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DO COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS IMPACT THEIR DECISIONS TO TRANSFER?

By
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A DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine if the perceptions of urban community college students impacted their decision to transition into a four-year private Catholic university. The study design was quantitative in nature, using an electronic Likert Survey. The electronic survey was sent out to 208 early childhood education students from an urban community college, 67 of these students anonymously participated in the survey. Frequencies were used to describe the participant sample. Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to determine if there was a relationship between the dependent variable, the students’ decisions to transfer, and the independent variables, the students’ perceptions of the barriers to transfer retention. Pearson correlations were run to corroborate the Kruskal-Wallis tests. Lastly, multiple regressions were run to determine the predictability of a researcher-created transition/barrier perception model. The Kruskal-Wallis tests showed a statistically significant relationship between students’ perceptions and their decision to transition, and the Pearson correlations supported the majority of the Kruskal-Wallis’ findings. The regressions showed that the researcher created model could be used as a predictor for community college students’ decision to transition to four-year universities. In conclusion, these results supported the idea that the perceptions of urban community college students do impact their decision to transition into a four-year private Catholic university.
Dedication

The work in this study is dedicated to my family, the Creighton University Education Department, Metropolitan Community College ECE students and young children everywhere.
Acknowledgements

It has been a long journey and there are many people to which I owe a debt of gratitude. First, I would like to thank my family. My husband, Andy, my children, AJ, Hannah, and Luke, and my parents, Bob and Carol. You all have always believed in me, even when times were tough. Thank you for not giving up, it helped me persevere, for sometimes the road has been long, and difficult, but you all never lost faith in me.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td></td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td></td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question(s) and Hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim of the Study</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology Overview</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Relevant Terms</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Bias</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Students: Candidates for Transfer?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer, Barriers and The Schmertz and Carney Model</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlossberg’s Transition Theory</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making and the Role Perceptions Plays</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hearn Hybrid Model: Transition Theory Meets a Student Retention Model</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature about the Professional Practice Setting</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question(s)/Research Hypotheses</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of the Findings</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Statistics: The Sample</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Question One</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview ............................................................................................................................49

Summary of Study .............................................................................................................49

Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................49

Aim of the Study .............................................................................................................49

Discussion of Results.......................................................................................................49

A Comparison of the Kruskal-Wallis Tests and Pearson Correlations .............50

Multiple Regressions ....................................................................................................52

Implications ....................................................................................................................56

Changing Perceptions ...................................................................................................56

Solutions and the Repercussions for Leadership .......................................................58

Organizational Change .................................................................................................58

Transformational Leadership ........................................................................................59

Mission Driven Partnership .........................................................................................60

Discussion of Significance .............................................................................................62

Recommendations for Future Research ......................................................................64

Conclusion .....................................................................................................................65

References ......................................................................................................................68
List of Tables

Table 1. Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Perceptions of Barriers and Decisions to Transfer .................................................40

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Analysis of Perceptions of Barriers and Decision To Transfer .................................................41

Table 3. Situation Barriers and Decision to Transfer ..............................................................43

Table 4. Self Barriers and Decision to Transfer ....................................................................44

Table 5. Social Barriers and Decision to Transfer ................................................................45

Table 6. Strategies Barriers and Decision to Transfer ...............................................................46

Table 7. Tables are Listed in the Order in Which They Appear in the Dissertation ..........xx

Table 8. Tables are Listed in the Order in Which They Appear in the Dissertation ..........xx
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.</td>
<td>The Hearn Hybrid Model</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.</td>
<td>Participant Age</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.</td>
<td>Living Arrangements</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.</td>
<td>Will Students Transfer After I Graduate from UCC?</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.</td>
<td>Would Students Like the Opportunity to Transfer to CUPU?</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.</td>
<td>Will Students Decide to Transfer to CUPU?</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8.</td>
<td>The Relationship Between Students’ Perceptions and Their Decision to Transfer</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9.</td>
<td>Regression Results: Barrier for Which the H₀ Has Been Rejected</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Meeting the Need for Early Childhood Education Teachers

Currently there is widespread agreement among scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers involved in the development of the early childhood education workforce that the limited number of qualified teachers in this field is a significant and complex real-world problem (Bueno, Darling-Hammond & Gonzales, 2010). According to Barnett (2004) and Heckman (2011), early education has a potential net positive effect on the cognitive and social development of all children. However, in order for children to reap the benefits, early childhood education programs must have highly qualified teaching staffs (Barnett, 2004). In fact, Bueno et al. (2010) argued that the quality of early childhood programs has been shown to be higher in classrooms where teachers have earned bachelor's degrees. Hence, a recent congressional mandate demanded that 50 percent of all lead teachers in public early education classrooms must have a bachelor's degree. This policy has resulted in a shortage of teachers in the field of early childhood education (Bueno et al., 2010).

Guaranteeing that there will be an adequate number of certified teachers to satisfy the ever-growing need for early childhood education classrooms is a challenge that needs correcting (Jacob, 2007). One solution is to tap into an underutilized resource, community college early childhood education associate's degree students. If these students could be encouraged to transition into four-year universities, they would be able to attain their bachelor's degrees and subsequent teacher certifications (Townsend & Ignash, 2003).
While transitioning from community colleges to senior universities seems logical, the numbers tell an ill-fated story. Forty-seven percent of all high school graduates start their post-secondary education at community colleges; eight out of ten of these students begin with the intention of transitioning into four-year universities (Handle & Williams, 2012). Despite the desire to obtain a four-year degree, only 25 to 35 percent of community college students make the transition to senior institutions, and of these only 45 percent go on to graduate (Handel & Williams, 2012). These statistics are revealing, as there seems to be a discrepancy between the number of students who begin their post-secondary education at community colleges with the dream of transitioning, and the amount who actually graduate after deciding to enter four-year university programs. These statistics beg the question: why does this incongruity exist?

Research suggests that transfer and retentions between two to four-year schools have been challenging due to barriers involving both academic and social cultures (Chrystal, Gansemer-Topf & Laanan, 2013; Davies & Casey, 1999; Flaga, 2006; Handel & Williams, 2012; Laanan, 1996; Townsend & Wilson; 2006). Schemertz and Carney's (2013) Transfer Retention Model categorizes these barriers. In this model, the obstacles that impede success for transfer students fall into the following four categories: academic integration, social integration, and personal and financial barriers (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

- Academic Integration barriers include the attainment of satisfactory grades, and the ability of the students to form relationships with faculty members at their new schools (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).
• Social Integration encompasses the students' facility to make friends, participate in extracurricular activities, access and utilize university resources and fit in with other undergraduates (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

• Personal transfer barriers involve the students' health, their ability to leave family, their capability to manage a workload and school, and their capacity to stay motivated (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

• Financial barriers amount to the students' ability to pay for their education and meet both the demands of a job and school (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

Exploration into these problems suggested that the more barriers students face, the less likely they will be to complete their four-year college experience after transferring (Bean, 1990; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Townsend & Wilson, 2009; Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2003; Schmertz & Carney, 2013; Tinto, 1988).

The barriers, as mentioned above can prohibit transfer students from completing their four-year education. However, perceptions of these barriers might impact community college students' decisions to transition before the process even begins. According to Fishbein and Ajzen, (2010), Plous, (1993) and Robbins and Judge (2013) perceptions are influential. These perceptions can prejudice all related decisions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Plous, 1993; Robbins & Judge, 2013). Hence, if community college students perceive barriers as problematic, these perceptions are likely to impact their decision to transfer. Conversely, gaining information about students' perceptions could be used to eliminate misconceptions. This information may be used to blunt the misconceptions, thus opening the door for community college students to transfer, setting these students on a path to becoming certified early childhood education teachers.
Purpose of the Study

The goal of this quantitative study was to identify the perceptions Urban Community College Early Childhood Education students have about the barriers to transfer and then use this data to determine how these perceptions might impact the students' decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

The Overarching Quantitative Design Question

The following research questions guided this quantitative study: Do the perceptions that Urban Community College early childhood education students have about transitioning to City Private Catholic University impact their decision to transfer?

Sub Questions

1. What are the perceived barriers that would hinder students' decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University?
2. Can knowledge about students' perceptions be used to predict whether students will make a decision to transfer?
3. Can a new model, a melding of Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory and Schmertz and Carney's barriers (2013), be used to predict Urban Community College students' decision to transition to City Private Catholic University?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis will guide this quantitative study:

H₁: If community college students have negative perceptions about barriers to successful transfer and retention, they will be less likely to make the decision to transition to a private Catholic four-year university.
Aim of the Study

The aim of this Dissertation in Practice was to use data to create evidence-based recommendations for City Private Catholic University leadership officials about how to most effectively recruit Early Childhood Education Associate's Degree students from Urban Community College. The hope was that this research would provide a process or programs that would encourage potential teachers from the community college to obtain their four-year degrees, which in turn could add to the supply of much needed certified early childhood education teachers.

Methodology Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the perceptions Urban Community College Early Childhood Education students had about the barriers to transfer and then use this data to determine how these perceptions might impact the community college students' decisions to transition to a neighboring private Catholic four-year university, City Private Catholic University.

The researcher collected quantitative data using a voluntary online survey. The measurement instrument contained several demographic multiple-choice questions and a Likert rating scale. The Likert questions were generated using a new model created by the researcher. The researcher based these questions on a combination of Schlossberg's transition theory and the barriers listed in the Schmertz and Carney (2013) student retention model. This new framework was created to determine the relationship of the students' perceptions of barriers to transfer and retention and their likelihood of making a decision to transition to a nearby four-year university. The researcher collected data from the current Early Childhood associates degree students at Urban Community College.
Definition of Relevant Terms

ECE: Early childhood education, birth to age eight.

UCC: Urban Community College, which a pseudonym for an urban community college located in a medium sized city in the heart of the Midwest.

CPCU: City Private Catholic University, which a pseudonym for a private Catholic university located in a medium sized city in the heart of the Midwest. This university is situated near Urban Community College.

Transfer: Move from one institution to another. For this research, it refers to transitioning from a community college to a four-year university.

Transition: A move from one situation in life to another. In relation to this project, transitioning from a community college to a four-year university.

Barriers: Factors that researchers have determined could hinder the success of a community college student as they transfer to four-year schools (Bean, 1990; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Townsend & Wilson, 2009; Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2003; Schmertz & Carney, 2013; Tinto, 1987; Tinto, 1988).

Obstacles: Another word for barriers that could hinder the success of community college students as they transfer to four-year schools.

Limitations, Delimitations, Assumptions, and Personal Biases

Although this research was carefully prepared, there could be limitations, Delimitations, Assumptions, and Personal Biases.

Limitations

The goal of this project was to measure the perceptions of the early childhood education students at one Urban community college; hence, to make generalizations, the
researcher endeavored to obtain a sample that would adequately represent this population (Visser, Krosnick & Lavrakas, 2000). The survey was distributed electronically to the participants as mentioned earlier; however, potential limitations to electronic data collection methodology are always a possibility. Primarily, incorrect or duplicate e-mail addresses, participants who did not have computer access, were uninterested, felt pressured by time constraints, or were not comfortable with electronic data collection methodologies could have been limiting factors. It was also possible that some of the respondents could have had a misunderstanding of the questions on the survey, or felt forced into specific answer choices (Visser et al., 2000). Any or all of the issues mentioned above could have an effect on the representative nature of the sample.

To increase the likelihood of obtaining a representative sample, the researcher endeavored to get a random sampling of the students from Urban Community College's Early Childhood Education Program. However, the participants in this particular program have been allowed to choose between face-to-face, online, or combination methods of course delivery. The program's instructors provided information about participation in this research project in a face-to-face fashion. Hence, the students who had access to this intimate contact could have been more influenced by this delivery method than the students who did not experience this personal delivery method. Hence, the results might not accurately reflect the opinions of all of the students included in the population. As well, students who have shown a prior interest in transferring might have been more likely to participate in the project.

Finally, because the subjects for this research were from only one program at the participating community college, generalization beyond this sample may not be possible.
Moreover, because the survey used in this project sought to discover the respondents' perceptions about transferring to one private, Catholic University the research findings may or may not be transferable to other private or public educational institutions.

**Delimitations**

The researcher conducted this study in a medium-sized town in the Midwest. The researcher sought voluntary participants from the Urban Community College Early Childhood Education Program. Because all of these volunteers were Early Childhood Education associates degree-seeking students, this sample might not be representative of the entire community college population, as well, they would not necessarily apply to other geographical areas or locations.

The researcher designed the instrument used for this study. She is aware that this instrument has not withstood the rigors of validity and reliability testing, however, deems it appropriate for this study. The researcher chose the theory and models for the creation of this tool. They were selected because they were representative of established scholarly research in the area of transitions from community colleges and barriers to higher education retention. Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory and the Schmertz and Carney's (2013) model of retention blended easily to create the new design. The researcher used this new model in this research project.

**Assumptions**

The choice to participate in this research project was given equally to all of the early childhood education students from Urban Community College; hence, it was assumed that the sample used was illustrative of this population. It was also assumed that because all of the participants were volunteers who were allowed to withdraw from the
survey at any time, with no consequence, and that their anonymity and confidentiality were maintained; they were able to answer the questionnaire questions truthfully and to the best of their ability. Lastly, the survey attempted to discover the perceptions that the Urban Community College early childhood education students had about a transfer to City Private Catholic University and what impact these perceptions might have had on their decision to transition. A group of recently graduated Early Childhood Education associates degree students from Urban Community College piloted the survey instrument to determine if it would accurately demonstrate the thinking of students of like kind. Then faculty and transfer and admission personnel from both schools were asked to give advice about the survey. The researcher made adjustments to the questionnaire based on the results of this pilot testing and counsel.

Personal Bias

The researcher works as an education instructor at City Private Catholic University. As the author of the instrument used in this project, she could have brought a bias towards the subject matter in the survey. The researcher is also a stakeholder in the Urban Community College and City Private Catholic University transfer program. However, the use of an electronic survey and the help of an independent statistical analyst were used to avoid this bias. In addition to this, when writing the conclusion, the researcher continued to maintain an awareness of the above mentioned possible prejudices and made every effort to avoid being influenced by personal bias.

Significance of the Study

This research project, mirroring Creswell's (2014) idea that an investigation that adds value is significant, has attempted to do the following:
• Create evidence-based recommendations for the leadership officials of both Urban Community College and City Private Catholic University that will pave the way for the successful transfer of the Early Childhood Education associates degree students into City Private Catholic University.

• Endeavor to understand the impact of the student perceptions of the barriers to transfer and use this knowledge to develop programs and informative materials to answer these concerns.

• Add to existing research about community college transfer situations. Prior research outlines ideas for solving transition barrier problems after students have already transferred to four-year schools (Bean, 1990; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton et. Al., 2003; Tinto, 1988; Schmertz & Carney, 2013). However, little research exists about how community college students make initial transfer decisions and the role students' perceptions of barriers to transition play in the decision-making process.

• Suggest an innovative model that by combining two existing theories attempts to act as a transfer decision predictor.

• Provide one possible solution to the area's early childhood teacher shortage.

Summary

Chapter one described the importance of overcoming teacher shortage in the field of the early childhood education. This is important because an insufficient number of teachers keeps these critical early childhood education programs from being made available to all children. This problem is at the root of one of the biggest challenges to the field of early childhood education (Neugebauer, 2008). Community colleges could be a
source for recruiting a number of preservice teachers to potentially fill these teaching positions, however many of the associates degree students do not take advantage of this opportunity. The goal of this quantitative study was to use a survey to identify the perceptions Urban Community College students had about the barriers to transfer and then use this data to determine how these perceptions might impact their decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University. The aim was to use the data collected to create evidence-based recommendations for City Private Catholic University leadership officials about how to most effectively recruit Early Childhood Education associates degree students from Urban Community College. The hope was that this research would provide a process that would encourage potential teachers to obtain their four-year degrees, which in turn could add to the supply of much needed certified early childhood education teachers.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The aim of this Dissertation in Practice was to use data to create evidence-based recommendations for City Private Catholic University about how to most effectively recruit Early Childhood Education associates degree students from Urban Community College. The expected result was to facilitate one possible solution to a significant and complex real-world problem; the shortage of certified early childhood education teachers. Section two of this dissertation focuses on a detailed review of the literature, which was necessary to frame this quantitative study.

To understand the context of the project it was essential to gain some background knowledge. Bales, Heckman, McEwen and Rolnick (2007), Barnett (2004), Espinosa, (2002), Heckman (2011) and Neugebauer (2008) found that children will become productive members of society only if quality care and education is made available for every child. However, the positive results that early education yields will only continue to be accomplished if there are enough teachers to ensure quality education for every child in the Nation (Neugebauer, 2008). It has been difficult to find and train a large enough number of people interested in this field, to mitigate this early childhood education teacher shortage. One solution to this dilemma is to encourage the transfer of community college early childhood education associates degree students into four-year programs, so that they might attain their teacher’s certificate.

Review of literature also examined the theoretical frameworks of this project: The Schmertz and Carney Transfer Student Retention Model (2013), Schlossberg’s transition theory (1995), and the role decision-making and perception played in students' decisions...
to transfer. Scholarly literature provided a framework that rationalizes the melding of the prior mentioned constructs into a new predictive tool. This tool was used to measure the impact that students' perceptions might have on their decisions to transition. Finally, the researcher explained the professional setting.

**Background:**

**The Importance of Early Childhood Education and the Need for Teachers**

"The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Stated simply, today's children will become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents" (Bales et al., 2007, p. 1). How should a community make sure that all children grow up and become contributing members of society? Research into how to best serve children revealed that if the care and education were to begin early, in exceptional programs, with high-quality teachers, the influence would be far reaching (Calman & Tarr-Whelan, 2005).

Early childhood education (ECE) programs have been shown to have benefit for society (Bales et al., 2007; Calman & Tarr-Whelan, 2005). These programs ensure proper cognitive development and also have implications for the social development of children (Barnett, 2004). Calman & Tarr-Whelan (2005) emphasized that children who attended quality preschools tended to do better later on in life than those who did not. The children in the longitudinal study referenced by Calman & Tarr-Whelan (2005) who experienced two years in a stellar preschool program were more likely to have graduated from high school and be employed. Thus, intervention in the early years of children's lives has a positive influence; it can turn the tide from one of hopelessness to one that breeds productive members of society (Heckman, 2011).
The age at which education begins is important. Bales et al. (2007) observed, children's brains maintain the power to learn throughout the entirety of their lives, however, the best and most effective time for neural development occurs during the first few years. In fact, the architecture of the brain begins development in the womb, and is almost complete by the age of five (Bales et al. 2007). This brain development has been compared to the building of a house, from foundation to completion. The foundation must be strong to support later development. If the foundation is not strong, the entire structure is at risk of falling. In order to make sure every child has this strong foundation, access to effective ECE programs from a very young age should be granted to all (Bales et al. 2007). In essence, to gain the maximum benefits for every child, additional ECE teachers are needed.

One way to address the shortage of ECE teachers is to facilitate the transfer of community college ECE students, who have proven their interest in working with young children (Townsend & Ignash, 2003). These students could transfer to four-year universities so they might attain their bachelor's degree. Creating alliances between community colleges and four-year universities would allow nontraditional community college students to become licensed ECE teachers. These partnerships would then help to supply the understaffed ECE classrooms with certified instructors, yet, transfer, a seemingly easy solution, has not always gone as planned.

**Community College Students: Candidates for Transfer?**

Community colleges have played an integral part in post-secondary education in the United States (Wang, 2012). Founded on the concept of equal opportunity for all,
community colleges have continued to provide admittance to student populations that have not traditionally had access to post-secondary education (Eaton, 2007).

In the past, community colleges chiefly met the needs of students who were not eligible for four-year institutions, but research findings dispute this notion. (Chrystal et al., 2013). More recently, many students who traditionally attended four-year schools choose to go to community colleges because they were found to be less expensive, less academically rigorous, or good places to discover personal interests (Chrystal et al., 2013).

Undergraduate enrollment at community colleges has increased dramatically, growing from 5.9 million to 7.0 million from 2000 to 2008 (Horn & Skomsvold, 2011). By 2019, the projected community college enrollment in the United States is said to be upward of 8.2 million (Horn & Skomsvold, 2011). Having emanated from a variety of age groups, cultures, races, socio-economic backgrounds, and ability levels, student populations in community colleges have historically been diverse (Cohen and Brawer, 1982). Moreover, most of these students begin their community college experiences with the plan to transition to four-year universities (Hagedorn, Cypers, & Lester, 2008; Radford, Berkner, Wheeless, Shepherd & National Center for E. S., 2010).

Students who go on to attain bachelors' degrees have an increased earning potential, better health outcomes, and are more likely to seek opportunities for civic involvement (Baum, Ma, Payea, 2010). Hence, as stated earlier, most community college students aspire to continue their education and earn their bachelor's degree (Hagedorn et al., 2008; Radford et al., 2010). Even though community college enrollment numbers have blossomed, and bachelor's degrees have been found to be beneficial, fewer than 13% of students who have enrolled in community colleges go on to four-year institutions.
(Hagedorn et al., 2008; Radford et al., 2010). With the vast majority of community college students beginning their schooling with the plan to transfer, it appears as if the barriers they face have caused their dreams of higher learning to come to an end (Chrystal et al., 2013; Davies & Casey, 1999; Flaga, 2006; Handel & Williams, 2012; Laanan, 1996; Townsend & Wilson; 2006).

**Transfer, Barriers and The Schmertz and Carney Model**

Many studies have been dedicated to student retention and departure after beginning an education at four-year universities (Tinto, 1988; Bean, 1990; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton et al., 2003). Research has revealed there are a number of barriers for students who have tried to undertake two to four-year institution transfers. The obstacles include credit transfer, culture shock, increased rigor, and admission and financial burdens. All of these barriers have proven to be problematic for students (Chrystal et al., 2013; Davies & Casey, 1999; Flaga, 2006; Handel & Williams, 2012; Laanan, 1996; Townsend & Wilson; 2006). In fact, only a fraction of the transfer students that have transitioned into four-year programs have gone on to graduate (Handel & Williams, 2012). Hence, even though most community college students begin their schooling with the aspiration of going on to attain four-year degrees, many of them have not been successful (Braxton et al., 2003).

The explorations focused on the retention and barriers that have caused the failure and withdrawal of transfer students had their beginnings with Tinto's (1988) theory of student departure. Tinto's model tied transitioning into college life to specific stages of separation and integration (Bean, 1990; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Khuong, 2014; Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Past research described what happened as students moved away from
their old lives and into their new college settings. Furthermore, throughout this process while some students integrated with relative ease, many encountered barriers to the transition (Bean, 1990; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Khuong, 2014; Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Tinto’s (1988) research revealed the more barriers the students faced, the less likely they were to withstand their college experiences.

Since Tinto began his work, retention theory has been refined, developed, and widely used (Bean, 1990; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2003; Khuong, 2014; Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Employing the information gleaned from revisions of Tinto's theory (1988), Schmertz and Carney (2013) developed a categorized list of barriers facing transfer students. This new framework sorted Tinto's (1988) ideas into four categories, and classified the barriers students might face as academic, social, financial, or personal.

- Academic integration was found to have a significant impact on success in four-year universities (Khuong, 2014; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Braxton, et al., 2003). Challenges in this area included time management, connecting with faculty, knowing the ins and outs of university resources, an increase in rigor and academic workload, and the maintenance of good grades (Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Other challenges in this area included students' abilities to adapt to a different academic styles, getting a read on the amount and kind of course work required, intuiting faculty expectations, and balancing school work and personal lives (Townsend, 1993; Braxton, et al., 2003; Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

- Social integration hinged on students' capacities for merging into the culture and community of four-year schools (Tinto, 1988; Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Social
integration included informally relating to peers, faculty, and staff at the new institutions (Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Many students reported feeling lonely or estranged (Tinto, 1988). These feelings seemed to result from age differences, time constraints due to job or family, lack of "connections" to the new environment, or cultural and SES differences (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

- Financial concerns, fueled by the need to cover educational and living costs, were often brought on by a lack of resources (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Students may not have had access to an adequate amount of money, or financial aid (Braxton, et al., 2003). Additionally, some students found holding down a job, which they needed to do to live and pay for school, was not conducive to successful completion of academic requirements (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

- Personal factors include things such as motivation, attitudes, self-beliefs, and academic intent (Bean, 1990). Additionally, leaving family and friends who are familiar and safe has been found to leave students with personal stresses. Moreover, health has also been an obstacle to some students' success (Schmertz & Carney, 2013). Each of these, along with prior commitments or familial demands could be problematic to students who are transferring to new schools (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).

Schmertz and Carney's (2013) new model synthesized the information into a usable format, which enabled them to develop a Likert scale survey instrument. This instrument assessed transfer students’ perceptions about the biggest challenges they faced while enrolled their first two semesters at the four-year universities (Schmertz & Carney, 2013).
Schlossberg's Transition Theory

A better understanding of the transition process for community college students can be achieved through the lens of Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory. Schlossberg's (1995) theory stated that four factors influence a person's ability to transition from one situation to the next. She dubbed these the 4 S's. This theory offers a framework for understanding the fluctuations that inevitably occur in people's lives (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Throughout the transition process, people utilize coping resources (Evans, et al., 1998). Schlossberg suggested that the way people handle the four traits that are present during transitions, the 4 S's, determines how well they cope with changes that occur in their lives (Evans et al., 1988). The 4 S's are: Situation, Self, Social Support, and Strategies (Evans et al., 1988).

- **Situation**, the first of Schlossberg's four groupings includes previous experiences and sources of stress (Evans et al., 1988).
- **Self**, the second trait, involves peoples' personal and demographic characteristics (Evans et al., 1988).
- **Social Support**, Schlossberg's third element, is defined as personal relationships (Evans et al., 1988).
- **Strategies**, the last set of factors, can be described as modifications or controls people use to manage transitions (Evans et al., 1988).

The barriers categorized by Schmertz and Carney (2013) logically fit into Schlossberg's 4Ss. Therefore, a theoretical framework using a combination of both Schlossberg's 4Ss, and Schmertz and Carney's (2013) classifications of the barriers to
Retention might provide some insight into the thought processes or perceptions of students as they make their decisions about transitioning from community colleges to four-year universities.

**Decision-Making and the Role Perception Plays**

Perception is a process used by individuals to decode their impressions, or personal perspectives of the world around them, and meld these viewpoints with personal experiences (Plous, 1993). Perceptions dictate how people think and act; they impact all of life's occurrences (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Plous, 1993). One could say that the world as perceived is the only world that has importance; perception is reality (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Throughout a person's entire decision-making process, perceptual distortions exist. The concept of perception is important to understand because people's behaviors and decisions are based on their perception of reality, and not on reality itself. What people perceive can be markedly different from unprejudiced reality (Plous, 1993). Because impressions of the various existing choices can be misunderstood, decision-making is often tinged by faulty information. In fact, people would likely make different decisions if they were able understand all the available alternatives (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Community college students have to make choices about transferring to four-year institutions. They must decide which path to take, to transition into a four-year university in order to earn a bachelor's degree, or to join the working world after the attainment of their associates degree. Many times they are forced to make these decisions without understanding all of the complexities surrounding the situation (Robbins & Judge, 2013).
Consequently, the discussion about perceptions, and how they impact decision-making is pertinent to community college students. Schmertz and Carney (2013) maintained that barriers play a significant role in the retention of transfer students. Braxton & Lien (2000) argued that the students would hear of failures caused by the above-mentioned obstacles, and would inevitably form perceptions about these barriers. Predictably, many of these students could become so concerned about the seemingly insurmountable perceptions that this might prevent them from transitioning altogether.

Although perceptions of Schmertz and Carney's (2013) barriers could have a significant impact on students' decisions to transition, this does not have to be the end. People can change and evolve their perceptions (Taylor, Bury, Campling, Carter, Garfied, Newbould & Rennie, 2006) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). A concentrated effort to re-engineer students' understanding of the barriers to retention could change their thinking about the obstacles they might face. Therefore, preemptive education should be instrumental in the correction of many misconceptions. (Taylor et al., 2006).

The Hearn Hybrid Model:

**Transition Theory Meets a Student Retention Model**

A person's perceptions are influential, therefore, knowing community college students' thoughts about the barriers to transfer might help to predict their decisions concerning transitioning to four-year schools. Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) recognized the important role perception plays in a person's appraisal of the barriers to retention. These barriers are delineated in Schmertz and Carney’s (2013) transfer retention model.
The categories defined by Schmertz and Carney (2013) and Schlossberg's transition theory (1995) happen to have a logical and natural relationship. As shown in Figure 1, the elements in each of the barriers-to-transfer retention categories: academic, social, personal and financial integration, fit into with Schlossberg’s 4S’s categories: situation, self, social and strategies. It is hoped that this union can answer some relevant questions concerning community college students’ decisions to transition into four-year schools, namely: 1) Is there a statistically significant link between students’ perceptions of the barriers to retention and the categories named in Schlossberg’s transition theory? And 2) If there is a correlation between the 4S’s and the perceived barriers, can this be used to predict whether students will decide to transition? The researcher in this project believed these two concepts could likely be merged to create a new predictive model for potential community college transfer students. The investigator was also looking to see if any trends emerged with regard to the barriers and the 4S’s categories.

The data collected using the new researcher-created model were expected to be beneficial when seeking information regarding perceptions community college students had about the barriers to transition into four-year universities. This information could then be used to create evidence-based programs that would facilitate two to four-year transitions. If programs could be developed using the trends in the findings of this research, students might have an easier path to completing their bachelor’s degree requirements, and thus become ECE teachers.

**Literature about the Professional Practice Setting**

City Private Catholic University has an opportunity to facilitate an articulation agreement with the ECE students from UCC. However, information is needed to discover students’
perceptions, and how these affect the students' decisions to transfer. The aim of this Dissertation in Practice was to use data to create evidence-based recommendations.

**Figure 1.** The Hearn Hybrid Model, a combination of Schmertz and Carney’s (2013) retention barriers and Schlossberg’s (1995) Transition Theory.

For CPCU leadership officials about how to most effectively recruit ECE associates degree students from UCC. The hope was that this research would provide a process that would encourage potential teachers to obtain their four-year degrees, which, in turn could

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<th>Perceived Challenges for Academic Integration</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain Grades</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
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<td>Handle Rigor</td>
<td>Bond with University Advisor</td>
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<td>Get Along with Professors</td>
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<td>Find a Study Group</td>
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<th>Perceived Challenges for Social Integration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fit in With Other Students</td>
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<td>Make Friends</td>
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<td>Connect With Other Students in Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feel Isolated and Lonely</td>
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<td>Find Interesting Extracurricular Activities</td>
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<td>Maintain Connection with Family and Friends</td>
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<th>Perceived Challenges for Personal Integration</th>
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<td>Balance School Work with Family Demands</td>
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<td>Access to Health Care</td>
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<td>Sustain Motivation</td>
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<th>Perceived Challenges for Financial Integration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Afford New School</td>
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<td>Understand Financial Aid at New School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need to work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Able to Keep Job While Going to School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition Financial Aid</td>
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<td>Ability to Transfer Credit Hours</td>
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add to the supply of much needed certified ECE teachers. To understand how this Dissertation in Practice accomplished this goal, it is necessary to understand the professional practice setting.

City Private Catholic University is the home to about 4000 undergraduate students (Creighton University, n.d). As a Jesuit Catholic University, CPCU honors the living tradition of the Catholic Church and is committed to truth, faith and justice. CPCU's campus is made up of several colleges and professional schools and is committed to the students, which it serves. The faculty works in an atmosphere ripe with a culture and values that evoke justice to all, and service to others. The employees are encouraged to seek knowledge and truth, and work for the betterment of society. Worth of each individual, and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity are the core values of CPCU (Creighton University, n.d).

The education department, just one part of the College of Arts and Sciences at CPCU, promotes Ignatian values as it strives to prepare students who will go out into the world and make a difference, even if it is one child at a time (Creighton University, n.d). This researcher, as an active member of the faculty in the education department strives to support this department in any way possible. Currently, her work involves the development and implementation of an ECE program, which serves to enrich the Elementary Education Program. As part of this endeavor, and as an active advocate for the education of all young children, the researcher was actively seeking to foster a partnership with UCC. This partnership would: 1) provide a path to a bachelor's degree for students in the Urban Community College ECE associates degree Program, 2)
increase the education department's student enrollment, and 3) help to service the ever-
growing number of ECE classrooms with high quality certified teachers.

The partnership between CPCU and UCC is natural. This is because small private
universities such as CPCU have tended to facilitate transfer agreements more efficiently
than many of the larger public schools. According to Fincher (2002), private universities
have independent governing bodies and hence, have been shown to be more flexible and
collaborative. Historically, private institutions have accepted more community college
students' credit hours, and have offered more personal attention to these transfer students
than their public counter parts (Fincher, 2002). These advantages could help to facilitate
the transition for UCC students, giving them the opportunity to work an additional two
years to obtain their bachelor's degree and teaching certification.

In addition to potentially adding to the ECE workforce and increasing enrollment
in the College of Arts and Sciences, this transfer agreement could potentially bring a
culturally diverse population to both CPCU, and the ECE teaching workforce. These
ideals serve to further the CPCU mission, which is dedicated to the promotion of justice,
service, family life, and the inalienable worth of each individual (Creighton University,
n.d). Montague shared that "given the large percentage of traditionally underrepresented
students currently attending two-year institutions, effective transfer regimes can enhance
diversity efforts at four-year institutions" (2013, p. 284). This, she continued, would
provide universities with the opportunity to fully appreciate multiculturalism within their
student populations (Montague, 2013). Hence, not only will the successful matriculation
of the UCC students be good for the ECE community, but it will also have a positive
impact on the CPCU as a whole.
Summary

Chapter two focused on a detailed review of current literature, which is a progression of scholarly ideas that properly frames this quantitative study. This literature review described the theoretical context of this project, which included:

- The societal value of ECE, the resulting teacher shortage, and transfer as a means to quell this deficiency.
- The role of community colleges as a stepping stone to transfer
- The Schmertz and Carney Student Retention Model (2013) and the barriers to successful transfer
- Schlossberg's Transition Theory
- How perceptions impact the decision to transfer
- The melding of theoretical frameworks to create a predictive model highlighting the role perception plays in decision making
- The professional practice setting

All in all, each of the components presented in this review of the scholarly literature was designed to help the reader understand the need for this project.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the perceptions Urban Community Colleges' (UCCs’) Early Childhood Education (ECE) students have about barriers to transfer, and then use this data to determine how these perceptions might impact these students' decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University (CPCU). This chapter reviews the research questions and hypotheses, explains the quantitative research design and describes the participants selected for this project. As well, a plan for data collection and analysis is presented. Lastly, the ethical considerations that could possibly influence this project are explored.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

The Overarching Quantitative Design Question

The following research questions guided this quantitative study: Do the perceptions that UCC early childhood education students have about transferring to City Private Catholic University impact their decision to transfer?

Sub Questions

1. What are the perceived barriers that would hinder students' decisions to transition to CPCU?
2. Can knowledge about students' perceptions be used to predict whether they will make a decision to transfer?
3. Can a new model, a melding of Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory and Schmertz and Carney's barriers (2013), be used to predict UCC students' decisions to transition to CPCU?
Hypothesis

The following hypothesis will guide this quantitative study:

H1: If community college students have negative perceptions about barriers to successful transfer and retention, they will be less likely to make the decision to transition to a private Catholic four-year university.

Research Design

Due to economy of design and the desire for rapid turn-around in data collection the researcher chose a Likert survey as an investigative tool (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the investigator sought to “generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences [could] be made about the…attitude[s]… of the population” (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, a cross-sectional quantitative study using an electronic survey was employed to collect data. This survey was comprised of several demographic questions and a Likert rating scale.

The researcher-created model dictated the rating scale questions. This hybrid model was a combination of Schlossberg's transition theory concepts (1995), and the barriers listed in the Schmertz and Carney's (2013) student retention model. Because the survey assessed students' perceptions of the barriers to retention (the independent variables) and attempted to quantify a students' likelihood of transferring to CPCU (the dependent variable), it was appropriate for testing the research questions and hypothesis.

Participants

This project examined ECE students from UCC. Urban Community College is situated in a medium-sized town in the Midwest. Urban Community College and CPCU
are in the same neighborhood. The small size, proximity and flexibility of CPCU's private status made it a suitable articulation partner for UCC.

Because the pairing between CPCU and UCC is logical, the researcher wanted to discover the UCC students’ perceptions and determine if these perceptions would preclude them from making decisions to transition to CPCU. The leadership officials at CPCU are using this information to address the misconceptions UCC students had about transfer. This knowledge will allow PCU officials to enlist, support, and facilitate the transfer of UCC students.

To facilitate this project, the researcher interacted with the instructors at UCC, the Dean of UCC's Early Childhood Education Department, and the Internal Review Boards at both schools. This interaction enabled the researcher to have access to the emails of the UCC students, and these emails were used to distribute the electronic survey. The UCC instructors acted as gatekeepers because they had access to the UCC students on a daily basis, and as gatekeepers, they were instrumental in explaining the survey to the students.

Data Collection

The researcher created an instrument similar to a Likert Scale survey. Best and Kahn (2005) suggested the use of pilot testing on researcher-created instruments. Hence, the investigator pilot tested this survey using a selected group of students who had recently graduated from the UCC Early Childhood Education program. This pilot testing allowed the researcher to gain knowledge about how the pilot group perceived the questions. Through a brief interview process with these same students, the researcher was able to discover potential problems. Edits were made to the survey, ensuring that each question was clearly understood.
The researcher attempted to establish face validity by seeking a review of the instrument from a panel of experts in the field of student transfer. This group included faculty at UCC and CPCU and transfer and admission personnel from both schools. The researcher has attached the resulting survey to this document (see Appendix 1).

The data collection process included several components:

- Internal Review Board approval from both UCC and CPCU
- Access to the UCC emails granted by IRB at UCC
- Survey distribution via the student emails, which included an introductory letter (see Appendix 2) and a link to the Qualtrics™ survey
- A script (see Appendix 3) and a set of brochures (See Appendix 4), both of which were distributed to the UCC instructors to be used by them to familiarize the UCC students about the specifics of the research project.
- A reminder script, with information which was to be disseminated 24 hours before the deadline, in an attempt to have as many students participate as possible (see Appendix 5)
- Data compilation and analysis

**Data Analysis**

In this project, the predictor or independent variables were the UCC student's perceptions of the barriers to transfer. The dependent variable was the likelihood of the students to make decisions to transfer to CPCU. The researcher used frequencies, Kruskal-Wallis tests, Pearson correlations and multiple regressions to analyze the data generated in this study.

- Frequency tests were computed to create a picture of the participant sample.
• Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to discover the nature of the relationship between the dependent variable and each independent variable in this study. This test was chosen because the researcher determined sample was non-parametric due to the smaller sample size (Statistic Solutions, 2013).

• Pearson correlations were also used to explore relationships. While this type of test is often used in parametric samples, the researcher chose to use this measure to gain a more thorough view of the data.

• Multiple regressions, a form of predictive analysis that is often used to describe the relationship between a continuous dependent variable and two or more continuous or categorical independent variables, were generated (Statistic Solutions, 2013). The models used for the regression analysis were determined using Schlossberg's 4S's as a directive.

**Ethical Considerations**

In analyzing the research problem through an ethical lens, the researcher for this project attempted to address any possible ethical challenges (Creswell, 2014). Hence, before the study began, the Institutional Review Boards from both CPCU and UCC were engaged and subsequently gave approval. The objective of this project was to collect data from community college ECE students through an electronic survey. The voluntary nature of this project ensured contributors’ privacy and minimalized the possibility of them from feeling pressure to participate.

Collection of data requires confidentiality. This discretion offers protection to the participants (Creswell, 2014). Obtaining email addresses from officials at UCC and then using this information to send the candidates the protected survey via Qualtrics™
accomplished participant privacy. The anonymous nature of the study prevented employers, school personnel, and the public from seeing the information gathered for this project (Creswell, 2014).

Storage of data also warrants ethical consideration (Creswell, 2014). For this project, all data was stored on a password-protected computer in a locked facility, and encryption software was used, adding another layer of security.

Ideally research should not take place where the researcher has a vested interest (Creswell, 2014). However, the desperate need for ECE teachers compelled stakeholders to seek solutions. These benefactors asked CPCU for aid in this endeavor, so even though the researcher did gain personally, because this project fulfilled the requirements of the attainment of the Interdisciplinary Educational Leadership Doctoral Program, the researcher deviated from this practice to answer the plea for help. Therefore, the researcher worked to mitigate any ethical dilemmas or bias by seeking the aid of outside help when analyzing the data.

The researcher made a conscious effort to maintain objectivity throughout the project. The research was completed at UCC, and was used to propose a solution for a problem involving both UCC and CPCU, the institution in which the researcher is a stakeholder. As a consequence, the researcher needed to account for any personal biases or conflict of interest that may have developed through her work, thus full discloser was paramount. Even though the researcher is a professor at CPCU, this research did not result in any personal or financial gain. The education department welcomes incoming students from UCC, and these new scholars will boost student numbers. However, the researcher's classes will not be affected. The reason for this is that these particular
students have already taken the ECE courses necessary for the ECE endorsement created and taught by the researcher. Consequently, she does not stand to gain financially from this project.

The actual writing of the research brought with it other ethical concerns. A potential concern revealed by Creswell (2014) was the selective reporting of findings by researchers. Creswell (2014) cautioned that a scholar must be careful to eliminate this type of bias before reporting on data. Although the uncovering of objectionable information in this project was unlikely, caution was taken to avoid this in the data analysis and reporting process (Creswell, 2014). Lastly, recognition to the proper sources was considered to be of the utmost importance. Because of this, care was taken to ensure that the author did not falsify "authorship, evidence, data, findings or conclusions" (Creswell, 2014, p. 94).

**Summary**

Chapter three included a restatement of the purpose of this research and reiterated the research questions and hypothesis. Additionally, this section detailed the methodology of this quantitative design. Furthermore, an explanation was given about the voluntary nature of the online survey and how the data was collected, compiled and analyzed. Lastly, ethical implications were explored. The next chapter will examine the findings and will provide a understanding of the statistically significant relationships that exist between the UCC students’ perceptions and their decisions to transfer.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND THE EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTION

Overview

As stated in Chapter 1, this study measured the perceptions Urban Community College (UCC) early childhood education (ECE) students had about the barriers to transfer and then used this information to determine if these perceptions had an impact on the students’ decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University (CPCU).

This chapter first gives a descriptive representation of the participant sample that took part in this study, and then is organized in terms of the following research questions:

1) What are the perceived barriers that would hinder students’ decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University?
2) Can knowledge about students’ perceptions be used to predict whether students will make a decision to transfer?
3) Can a new model, a melding of Schlossberg’s (1995) transition theory and Schmertz and Carney’s barriers (2013), be used to predict Urban Community College students’ decision to transition to City Private Catholic University?

Presentation of the Findings

Descriptive Statistics: The Sample

The participants for this research project were the early childhood education students from UCC. The researcher distributed an anonymous electronic survey to 208 students via email. Sixty-seven students completed the questionnaire. To gain a clear picture of the sample, the researcher examined the data using frequency tests. The following information emerged:

- Sixty-five of the 67 students were female.
• While the majority of the participants in this sample were Caucasian, 38% of the students identified as minorities. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the ethnicity of this participant sample.

![Figure 2. Ethnicity](image)

*Figure 2. Ethnicity. This figure shows the sample’s ethnicity in percentages.*

• The frequency tests also revealed that there was a range of ages in this participant sample. Figure 3 displays the percentage of students in each age group.

![Figure 3. Participant Age](image)

*Figure 3. Participant Age. This figure shows percent of participants in each age group.*

• Most of the sample, 83%, identified as Christian.

• Twenty-one percent of the sample was Catholic.
• Seventy-seven percent of the students had earned a 3.0 or higher grade point average, and 57% claimed to have a 3.5-grade point or better.

• There was an even split between face-to-face, all on-line, or a combination of course delivery methods.

• The vast majority of the participants claimed to work more than 20 hours per week, with 41% of the students stating that they worked more than 40 hours.

• The students from this sample reside in a variety of settings. Figure 4 shows the distribution of these living arrangements.

![Figure 4. Living Arrangements. This figure shows the living arrangements of participants.](image)

• About ½ of the participants felt it would be advantageous to attend a private four-year university.

• However, more than half felt that the fact that City Private Catholic University was private did not necessarily influence their decision to transfer to the school.

• The fact that CPCU was a Jesuit university did not seem to be important to this group of participants, as most did not see any advantage to this trait.
Eighty percent of the sample felt that transferring to a four-year university would be paramount, and 90% believed that obtaining a bachelor’s degree would improve job prospects and career goals.

In fact, after completion of their associates degree at UCC, many of the students wanted to transfer to a four-year university. Figure 5 illustrates the number of students who hoped to transfer to a four-year school after completing their associates degree.

Most of the participants wanted to have the opportunity to transfer to CPCU.

When it came down to actually making the decision to transfer to CPCU the picture was a bit different. Figure 7 details the number of students who believed they would decide to transfer to CPCU.
Figure 6. Would Students Like the Opportunity to Transfer to CPCU?

Figure 7. Will Students Decide to Transfer to CPCU? This figure demonstrates the percentage of participants who believed they would transfer to CPCU after they had attained their associates degree.
It is important to note that while most students hoped to transfer to a four-year university, and wanted the opportunity to transfer to CPCU, they, for whatever reason, did not know if they would make the decision to transfer to this university.

**Sub Question One**

**What are the perceived barriers that would hinder students’ decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University?** To discover the answer to this research question and determine the relationships between the perceived barriers and students’ decisions to transfer, the investigator decided to use Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson correlation tests. Hollingsworth, Collins, Smith, and Nelson (2011) argued that due to the ordinal nature of Likert Scale items, nonparametric tests would be the most fitting choice for the statistical analysis of this kind. Hence, a series of Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to evaluate the relationships between students’ perceptions of the barriers to retention (Schmertz and Carney, 2013) and their possible decisions to transfer to City Private Catholic University. The dependent variable was the participants’ decision to transfer to CPCU. The independent variables were the students’ perceptions of the barriers to transfer. Table 1 shows the results of this test for each independent variable.

According to the Kruskal-Wallis test, there appears to be a considerable number of perceived barriers that would hinder students’ decisions to transition to CPCU. As shown in Table 1 only one barrier, the students’ perception that CPCU would too difficult academically, appeared not to have a statistically significant relationship. Every other perceived barrier listed in Table 1 did show a statistically significant relationship between the perceived barriers and students’ decisions to transition to CPCU.
To lend credence to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, the researcher used the Pearson correlation tests to determine the nature of the relationships between the dependent variable and each independent variable. Lovelace and Brickman (2013) argued this type of analysis is not always appropriate when the participant sample is non-parametric. However, the researcher chose to use this test as a check-and-balance, in the hope that it would further substantiate the findings of the Kruskal-Wallis test.

When the investigator compared the Pearson correlation results shown in Table 2 with the Kruskal-Wallis results shown in Table 1, the results closely matched. The
outcome of the Pearson tests revealed that sixteen of the twenty independent variables matched the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test. The only differences in the findings were the student perceptions about getting along with professors, maintaining connections with family and friends, and the ability to access health care. These perceived barriers did not show a statistically significant relationship with the decision to transfer. Because the results from both the Kruskal-Wallis tests and the Pearson Correlation were quite similar aside from the variances mentioned above, the researcher can feel confident in the correctness of these findings.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Barrier</th>
<th>Decision to Transfer</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Grades</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle Rigor</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond with University Advisor</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Along with Professors</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a Study Group</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit in With Other Students</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Friends</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Connect With Other Students in Class</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Isolated and Lonely</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find Interesting Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Connection with Family and Friends</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance School Work with Family Demands</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Health Care</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustain Motivation</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afford New School</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand New Financial Aid</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to work</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to Keep Job While Going to School</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Financial Aid</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Transfer Credit Hours</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 67$
Sub Question Two

Can a researcher created model be used to predict whether the students will make the decision to transfer? The researcher-generated model used in the development of the measurement tool was based on Schmertz and Carney’s (2013) Retention Model and Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (1995). To determine the answer to the research question mentioned above the investigator used a series of multiple regressions based on this model. The researcher’s four regressions, one for each of Schlossberg’s 4S’s were: Situation (Figure 10), Self, (Figure 11), Social Support (Figure 12), and Strategies (Figure 13).

The findings discovered in each model indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the independent variables in each of the 4S's categories and the dependent variable. Interestingly, while each model itself revealed a significant association, many of the individual barriers that made up each of the models did not. In fact, in each of the models, many of the independent variables did not have statistically significant relationship. Hence, there appears to be a discrepancy. This is the fact that not all the barriers had a relationship to the dependent variable while the whole model did indicate a significant association. Seemingly, this incongruity suggests that the obstacles that did have a significant association had a strong enough correlation to make up for the other independent variables. The researcher described the four regression models below.

**Situation-regression.** Previous experiences influence students' situations, these include sources of stress, and things that may be out of their control (Evans et al., 1988). Shifting through Schmertz and Carney’s (2013) barriers, it appears that concerns about health care, the cost of school, financial aid and the ability to transfer credit hours from
the students’ previous schools fall under this category. These matters are all part of the students’ situations, and are for the most part, out of their control. Table 3 shows the statistical significance of the relationship between each of the situation-barriers and the dependent variable. The Adjusted $R^2$ suggests that given the data, this model appears to capture about 37% of the variation in the students’ decision to transfer. However, of the variables tested in this regression only cost was statistically significant.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation Barriers and Decision to Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision to Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afford New School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand New Financial Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Financial Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Transfer Credit Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ (Adjusted)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-regression.** The self-category in Schlossberg’s 4S’s, deals with the students’ personal and demographic characteristics (Evans et al., 1988). Things such as their intellect, prior academic experiences, their interests, and their ability to stay motivated fall into this category. Table 4 details the statistically significant relationships these barriers had to the UCC students’ decisions to transition to CPCU. The Adjusted $R^2$ suggests that given the data, this model appears to capture about 40% of the variation in
the students’ decision to transfer. Consequently, of the variables tested in this regression, perceptions of the ability to maintain grades, handle rigor, and sustain motivation were all shown to have a statistically significant relationship to the dependent variable.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Decision to Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.188*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.354)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Grades</td>
<td>.731*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.228)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle Rigor</td>
<td>.311*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find Interesting Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustain Motivation</td>
<td>-.367*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.178)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N                    | 67                   |
| R² (Adjusted)        | .404                 |

*p<0.05, two-tailed standard errors in parentheses

Social support-regression. Social Support, another of Schlossberg’s 4S’s, is described as students’ personal relationships (Evans et al., 1988). This includes relationships the students build, foster, and maintain. The barriers that are the focus in this area include, bonding with professors and university advisors, finding groups of students with which the community college students can study and form collaborative in-class groups, the students’ ability to find new friends, and how they will maintain older, familiar relationships. Table 5 illustrates the relationship between these factors and the students’ choices to transition into the neighboring four-year university. The Adjusted $R^2$ suggests that given the data, this model appears to capture about 45% of the variation in the students’ decision to transfer. Of the variables tested in this regression, the students’
concerns about their ability to make friends and their worries about loneliness and isolation were statistically significant.

Table 5  
*Social Barriers and Decision to Transfer*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision to Transfer</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.573*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond with University Advisor</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Along with Professors</td>
<td>-.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a Study Group</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit in With Other Students</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.172)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Friends</td>
<td>.382*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.189)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect With Other Students</td>
<td>.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Isolated and Lonely</td>
<td>-.394*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.202)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Connection with Family and Friends</td>
<td>-.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.254)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 67  
$R^2$ (Adjusted) .445  
*p<0.05, two-tailed standard errors in parentheses

**Strategies-regression.** Students’ ability to develop strategies would be described as their capacity to make modifications or manage changes brought on by the circumstances in which they might find themselves (Evans et al., 1988). Things such as their ability to create strategies to manage their time, their ability to balance school and family, and strategies they devise to fund their new school commitments are included in this category. Table 6 details the UCC early childhood education students’ perceptions of their ability to construct strategies to deal with the new schooling situation and the
relationship this has to their decision to transition to CPCU. The Adjusted $R^2$ suggests that given the data, this model appears to capture about 34% of the variation in the students’ decision to transfer. Yet, of the variables tested in this regression, only students’ perceptions of their ability to keep a job while going to school was shown to have a statistically significant relationship to their decision to transition to CPCU.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation Barriers and Decision to Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision to Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance School Work with Family Demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to Keep Job While Going to School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ (Adjusted)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05, two-tailed standard errors in parentheses

Sub Question Three

Can a new model be used to predict urban community college students’ decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University? Each of the above-mentioned statistical tests support the idea that there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable, students’ decisions to transition, and the independent variables, students’ perceptions of the barriers to transfer. The original premise was that a researcher-created model would demonstrate a relationship between the variables in this project. The fusion of Schmertz and Carney’s model (2013) and
Schlossberg’s theory (1995) offered a representation, which would establish this relationship. Figure 8 is a pictorial illustration of this association. It is a representation of the results obtained in each of the statistical analyses mentioned above. This model illustrates how the researcher-created model could be used to predict how community college students’ perceptions impact their decision to transition to a four-year university such as CPCU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schlossberg’s 4 S’s (Schlossberg, 1995)</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Social Support</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Challenges for Academic Integration</td>
<td>Maintain Grades</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handle Rigor</td>
<td>Bond with University Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get Along with Professors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Find a Study Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Challenges for Social Integration</td>
<td>Fit in With Other Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connect With Other Students in Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel Isolated and Lonely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find Interesting Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain Connection with Family and Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Challenges for Personal Integration</td>
<td>Access to Health Care</td>
<td>Balance School Work with Family Demands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustain Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Challenges for Financial Integration</td>
<td>Afford New School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand Financial Aid at New School</td>
<td>Need to work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition Financial Aid</td>
<td>Able to Keep Job While Going to School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to Transfer Credit Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. The Relationship Between Students’ Perceptions and Their Decisions to Transition to Four-Year Universities. This figure shows the researcher created model, which has been coded to show the results of the Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson correlation test.
Analysis and Synthesis of Findings

The overarching quantitative design question was: Do the perceptions that UCC early childhood education students have about transitioning to CPCU impact their decision to transfer? Also, the hypothesis (H₁) that guided this study was: If community college students have negative perceptions about barriers to successful transfer and retention, they will be less likely to make the decision to transition to a private Catholic four-year university. The findings in all of the above mentioned statistical analyses support both the research question and the hypothesis (H₁) in this project.

The Kruskal-Wallis tests, the Pearson correlations, and the multiple regressions all suggested that for the participants in this sample, there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable, and virtually all of the independent variables. Most notably students’ perceptions about their ability to maintain good grades, handle the rigor at the new school, connect with other students, balance school work and family demands, maintain good health, stay motivated, pay for school, and their ability to keep their jobs while going to school were found to impact their decision to transfer to CPCU. This led the researcher to conclude that the community college students’ perceptions of the barriers, did impact their decisions to transfer to the four-year universities. Therefore, it seems to reason that if the students’ perceptions were mostly negative (of great concern to them), they were not likely to make the decision to transfer.

Summary

Chapter four laid out the results of this research project. This chapter began with a description of the participant sample. Following this report, results, which attempted to answer the three research questions, were revealed. The tests which provided insight into
these answers were the Kruskal-Wallis test, Pearson correlation test, and four multiple regressions. These tests presented data for figure 8, which highlighted the implications this had for predictive nature of the researcher-created model. Finally, this chapter sets the stage for chapter five, which will discuss how these results can be utilized to create evidence-based recommendations for CPCU about how to most effectively recruit ECE associates degree students from UCC and add to the supply of much needed certified early childhood education teachers.
FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The discussion presented in Chapter five presents a summary of the study, a discussion of the data and the implications of the results found in this research. Suggestions will include recommendations for leadership officials and will highlight some proposals as to how to use this data to create evidence-based solutions to the problem explored in this project. Additionally, the researcher will examine the significance of the findings of this research and offer recommendations for future explorations. Lastly, the researcher will discuss the conclusions of this project.

Summary of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the perceptions Urban Community Colleges’ (UCC’s) Early Childhood Education (ECE) students had about the barriers to transfer and then use this data to determine the impact these perceptions on community college students’ decisions to transition to City Private Catholic University (CPCU), their nearby private Catholic four-year university.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this Dissertation in Practice was to use data to create evidence-based recommendations for City Private Catholic University leadership officials about how to most effectively recruit Early Childhood Education associates degree students from Urban Community College. The hope was that this research would provide a process or programs that would encourage potential teachers from the community college to obtain
their four-year degrees, which in turn could add to the supply of much needed certified early childhood education teachers.

**Discussion of Results**

The overarching quantitative design question was: Do the perceptions that UCC early childhood education students have about transitioning to CPCU impact their decision to transfer? The Kruskal-Wallis tests, the Pearson correlations and each of the multiple regressions suggested that for the participants in this sample, there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable (the UCC students’ decision to transfer into CPCU), and most of the independent variables (the students’ perceptions).

**A Comparison of the Kruskal-Wallis Tests and Pearson Correlations**

The Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson Correlations tests both indicated that a statistically significant relationship existed between the dependent variable and a majority of independent variables. Hence, these tests confirmed that there was a relationship between students’ perceptions of barriers to retention and their decision to transfer to CPCU. Out of the 20 perceived barriers that did turn out to have a statistically significant relationship to the dependent variable (as shown by the Kruskal-Wallis test), only one, the students concern about the rigor of the course work at CPCU, proved not to be relevant for this participant sample.

The Pearson correlations did corroborate each of the results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests, but counter to the Kruskal-Wallis tests, found there was a statistically significant relationship between the perceptions about coursework rigor. This disparity can be explained by looking closely at the barriers in the researcher-created model.
Both the Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson correlation tests showed that the students did not appear to be concerned about maintaining good grades, the discrepancy only emerged when rigor of coursework was considered. As stated earlier, demographic data revealed that the majority of the students surveyed indicated that they were good students, with a grade point average of 3.0 or above. So, isn’t it possible that the students found the work at UCC easy enough to attain good grades, and therefore were not particularly worried about the difficulty of the course work at CPCU? This, then, could account for the students’ positive outlook where rigor was concerned in the Kruskal-Wallis test.

In the analysis of the findings for this project, the researcher put more emphasis on the Kruskal-Wallis findings when interpreting the data. The importance was placed on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test because it is non-parametric in nature. The investigator used the Pearson correlations solely as authentication. Accordingly, while the researcher placed greater importance on the findings of the Kruskal-Wallis tests, she did consider both of the relationship based statistical tests.

Accordingly, there were a few areas where the Kruskal-Wallis tests and the Pearson correlations differed. As previously discussed, the rigor barrier was the only barrier that showed a statistically significant association to the dependent variable on the Pearson correlation test and not the Kruskal-Wallis test. However, there were three tests that indicated a positive relationship to the dependent variable on only the Kruskal-Wallis tests and not the Pearson correlations. Thus, the Pearson correlations did not corroborate the findings of the Kruskal-Wallis tests for these barriers. These were the students’ perceptions about getting along with professors, maintaining connections with family and
friends, and their ability to access health care. To understand the inconsistency in the findings between the three barriers that revealed a relationship in the Kruskal-Wallis tests and not the Pearson correlations, the researcher looked at the regression models for further clarification.

The first difference was the students’ concerns about health care. This barrier was found to have a statistically significant relationship to the dependent variable in the Kruskal-Wallis test findings. Indeed, the situation-regression model did also show that the health-care barrier was linked to students’ decisions to transition. Consequently, the results in the regression model did corroborate the findings in Kruskal-Wallis test.

For the barriers tied to relationships with professors and concerns about the maintenance of relationships with family and friends the results of the two correlation tests did not agree. The researcher once again looked to the multiple regressions for answers. Upon investigation of the social-regression model, these two perceived barriers did not have a statistically significant relationship to the students’ decisions to transition. As such, the conflicting results of these two social-integration barriers for the Kruskal-Wallis tests and the Pearson correlations remain uncorroborated. However, if the entirety of the social-regression model, which was found to have a statistically significant relationship, were to be considered instead of breaking the model apart by individual barriers this might be enough to supersede the dissimilar results, and give credence to the Kruskal-Wallis findings.

Lastly, perhaps, the discrepancy in the results of these two independent variables on the correlations tests can be explained by the fact that the Pearson correlation tests were designed for parametric samples. As described earlier, the sample for this project
was non-parametric. Once again, this highlights the fact the Pearson correlations were used by the researcher primarily for the corroboration of the Kruskal-Wallis tests.

**Multiple Regressions**

The multiple regressions carried out in the analysis of the data were calculated by grouping together the survey questions that represented Schlossberg’s 4S’s. This categorization was done to determine if these factors, when combined, would have an impact on students’ decisions to transition. The theory employed was: if there were a majority of the 4S’s in each integration category displaying a statistically significant relationship to the students’ decisions to transition, then this would impact their decisions to go forward with the transfer process. When analyzed, each of the regressions did prove to have a statistically significant relationship to the dependent variable. However, when looking at the individual barriers in each regression model, some interesting trends emerged. Figure 9 illustrates the results for each of the barriers.

**Situation.** The findings for the first of the 4S’s regression model; situation, as a whole did have a statistically significant relationship with the students’ decisions to transition to CPCU. As stated earlier, situation has to do with students’ previous experiences, anything in their lives that was out of their control and could cause stress (Evans et al., 1988). The barriers that fit logically into this category were: 1) health and healthcare, 2) cost, 3) availability of financial aid, 4) portability of financial aid packages, and 5) transferability of credit hours.

The researcher investigated the regression model by looking at each barrier. As shown in Figure 9, two of the six perceived obstacles had a statistically significant
relationship to the dependent variable. These two perceived barriers were healthcare, and cost. Because of the connection between students’ concerns about cost and healthcare, it can be surmised that perceptions about these were robust enough to impact the entire model. Consequently, helping the students overcome these perceptions could ease their minds and encourage a shift in their paradigms. Thus, creating programs that would answer these fears should be considered by leadership officials at both UCC and CPCU.

**Self.** The second of the 4S’s, self, deals with the students’ personal matters and their demographic situations (Evans et al., 1988). These factors include things such as 1) their intellect, 2) their ability to maintain good grades, 3) their personal interests, and 3)
student motivation. As revealed in Figure 9, of the four barriers listed in this category all except the students’ perceptions of their ability to find activities that matched with their personal interests were found to have a statically significant relationship to students’ decisions to transfer.

These results seem to suggest that in addition to maintaining motivation throughout their schooling, students from UCC are concerned about being able to handle the coursework, and maintaining good grades. Hence, educating the students about the support that is available in these areas could be one way for leadership officials to alleviate some if not all of these worries.

**Social support.** The third of the 4S’s; social support, included students’ ability to build, foster, and maintain relationships throughout their school years (Evans et al., 1988). While students appeared to be least concerned about this category, the model, as a whole, did indicate that there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. As presented in Figure 9, social support is comprised of eight perceived barriers, and of these only one, the ability to connect with other CPCU students in classes was found to have a correlation to their decision to transition. Giving students opportunities for bonding in classes, providing them with opportunities to meet professors, and pairing potential transfer students with mentors could help to minimalize these concerns. These are actions that could be taken by the stakeholders at both UCC and CPCU.

**Strategies.** The 4th and last of the 4S’s; strategies, is described as students’ abilities to make modifications or manage changes brought on by their circumstances (Evans et al., 1988). These would include students’ abilities: 1) to create strategies to
manage their time, 2) to balance school, work, and family, 3) to deal with the necessity to work, and 4) to maintain their jobs. As shown in Figure 9, perceptions of two of the four barriers in this category, their ability to balance school, work, and family, and their ability to maintain a job while attending school, proved to have a statistically significant relationship to their decision to transition. To mitigate these concerns programs that focused on educating students about financial matters and time management strategies could be implemented. In addition to these actions, introducing students to support groups, mentors, and other outside resources could help to assuage some of the detracting perceptions.

**Implications**

**Changing Perceptions**

Community college students must make choices. Should they transfer to four-year institutions and continue with their education in pursuit of bachelor’s degrees, or should they stop their schooling at the end of their community college experiences altogether? This project was focused on students’ perceptions and how these impacted these decisions. The results of this research indicated that potential transfer students do make their decisions to transition to four-year schools based upon their perceptions. Therefore, the discussion about attitudes, and how they influence decision-making is pertinent.

Because the human mind cannot resolve complex problems with full rationality, it works within the limits of bounded rationality (Robbins and Judge, 2013). In other words, people’s decisions are bounded solely upon the information available to them. In the case of the UCC students, they can only base their decisions on the information or things they have experienced. These students will sift through the information available
to them. Then without understanding all of the complexities surrounding the situation, they will make decisions (Robbins and Judge, 2013).

As we have seen through Tinto’s (1987) research and Schmertz and Carney’s (2011) redesigning of this, barriers play a significant role in the retention of transfer students. This research project has illuminated the facts that not only are community college students aware of the obstacles to transition, but they have also formed perceptions about them. Furthermore, the results of this project have shown that inevitably, students may be so concerned about the barriers to retention, that these perceptions will turn them away from transitioning altogether.

Can perceptions be changed? If so, preemptive education could correct misunderstandings about the barriers to transfer, even those obstacles that are seen as severe (Taylor et al.). With the hope that students’ perceptions can be re-engineered, this researcher used the data from this project to give evidence-based suggestions to the leadership officials at both CPCU and UCC. This information was then utilized to develop programs such as those listed in Figure 10. These programs addressed students’ concerns. It is hoped that these programs will help shift the paradigms of the UCC students and that this new way of thinking will allow them to make knowledgeable decisions that will pave the way for them to finish their final two years of instruction at CPCU and become certified ECE education teachers.

**Solutions and the Repercussions for Leadership**

Working together, leadership officials at both CPCU and UCC can facilitate a productive and successful transfer program. Stimpfel (2013) suggested the transfer process works best when all of the participating institutions are committed and willing to
work together to furnish the necessary resources and staff. Therefore, to ensure the success of transfer programs, the leadership officials at both UCC and CPCU will need to share in the development of orientation programs that will address the perceptions held by the UCC students (Stimpfel, 2013).

Stimpfel (2013) explained that “transfer-friendly” schools needed to invest time and effort in many areas, including but not limited to admissions, financial aid, housing, advising, credit coordination, academic support and career services, all of which fall into Schmertz and Carney’s (2013) retention model. With information garnered from this research, officials from both institutions are now in the position to create evidence-based programs in each of the areas mentioned above. These new programs will help drive organizational change, which will help to ensure the success of the transfer students.
Organizational change

As previously mentioned, this research project yielded results that have provided leadership officials from both UCC and CPCU with information that will be useful as they make adjustments to their programs. These modifications will likely drive organizational change in the Education Departments of both schools, and continued success could result in long term policy changes in both schools. Lunenberg (2010) shared a methodology to facilitate transformation in an organization. This process will be used in the development and implementation of orientation and support programs for the potential ECE students from UCC. Figure 11 details Kotter’s eight-step process, which will serve as a model for the organizational change in the Education Departments at both secondary education institutions.

Transformational Leadership

The ultimate goal of this research was to fill the need for more ECE teachers. This transcends the self-interest of the researcher and her organization (Robbins and Judge, 2013). The outcomes of this research will positively influence the UCC students, CPCU, and the community in general. The results have given this researcher an opportunity to practice transformational leadership as it has allowed her to transform practices at both CPCU and UCC. Through this organizational change process, the investigator, as a leader, has influenced the stakeholders at both schools by developing an awareness of the situation, and then inspiring and motivating all to work together toward a common goal, new policies designed to create a continuous stream of transfer students (Robbins and Judge, 2013).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step #</th>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Process:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish sense of urgency</td>
<td>Share research and DIP findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Create a coalition to facilitate the change</td>
<td>Bring together members of the following groups from both at UCC and CPCU: leadership officials transfer credit experts, student support personnel, financial aid staff, admission staff, College of Arts and Sciences course credit experts, College of Professional Studies personnel, legal consultation, and the member of the Department of Education as a transfer coalition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Develop a vision and strategy</td>
<td>Use DIP to create evidence-based practices and programs such as those detailed in Figure 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Communicate the change vision</td>
<td>Share vision with coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Work to eliminate any barriers to the change effort</td>
<td>Assess barriers to change effort and work with coalition and UCC transfer students to find solutions to these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Create short-term wins</td>
<td>Monitor the progress of transfer students to determine if the agreement is a “win” or if improvements upon the change process need to be made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Repeat the “wins” and/or the improvements from step six to generate more change and invigorate the process</td>
<td>Continue to monitor progress, and meet with coalition and student groups to determine what changes could be made. Possibly do another research study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Use successes to make sure the change has been assimilated into the culture of the organization</td>
<td>Advertise successes; use media to make program and its progress known.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Kotter’s Eight-Step Process (Lunenburg, 2010). This figure shows how CPCU will use the eight steps suggested by Kotter to facilitate successful organizational change.

**Mission Driven Partnership**

The result of this research, the matriculation of UCC students into the Education Department of CPCU, complements the hallmarks of an interdisciplinary Jesuit education, and highlights the Ignatian charisms. This outcome has been accomplished in several ways: 1) it will contribute to the diversity of the student body at CPCU, 2) it will serve the ideals of the leadership at UCC by paving a way to a four-year program for their underserved students and allow them to fulfill assurances to incoming students, and 3) it will produce a diverse group of highly qualified ECE teachers.
Handel, et al., (2012) argued, community college students are traditionally from culturally diverse backgrounds and are often from lower socioeconomic backdrops. Because of this, there are benefits for transitioning community college students into four-year universities. Among the advantages for the undergraduate population at the four-year universities are: a sense of civic responsibility, an increased willingness to donate time and treasure to charitable causes, the desire to make a difference in the community, increased involvement in campus activities, the ability and desire to build relationships with people who are different from themselves, and a general feeling of belonging for all students (Handel et. al, 2012; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Hayek, Carini, O’Day, & Kuh, 2002; Nelson, Halperin, Wasserman, Smith, & Graham, 2006). The addition of these new community college students will foster a campus that goes a long way in preparing its’ students to live and work in a global community (Seaman, 2005, p. 167).

In addition to the benefits for CPCU mentioned above, the information from this project will also further the cause of the leadership officials at UCC. The new found facts will allow these leaders to make good on promises they, like many other community college officials, have made to transfer students. This is the assurance that after two years in a community college program, students will be able to seamlessly transfer to senior universities, (Handel et al., 2012). While many students attend community colleges with this notion, research has told a different story (Handel et al., 2012). In fact, the success of those who are able to transfer is quite small (Handel et al., 2012). The information revealed by the data in this project has helped to frame programs that will likely turn this dismal statistic around for the ECE students at UCC.
Facilitating the transfer of ECE students from community colleges to four-year universities so they might attain their bachelor’s degrees, and subsequent teacher certifications could be one way to address the ECE teacher shortage problem (Townsend & Ignash, 2003). Creating such alliances has been known to allow nontraditional community college students to become licensed teachers. As stated previously, many of these students have come from marginalized and underserved populations. Having emanated from a variety of age groups, cultures, races, socio-economic backgrounds, and ability levels, the make-up of community college student populations has historically been diverse (Cohen and Bawer, 1982) and the articulation of this group will produce an equally diverse teaching cohort. With this fact in mind, post-secondary education enrollment that includes such a broad representation of the community, would benefit young children as it would give them access to an increased number of culturally diverse teaching professionals (Wang, 2012; Cohen and Bawer, 1982).

**Discussion of Significance**

As identified previously, high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programs have a net positive effect on the cognitive and social development of children (Barnett, 2004). These programs have implications for the future as they have the power to change the path of a child's life from one of hopelessness and poverty to one of a thriving, productive member society (Heckman, 2011). The quality of these early childhood education programs depends upon qualified teachers (Jacob, 2007). Currently, there are not an adequate number of such teachers to staff ECE classrooms (Jacob, 2007).

This research sought to provide one solution to this problem by facilitating a path to transition from the ECE program at UCC, to CPCU, the neighboring private Catholic
university. Thus allowing these students to earn their bachelor’s degree and become certified early childhood education teachers. The data generated by this project showed that the participants from UCC did have perceptions about transfer, and these perceptions did impact their decision to transition into CPCU. Using the information provided by this project, school officials of both UCC and CPCU were able to work together to develop programs to improve the transfer process for the associates degree students.

Empowered by the knowledge from this research, the researcher and other stakeholders will be able to address student perceptions, real or imagined. Through Kotter’s eight-step organizational change process the researcher was able to develop orientation and mentor programs that will help to break down the barriers that have been shown to derail successful transfer efforts. These innovative programs are designed to inhibit negative perceptions from taking root. Additionally, the new programs will help the students resolve any barriers before they become insurmountable and debilitating.

Not only did this study provide information about perceptions of barriers to transfer, but it also added to the existing scholarly research and literature on the subject. Much literature existed about what happened to transfer students after they transitioned (Tinto, 1988; Braxton, Hirsch, McClendon, 2003; Bean (1990); Schmertz and Carney, 2013). This established research detailed the barriers that existed for these students (Tinto, 1988; Braxton, et al., (2003), Bean (1990); Schmertz and Carney, 2013). It described how these obstacles negatively impact students’ ability to stay in four-year programs (Tinto, 1988; Braxton, et al., 2003, Bean (1990); Schmertz and Carney, 2013).

Prior research also outlined ideas as to how to help solve retention problems. Little research, however, existed about what happens before community college students
transfer. How do they decide to transfer? What are their perceptions of the barriers? And what role do these perceptions play in the decision to transfer? The hope is that with information from this project, stakeholders can positively influence student decisions concerning transfer, thus, facilitating the transition of these community college students to their new schools.

This research project is focused on early childhood education students at UCC and neighboring CPCU. However, the transfer policies examined by this research could also be applied and generalized beyond these schools. The researcher sought to improve transfer practice and policy by combining a theory and a model to make a new predictive model. This hybrid model might be used to predict if students would likely decide to transition into a new educational setting by looking at their perceptions of potential barriers to retention. This model could also give valuable institution-specific information to help determine any possible roadblocks to transitioning. This institution-specific information could then be used by organizations to create tailor made programs to address their specific perception problems. This study could pave the way for other four-year institutions to recruit community college students. In essence, other organizations could look to the implications this research has for transfer policy and replicate it.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This project sought to answer the research questions and lead to recommendations for program development and policy transformation, however the researcher suggested that further research on this topic be completed:
• To determine if the evidence-based programs developed by the researcher accomplished their intended purpose, which was to impact and change students’ decisions to transfer to CPCU, follow-up research is recommended.

• To determine the viability of the newly developed and implemented programs, a qualitative follow-up study with students who went through these programs would also be beneficial. This would allow the researcher and other stakeholders to make adjustments that would serve to fine tune the established programs in order make them more effective.

• Additionally, more studies could be designed to determine if the information the researcher-developed model yielded could be enhanced. Of particular interest to the researcher were questions regarding the 4S’s. If different barriers were shown to have statistically significant relationships to the dependent variable in each of the 4S’s groupings, would this change the viability of each model? Specifically, is there a tipping point that would give the researcher a better predictor as to which perceptions are most impactful in students’ decisions to transition?

• Furthermore, a qualitative follow-up study on the Kruskal-Wallis test findings and the researcher-created model could be advantageous when looking at the trends that emerged. Perhaps a focus-group of student participants would help to clarify and further hone in on the perceptions these participants had and the role the perceptions play in the 4S’s part of the model.

• The researcher also suggested that information about the origination of students’ perceptions and ideas concerning what could be done. Information on this topic could provide information that could be used to mitigate these views.
Also, this research could have implications for developing transfer policy for other community colleges students who might be interested in a transition to CPCU. The instrument used in this project could be used by other community colleges to determine if the same patterns would emerge for possible CPCU transfer candidates. If similar findings were achieved this would confirm the results of this research.

Lastly, replication of this study for other community colleges and other universities could provide information. This information could supply evidence-based recommendations for any other two-to-four year schools that might be interested in developing articulation agreements.

Conclusion

As discussed earlier, the purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the perceptions UCCs’ early childhood education students had about the barriers to transfer and then use this data to determine how these perceptions might impact their decisions to transition to CPCU.

When examining the data, which described the participant sample, almost all of the students suggested that they were aware of the importance of a bachelor’s degree. Additionally, the vast majority of the UCC students wanted to transfer to a four-year university upon completion of their associates degree. Moreover, 90% of the participants hoped to have the opportunity to transfer to CPCU. Yet, despite the fact that these students knew the importance of attaining a bachelor’s degree, wanted to transfer into four-year programs, and welcomed the opportunity to transfer to CPCU, in the end, most of them did not believe that they would make the decision to transfer to CPCU. What is
the reason for this result? Why did UCC students believe they would not make the decision to transition into CPCU, even though they understood the importance of transferring to four-year universities? And lastly, what can be done now and in the future to quell students’ fears and persuade them to transition to the next step in their educational journey?

The outcomes of this study hold the answers to these questions. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the students’ perceptions and their decision to transfer. Hence, it appeared that even though students understood the importance of transfer, and wanted to undertake this transition, they believed they would not make the decision to do so because they perceived the barriers to be too overwhelming.

While the literature discussed the barriers and how these obstacles often stop students from successfully completing their degrees at four-year schools after transfer, little has been written about the impact of students’ perceptions and how these preclude them from making the decision to transition in the first place. This project identified the relationship between these two factors and provided recommendations to CPUC as to how to re-engineer the community college students’ thinking so that they might make favorable decisions to transfer to CPCU after the attainment of their associates degrees from UCC.

The researcher created model showed a significant predictive relationship between Schlossberg’s 4S’s of transition and students’ perceptions of the barriers to retention. This model could be used to determine the attitudes of students and help leadership officials recognize the specific concerns of their potential students. This
would foster a climate in which students might feel free to make the decision to transition into four-year schools. For the scenario discussed in this project, the transfer of the early childhood education students from UCC could increase enrollment in the bachelor’s degree elementary education program at CPCU, and in the end, add to the supply of much needed early childhood education educators in the area.
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Appendix 1

Survey: XCC/XXXU 2+2

Q1 Below you will find several questions, which are intended to discover the thoughts XXXXXXXXXX Community College students have about transferring to four-year universities. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Q2 My age as of today is...
- 40 years of age or older (1)
- 30 to 39 years of age (2)
- 19 to 29 years of age (you must be at least 19 years of age to take this survey) (3)
- 18 years of age or younger (4)

If 18 years of age or younger Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q3 I am an Early Childhood Education Major at XXXXXXXXXX Community College?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q4 My gender is...
- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q5 My race can best be described as...
- White/Caucasian (1)
- African American (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native American (5)
- Pacific Islander (6)
- Other (7)

Q6 My religious affiliation can best be described as...
- Catholic (1)
- Christian (non-specific) (2)
- Lutheran (3)
- Jewish (4)
- Other (5) _______________
- None (6)
Q7 My year in school at XXXXXXXXXX Community College is...
- First year (1)
- Second year (2)
- Third year (3)
- Other (4)

Q8 My grade point average is...
- 3.5 to 4.0 (1)
- 3.0 to 3.4 (2)
- 2.5 to 2.9 (3)
- 2.0 to 2.4 (4)
- 1.9 and below (5)
- Not Applicable (6)

Q9 When I attend XXXXXXXXXX Community College...
- All of my classes are face to face (1)
- All of my classes are online (2)
- The majority of my classes are face to face, but some are online (3)
- The majority of my classes are online, but some are face to face (4)
- I split my classes evenly between online and face to face (5)

Q10 I work...
- 40 or more hours a week (1)
- 30 to 39 hours a week (2)
- 20 to 29 hours a week (3)
- 10 to 19 hours a week (4)
- 4 to 9 hours a week (5)
- Less than 3 hours a week (6)

Q11 While I go to school at XXXXXXXXXX Community College I...
- Live with my parents (1)
- Live on my own (2)
- Live with roommates (3)
- Live with my spouse or significant other (4)
- Live with my children and my spouse or significant other (5)
- Live with my children as the sole head of the household (6)
- Other (7) ________________
Q12 I feel transferring to a four-year university is...
- Extremely Important (1)
- Very Important (2)
- Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)
- Very Unimportant (4)
- Not at all Important (5)

Q13 I believe that a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education will improve my job prospects and career goals.
- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q14 After I complete my schooling at XXXXXXXXXX Community College, it is ___________ that I will transfer to a four-year University.
- Very Likely (1)
- Likely (2)
- Undecided (3)
- Unlikely (4)
- Very Unlikely (5)
Q15 Respond to each of the following questions as best you can. If I transfer from XXXXXXXXXXX Community College to a four-year university...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I will be able to manage my time, which will allow me to get all of my academic work done. (1)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to maintain good grades. (2)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (1)</td>
<td>Agree (2)</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</td>
<td>Disagree (4)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="" /></td>
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<td><img src="#" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will not be able to handle the schoolwork (will it be much harder than what I am used to). (3)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (1)</td>
<td>Agree (2)</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</td>
<td>Disagree (4)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (5)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I be able to find a faculty advisor (someone to help me navigate through a new school and answer questions for me). (4)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (1)</td>
<td>Agree (2)</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</td>
<td>Disagree (4)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (5)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to connect and get along with the new professors. (5)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (1)</td>
<td>Agree (2)</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</td>
<td>Disagree (4)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><img src="#" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to find a study group (a group of students with which I can study). (6)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16 Respond to each of the following questions as best you can. If I transfer from XXXXXXXXXXX Community College to a four-year university...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will not fit in with the other students. (1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to make friends. (2)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to work with the other students when doing cooperative group work. (3)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will feel isolated and lonely. (4)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to participate in extracurricular activities that are interesting to me. (5)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to stay in contact with my family and friends. (6)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q17 Respond to each of the following questions as best you can. If I transfer from XXXXXXX Community College to a four-year university...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to balance my new school with the demands of my life (family, friends, job). (1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will not have access to healthcare while I attend my new school. (2)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to maintain my motivation throughout all of the years at my new school. (3)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q18 Respond to each of the following questions as best you can. If I transfer from XXXXXXXXXX Community College to a four-year university...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to afford XXXXXXXXXX University.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to understand the financial aid at XXXXXXXXXX University?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I will have to get a job so that I can attend XXXXXXXXXX University.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I will not be able to hold down a job in addition to school.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The financial aid I have received at XXXXXXXXXX Community College will</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>continue if I transfer to XXXXXXXXX University.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the course hours I have taken at XXXXXXXX Community College will transfer, and count toward my degree at XXXXXXXX University.

Q19 If you have any worries that have not been mentioned please, list them below (keep any responses to 1 to 2 words)

Possible Alternate Barrier (1)
Possible Alternate Barrier (2)
Possible Alternate Barrier (3)
Possible Alternate Barrier (4)
Possible Alternate Barrier (5)

Q20 Transferring to XXXXXXXX University will result in a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education.

Definitely will (1)
Probably will (2)
Don't know (3)
Probably will not (4)
Definitely will not (5)

Q21 I would like to have the opportunity to transfer to XXXXXXXX University.

Yes (1)
Maybe (2)
No (3)

Q22 I have heard of the 2+2 transfer program from XXXXXXXX Community College to XXXXXXXX University.

Yes (1)
No (2)
Q23 The staff and faculty at XXXXXXXXXX Community College have shared information about the 2+2 transfer program from Metro Community College to XXXXXXXXXX University with me.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q24 I plan on transferring to XXXXXXXXXX University.

- Definitely will (1)
- Probably will (2)
- Don’t know (3)
- Probably will not (4)
- Definitely will not (5)

Q25 I feel I will be able to gain admittance to XXXXXXXXXX University

- Definitely will (1)
- Probably will (2)
- Don’t know (3)
- Probably will not (4)
- Definitely will not (5)

Q26 I believe it would be advantageous to attend a private university.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q27 The fact that XXXXXXXXXX University is a Private University makes me want to attend.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q28 I believe it would be advantageous to attend a Catholic/Jesuit university.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)
Appendix 2

Introduction Letter

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that is designed to look at the perceptions Early Childhood Education students from XXXXXXXXXX Community College have about transferring to four-year universities.

This study involves research in the form of a voluntary electronic survey. There are no risks if you choose to participate by completing this survey, as all data that will be obtained is anonymous as per the study design. Because this study is voluntary, the participants can withdraw at any time.

This research is designed to discover your concerns about transferring into XXXXXXXXXX University. Should you opt to take the survey, it will provide information about possible barriers to the successful transfer. The information will help to guide program development, which will, in turn, help students such as yourself overcome the barriers they believe they will encounter. The development of these types of programs will help facilitate your transfer from XXXXXXXXXX Community College’s stellar early childhood education program into XXXXXXXXXX University’s Education Department. This might put you in a position to continue your education and earn a Bachelor of Elementary Education from XXXXXXXXXX University.

It is hoped that this project will provide a path for a number of students to obtain their bachelor’s degree. Students who are able to successfully transfer will be able to complete their degree in approximately 2 years. This would result in the attainment of teaching certificates for these XXXXXXXXXX Community College students, and help to staff our nation’s early childhood classrooms with skilled instructors.

If you should have any questions about this research project you may contact the director or Early Childhood Education at XXXXXXXXXX University, Jean Hearn at 402-280-4905. If you have any questions about research subjects’ rights, the contact must be the Institutional Review Board at XXX-XXX-XXXX.
By completing and submitting this survey you have agreed to participate in this research project.

To continue to the survey click on this link Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Sincerely

Appendix 3

Script for XCC Faculty CAP survey introduction

Pass out brochure to the students

MCC faculty will say: Today I want to share some information about a survey that you will be receiving via your MCC emails. This survey is the beginning of a partnership between Metro and XXXXXXXXXX University.

I hope that by giving you this information you might consider filling out this survey as it will eventually help you if you if you should decide to transfer to XXXXXXXXXX University.

Please take a look at the brochure I have handed you and read along as I read it to you.

Read through the brochure.

The survey will be sent by email on_______ and you will need to have it completed by ____________.

Thank you for your attention. Please remember that taking this survey is not mandatory, but if you would consider taking might well help you in the future.
Appendix 4

Informational Brochure

Top 4 Reasons to Participate

1. Help make campus life more manageable for more students
2. Help frame the information needed for transfer students
3. Open up the road to a Teaching Certificate
4. Help alleviate major concerns about transferring to a four-year school

Survey Conducted by Qualtrics

On behalf of [Name], ECR coordinator at [University]

What is the Community College 2+2 Program?

This is a new program designed to facilitate a quicker transition to a University. Students who participate in the Community College’s ECL program will earn an Associate’s degree in Education from [Community College]. After completing the requirements for an Associate’s degree, the student will be able to transfer to the University to begin work on a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education.

How do You Participate?

And what is it for?
Appendix 5

Script for XCC Faculty: survey reminder

Students, I just wanted to remind you that you have two more days to complete the CAP survey. If for some reason you did not receive it or unintentionally deleted it, please let me know so I can make sure that you do have an opportunity to take it. Remember, this survey has to do with making the opportunity to transfer from Metro to XXXXXXXXX University after you graduate from this program with your associate’s degree easier for you.

Filling this survey out is not mandatory, but it may be helpful to you in the future.