester of enrollment, Fall 1996-1997; and the beginning of the fourth semester of enrollment, Spring 1997. The beginning of a semester for the purposes of examining retention is defined as the fourteenth day of class.

Of the 244 students in the ACCESS Program, the majority were enrolled in the Spring semester, 1996. Thirteen students did not return to the university for the Spring semester, 1996.

For the following semester, Fall 1996-1997, 151 students (or 61.89%) were enrolled on the date of investigation. Ninety-three students (38.11%) did not return to the university for the Fall semester, 1996-1997.

Of the 244 ACCESS Students who entered the university in the Fall of 1995, the majority of students (n = 138 or 56.56%) were enrolled in the Spring semester 1997. Students not returning to the university for the Spring semester, 1997, numbered 106 (43.44%).

An overview describing the retention percentages for the three semesters under investigation, Spring 1996, Fall 1996-1997, and Spring 1997, are found in Table 20.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>n/% returned</th>
<th>n/% dropped out</th>
<th>Return rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 1996</td>
<td>231/94.70</td>
<td>13/5.30</td>
<td>.9470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall, 1997</td>
<td>151/61.89</td>
<td>93/38.11</td>
<td>.6189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 1997</td>
<td>138/56.56</td>
<td>106/43.44</td>
<td>.5656</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective Five

Objective five was to determine the cumulative grade point average (GPA) of students who entered the ACCESS Program in Fall 1995 at four points in time: the end of the first semester, Fall 1995-1996; the end of the second semester, Spring 1996; the end of the third semester, Fall 1996-1997; and the end of the fourth semester, Spring 1997. The information under investigation was described using means and standard deviations.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for ACCESS Students, Fall Semester, 1995-1996

The majority of students in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 either had cumulative GPAs in the range of 2.1-2.5 (n = 70 or 28.69%) or 2.6-3.0 (n = 69 or 28.28%). The GPAs ranged from a low of 0.0 to a high of 4.0 with a mean of 2.47 (SD = 0.72). Results are found in Table 21.

Table 21

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for ACCESS Students, Fall Semester, 1995-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1.5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The mean GPA was 2.47 (SD = 0.72).

*The cumulative GPA ranged from 0 to 4.0.
**Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for ACCESS Students, Spring Semester, 1996**

The most frequent GPA value of students in the Spring semester, 1996 was a cumulative GPA in the range ≤ 1.5 (n = 82 or 35.50%). Fifteen of the 82 students in this range had cumulative GPAs of 0.0 while 11 had cumulative GPAs of 1.0. The GPAs ranged from a low of 0.0 to a high of 3.75 with a mean value of 2.21 (SD = 0.63). Results are found in Table 22.

**Table 22**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>231</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Cumulative GPAs were not available for 13 ACCESS Students, Spring 1996. The mean GPA was 2.21 (SD = 0.63).

*The cumulative GPA ranged from 0 to 4.0.*

**Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for ACCESS Students, Fall Semester, 1996-1997**

The majority of students in the Fall semester, 1996-1997 either had cumulative GPAs in the range of 2.1-2.5 (n = 61 or 40.40%) or 1.6-2.0 (n = 46 or 30.46%). The
GPAs ranged from a low of 1.5 to a high of 3.5 with a mean value of 2.35 (SD = 0.44).

Results are found in Table 23.

**Table 23**

**Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for ACCESS Students, Fall Semester, 1996-1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\leq 1.5$</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\geq 3.6$</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>151</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Cumulative GPAs were not available for 93 ACCESS Students, Fall 1996-1997. The mean GPA was 2.35 (SD = 0.44).

*The cumulative GPA ranged from 1.5 to 3.5.*

---

**Cumulative GPA for ACCESS Students, Spring Semester, 1997**

Of the remaining students in the Spring semester, 1997, the majority either had cumulative GPAs in the range of 2.1-2.5 ($n = 48$ or 34.8%) or 1.6-2.0 ($n = 44$ or 31.9%). The GPAs ranged from a low of 1.42 to a high of 3.48 with a mean value of 2.29 (SD = 0.47). Results are found in Table 24.
Table 24

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for ACCESS Students, Spring Semester, 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cumulative GPAs were not available for 106 ACCESS Students, Spring 1997. The mean GPA was 2.29 (SD = 0.47).

*The cumulative GPA ranged from 1.42 to 3.48.

Objective Six

Objective six was to determine whether or not the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students returned for the following semesters: the beginning of Spring 1996; the beginning of Fall 1996-1997; and the beginning of Spring 1997. The beginning of a semester for the purposes of examining retention is defined as the fourteenth day of class.

Of the 244 students in the sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, the majority of students were enrolled in the Spring Semester, 1996. Thirteen students did not return to the university for the Spring Semester, 1996.

For the following semester, Fall 1996-1997, 200 students (or 81.97%) were enrolled on the date of investigation. Forty-four students (18.03%) did not return to the university for the Fall semester, 1996-1997.
Of the 244 Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students who entered the university in the Fall of 1995, more than three-quarters of the students (n = 185 or 75.82%) were enrolled in the Spring semester 1997. Students not returning to the university for the Spring semester, 1997, numbered 59 (24.18%).

An overview describing the retention percentages for the three semesters under investigation, Spring 1996, Fall 1996-1997, and Spring 1997, are found in Table 25.

Table 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>n/% returned</th>
<th>n/% dropped out</th>
<th>Return rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 1996</td>
<td>230/94.26</td>
<td>14/5.74</td>
<td>.9426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall, 1996-1997</td>
<td>200/81.97</td>
<td>44/18.03</td>
<td>.8197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 1997</td>
<td>185/75.82</td>
<td>59/24.18</td>
<td>.7582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective Seven

Objective seven was to determine the cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students who entered the university in Fall 1995 at four points in time: at the end of the first semester, Fall 1995-1996; at the end of the second semester, Spring 1996; at the end of the third semester, Fall 1996-1997; and at the end of the fourth semester, Spring 1997. The information under investigation was described using means and standard deviations.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Fall Semester, 1995-1996

Nearly half of the students in the Fall semester, 1995-1996 either had cumulative GPAs in the range of 2.6-3.0 (n = 70 or 28.69%) or 2.1-2.5 (n = 51 or 21.90%). The GPAs ranged from a low of 0.0 to a high of 4.0. Results are found in Table 26.
Table 26

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students, Fall Semester, 1995-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range(^a)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(\leq 1.5)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\geq 3.6)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The mean GPA was 2.43 (SD = 0.84).

\(^a\)The cumulative GPA ranged from 0 to 4.0.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Spring Semester, 1996

The majority of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students in the Spring semester, 1996 had a cumulative GPA in the range 2.1-2.5 (n = 63 or 27.39%) or 2.6-3.0 (n = 61 or 26.52%). The GPAs of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students ranged from a low of 0.1 to a high of 4.0 with a mean value of 2.46 (SD = 0.75). Results are found in Table 27.
Table 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cumulative GPAs were not available for fourteen students. The mean GPA was 2.46 (SD = 0.75).

*The cumulative GPA ranged from 0.1 to 4.0.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Fall Semester, 1996-1997

In the Fall semester, 1996-1997, the majority of the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students either had cumulative GPAs in the range of 2.1-2.5 (n = 70 or 35.0%) or in the range of 2.6-3.0 (n = 58 or 29.0%). The GPAs ranged from a low of 0.84 to a high of 3.94 with a mean value of 2.57 (SD = 0.62). Results are found in Table 28.
Table 28

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students, Fall Semester, 1996-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range^</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cumulative GPAs were not available for 44 students. The mean GPA was 2.57 (SD = 0.62).

^The cumulative GPA ranged from 0.84 to 3.94.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Spring Semester, 1997

Of the remaining Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students in the Spring semester, 1997, the majority either had cumulative GPAs in the range of 2.1-2.5 (n = 63 or 34.05%) or in the range of 2.6-3.0 (n = 55 or 29.73%). The GPAs ranged from a low of 1.21 to a high of 3.95 with a mean value of 2.66 (SD = 0.56). Results are found in Table 29.
Table 29

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for Regularly Enrolled Freshman Students, Spring Semester, 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score value range*</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cumulative GPAs were not available for 59 students. The mean GPA was 2.66 (SD = 0.56).

*The cumulative GPA ranged from 1.21 to 3.95.

Objective Eight

Objective eight of the study was to determine if the variables enrollment status (whether the student was enrolled in ACCESS or Regularly Enrolled) and whether or not the student returned to the university were independent. The variable whether or not the student returned to the university was measured at three specific points in time: the beginning of Spring 1996 (second semester of enrollment); beginning of Fall 1996 (third semester of enrollment); and beginning of Spring 1997 (fourth semester of enrollment).
The Chi-Square Test of Independence was used for this analysis at each of the three points in time.

Results of the three Chi-Square Tests are presented in Table 30. Examination of the data in this table reveals non-significant results for one of the tests and statistically significant results the other two tests. At the first point in time (Spring 1996), the variables whether or not the student returned and enrollment status (ACCESS or Regular) were found to be independent. However, for the other two points of measurement of the variable whether or not the student returned to the university, the results showed that the variables were not independent. The nature of the association between these variables is examined in the contingency tables presented in Tables 31 and 32.

Regarding the nature of the association between whether or not the student returned for the Fall 1996 semester and enrollment status, data in Table 31 show that a larger percentage of the students enrolled in the regular program returned than those enrolled in the ACCESS Program (81.98% as compared to 61.89%).

Similar results were found when the contingency table presented in Table 32 on whether or not the student returned to the university during the Spring 1997 semester and enrollment status (ACCESS or Regular). In this instance, 56.66% of the students who were enrolled in the ACCESS Program returned to the university for the Spring 1997 semester while 75.82% of the students who entered the university as Regularly Enrolled Freshmen students returned for the Spring 1997 semester.
Table 30

Summary Table of Relationship Between Enrollment Status and Retention Rate by Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 1996</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall, 1996-1997</td>
<td>24.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, 1997</td>
<td>20.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31

Relationship Between Retention Rate and Enrollment Status, Fall 1996-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS n/%</th>
<th>Regular n/%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Returning</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.89%</td>
<td>81.98%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not returning</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.11%</td>
<td>18.03%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 32

Relationship Between Retention Rate and Enrollment Status, Spring 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS n/%</th>
<th>Regular n/%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Returning</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.66%</td>
<td>75.82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not returning</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.44%</td>
<td>24.18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective Nine

Objective nine called for a comparison of the two groups of freshmen students (ACCESS and Regularly Enrolled) on the cumulative grade point average (GPA) at four points in time: at the end of the first semester, Fall 1995-1996; at the end of the second semester, Spring 1996; at the end of the third semester, Fall 1996-1997; and at the end of the fourth semester, Spring 1997. Of special interest to the researcher was to establish whether or not there were significant differences between the cumulative GPA of the two groups of students during the two year study. The t-test was used to achieve this objective.

Comparison of the Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Fall Semester, 1995-1996

The results of the two groups sample t-test compared the mean GPA of students in the two groups for the Fall semester, 1995-1996. As shown in Table 33, it was determined that there was no significant difference in the cumulative GPA of the two groups for this time period at the .05 level.

Table 33

Comparison of the Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Fall Semester, 1995-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS Mean SD</th>
<th>Regular Mean SD</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGPAF95</td>
<td>2.47 (0.72)</td>
<td>2.43 (0.84)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>474.48</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>.544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aSince Fall, 1995-1996 was the student's first semester of enrollment, the cumulative and semester GPA would be the same.

bCGPAF95 is the cumulative grade point average for the Fall semester, 1995-1996.
Comparison of the Cumulative and Semester Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Spring Semester, 1996

The results of the two groups sample t-test compared the mean scores for the cumulative GPA for students in the ACCESS Program and a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students for the Spring Semester, 1996, the final semester under investigation. Data in Table 34 show that there were significant differences on the cumulative GPA between the two groups of students at the .05 level. In addition, the results of the t-test compared GPA mean scores in the two programs examining only the semester grades for the Spring Semester, 1996. It was determined that there were also significant differences between the two groups of students on the semester grades GPA at the .05 level. In both measures, cumulative GPA and semester GPA, the regularly enrolled freshmen students had significantly higher GPA.

Table 34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Regular Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGPAS96*</td>
<td>2.21 (0.63)</td>
<td>2.46 (0.75)</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGPAS96b</td>
<td>1.83 (0.33)</td>
<td>2.41 (0.91)</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. There were 43 missing cases for the variable CGPAS96 and 33 missing cases for the variable SGPAS96.

*CGPAS96 is the cumulative grade point average for the Spring semester, 1996.

bSGPAS96 is the semester grade point average for the Spring semester, 1996.
Comparison of the Cumulative and Semester Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Fall Semester, 1996-1997

The results of the two groups sample t-test compared the mean scores for the cumulative GPA for students in the ACCESS Program and a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997. Data in Table 35 shows that there were significant differences in the cumulative GPA between the two groups of students at the .05 level. In addition, the results of the t-test compared GPA mean scores in the two programs examining only the semester grades for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997. There were also significant differences between the two groups of students on the semester grades GPA at the .05 level. In both measures, cumulative GPA and semester GPA, the Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students had significantly higher GPA.

Table 35

Comparison of the Cumulative and Semester Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Fall Semester, 1996-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS Mean</th>
<th>Regular Mean</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPAF96a</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.44)</td>
<td>(0.62)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGPAF96b</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.92)</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. There were 141 missing cases for the variable CGPAF96 and 166 missing cases for the variable SGPAF96.

*aCGPAF96 is the cumulative grade point average for the Fall semester, 1996-1997.

bSGPAF96 is the semester grade point average for the Fall semester, 1996-1997.
Comparison of the Cumulative and Semester Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Spring Semester, 1997

The results of the t-test compared the mean scores for the cumulative GPA for students in the ACCESS Program and a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students for the Spring Semester, 1997, the final semester under investigation. Data in Table 36 shows that there were significant differences in the cumulative GPA between the two groups of students at the .05 level. In addition, the results of the t-test compared GPA mean scores in the two programs examining only the semester grades for the Spring Semester, 1997. It was determined that there were also significant differences between the two groups of students on the semester grades GPA at the .05 level. In both measures, cumulative GPA and semester GPA, the regularly enrolled freshmen students had significantly higher GPA.

Table 36

Comparison of the Cumulative and Semester Grade Point Average (GPA) of ACCESS Students and a Sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students, Spring Semester, 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ACCESS Mean</th>
<th>Regular Mean</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPAS97*</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>(0.56)</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>316.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGPAS97b</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>(0.94)</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>(0.82)</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. There were 172 missing cases for the variable CGPAS97 and 215 missing cases for the variable SGPAS97.

*CGPAS97 is the cumulative grade point average for the Spring semester, 1997.

SGPAS97 is the semester grade point average for the Spring semester, 1997.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary
The primary purpose of this study was to determine whether there existed any differences between two groups of freshmen students, ACCESS (defined as freshmen students who did not meet one or more of the specified selective admission requirements) and regularly enrolled freshmen students entering LSU for the first time in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996. The following specific objectives guided this study:

• Describe a cohort of ACCESS Students entering LSU in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 on selected demographic and academic measures. The selected personal characteristics included the following: age, gender, ethnicity or race, living on or off campus and parish of residence. The selected academic characteristics included the following: ACT Composite Score, ACT English Score, ACT Math Score, overall high school grade point average, academic high school grade point average and the number of completed academic high school units.

• Describe a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students at the same point in time on the same measures.

• Compare a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program to a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students on selected academic and personal characteristics. The selected personal characteristics included the following: age, gender, ethnicity or race, living on or off campus and parish of residence. The selected academic characteristics included the following: ACT Composite Score, ACT English Score, ACT Math Score, overall high school grade point average and the number of completed academic high school units.
• Determine the retention rate of a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program at three points in time.

• Determine the cumulative GPA of a cohort of students in the ACCESS Program at four points in time.

• Determine the retention rate of a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students at three points in time.

• Determine the cumulative GPA for a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students at four points in time.

• Compare the retention rate of ACCESS Students to a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students at three points in time.

• Compare the cumulative GPA of ACCESS Students to a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students at four points in time.

The target population for the study was defined as full time freshmen students entering LSU in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996.

The accessible population consisted of two groups of full-time freshmen students: students selected to participate in a developmental/retention program and a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students. There were 244 students in the developmental retention program. For comparison purposes, the same number of students (244) were selected from the regularly enrolled freshmen class entering the university at the same point in time.

The instrument used to collect data in this study was a computerized recording form designed by the researcher. The variables were specified, as was the order and format of the collection process. The Office of Budget and Planning provided the appropriate admission and academic information from the university data base. All the information collected for this study, both personal and academic, was collected
unobtrusively from the data base. The following is a summary of the major findings of the study:

- The demographic data for the ACCESS Students showed that the mean age was 18.41. The majority of students were male (n = 126 or 51.64%), and the majority of them were white (n = 192 or 79.67%). However, the percentage of white students enrolled in ACCESS represents the approximate percentage of white students in the LSU student population at large. The composite ACT mean was 19.49. The ACT English mean was 19.36, and the ACT Math mean was 18.48. The cumulative high school GPA mean was 2.50 while the cumulative academic GPA mean was 2.25. Only 92 of the ACCESS Students (or 38.83%) had completed at least the required 17.5 academic units. The majority of students in the program were from East Baton Rouge Parish (n = 77 or 32.08%), and over half of them lived off campus (n = 140 or 57.38%).

- The demographic data for the sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students showed that the mean age was 18.30. The majority of students were female (n = 140 or 57.37%), and the majority were white (n = 196 or 81.3%). The composite ACT mean was 21.73. The ACT English mean was 22.00 and the ACT Math mean was 22.20. The cumulative high school GPA mean was 3.14 while the cumulative academic GPA mean was 2.94. The majority of the group (n = 187 or 80.96%) completed 17.5 or more of the required high school academic units. The majority of these students were from East Baton Rouge Parish (n = 65 or 26.64%), and the majority of them lived on campus (n = 140 or 57.38%).

- The third major finding reported the differences between the student groups on the following variables: gender, ethnicity and residence (living on or off
Each of these variables was examined using the Chi Square Test to determine if it was independent of the variable enrollment status (ACCESS or regular). Results of the tests revealed that all three of the variables were not independent of enrollment status. The nature of these associations was such that ACCESS had more male students, fewer Asian students, and fewer students residing on campus than the group of regularly enrolled students.

Objective four determined whether or not the ACCESS Students continued their enrollment at the university at three points in time: Spring Semester, 1996; Fall Semester, 1996-1997; and Spring Semester, 1997. The number of ACCESS Students who remained enrolled in the university after the fourteenth day of class, Spring Semester, 1996 was 231 (n = 231 or 94.6%). The number of ACCESS Students who remained enrolled in the university after the fourteenth day of class, Fall Semester, 1996-1997 decreased to 151 (n = 151 or 61.9%). The number of ACCESS Students who remained in the university after the fourteenth day of class, Spring 1997 decreased to 138 (n=138 or 56.6%).

Objective five determined the cumulative mean GPA of ACCESS Students at four points in time. Findings showed that the mean for the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 was 2.47. The cumulative mean GPA for the Spring Semester, 1996 was 2.21 and the cumulative mean GPA for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 was 2.35. The final semester under investigation, Spring, 1997, reported a cumulative mean GPA of 2.29.

Objective six determined whether or not the regularly enrolled freshmen students continued their enrollment at the university at three points in time: Spring Semester, 1996; Fall Semester, 1996-1997; and Spring Semester,
1997. The number of regularly enrolled freshmen students who remained enrolled in the university after the fourteenth day of class, Spring Semester, 1996, was 230 (n = 230 or 94.3%). The number of regularly enrolled freshmen students that remained enrolled in the university after the fourteenth day of class, Fall Semester, 1996-1997 decreased to 200 (n = 200 or 82.0%). The number of regularly enrolled students who remained in the university after the fourteenth day of class, Spring 1997 decreased to 185 (n = 185 or 75.8%).

- Objective seven determined the cumulative mean GPA of the sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students at four points in time. Findings showed that the cumulative mean GPA for the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 was 2.43. The cumulative mean GPA for the Spring Semester, 1996 was a 2.46, and the cumulative mean GPA for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 was a 2.57. The final semester under investigation, the Spring Semester, 1997, reported a cumulative mean GPA of 2.66.

- Objective eight of the study was to determine if the variables enrollment status (ACCESS or regular) and whether or not the student remained enrolled in the university at each of the three specified points in time were independent. The Chi-Square Test was used to make this assessment. For all three of the tests, the Chi-Square Test was statistically significant, indicating that each of the retention measurements (at three points in time) were not independent of the variable enrollment status. The nature of this association was such that at all three of the times, a lower percentage of the students enrolled in the ACCESS Program remained enrolled in the university.
• Objective nine called for a comparison of cumulative mean GPA for both groups of students at four points in time. The findings of the t-test showed the following: the mean value for the cumulative GPA for ACCESS Students for the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 was 2.47 and the mean value for the cumulative GPA for the regularly enrolled freshmen students was 2.43. It was determined that there were no significant differences in the cumulative GPAs for the Fall Semester, 1995, between the two groups of students at .05.

For the Spring Semester, 1996, the cumulative mean GPA for ACCESS Students was 2.21 and the cumulative mean GPA for the sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students was 2.46. It was determined that there were significant differences in the cumulative GPAs for the Spring Semester, 1996, between the two groups of students at .05.

For the Fall Semester, 1996-1997, the cumulative mean GPA for ACCESS Students was 2.35 and the cumulative mean GPA was 2.57. It was determined that there were significant differences in the cumulative mean GPAs for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 between the two groups of students at .05.

For the final semester under investigation, Spring, 1997, the cumulative mean GPAs for the ACCESS Students was 2.29 and the cumulative mean GPA for the sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students was 2.66. It was determined that there were significant differences in the cumulative GPAs for the Spring Semester, 1997, between the two groups of students at .05.

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions, implications, and recommendations were derived:
Substantial differences in personal characteristics existed between the two groups of freshmen students under investigation (the ACCESS Students and a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students) entering the university for the first time in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996. The conclusion is based on the following findings. The Chi Square Test for selected personal characteristics were gender, $\chi^2 = 3.98$, ethnicity, $\chi^2 = 6.56$, and residence, $\chi^2 = 10.62$. The variables gender and ethnicity were statistically significant at the .05 level, while the variable residence was statistically significant at .001. Berger (1997), Casazza & Silverman (1996), and Astin (1977) reported that students who live on campus stay in college longer, increasing their chances of graduating. The researchers argue that students who live in campus housing demonstrate a connection to their university and are more involved in social and academic programs that those students who do not live on campus. Astin (1977) reported that campus living accounts for at least a 12% advantage in a student’s rate of retention. The researcher recommends that university administrators should develop programs that will encourage students to live on campus and to also develop strategies that will enable the student to connect to the university through social, academic, and community activities. The researcher also recommends that students placed in developmental programs be allowed the opportunity to join organizations that are appropriate to their professional and academic development. Under the ACCESS Policy, students are not allowed to join any campus organization that required a certain grade point average.

Significant academic differences existed between the two groups of freshmen students under investigation (the ACCESS Students and a sample of Regularly
Enrolled Freshmen Students) entering the university for the first time in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996. The conclusion is based on the following findings: the t-test for selected academic characteristics were ACT Composite Score, $t = 8.46$; ACT English Score, $t = 8.44$; ACT Math Score, $t = 7.46$; Overall High School GPA, $t = 20.36$; Academic High School GPA, $t = 21.67$; and High School Academic Units, $t = 8.84$. All the academic variables under investigation were statistically significant at .001.

- Significantly lower high school academic differences existed for the ACCESS Students prior to their entering the university. This conclusion is based on the following findings. In all academic variables except for English ACT Scores, the ACCESS Students entered LSU with significantly lower mean scores than the other group. The mean overall high school GPA for ACCESS Students was 2.51 compared to the mean overall high school GPA for the regular group which was 3.14. The mean academic GPA for ACCESS Students was 2.25 while the regular group had a mean academic GPA of 2.94. Only 92 ($n = 92$ or 38.33%) of the ACCESS Students had completed the required 17.5 academic units prior to entering LSU. Of the regularly enrolled freshmen students, 187 ($n = 187$ or 80.96%) had completed 17.5 or more of the required academic units prior to entering LSU. In summary, the regularly enrolled freshmen students entered the university with a considerably stronger academic background than did the ACCESS Students. The literature reports that students who enter college without the specified admission criteria are at high risk for failure. Furthermore, high risk students entering higher education is a problem that is gaining recognition throughout the country. Many southern states, including Florida, Texas, Georgia and Tennessee, are attempting to identify and assist students who come through the secondary
education system with basic skill deficiencies and are interested in attending an institution of higher education. According to educational experts, testing and developmental education go hand-in-hand. Studies show that the comprehensive assessment programs are working. The researcher recommends that LSU administer a similar type of testing to all incoming freshmen students. According to Halpern (1987), assessing academic areas can benefit all students and not just those who need basic skills testing. These types of assessment programs can be the driving force behind curriculum reform, and innovative and progressive teaching methods, and they also have the potential to motivate students. The second recommendation is that a close, community relationship be established between the high schools in the state and the flagship university. Communication and cooperation between secondary and post secondary education are vital if students are going to understand and meet the required pre-college courses that are necessary not only for admission but academic success. Most of the 17.5 required academic units are the foundation courses for the required general education classes at LSU.

- Significant differences existed between the two groups of freshmen students (the ACCESS Students and a sample of Regularly Enrolled Freshmen Students) entering the university for the first time in the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 and whether or not the student was enrolled the 14th day of class for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 and the Spring Semester, 1997. The conclusion is based on the following findings. At the investigated points in time except the Spring Semester, 1996 (which was not statistically significant) the Chi Square Test for the variables, status of enrollment and whether or not the student was enrolled on the 14th day of class for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 was
\( \chi^2 = 24.37 \). The Chi Square Test for variables, status of enrollment and whether or not the student was enrolled on the 14th day of class for the Spring Semester, 1997 was \( \chi^2 = 20.23 \). The variables whether or not the students were enrolled at two points in time, Fall Semester, 1996-1997 and the Spring Semester, 1997 and the status of enrollment were significant at .001.

Tinto (1993) has shown that positive and productive retention and developmental programs are comprehensive in nature and extend beyond the freshmen year. While the ACCESS Program offered assistance to those students who entered the university with academic deficits, it was limited to 24 academic credit hours. Upon completion of the 24 academic credit hours, students were dropped from the ACCESS Program and transferred into their senior college of choice. Other freshmen students not in the ACCESS Program were allowed to remain in the Freshmen Division (Junior Division) for the maximum of 60 hours. Researchers in the area of retention and developmental education have stressed the importance of continuing such programs throughout the freshmen and sophomore years. The researcher suggests that LSU consider implementing the program for a longer period of time and connecting such a developmental program directly to the other support services offered on campus. An integrated package of services should be offered to all students. The policy for the ACCESS Program dictated that students be taught in separate classes with primarily adjunct professors. This allowed little or no career counseling with full-time faculty members. Astin (1977) has shown that undecided students have lower retention rates that students who are decided on a major. Faculty mentoring is an effective recruiting tool in student retention. Regular freshmen students were not allowed in ACCESS classes, nor were ACCESS Students allowed in regular
freshmen classes. Students were not allowed choices in regard to the time and course selected. These decisions were made by the administrator of the ACCESS Program, according to the university policy governing ACCESS. Retention efforts are crucial for students’ academic success. Universities should not only spend money on recruiting students to their campuses, but they should invest the resources, financial and human, to improve retention percentages. The researcher also recommends that a large research university such as LSU work diligently to create a sense of community. Community is defined as a group of people with shared values, practices and objectives. Prior research by Lounsbury & DeNuie (1995) found that community building is an important factor in helping undergraduate students, particularly freshmen, adjust to and cope with the challenges of college life, leading to college persistence. Based on the success of other colleges and universities, Seminar Learning is one example of successful community building that has helped freshmen students connect to the independent world of a research university. The freshmen program should include, but not necessarily be limited to: (a) placing students in small groups with experienced faculty members who excel in teaching and graduate students in the freshmen’s area of study, for the purpose of studying a single complicated subject or problem, (and/or engage in extensive writing); (b) comprehensive counseling, not just academic advising of students, by professionals educated and trained in the areas of personal and social adjustment and career counselors; (c) integrating the freshmen program to the sophomore year - one way to extend group learning is designate residence halls for students who share the same vocational interest.
Significant cumulative GPA differences existed between the two groups of freshmen students under investigation (ACCESS Students and a sample of regularly enrolled freshmen students) enrolled in the Spring Semester, 1996, Fall Semester, 1996-1997, and the Spring Semester, 1997. There was not a significant cumulative GPA difference between the two groups of students at the end of the Fall Semester, 1995-1996. The conclusion is based on the following findings. The t-test for cumulative GPA for the Fall Semester, 1995-1996 was $t = 0.61$ and not statistically significant at .544. The t-test for the cumulative GPA for the Spring Semester, 1996 was $t = 3.96$ and the t-test for the cumulative GPA for the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 was $t = 3.96$. The Spring Semester, 1996 and the Fall Semester, 1996-1997 were statistically significant at .001. Research supported by Boylan, Bonham, and Bliss, 1992 showed that when tutoring is delivered by trained tutors, it is the strongest correlation of student success. The same research project reports that when tutors are not trained there is no correlation with academic performance. Other research by Tinto (1987) and Astin (1977) report that faculty involvement both in the academic and social arena is a powerful resource for academic motivation of all students. The researcher recommends that tutors trained by professionals in the areas of learning styles and developmental counseling are incorporated into the freshmen division to help students who do not enter the university with the required academic backgrounds, but in reality enter college with significant academic deficiencies.

Lastly, the significant differences in retention rates need further explanation. Developmental education experts such as Tinto (1996) contend that not all students leave school because of poor grades. It is generally assumed that the
reason students do not return to college the following semester is academic difficulties. Past research efforts to study student success have focused on the quantitative method of collecting and reporting educational data. While this method is highly efficient and appropriate in most cases, it falls short when used to measure the understanding of how students adjust into the academic and social milieu of higher education. Poor grades may not be the reason why a student has dropped out of school; or there may be a combination of personal, financial and academic reasons for departure. The researcher recommends further research in the domain of student retention and in particular, a multifaceted qualitative research approach that has the potential to enhance the overall validity in this area of inquiry. Two other areas of vital concern in developmental education that have been identified in the literature are: finding ways to assist students engage and connect with other students and their university community, particularly at a time when the majority of students work while in college; and the pervasive lack of student motivation, a topic that has gained both local and national attention and has the potential to weaken the academic progress of students in all areas of education.
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**APPENDIX A**

**PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATIONAL COURSES, BY INSTITUTION, FALL 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>First-Time Freshmen*</th>
<th>First-Time Freshmen Enrolled in Developmental Education</th>
<th>% Of Total First-Time Freshmen Enrolled In Developmental Education Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delgado</td>
<td>2,368</td>
<td>1,633</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grambling</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaTech</td>
<td>1,516</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeese</td>
<td>1,958</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholls</td>
<td>1,181</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>1,811</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunez</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>1,509</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern</td>
<td>2,951</td>
<td>1,805</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSU A</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSU BR</td>
<td>4,656</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSU E</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSU S</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNO</td>
<td>1,677</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU BR</td>
<td>1,919</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU NO</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU S</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,457</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,358</strong></td>
<td><strong>46.9%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Board of Regents, Student Profile System (SSPSFIFR)
APPENDIX B

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND ADMISSION POLICY

U. S. students who have graduated from approved high schools fulfill the academic requirements for admission if they meet any one of these standards:

• an academic grade-point average/ACT or SAT score combination as shown in Table II below in at least 16 of the units listed in Table I; or
• an academic high school grade-point average of at least 2.30 on all 17/2 high school unit requirements listed in Table I; or
• an academic high school grade-point average of at least 3.50 in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and an ACT score of at least 28 (SAT of at least 1170). Experience has shown that most entering freshmen who meet these standards can be expected to perform satisfactorily in their first year at LSU.

TABLE I. HIGH SCHOOL UNITS REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION

| Category 1 | ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND LITERATURE (four units) — English I, II, III, IV. |
| Category 2 | COLLEGE PREPARATORY MATHEMATICS (three units) — Algebra I, Algebra II, and one additional unit consisting of courses such as Geometry, Trigonometry, Advanced Mathematics, or Calculus. |
| Category 3 | NATURAL SCIENCES (three units) — Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. |
| Category 4 | SOCIAL STUDIES (three units) — One unit in American History; one unit in World History, World Geography, or History of Western Civilization; and one unit consisting of courses such as Civics, Free Enterprise, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, and American Government. |
| Category 5 | FOREIGN LANGUAGES (two units) — Two units in a single language. |
| Category 6 | COMPUTER STUDIES (one-half unit) — Computer Science, Computer Literacy, or Data Processing. |
| Category 7 | ADDITIONAL COURSES (two units) — Two additional units from categories 1 through 6 above and/or certain courses in the visual and performing arts (Fine Arts Survey, Art III, Art IV, Advanced Band, Applied Music, Advanced Chorus, Jazz Ensemble, Music Theory II, Advanced Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, and Studio Piano III). |

LSU will accept, as one unit toward the Category 7 requirement, any two units of performance courses in music, dance, or theater not listed above; or two such units of studio art courses.
TABLE II. HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC GPA/ACT/SAT SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSGPA</th>
<th>MINIMUM ACT</th>
<th>MINIMUM SAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.9 - 4.00</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 - 2.89</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 - 2.59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, a student with 16 of the 17½ units, an academic high school GPA of 2.85, and an ACT score of 20 (or SAT of 830) would be admissible.

Students who lack two or more of the units will be considered for admission based on the number and nature of the deficiencies, high school grades, ACT or SAT scores, or special talents.

Graduates of unapproved high schools must meet the unit requirements and submit satisfactory grades and an ACT composite score of 21 or higher or a SAT combined score of 880 or higher. GED graduates will also be subject to the requirements as outlined above.

A Louisiana resident who is at least 21 years old may apply for admission. The applicant’s entire background — education, training, and experience — will be considered.

A student athlete who is awarded an athletic grant-in-aid may be admitted if he or she meets the standards found in Bylaw 14.3.1 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. A student athlete at LSU will be subject to a number of special academic requirements specified in the rules of the Southeastern Conference and the NCAA.
## Freshman Admission Standards • Fall 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Academic GPA</th>
<th>High School Course Work</th>
<th>Admission Test Score</th>
<th>Admission Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.50-4.00</td>
<td>Rigorous college preparatory curriculum in an accredited or state-approved high school</td>
<td>ACT: 28 or above(^4) SAT: 1170 or above</td>
<td>Regular Admission Eligibility to apply for Honors College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30-4.00</td>
<td>17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT/SAT: any score</td>
<td>Regular admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: 19 or above SAT: 790 or above</td>
<td>Regular admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90-4.00</td>
<td>Less than 16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: 19 or above SAT: 790 or above</td>
<td>Deferred decision(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: below 19 SAT: below 790</td>
<td>Deferred decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: 20 or above SAT: 830 or above</td>
<td>Regular admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.60-2.89</td>
<td>Less than 16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: 20 or above SAT: 830 or above</td>
<td>Deferred decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: below 20 SAT: below 830</td>
<td>Deferred decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: 21 or above SAT: 880 or above</td>
<td>Regular admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30-2.59</td>
<td>Less than 16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: 21 or above SAT: 880 or above</td>
<td>Deferred decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 of 17.5 specified high school units required</td>
<td>ACT: below 21 SAT: below 880</td>
<td>Deferred decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 2.30(^6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Louisiana residents will be reviewed for LSU ACCESS • Out-of-state residents will be reviewed by the Undergraduate Admissions Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Grade-point average is calculated on the basis of the academic units listed in Table 1, using the standard 4.00 minimum scale ("A" = 4; "B" = 3; "C" = 2; "D" = 1; "F" = 0).

2 Specified high school units are listed in Table 1. Applicants from unapproved or unaccredited high schools will not be admitted without a minimum composite score on the ACT of 21 or higher or a combined score on the SAT of 880 or higher.

3 Applicants may submit an official score for the ACT or SAT.

4 Deferred Decision — Records of all other applicants will be reviewed on an individual basis. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee considers GPA, standardized test scores, class rank, pattern and quality of courses, curriculum, grade trends, educational objectives, extracurricular activities, leadership

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abilities, and school recommendations. Students may be admitted on the basis of special talents, significant life and career experience, or membership in groups underrepresented in the student body. Final senior grades may be requested before an admission decision is made.

5 Applicants may appeal admission decisions to the Office of Academic Affairs and Provost. Such appeals will be considered after the application has been reviewed by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Undergraduate Admissions Committee. An appeal must include supporting documentation of a student’s special talents and/or extenuating circumstances.

6 Student athletes who are awarded athletic grants-in-aid may be admitted if they meet the standards found in Bylaw 14.3.1 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. A student athlete at LSU will be subject to a number of special academic requirements specified in the rules of the Southeastern Conference and the NCAA.
APPENDIX C
LSU ACCESS PROGRAM

I__________________________ Soc. Sec. #____________________ accept the offer to enroll in the ACCESS Program at LSU. By acceptance, I understand:

To exit the ACCESS Program and be regularly admitted to LSU, I must obtain 24 hours of earned credit in preassigned ACCESS course work with a minimum 2.0 GPA, and pass required English and Math course work.

I may attempt a maximum of 30 semester hours in a single academic year to satisfy the exit requirements.

I will be eligible to participate in all aspects of campus life and student activities except those requiring a minimum grade-point average. Activities requiring a minimum grade-point average include but are not limited to fraternities, sororities, student government, NCAA athletics, and cheerleading.

Previous college course work may not be used to satisfy the exit requirements (example - college work taken in the summer before enrolling in the fall at LSU).

_____ No, I do not wish to participate in the LSU ACCESS Program.

_________________________________  ______________________
Signature                                Date

Please return this form to:
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
110 Thomas Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
(504) 388-1175 or
Fax (504) 388-4433
Executive Summary

Currently many Louisiana high school graduates who fail to satisfy the admissions criteria at LSU enroll in other colleges and universities in order to earn the 2.0 average in twenty-four hours of course work that will make them eligible for transfer to LSU. Often the courses in which they enroll lack the breadth, depth, and rigor of equivalent courses at LSU. Once enrolled at LSU, most of these students demonstrate that they can and will succeed at the flagship institution. But their preparation for continuing study is not as sound as it would have been had they attained the qualifying 2.0 average in courses for which LSU is responsible for content and quality.

LSU and A&M proposes to establish ACCESS, a program designed to prepare such students for matriculation into the University’s regular undergraduate programs in an educational environment in which LSU controls curriculum and quality and guarantees complete transferability of earned credits toward LSU degrees. While students may be suitable candidates for LSU ACCESS for a variety of reasons, the target population is largely constituted by individuals whose educational development has been hampered for cultural and socioeconomic reasons and by adult students who choose to begin or return to college. This outreach program reinforces LSU’s standards of excellence in undergraduate education and advances the University’s historic mission of service to society as a Land-Grant institution.

LSU ACCESS would provide for:

- Provisional admission to the General College under a special curriculum code
- Eligibility for financial aid
• Clearance to enroll only in a defined curriculum of 1000-level General Education courses, including 6 hours in English and in analytical reasoning (12 hours total) and 3 hours in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences (12 hours total)

• Admission to regular undergraduate programs with the achievement of a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better at the end of the specified 24 hours

No ACCESS student will be allowed to continue at LSU beyond 30 hours with a GPA below 2.0.

Requirements for admission to LSU ACCESS are:

• A high school diploma or GED

• Submission of an LSU ACCESS application

• Submission of official transcripts and ACT/SAT scores

ACCESS Students will be restricted to 1000-level courses, whereas regular freshmen are eligible to take 2000-level courses. Fees for ACCESS Students will be the same as those for other students. ACCESS will be administered by the dean of General College with support for admission, counseling, and financial aid from other units. Developmental courses will not be offered, but ACCESS Students will be able to upgrade math and English skills through a variety of non-credit activities.

Resolution

Whereas LSU and A&M can better serve the people of Louisiana by providing an access program to baccalaureate programs for students who can succeed at the university but who do not meet regular admissions criteria,

And whereas the proposal for the LSU ACCESS Program will accomplish this goal while upholding the University’s commitment to excellence in undergraduate
education and will advance the University's historic mission of service to society as a Land-Grant institution,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University authorizes LSU and A&M to implement the ACCESS Program described in the Executive Summary.

**LSU ACCESS**

Currently many Louisiana high school graduates who fail to satisfy the admissions criteria at LSU enroll in other colleges and universities in order to earn the 2.0 average in twenty-four hours of course work that will make them eligible for transfer to LSU. Often the courses in which they enroll lack the breadth, depth, and rigor of equivalent courses at LSU.

Once enrolled at LSU, most of these students demonstrate that they can and will succeed at the flagship institution. But their preparation for continuing study is not as sound as it would have been had they attained the qualifying 2.0 average in courses for which LSU is responsible for content and quality.

LSU ACCESS is a program designed to prepare such students for matriculation into the University's regular undergraduate programs in an educational environment in which LSU controls curriculum and quality and guarantees complete transferability of earned credits toward LSU degrees.

While students may be suitable candidates for LSU ACCESS for a variety of reasons, the target population is largely constituted by individuals whose educational development has been hampered for cultural and socioeconomic reasons and by adult students who choose to begin or return to college. This outreach program reinforces LSU's standards of excellence in undergraduate education and advances the University's historic mission of service to society as a Land-Grant institution.
LSU ACCESS provides for:

- Provisional admission to the General College only under a special curriculum code (GCAC)
- Eligibility for financial aid
- Clearance to enroll only in a defined curriculum of 1000-level General Education courses, including requirements for 6 hours in English composition and in analytical reasoning (a total of 12 hours) and 3 hours in the arts, in the humanities, in the social sciences, and in the natural sciences (a total of 12 hours)
- Admission to regular undergraduate programs with the achievement of a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better at the end of the specified 24 hours
- Exclusion of ACCESS Students from freshman class data

No ACCESS student will be allowed to continue at LSU beyond 30 hours with a GPA below 2.0.

Requirements for admission to LSU ACCESS are:

- A high school diploma or GED
- Submission of an LSU ACCESS application (which will carry a fee identical to the fee for regular undergraduate applications)
- Submission of official transcripts
- ACT/SAT scores

ACCESS Students will be distinguished from regularly admitted students in that 1) they will carry a special code (GCAC) marking their inadmissibility to senior colleges, to which most regular freshmen will be directly admitted (undecided regular freshman and
transfers will be classified GCUN); 2) they will be restricted to 1000-level courses, whereas regular freshmen are eligible to take 2000-level courses.

The University will provide resources for hiring instructors required to accommodate ACCESS Students in core courses. Fees for ACCESS Students will be the same as those for other students. ACCESS will be administered by the dean of General College with support for admission, counseling, and financial aid from other units. Developmental courses will not be offered, but ACCESS Students will have opportunities to upgrade math and English skills through a variety of non-credit activities.

LSU ACCESS
A TENTATIVE WORKING OUTLINE

PREAMBLE

Currently many Louisiana high school graduates do not meet all admissions criteria for LSU even though some have the potential to succeed at the University. LSU ACCESS is a program designed to create enhanced access to LSU for these individuals, LSU ACCESS will challenge motivated students and provide those who work hard with support mechanisms aimed at academic success.

PROGRAM DEFINITION AND ADMINISTRATION

These points are fundamental to the conception of LSU ACCESS:

- ACCESS will be clearly separate from programs for non-ACCESS Students
- ACCESS Students will be accountable for the same high standards of academic performance expected of all other students
- LSU will maintain its existing admissions standards
• LSU will commit resources to ensure that as many ACCESS Students as possible succeed in exiting from ACCESS into the University’s senior colleges

• ACCESS will be funded through fees paid by ACCESS Students and will be self-supporting

• Fees for ACCESS Students are anticipated to be the same as those for all other students

• ACCESS Students will be eligible to participate in all aspects of campus life and student activities except those requiring a minimum grade-point average.

In order to achieve the goals of ACCESS, the University will follow these operational guidelines:

• ACCESS Students will be admitted to the General College under a new curriculum code

• They will be certified as eligible to apply for financial aid

• The ACCESS Program will be administered by a director who will work with academic departments to schedule courses and to select instructors; the director will coordinate counseling and tutorial programs for ACCESS Students

• ACCESS courses will be open to ACCESS Students only; ACCESS Students will not be taught with non-ACCESS Students.

ADMISSION

Admission to LSU ACCESS will be handled by the Undergraduate Admissions Committee. Currently, as stated in the LSU General Catalog, all persons interested in
attending LSU are invited to apply to the University, with the promise that those not admissible according to the published regular criteria will be reviewed on an individual basis. To ensure as large an applicant pool as possible, the opportunity for all applicants to be considered will be widely publicized, as will the LSU ACCESS Program itself. School counselors will be fully briefed on the program.

For each upcoming semester, the director of the ACCESS Program will consult with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and the Provost to determine the optimal number of students to be served through LSU ACCESS; the aim of the admissions process will be to enroll that number in ACCESS. Applicants selected from the pool will be those judged most likely to succeed and only those deemed to have a reasonable probability of success. Indicators for admission will include:

- Track record in secondary school as indicated by grade-point average, teacher/counselor recommendation, and course selection recorded on high school transcripts
- ACT scores
- Applicant’s personal statement in response to a question or questions designed to help University personnel to assess personal motivation

CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the LSU ACCESS Program will be designed by the faculty to meet the needs of students who demonstrate promise of success at LSU. A structured opportunity with limited choice of coursework will provide a firm basis for further study in the University. Courses offered to ACCESS Students will match the current academic rigor of coursework generally at LSU, and students will need to complete 24 college-level
hours with a C average to apply for admission to the senior colleges. The following stipulations are basic to the ACCESS curriculum:

- Upon admission to the program, students will be assessed to determine course placement; all ACCESS Students must have ACT scores on file and must complete diagnostic examinations for English and mathematics placement
- Special counseling and curriculum guidance will be provided for students in the program
- The course menu will require, first and foremost, that students satisfactorily complete required, 1000-level English and mathematics courses and a freshman-level strategic skills course
- Students will also select from a limited menu of General Education courses which fit their curricular goals
- Most courses offered to ACCESS Students will carry three semester hours of credit but some of these may be offered in formats requiring four to five contact hours weekly
- ACCESS Students who fail to achieve a C average in their first twenty-four semester hours of course work may enroll in no more than six additional semester hours in the ACCESS Program in an attempt to achieve the required average; those who fail to attain a C average on thirty semester hours of work will not be allowed to continue their enrollment at LSU but will be counseled on opportunities for pursuing post-secondary education elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

LSU ACCESS will enable the University to better serve the people of Louisiana by providing increased access to LSU’s baccalaureate programs. The development of
increased opportunity for access will advance the University's historic mission of service to society as a Land-Grant institution. Careful design of an ACCESS Program clearly separated from other University programs will allow LSU to preserve the integrity of its current admissions process and of its regularly admitted freshman class and will, at the same time, allow faculty and staff to provide ACCESS Students with the support that they will need to achieve success in the University.
LSU ACCESS
A TENTATIVE WORKING OUTLINE
Q & A

Question: What is the aim of the proposed LSU ACCESS Program?

Answer: LSU ACCESS will enable the University to better serve the people of Louisiana by providing increased access to LSU’s baccalaureate programs. The development of increased opportunity for access will advance the University’s historic mission of service to society as a Land-Grant institution. Currently many Louisiana high school graduates do not meet all admissions criteria for LSU even though some have the potential to succeed at the University. LSU ACCESS is a program designed to create enhanced access to LSU for these individuals. LSU ACCESS will challenge motivated students and provide those who work hard with support mechanisms aimed at academic success.

Question: Will LSU be lowering its admissions criteria and academic standards if it implements the ACCESS Program?

Answer: LSU is fully committed to maintaining its admissions criteria and rigorous academic standards. Students admitted to LSU ACCESS will not be eligible to apply to the senior colleges of the University until they have completed twenty-four semester hours of coursework with a C average or better. While in the ACCESS Program, students will be taught in specially staffed sections of 1000-level courses, primarily in courses that may later be used to satisfy the University’s General Education requirements. Regularly enrolled students will not be permitted to enroll in the ACCESS courses. Many
of the ACCESS courses, moreover, will be taught in special formats requiring more class contact hours than regular sections of the same courses. ACCESS courses will require students to meet the same high standards of academic performance as students in regular courses. Thus, ACCESS Students will be well prepared to succeed in the senior colleges when they complete the ACCESS Program. They will no more lower LSU's admissions criteria and academic standards than students who transfer to LSU after having earned a C average on twenty-four semester hours of college credit elsewhere.

**Question:** Isn't LSU really more concerned with raising its enrollment and tuition revenues than with serving the needs of students?

**Answer:** As stated earlier, the primary aim of the proposed LSU ACCESS Program is to provide a service to students and to society by preparing more of the sons and daughters of Louisiana for success in the University. Like most public institutions and virtually all private colleges and universities, LSU of course has legitimate concerns with enrollment and funding. But LSU ACCESS is a carefully designed program for which the overriding and central goal is to challenge students who are willing to work hard to pursue academic success at the state's flagship institution of higher education. LSU ACCESS aims to identify such students and to provide them with the tools and skills they will need to graduate with their bachelor's degrees. At the same time, we believe that an essential element in academic and fiscal planning is enrollment management, and LSU ACCESS would give the University the flexibility to determine an annual enrollment target. While enrollment management is not the driving factor for LSU ACCESS, the program of course has fiscal as well as academic implications.
Question: How will enrollment targets be determined?

Answer: For each upcoming semester, the director of the ACCESS Program will consult with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and the Provost to determine the optimal number of students to be served through LSU ACCESS; the aim of the admissions process will be to enroll that number in ACCESS. Applicants selected from the pool will be those judged most likely to succeed and only those deemed to have a reasonable probability of success.

Question: Who are the students who will be served by the ACCESS Program?

Answer: Our target population includes, but is by no means limited to, individuals whose educational development has been hampered for cultural and socioeconomic reasons, individuals who have made a late decision about taking college preparatory courses in secondary school, and adult students who have chosen to begin or to return to college. LSU ACCESS is a program, moreover, for Louisiana residents only.

Question: Who will be eligible for admission to the ACCESS Program?

Answer: All Louisianians interested in enrolling in the University are encouraged to apply, even though they may not meet the regular admissions criteria. A high school diploma or GED is of course a basic prerequisite. Each applicant to ACCESS will be asked to provide a letter of recommendation from a teacher, school counselor, or
employer and a personal statement that will give the Undergraduate Admissions Committee some indication of each applicant's personal motivation.

**Question:** Will students have to have a minimum ACT or SAT score, a minimum grade-point average, or a set high school curriculum in order to be admitted to LSU ACCESS?

**Answer:** No. As the LSU *General Catalog* states (p. 22), “All students who wish to be considered for undergraduate admission to LSU are encouraged to apply.... The records of all other applicants [those who do not meet the regular published admissions criteria] will be considered on an individual basis. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee considers grade-point average, standardized test scores, class rank, pattern and quality of courses, curriculum, grade trends, educational objectives, extracurricular activities, and school recommendations.” The admissions procedure for LSU ACCESS will be nothing new. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee will make the kind of holistic evaluation of each applicant described in the *Catalog*. The aim of the Undergraduate Admissions Committee will be to select students whom the University can serve well by preparing them for academic success.

**Question:** Will standardized test scores even be required then?

**Answer:** Yes: LSU will use ACT scores for English and math placement of ACCESS Students, just as it does for all other undergraduates.

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1 The Undergraduate Admissions Committee consists of three members of the Faculty Senate Committee on Admissions, Standards, and Honors, including the chair, and the Director of Undergraduate Admissions.
**Question:** Then what is new about ACCESS?

**Answer:** There are many new and innovative aspects of LSU ACCESS. First, even though the opportunity now exists for all students to apply for undergraduate admission, there has not been a separate academic program and classification for students who do not meet all of the University's admissions criteria. With a special program in place geared toward ensuring that the largest possible number of these students will succeed in the University, LSU will be able to more actively promote the opportunity to participate by informing high school students and guidance counselors throughout the state.

**Question:** One of the aims of LSU's admissions policy has been to improve secondary education in Louisiana by encouraging high schools to offer the rigorous college preparatory curriculum required for admission and by encouraging high school students to aim for the level of academic performance required by LSU. If the ACCESS Program is implemented, won't high schools and students lose the incentive to prepare to meet LSU's standards?

**Answer:** Because LSU ACCESS is designed as a separate program within LSU, there will still be strong incentives for students to seek regular admission and for high schools to prepare students to meet regular admissions requirements. These incentives will range from enhanced scholarship opportunities to the fact that ACCESS Students will be taught in a limited menu of 1000-level courses only and will not be in the same classes with regularly admitted students. Regularly admitted freshmen will be taught with the general student population and will be eligible from the outset to take virtually all of the 2000-level as well as 1000-level courses offered at the University. ACCESS Students will often take courses, moreover, that will require more hours in the classroom than will
be required of regularly admitted students in the same courses. For example, a regularly admitted student would take the first semester of freshman English in the standard format requiring three hours in class each week to earn three semester hours of credit, whereas an ACCESS student might receive credit for the same first-semester freshman English course in a format requiring five hours in class each week in order to earn the same three semester hours of credit. And there will be other opportunities that regularly admitted students will enjoy that ACCESS Students will not have available until they have successfully completed the ACCESS Program.

**Question:** Would you please amplify on the last point: What opportunities will ACCESS Students have and what opportunities will they not have that are enjoyed by regularly admitted students?

**Answer:** Students enrolled in LSU ACCESS will be LSU students. They will carry LSU ID cards. They will be eligible to live in the residence halls, to use the Union and the Student Recreation Center, to attend athletic events, and, generally, to enjoy all aspects of student life. But until they have successfully completed the ACCESS Program, students who enter LSU through ACCESS will not be eligible to participate in activities for which a grade-point average is required. They will thus not be eligible to hold officerships in many student organizations, and they will not be eligible to join some fraternities and sororities and various honorary societies. Nor will they be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics.

**Question:** What special services will be offered to ACCESS Students to help them succeed academically?
Answer: The ACCESS Program will be under the administration of a director whose mission will be to prepare ACCESS Students to succeed by exiting from ACCESS into the senior colleges in order to earn bachelor's degrees. Central to the success of ACCESS will be the provision of expert counseling services and of instructors especially prepared by training and experience to meet the academic needs of ACCESS Students. Tutoring will be provided as necessary through the Learning Assistance Center, and special, innovative non-credit short courses will be offered to students requiring further skill acquisition in order to perform at required levels in credit-bearing courses.

Question: Will LSU ACCESS offer developmental or remedial courses?

Answer: No. Students needing foundational work will be offered non-credit assistance to develop essential skills. There will not be remedial coursework.

Question: How will the University cover the costs of the ACCESS Program? Won't provision of the special services you have just mentioned make ACCESS a high-cost program?

Answer: In keeping with its aims in the program, LSU is fully committed to providing the resources needed to give ACCESS Students the greatest possible chance of success. We have calculated that student fees, anticipated to be the same as those for all other students, will provide sufficient resources to get the job done well. We anticipate little or no administrative overhead. There will be no new bricks and mortar. For example, many of the ACCESS courses will be offered in the afternoon and evening in order to accommodate the schedules of part-time and working students; this kind of scheduling
will allow us to make maximum use of facilities that have excess capacity from mid-afternoon on. Thus there will be no appreciable increase cost in plant operations.

**Question:** When will LSU ACCESS begin?

**Answer:** We would aim to have the program fully up and running by the fall semester, 1995. Depending upon the pace of faculty approval of the proposed program, a small pilot program might conceivably begin as early as fall, 1994, and probably no later than spring, 1995.

**Question:** How many students do you envision in the program?

**Answer:** It's hard to say at present. A pilot version might range anywhere from 50 to 250 students – 50 is more likely if we are able to begin this fall, and 250 might be a good target number if the program were first piloted next spring. But while the program could potentially grow to include a significantly larger number of students, we will limit it to numbers that we are confident we can serve well. Service to students is the bottom line of LSU ACCESS.

**Question:** Will students be able to transfer credits earned in LSU ACCESS to other colleges and universities?

**Answer:** Yes. While ACCESS courses may be taught in innovative formats and will be open to ACCESS Students only, they will be bona fide LSU courses drawn from the LSU *General Catalog*. 
**Question:** Is ACCESS an attempt to establish a community or junior college at LSU?

**Answer:** No. ACCESS is not intended to be a community college or junior college. LSU ACCESS is a program with a precisely defined objective: to better prepare students to make the transition into their senior colleges. Students will be working toward baccalaureate degrees from the moment they enter ACCESS and well continue to do so as they move into other programs at the University Community and junior colleges have much broader missions, including associate degree programs, certificate programs, and vo-tech programs. We believe, incidentally, that Baton Rouge needs a community college, and we have agreed with Southern University and A&M on the desirability of jointly creating a community college here. But LSU ACCESS is an entirely different proposal. The chief parallel between ACCESS and a possible community college is that both would be attempts to address pressing educational needs of the people of Louisiana.

**LSU ACCESS Taskforce Membership**

- Ms. Mary Evelyn Baszile (General College)
- Dr. Billie Collier (President, Faculty Senate)
- Dean Carolyn Collins (Junior Division)
- Dr. Pat Culbertson (Economics)
- Dr. Rita Culross (Evening School)
- Mr. Robert Doolos (Student Records & Registration)
- Dr. Daniel Fogel (Academic Affairs), chairman
- Ms. Lisa Harris (Undergraduate Admissions)
- Dr. John A. Hildebrant (Mathematics)
Mr. Bob Kuhn (Budget & Planning)
Dr. Laura Lindsay (Academic Affairs)
Vice-Chancellor Norman Moore (Student Services)
Dean Jack Parker (General College)
Dean Larry Pierce (College of Education)
Dr. Erwin D. Poliakoff (Chemistry)
Dean Peter Rabideau (Basic Sciences)
Dean Tom Risch (Dean of Students)
Dean Karl Roider (College of Arts & Sciences)
Ms. Kathy Sciacchetano (Student Aid & Scholarships)
Dr. George Strain (Veterinary Physiology, Pharmacology & Toxicology)
May 13, 1997

TO: Dr. Carolyn Hargrave
    Interim Provost

THRU: Dr. Jack Parker
       Dean

FROM: Margo Abadie
      Faculty Advisor

I have completed my course work for a doctoral program in Vocational Education. I would like to write my dissertation as a program evaluation of the Access Program. In particular, I am interested in accessing outcome and surveying students' perception of success and other related variables. I would like your permission to use the data that has been collected on Access students in the Office of Budget and Planning and in the General College. If you approve, I understand that I will need to complete the necessary paperwork to present to the Institutional Review Board for approval. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please call me at 333-3231.

[Signature]

5/12/97

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VITA

Margo Myers Abadie is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling at the Louisiana State University Medical Center in New Orleans. Ms. Abadie has also taught in the School of Social Work at Louisiana State University. She received her bachelor of science and master of social work degrees from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She has also been involved in several professional organizations in Social Work and Rehabilitation Counseling, served on numerous university committees, and has practiced clinical social work in various settings. In addition to clinical work and teaching in higher education for the past nine years, she has been active in community organizations throughout the Baton Rouge area.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Margo Myers Abadie

Major Field: Vocational Education

Title of Dissertation: Comparison of Students Enrolled in an Alternative Academic Program with Regularly Enrolled Students in a Research I University

Approved:

[Signatures]

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

October 23, 1998

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