Introduction

In fall 2005 the University of Kentucky experienced a significant decrease in the enrollment of African American first-year undergraduate students. Interim Provost Scott Smith appointed the Committee for Research and Analysis on African American Student Success (the Committee) to study the factors leading to the enrollment drop and to identify factors related to success at UK for African American undergraduates. Committee members included Dr. Phil Kraemer, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education; Dr. Sonja Feist-Price, Professor in Rehabilitation Counseling, College of Education; Dr. Connie Ray, Chair and Vice President for Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness; Dr. Roger Sugarman, Director of Institutional Research; Ms. Toni Thomas, Director of the Center for Academic Resources and Enrichment Services (CARES); Lynda Brown Wright, Associate Professor and Chair of Educational and Counseling Psychology in the College of Education; and Dr. William Turner, Vice President for University Engagement and Associate Provost for Multicultural Affairs.

The Committee held its first meeting on Wednesday, October 19, 2005, to receive its charge from the interim Provost. In a memorandum of appointment to the Committee dated September 27, 2005, the Provost stated:

_I request your participation in planning an initiative to intensively analyze those factors that predict and/or promote the success of African American students at the University of Kentucky. This effort will be one element, but a critical one, in developing an effective university response to significantly improving our success in enrolling and graduating African Americans. The initiative will include more thorough and specific review of data already available, but also is likely to encompass new research._

At the Committee’s second meeting, Dr. Sugarman presented a comprehensive overview of institutional and survey data currently available regarding the admission, enrollment, success and related characteristics of UK's African American undergraduates. Using the presentation as a framework for understanding what is currently available and what additional information is needed, the Committee continued to meet throughout the 2005-06 academic year to develop and implement its research agenda. Five projects were designed to provide data that would inform the admissions process and the University community as it strives to improve the success of African American students. The research projects completed during the academic year included:

- **Project I – Analysis of Existing Institutional Data Related to African American Student Success:**
  
  _Historical trends, relationships and predictors_. This project involved a closer look at three statistics...
widely recognized as measures of student success: first semester GPA, retention, and graduation rate.

- **Project II - Admission to Enrollment: Factors associated with the decrease in enrollment of African American first-year students in fall 2005.** This project consisted of a telephone survey of African American students who had been admitted to the fall 2005 first-year class but did not enroll.

- **Project III - The First-year Experience and Success: A qualitative analysis.** This project consisted of focus groups with the African American first-year students who entered in fall 2005 and returned in spring 2006.

- **Project IV - Persistence to Graduation: Factors associated with the success of African American seniors.** This project consisted of focus groups with African American students who had attained senior status in spring 2006.

- **Project V - Leaving UK: Factors associated with attrition of African American students after one and two years of enrollment.** This project consisted of a telephone survey of African Americans who were first-year students in fall 2003 and fall 2004, but were no longer enrolled at UK in spring 2006.

This report describes each research project and its findings, presents a synthesis of results and conclusions of the Committee, and offers specific recommendations for improvement.

The Committee was aware of the inadequacies of previous approaches to researching and understanding the factors that influence the retention and graduation rates of African American students on predominately white campuses like UK. A substantial part of the Committee’s work was informed by our discussions of an often ignored element of these types of analyses. Dr. J. Herman Blake, an education sociologist and former president of Tougaloo College (a HBCU in Mississippi) addressed “Approaching Minority Students as Assets” (Academe, November, 1985):

> We ultimately realized that we had organized our program around a deficit model of underrepresented minorities. After analyzing the literature on minority students and talking to many of them, we realized that all of us tended to approach minority students from the deficit perspective and in so doing often subtly promulgated negative views of our students.

Our analysis, conclusions and recommendations were informed by a discussion of the deficit model. We recognize that UK must guard against marginalizing our African American students by communicating in subtle, but unintentional, ways that they are somehow deficient. We must approach African American students as assets and seek those institutional changes that make the environment more encouraging while helping them develop strategies to ensure they are successful. Toward this end, few comparisons of African American students to other student populations are presented in this report.
A Brief Look at Related Literature

As the Committee conducted its research and analysis activities, members reviewed and shared various research articles related to the issue of African American student success in higher education. A brief review of pertinent information is presented here to provide a frame of reference for conveying a strong sense of validity to the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee.

There exists a substantial literature on factors related to student success in college. Alexander Astin, a noted researcher, has put forth a theory of student involvement that can explain much of the research findings about environmental influences on student development and learning that have been gathered over the years. In his theory, student involvement refers to "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience," making time-on-task an important predictor of student learning and success. According to Astin, every significant effect identified in a longitudinal study of environmental factors related to persistence in college can be explained by the student involvement theory. The most important positive factors for retention were: 1) living in a campus residence hall; 2) joining social fraternities and sororities or participating in extracurricular activities of varying types; and 3) holding a part-time job on campus. Astin also stated that "it is easier to become involved when one can identify with the college environment." Astin's work is particularly relevant for the current study of African American student success. It suggests that factors leading to distractions from academic pursuits and interfering with one's ability to connect to an institution will have a negative impact on success.

In an essay on student success, another prominent researcher, Vincent Tinto, suggested strongly that student retention "resides in the work of the faculty and in the institution's capacity to construct educational communities that actively engage students in learning." Additionally, he identified three basic principles of effective retention: 1) an institutional commitment to helping students further their own needs and interests; 2) a commitment to the education of students that does not leave learning to chance; and 3) an emphasis on the importance of educational community -- academic and social -- in the learning process. Characterizing the research in this area as "quite clear," Tinto also stated that the "frequency and perceived worth of interaction with faculty, staff, and other students is one of the strongest predictors not only of student persistence but also of student learning." As regards students of color, Tinto emphasized the importance of supportive community as absolutely essential for those in predominantly white institutions. Finally, he identified frequent messages as to their marginality as a primary factor in decisions of students of color to leave such institutions.

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1 Online at http://www.housing.sc.edu/resed/pdf/AstinInvolvement.pdf

2 Online at http://www.aascu.org/GRO/tinto.htm
Another important body of research focuses solely on the experience of African American students on college campuses. In a review of literature conducted by Fries-Britt and Turner3 for a qualitative study of Black students on both black and white campuses, a number of previous research findings were cited, many of which are highly relevant to the Committee's research agenda and findings:

Black students at traditionally white institutions (TWIs) have significantly lower levels of academic integration, less satisfaction with their university, and suffer more from such interference as discrimination and inadequate study habits than White students.

Black students at TWIs experience daily struggles and recurring crises...struggle to find out what the rules of the game are. They report being at sea in a hostile environment. Painful difficulties, White teachers, fellow students and curricula....regularly bring to mind the collective memory of past discrimination.

Black students at TWIs report that their White peers see them as underprepared for college; these and other stereotypes can negatively effect the academic performance of Black students.

As a result of their qualitative study, Fries-Britt and Turner also found that for Black students at TWIs:

- Academic energy is diverted into educating their White peers and being asked to represent Blacks, especially about racial/cultural issues. Energy normally expended on academics goes into dealing with negative stereotypes of the Black race. Such challenges create difficult, uncomfortable situations to manage.

- A critical mass of Black peers and faculty is lacking, resulting in campus activities being geared toward Whites. The environment may not be perceived as hostile, but feelings of loneliness and not being part of the campus community are common.

- Frustration and betrayal often result after students arrive on campus and sense that they received a false picture of inclusiveness during recruitment activities. Staying focused through immersion in their studies and adjusting to limited social outlets become basic survival strategies.

Fries-Britt and Turner concluded their study with the following suggestions: help Black students build confidence by creating personal and institutional systems of support; encourage genuine engagement with faculty both in and out of the classroom; expand pedagogy to reflect diverse cultural experiences and intellectual ideas, incorporating new material and perspective when possible; do not expect students of color to serve as resources or experts in cultural and ethnic discussions; encourage faculty to develop competence and understanding around their own level of comfort with racial/cultural discussions; and expand traditions and activities on campus toward greater inclusiveness.

3 Online at http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/review_of_higher_education/v025/25.3fries-britt.pdf
Another informative body of literature explores the existence of bias in various societal and educational structures. Recently, results of a study of high school counselors and their advice regarding college choices to Black students and White students surprised the researchers. According to a media release on the study:

*Counselors were more likely to recommend Black students than White students to two-year colleges even after taking into account the students' gender, academic performance and family income.*

The findings suggested that an unconscious bias entered into the advice high school counselors gave to their students. The article further suggested that the American School Counselor Association is working hard to improve equity and access issues. This study was conducted in 2005-06, a time when most educators would like to think that racial bias is a thing of the past. Yet it brings to light what many are reluctant to admit -- that unintentional bias does exist and can be detrimental to individuals whose opportunities for fulfilling their potential are limited.

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Project I
Analysis of Existing Institutional Data Related to African American Student Success: Historical trends, relationships and predictors

The Committee examined three measures commonly regarded as indicators of student success in its effort to understand the factors that contribute to the success of African American students at the University of Kentucky. First, attention was focused on first-semester grades earned by African American students during the past decade. A regression model was developed using data from the 2003 and 2004 cohorts to account for variance in students’ GPAs. Next, the Committee studied retention rates achieved by the last 10 cohorts of African American students. Finally, graduation and persistence rates were reviewed.

Predicting First-Semester GPA

First-semester grades earned by African American students have been fairly stable over the past 10 years. Figure 1 shows first-semester GPAs for the fall 1996 through fall 2005 cohorts. First-semester grades ranged from 2.15 to 2.39, with the two lowest GPAs earned by the two most recent entering cohorts of African American students. The relationship between the size of the entering African American cohort and first-semester grades was not statistically significant.

In developing a statistical model to explain variation in African American students’ first-semester grades, the Committee explored the role played by demographic variables, measures of academic preparation, social-psychological factors, and several institutional variables. Nearly all of the data was obtained from students’ application files and their responses to the fall Survey of First-year Students administered by the Office of Institutional Research. To ensure that a sufficient number of African American students were represented, a total of 299 students from the fall 2003 and fall 2004...
cohorts were included in this study. Additional analysis revealed no substantive differences in the status of these two cohorts on the variables included in the model. The variables initially entered into the regression model are presented in Table 1.

| Table 1: |
| Independent Variables Used in the Regression Model to Explain First-semester Grades |
| Demographic Variables |
| Gender |
| First-generation collegiate status |
| Distance from home |
| Academic Preparation |
| High School Grade Point Average |
| ACT Composite Score |
| Number of AP courses taken |
| Number of years of coursework in mathematics |
| Self-reported hours devoted to homework in senior year |
| College Plans and Intentions |
| Intentions to become employed during first term |
| Intentions to join a fraternity or sorority |
| Importance placed on academic focus during one’s college career |
| Social and Psychological Factors |
| Drive to achieve |
| Intellectual self-confidence |
| Procrastination tendencies |
| Student role identification |
| Involvement in a serious romantic relationship during the past year |
| Serious financial difficulties during the past year |
| Institutional Factors |
| Major (un)declared |
| Participation in the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) |

The regression model accounted for 41 percent of the variance in African American students’ first-semester grades (see Appendix A for detailed statistical results). Six variables were significant predictors at the \( p \leq 0.05 \) level or beyond. Four of these variables were positively associated with an increase in first-semester grades:

- High school grade point average
- ACT Composite score
- Self-reported hours devoted to homework or study during the senior year
- Rated importance of having an academic focus in college (e.g., importance of "developing my intellectual capabilities," "studying new subjects and ideas," and "being a cultured person");
Two variables were negatively associated with first-semester GPA:

- *The number of hours a student plans to be employed during the fall term*
- *Self-reported involvement in a serious romantic relationship during the previous year*

High school GPA was, by far, the most powerful predictor of this measure of academic success, accounting for 29 percent of the variance in first-semester grades. Indeed, high school grades predicted over twice as much of the variance as all of the other independent variables combined. Holding all the other variables in the model constant, an increase of one full high school grade point was associated with a 0.84 increase in first-semester GPA.

One of the shortcomings of this analysis was the small number of institutional or environmental variables included in the model. Information pertaining to students’ participation in UK’s programs and services is collected by the Survey of First-year Experiences administered during the spring semester in first-year English classes. In addition, students evaluate their level of engagement in their courses and their success in developing close social relationships and meaningful connections to faculty.

Unfortunately, the number of students who routinely complete the spring survey has declined during the past two years with the curriculum revision that eliminated English 102, the course in which the end-of-year survey was administered. Consequently, given pragmatic concerns about the number of students available for the analysis, the data obtained during the beginning of students' academic careers at UK were used to predict first-semester grades.

To shed further light on first-semester grades, the Committee examined first-semester GPAs earned by the last five entering cohorts, including African American students, by their high school grades. Figure 2 shows a reasonably linear relationship between first-semester grades and high school grades -- with African American's performing only slightly lower than all students. The Committee discussed possible explanations for the slight gap, such as differences in the rigor of high school curricular choices; unrealistic expectations for the amount of time required for studying and class preparation; and the stress associated with adjusting to a predominantly white campus. These possible explanations require additional study.

![Figure 2: First-Semester Grade Point Averages by High School GPA and Race: 2000 - 2004 Cohorts](image-url)
Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate

One of the most widespread measures used to evaluate the academic success of college students is the fall-to-fall retention rate. This statistic refers to the percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who enroll in the fall semester and return to their institution the following fall. Figure 3 shows retention rates for the last 10 cohorts of African American first-year students who enrolled at UK in the fall semester. The graph shows that retention rates have ranged from 69.0 percent to 80.3 percent over the past decade. After holding fairly steady at roughly 77 to 78 percent from 1999 to 2002, African American student retention rates declined over the past two years. The retention rate for the 2004 cohort was the lowest recorded during the last 10 years.

To develop a better understanding of students’ persistence, the Committee examined the retention rates of the past five cohorts by high school GPA range. Figure 4 below shows that the likelihood of returning for a second year of college increases steadily as high school grades increase -- with African American students having a slightly higher retention rate than all students at most ranges. This finding is consistent with the results of a survival analysis performed by Murtaugh, Burns and Schuster. They found that the average Black student is more likely to withdraw than the average White, but if factors such as age, GPA, and residency are considered, Black students are actually less likely to withdraw. At UK, the exception to this essentially linear trend can be found in the lowest range of high school grades, from 2.000 to 2.249. Compared to their peers who earn GPAs less than 2.50, students who present high school GPAs of 3.750 and above are over one-and-one-half times more likely to return to UK the following fall semester. The dotted horizontal line in Figure 4 highlights the 83 percent retention rate level that UK established as a key indicator goal in the 2003-2006 Strategic Plan -- The Dream & the Challenge. UK students who are retained at the 83 percent goal level tend to have high school GPAs of 3.500 or higher.

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5 Online at http://www.springerlink.com/content/hnpm8l781p5362x8/fulltext.pdf
The likelihood of being retained for another year of college was also studied by examining the first-year GPAs of African American students who were grouped as "retained" or "not retained." Figure 5 shows retention patterns for the last five cohorts of African American students based on whether their first-year GPA was above or below 2.0—the dividing line for being in “good academic standing.” Of those students who returned for a second year at UK, 84 percent maintained a first-year, cumulative GPA above 2.0. Of those students who were not retained, 79 percent earned a GPA below 2.0. Further analysis revealed that the mean GPA of students who dropped out during or after the fall semester was 0.794 while the mean GPA of students who left during or after the spring semester was 1.539.

These findings raise a number of questions about why roughly one in four African American students does not return for another year of college. In an effort to address these questions, the Committee examined the high school grades of students from the last five cohorts who were not retained at UK and who had GPAs below 2.0. The distribution of high school GPAs for these students is depicted below in Figure 6. The graph shows that nearly three of five (57%) non-returning students earned less than a ‘B’ average (i.e., 3.000) in high school. While this finding suggests that some non-
returning African American students may have been academically under-prepared when they entered UK, Figure 6 also reveals that approximately one in 10 (11%) students earned high school GPAs of 3.500 or above. These results confirm further the multivariate nature of the factors related to success for African American students and call for multiple interventions to boost retention rates. Effective interventions to retain African American students must be aimed at improving the effectiveness of our outreach and support services. In addition, the University must determine why many academically successful African American students are choosing to leave before their sophomore year and must design interventions to keep them here. The Committee’s efforts to understand African American students’ decisions to leave UK have been addressed, to some extent, in a telephone survey of students from the 2003 and 2004 cohorts who were not enrolled in the University during spring 2006. The results of this telephone survey and relevant results from focus groups conducted with first-year students and seniors will be presented later in this report.

Ideally, other interventions should instill in high school students more realistic expectations about the demands of college-level work. The results of the regression analysis described earlier found that the number of hours students reported studying in a typical week during their senior year of high school was a significant predictor of first-semester GPAs. Indeed, a substantial proportion of students reported studying relatively few hours per week.

Figure 7 illustrates the number of weekly hours African American students reported studying during their senior year and during their first year at UK. The graph indicates that nearly one-fourth (23.5%) of African American
students reported studying less than one hour in a typical week during their senior year, and three-quarters (77.3%) of the sample reported studying five hours or fewer per week. This relatively limited amount of time spent on homework may have a negative impact on the development and maintenance of certain skills, such as mathematical reasoning and writing, which require regular practice to master. Moreover, few hours allotted to studying may produce unrealistic expectations about the amount of time students need to study when they reach college. It may also serve as an indicator that the rigor of the senior year was not demanding and therefore insufficient as preparation for college level work. Figure 7 also shows that students approaching the end of their first year in college report spending more time preparing for classes than they did in high school. However, half (51.2%) of the students reported studying five hours or fewer in a typical week. Only one in four (22.8%) students reported studying 10 or more hours each week.

**Graduation and Persistence Rates**

The third set of academic success measures involves the rate at which students earn a baccalaureate degree. The graduation rate reflects the percentage of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who earn a bachelor’s degree within six years. The criteria used to identify a cohort of eligible students and the six-year tracking period were established by the United States Department of Education. All degree-granting colleges and universities follow the guidelines established by the federal government. Figure 8 presents graduation rates for the last 10 cohorts of African American students who entered UK. The graph shows that graduation rates for African American students fluctuated in the mid 30 percent range for cohorts entering between 1990 and 1992. After reaching a low with the 1993 cohort, graduation rates began to rise dramatically for the next five years. During this timeframe, the six-year rate jumped by 18 percentage-points, from 32.5 percent to 50.5 percent. Last year, the graduation rate for the 1999 cohort declined 4.3 percentage-points to 46.2 percent.

![Graduation Rates of AA Students: 1990 Cohort – 1999 Cohort](image)
To get a better grasp of students’ progression toward their degrees, the Committee examined graduation rates by their incoming high school GPAs. Figure 9 shows that for GPAs in the ranges of 2.500 to 3.749, increases in an African American students’ high school GPA are associated with a greater likelihood of graduating. In fact, students who present a high school GPA in the range of 3.500 – 3.749 are twice as likely to graduate as those who earned GPAs in the range of 2.50 – 2.749.

![Graduation Rates by High School GPA and Race: 1996 - 1999 Cohorts](image)

Figure 9

The graph also shows that, when controlling for high school GPA, African American students graduate at virtually the same rate as all students. The most unexpected finding depicted in Figure 9 is the slight decline in graduation rates for African American students who fall into the highest range of high school GPAs, from 3.750 to 4.000. It is unlikely that this is a statistical artifact, given that the graph summarizes data from four cohorts. Perhaps African American students with such impressive academic credentials are able to transfer to any institution of their choosing. If this explanation is correct, administrators and faculty members need a better understanding of why these students might be disenchanted with their experiences at UK. As with the retention rate, the dotted line represents the 60 percent graduation rate goal of the 2003-06 strategic plan, and again, UK students appear to need a high school GPA of 3.500 or higher to graduate at a rate consistent with current institutional goals.

The Committee’s final effort to understand retention patterns involved charting the persistence rates of African American students from four cohorts. Figure 10 depicts a combination of fall-to-fall retention and persistence rates over a period of seven years. During their initial fall semester at UK, each entering class of African American students starts with 100 percent of the cohort enrolled. By the start of the second fall semester, each cohort experiences its largest percentage-wise decline in enrollment,
occurring either during or just after their first year at UK. Indeed, half of all students who are not successful in earning a degree within six years leave the University before the start of their second year. The next largest drop in retention occurs between the second and third fall semesters. Starting with the fifth fall semester, retention rates are supplemented by adding in the percentage of students who have already graduated, resulting in a "persistence" rate. These fifth-, sixth- and seventh-year persistence rates reflect the percentage of students who were still enrolled the following fall semester, plus those who had previously earned their bachelor’s degrees. Generally, by the sixth year, persistence rates begin to level off—with the declining percentage of students who continue their studies off-set by the percentage of students who ultimately graduate.

*Note: Persistence rates refer to the percentage of students who continued on to their next year of study plus those who had previously graduated.

Figure 10
Project II

Admission to Enrollment: *Factors associated with the decrease in enrollment of African American first-year students in fall 2005*

In fall 2001, only 151 African American students enrolled as first-year students at the University of Kentucky—the fewest since 1996. In response to that disappointing enrollment level, President Todd and Interim Provost Nietzel challenged the Enrollment Management team to improve efforts to attract broader diversity to the University, especially African Americans. Those efforts, including a partnership with Central High School in Louisville, began to have a positive impact. The next three entering classes for the fall semester included successively increasing numbers of African Americans: 164 in 2002; 202 in 2003; and a record enrollment of 262 in 2004, as depicted in Figure 11. Surprisingly, the number of African American enrollments plummeted in 2005 to 143.

The confluence of several factors may serve to explain the unanticipated decline in African American enrollments. Admissions criteria were revised in 2005 in an effort to address overall enrollment goals. It was expected, however, that this policy change would have a marginal impact on enrollments, given past application rates and yield rates. During these years, the yield rate for African American students ranged from 44.4 percent to 54.5 percent, as shown in Figure 12. The University fully anticipated that the yield rate would be similar in 2005. Unexpectedly, the number of applications declined from the previous year, and the yield rate among admitted African Americans dropped significantly from 54.5 percent in fall 2004 to 39.7 percent in fall 2005. Consequently, only 143 African American students enrolled at UK in fall 2005. Given the 360 African American students admitted for fall 2005, a yield rate of 73 percent would have been needed to achieve the previous year's enrollment level.
In other words, the University needed to act aggressively and proactively to increase the yield rate by almost 20 percentage points.

One factor that could have depressed the yield rate was a delay in providing award offers. During the time at which scholarship offers are typically announced, an ad hoc committee was conducting an internal evaluation of UK’s diversity admissions and scholarship procedures in response to Supreme Court decisions in the University of Michigan case. Consequently, award letters were delayed beyond the normal announcement date, which many at UK have considered to be too late as it is. This delay placed UK in a competitive disadvantage relative to other public universities in Kentucky. The University of Louisville and Western Kentucky University continued to implement aggressive recruitment strategies for African American students, which included more effective packaging of financial aid and earlier award announcements. It is also possible that UK’s tuition increase for fall 2005 dissuaded some students from enrolling.

In order to explore some of these explanations, the Committee agreed that the first priority for its research agenda was to collect information from the African American students who were admitted to UK for fall 2005 and chose not to enroll. The Committee quickly initiated a telephone survey of this population while students’ recollections and feelings were more likely to be fresh and available phone numbers more likely to be accurate. Under the leadership of Dr. Ron Langley, UK’s Survey Research Center conducted the telephone survey during the holiday vacation, beginning in mid-December and finishing in mid-January. The Committee worked with Dr. Langley and staff from Multicultural Affairs to develop the survey questions (see Appendix B-1) and other elements of the research design. Specifically, the timeframe for the telephone survey was structured to ensure that African American interviewers were
available to conduct the survey. The interviewers completed surveys with 111 African American students, half of the 220 students admitted to UK who decided not to attend here. It should be noted that there was very little difference between admitted African American students who enrolled and those who did not enroll in terms of high school GPA (3.24 versus 3.31) and ACT scores (21.94 versus 21.96).

Figure 13 shows that over one-third (N=41; 37%) of survey respondents enrolled at the University of Louisville (UofL) and a similar proportion (N=40; 36%) chose to attend an out-of-state university or college. Nearly one-fourth (N=26; 23%) of the respondents enrolled at one of the state’s regional universities, independent colleges or the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

![Telephone Survey Results: Other Institutions Attended by AA Students Admitted to UK in Fall 2005]

One of the major goals of the survey was to identify the reason why students choose not to come to UK. Figure 14 presents a range of reasons for not attending UK and the importance students placed upon these possible explanations. The primary reason students gave for not choosing to attend UK involved financial considerations. As can be seen in the Figure 14, four of five (81%) respondents indicated that financial aid was very important and an additional 12 percent reported that it was somewhat important. Students who chose to attend other institutions placed similar importance on the cost of attending as a factor in their enrollment decisions. Moreover, students placed a high degree of importance on two other factors, academic reputation and the availability and prestige of the major. Surprisingly, respondents placed only a moderate level of importance on the number of black students, black faculty, social climate, and friends attending competing institutions in choosing where to go to college.
Since a large share of prospective UK students decided to go to UofL, the Committee examined how those 41 students rated the importance of the various reasons for attending another institution. For many of the reasons evaluated, students who ultimately chose to go to UofL rated most of the items no differently than other students in the sample. Differences in importance ratings (i.e., the percentage who rated an item as “somewhat” or “very important”) of the two groups generally involved reasons having to do with race: the number of black students (overall sample: 64%; UofL respondents 79%); the number of black faculty (overall sample: 56%; UofL respondents: 69%); and friends that go there (overall sample: 47%; UofL respondents: 64%).

With respect to the timeliness of financial award letters, UK appeared to perform well relative to other schools. Figure 15 shows that UK made an offer of financial aid before the students’ chosen institution more than half (55%) of the time. However, further analysis of students who chose UofL over UK showed that the opposite was true. Students who accepted an offer from UofL reported that their chosen institution extended an offer of financial aid first 60 percent of the time.

The telephone survey concluded by asking respondents “what UK could have done differently to get you to attend.” The most common initial response given by over half of the students was to offer greater financial aid or provide more scholarships. Secondary themes suggested that UK should "promote itself more" and "respond more quickly" throughout the recruiting cycle.
Project III
The First-year Experience and Success of African American Students: A Qualitative Analysis

Early in its deliberations, the Committee agreed that the experience of first-year African American students represents a critical time that bears directly on their eventual success. To learn more about the relationship between the first-year experience and success at UK for African Americans, the Committee decided to conduct focus groups to collect rich, descriptive information from the fall 2005 African American freshmen on their perspectives regarding the first-year experience. The Committee wanted an opportunity to have discussions with this group of African American students before the end of the year, when some would probably leave for the summer and not return in the fall. The study was approved by UK's Institutional Review Board to ensure the protection of human subjects.

A total of 116 African American first-year students (those who had returned in spring 2006 from the group of 143 that enrolled in fall 2005) were invited via a letter (see Appendix C-1) from Vice President William Turner to participate in a series of focus groups conducted during a two-week period in April 2006. Of the invited students, 32 (or 28%) participated in four focus groups established to accommodate varying schedules. In recognition of the contribution of their time, students received a $20 stipend and a $6 dining coupon. Dr. Kenneth Tyler, an African American Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, and Ms. Marietta Watts, an African American professional staff member in Human Resources Training and Development, served as facilitators and conducted 90-minute focus group discussions, guided by a set of questions (see Appendix C-2) prepared by the Committee in consultation with the facilitators and staff from Multicultural Affairs. With assistance from the Teaching and Academic Support Center (TASC), the focus group discussions were audio-taped and transcribed (resulting in 85 pages) for review and analysis. Committee members made the commitment to read all transcripts and record their findings, which were shared and discussed at an all-day retreat on Wednesday, May 24, 2006. During subsequent meetings, Committee members achieved consensus on the following:

- UK's African American first-year students made the decision to attend UK based on four major types of influences: scholarships offered and cost; respect for the academic quality and reputation of UK, particularly first-professional programs; recruiting efforts that included having participated in the "Come See for Yourself" program, receiving mailings, and participating in high school visits; and family influences, such as having a family member who attended UK or involving a family member in the process of researching schools.
Expectations about UK clustered around three areas. The African American first-year students expected: a predominantly white environment that caused varying levels of concern based on community and high school backgrounds; a struggle—hard and challenging; and a large campus with large classes. These expectations appeared to be influenced, in part, by the image of UK as held by community members.

In considering their experiences of the past year, the African American first-year students tended to rate their high school preparation fairly strong, as far as academics were concerned, and somewhat less so, as far as social considerations. Their comments provided insights into strategies that public schools should consider to improve their work to prepare students for the transition to college.

Resources cited as helping the students manage their first year included: having a scholarship; CARES; tutoring; the Counseling and Testing Center, Living Learning Communities; the Honors program; Greek life; and various activities that helped them focus on maintaining their GPA. The students also cited the helpfulness of siblings who attended UK and other students experienced in managing the demands of campus life.

The challenges faced by the first-year students centered around those personal attributes necessary to help them stay focused -- time management, prioritization and organization; transitional freshman issues such as adjusting to campus life and academic demands; and the overall climate that emerges for black students on UK's predominantly white campus.

Suggestions for change tended to mirror the challenges faced as well as typical campus life issues: improve campus diversity; improve affordability -- reasonable tuition and more scholarships; develop more effective recruitment strategies; hire caring faculty; offer more activities that involve the whole campus; improve feeling of being safe on campus; and offer more options for residence life, dining and music.

Factors Related to Enrollment Decision

Four categories of factors emerged as important elements in the decision to enroll at the University of Kentucky: scholarships and cost, academic programs and reputation; recruitment strategies; and family influences. A brief summary of the details of the responses is presented below along with supportive text representative of the thoughts and feelings of the first-year African American students.

Scholarships and Cost. Not surprisingly, African American first-year students cited scholarships and cost as critical factors in the decision to attend UK. In particular, the William C. Parker scholarship program was mentioned frequently. For one out-of-state student looking at a variety of institutions, both public and private, UK was very competitive in terms of the cost. Comments included:

*One of the determining factors for me was scholarship availability, because the William C. Parker qualifications were compatible with my, you know, high school performance... (4/5/06, p. 1, 17)*
Really it was just kind of a split second decision, I...had two colleges. UK was cheaper, so I came here. (4/5/06, p. 2, 87)

I came here because of the money...the scholarships and because I'm an instate and I had KEES money, the Parker Scholarship, things like that really helped me out as opposed to going out of state or going to another school. (4/12/06, p. 1, 20)

...on the big scheme...Kentucky was cheaper...cheaper than a private school...not cheaper than an in-state regular school... (4/24/06, p. 1, 32)

**Academic Programs and Reputation.** From business and nursing at the undergraduate level to clinical psychology, law, pharmacy and medicine at the graduate and first professional levels, numerous African American first-year students cited the reputation of such programs as the reason for attending UK. In some cases, counselors and teachers advised students that UK was the "best place;" while in other cases, parents or friends made similar suggestions. Examples of comments included:

Yeah, with me...I want to be a pharmacist, and they have one of the best pharmacy schools...so that's why I came here. (4/5/06, p. 1, 30)

I came here because it's got a nationally recognized business program. (4/12/06, p. 1, 12)

...I knew I wanted to be a psychologist -- clinical -- and I know that UK had the graduate program. (4/12/06, p. 2, 76)

Me and my counselor had to do a lot of research because I've only been in Kentucky for two and a half years so I really couldn't tell the difference between Louisville or UK or Western so she just kind of helped me out a lot. And I told her what I wanted to go into; she said this is the best place. (4/12/06, p. 2, 81)

I wanted to come here because my goal was to get into the University of Kentucky Medical School. So I wanted to be an undergrad here...that was pretty much 90 percent of my reason for coming here. (4/24/06, p. 1, 15)

With me ...it was a graduate program. It was Law School. It's pretty good here at Kentucky. (4/24/06, p. 1, 23)

I wanted to come here because UK has the best pharmacy school and that's what I'm trying to do. (4/24p/06, p. 1, 12)

I was in between UK and UofL, but I ended up coming here because...I wanted to go into Physician Assistant studies and then had a talk with Mr. XXX about it. And he was like, oh well, you can do the medical school thing...just a few more years...you try hard...so he kind of convinced me to go with the pre-med program which is what I'm doing...that's the main reason why I came up here. (4/24p/06, p. 2, 56)

I researched the nursing program here and I just thought that it was really good. (4/24p/06, p. 2, 70)

At my school we had a UK scholars program...UK used to come to our school all the time and talk to us...I was also in the pharmacy magnet school...my teacher always told me that UK has a pharmacy school and it's a good school to go to. So I had always looked at UK... (4/24p/06, p. 3, 108)
Recruitment Strategies. The African American first-year students cited a variety of recruitment activities that led to their decision to attend UK; however, a good number of comments suggested that UK's recruitment efforts were not particularly outstanding, compared to other institutions also recruiting them. Those efforts that seemed to be mentioned most frequently included "Come See for Yourself," particularly due to the opportunity to meet and talk with current students about what it's really like at UK; visits to the high schools and meetings with select groups of students; and lots of mailings. One student expressed a desire for mailings to include more useful information, rather than "the same pictures" of the "library" and other "new buildings." Comments of these first-year students included:

I came to... Come See for Yourself, or something like that. (4/5/06, p. 2, 51)

Well, as far as the recruitment process, nothing about it really stood out. They did put a lot of energy into, you know, recruiting...for my school... (4/5/06, p. 2, 62)

I expected to be recruited by UK in particular because...they had a select group of students that they would always pull out for meetings every year and they would always talk to us about our academic achievements...(4/5/06, p. 2, 76)

...I think it would have been more effective if we actually shadow a UK student for the whole day. (4/5/06, p. 3, 95)

I just like UK's...sense of community...when I visited Louisville it seemed like real spread out...but since everything's so close together it's easy to make friends and kind of talk to people.(4/12/06, p. 1, 39)

...being from Lexington, I saw pamphlets everywhere. There was really nobody that came to my high school...But I've got so many other recruitments, like from every other college it seemed, but UK...UK would send me something personally in the mail...So that's how I got recruitment for UK. (4/24/06, p. 2, 55)

(from Texas) Once I started to correspond with them, it flooded in...looking back on it, it wasn't anything that I really needed to know...It got you excited about Kentucky, but it wasn't useful...they'd show you the same pictures...of the library...all the new buildings...but they didn't tell me anything about the Commons...the Student Center...how big my classes at Memorial Hall are...Or what scholarships?...So then I had to struggle once I got here because I couldn't afford it...they told me about things that were so irrelevant...I really needed to know about how to pay for college...I didn't get--you're accepted, but now how are you going to pay for it? It was like--you're accepted but now you need a meal plan... (4/24/06, p. 2, 83)

I think it was either my junior or senior year that we came up here for some type of program that they had...the Come See for Yourself program, and it was very interesting, I met a lot of people, a lot of staff and faculty from the different colleges, and I think the student input is really what influenced me because they talked about not only the good, but also the bad... (4/24p/06, p. 2, 87)

After we took the ACT...I got plenty of mail, plenty of mail...my college counselor was an alumni and she encouraged it...Come See for Yourself...it helped a lot, especially when the students talked...(4/24p/06, p. 3, 100)

(UK) came to our school a couple of times, and they got the African American students that had like a 3.2 GPA and higher and they told us all about the (school) and that's how I got here. (4/24p/06, p. 3, 119)
**Family Influences.** A final category of comments related to the decision to attend UK clustered around input of family members. Experiences of siblings and parental considerations were mentioned. Although included as a category, the comments in this area were not as prevalent as those in previous categories and were often tied to other considerations. Examples were:

*I came here because my sister is here...kind of knew the campus a little bit from her...they have a good psychology program...plus I also got three or four scholarships that also have dealt with cutting the cost of tuition.* (4/12/06, p. 1, 26)

*My mom provided me with a lot of information as to why I should stay here because I'm going into business, too, and she was like they have a great business program...* (4/12/06, p. 2, 69)

*Well, like I said, my brother played football (for UK) so I used to listen to their games...they had advertisements on their radio...* (4/24/06, p. 3, 110)

*I'm from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, so I wasn't recruited. I was interested in UK because of the pharmacy school. And my dad is a resident of Kentucky, and so I got to come here and pay in-state tuition. That's why I came.* (4/24/06, p. 3, 127)

**Expectations about UK**

The Committee was particularly interested in the expectations of African American students as they began their college education at the University of Kentucky. A mismatch between expectations and reality can lead to dissatisfaction and decisions to leave an institution. In most cases, the students expressed what they had heard from others or what they thought UK would be like, based on their research and early experiences, and then some reflected on the reality of their experiences over the last year. Four categories appeared to emerge: campus climate; academic rigor; caring and helpfulness of the campus community; and the large size of the University. These four categories are described briefly below.

**Campus Climate.** The first-year African American students expected a predominantly white campus, but also a larger African American population; consequently, some expressed feelings of being overwhelmed by the lack of African Americans. On the other hand, one student who had come from a county with very few blacks perceived the campus to have a lot of black students. Another student mentioned an expectation that racism may be part of the campus climate, and then found that the white people were "very nice." A sub-theme that is discussed more thoroughly later as a challenge is the difficulty some students seem to have in identifying with a group due to the cliques that exist on campus among both blacks and whites. The comments below depict the expectations and varying experiences that the African American freshmen had during their first year. Two major issues emerged as concerns: 1) being overwhelmed by the lack of blacks; and 2) identifying and connecting with a social group:

*...first thing from my sight the minute I got here was -- well, it was more of a culture shock because I expected more of a larger African American population to be in this community.* (4/5/06, p. 3, 106)
I differ...because I came from...a small town and in my graduating class there was maybe 10 people out of 375 that were African Americans, so I was like one of the ten that graduated, so when I came to UK, I was like -- wow! there's all kind of black people here. (4/5/06, p. 3, 109)

...we used to be like 19 black people in the same place and now I'm the only black person on my floor. So it was...I was, like -- is there any other black person on the floor down? (4/5/06, p. 4, 148)

...but I kind of thought that there would be more black people even though I looked on collegeboard.com...And it was like 4 percent. But I was looking at other schools, and I was like, okay, that's about average, sadly...But I didn't know exactly what 4 percent meant...It's just mind boggling that there aren't any black people here... (4/24/06, p. 4, 166)

And socially, I was kind of disappointed because I thought you'd be getting away from a lot of the clique-i-ness and groupiness of high school. And you get here and it's the same thing. You kind of expected more adult-like attitudes... (4/24p/06, p. 4, 140)

I was thinking...because UK is like pretty much predominantly a white school...I thought that it wasn't going to be a lot of black people...I think that the African Americans on campus are very active...do a lot of things...are friendly...And the white people here are friendly, too...I was probably thinking like they're going to be mean, you know, racist or something. But, they're very nice. (4/24p/06, p. 4, 145)

...when I first got here...so many white people are like--hi, how are you? And then the first like couple weeks, not one black person gave me a--hi, how are you? Like at random, and it was just kind of odd...Really weird. (4/24p/06, p. 4, 166)

**Academic Rigor.** A few students spoke to expectations related to academic rigor, and in all cases expected the academic work at UK to be hard, difficult, and challenging. Actual experiences appeared to differ--ranging from finding it hard to being disappointed at the lack of academic rigor. Such differences may be a function of having declared a major in particularly demanding programs such as pre-pharmacy, or possibly not yet having a major. Comments included:

*Academically, I was told that it was going to be hard and that I was going to struggle, and that I was going to have to study like ten hours a day. And I got here and I barely study and, like, I still did good my first semester.* (4/12/06, p. 3, 133)

*OK, they told me that it was going to be hard and it is hard...with the pharmacy program...I'm doing organic chemistry, microbiology, and it's a lot of work.* (4/12/06, p. 4, 154)

*I thought it was going to be harder. Like academically...I was kind of disappointed...I was really expecting to have to do a lot more...* (4/24p/06, p. 3, 136)

**Caring, helpful faculty, staff, administrators.** The expectation for a caring, helpful campus varied among the students, based on what people had told them as well as some of their pre-enrollment experiences. Likewise, the reality of the first-year experience also differed. These students had heard that professors would not care about them as individuals, and some students discovered that they did. Based on information gathered from the recruitment process, students expected a more helpful staff and administration, and yet had experiences before enrolling that began to moderate those expectations. Comments included:
they told me professors would not care--they see a little black girl walk into their class and especially cause most of the professors you're going to have are going to be old, white men -- they see you walk into class and they're going to look at you and be, like--okay, she's not important, I'm going to talk to the rest of the class. And they say that's how they feel in a lot of their classes... (4/12/06, p. 4, 169)

...a lot of professors wouldn't care about your grades, only you do. Honestly when I got here I thought a lot of my professors were, you know, caring. I mean, they won't let you get away with anything, but at the same time they care about, you know, my grades and how I was doing in class. (4/12/06, p. 5, 190)

I figured the... staff and the administration would be more helpful than they were. I had to call to see where I was supposed to be staying...I was just like--wow, scholarships, so they're paying for this. And they're--if your scholarships don't come in, you have to pay for it yourself....they send you so much information...make it seem like it's such a nice place, and then once you actually get on campus and get behind the scenes, they weren't really as helpful as I thought. So that really bothered me. (4/24/06, p. 4, 142)

I can't necessarily say that I expected much of them, because it was so hard to get somebody on the phone...I knew to call at 10, because if you called near lunch, nobody wanted to stop and talk to you...if you called at lunch, there was nobody there. You were leaving messages. It was like leave your social security number. I was like, why am I going to leave my social security number with these people over the phone...And if it was like 3:40...I think some people might get off at 5, they were going home...I knew not to expect much...And like the buildings they showed you were the nicest buildings...But the time...spent predominately in the classroom building or...the Commons, like it's the most dirty place ever. I have to eat there. It's so dirty... (4/24/06, p. 4, 154)

I thought, well especially like with sciences, I thought that they would have a better...they would schedule the classes that...have more professors. Dr. XXX is not the only professor who is out there, so if he's trying to become tenured, they should get somebody else to step in for him, because that's difficult for students. You know, chemistry is a difficult subject...even with a regular professor. And then to have a teacher who's never there, that's a setback to us... (4/24/06, p. 5, 210)

...when I called the woman about my housing, she told me where I was. I said--I was told that Jewel doesn't have air conditioning, and she said--that's true. And I said--can you put one in? And she says--No. And I said--well, is it cheaper? She says--no. I said--well, I would like to be requested to move out of here because I can't even fathom the fact that we pay so much to go to a school that does not have air conditioning...You know what I'm saying, the people like administrators, they have a brand new building...And they put the kids, they throw our honors kids, the best kids on campus, I'm sorry, in the oldest raggedy dorm? (4/24/06, p. 10, 450)

Large Campus. Expectations for a large campus appeared to come from a variety of sources. Students often refer to what people have told them, but in one case, expectations were shaped somewhat by the Freshman Summer Program experience. That is--students who participated in FSP with other African Americans in their classes and dorm rooms were shocked by the reality of these environments when the fall semester began. The comments below illustrate the actual experiences of two students:

My first class...was a class of 500 students, so I was like --whoa! --but like through the whole summer I went through FSP, taking, you know, college courses and living in the dorms on the same floors with 20 other African Americans, so I mean it was kind of a big shock that first day that we came and actually sat in the class room, and you're, like -- well, there's a lot of white people -- but in the back of my mind, I went -- well, there's a lot of people all over in other classes... (4/5/06, p. 4, 140)

I was expecting that it was going to be a big university. I was told by a lot of people...you're going to meet
one person in that huge campus, you don't get to know very many people. And so I was kind of expecting that, but the more I got involved on campus--the more I got to know people. So, it wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be as soon as I started getting involved. (4/24p/06, p. 4, 182)

Effectiveness of High School Preparation

The effectiveness of one's high school preparation contributes to success in college, and therefore, this comprised another avenue of inquiry that the Committee believed may be fruitful in terms of increasing understanding of factors related to success of African American students at UK. Again, varied comments of the African American first-year students attest to the varied backgrounds that prepared them for college and for life--ranging from a student whose high school provided more of a career/technical preparation, rather than college prep, to students who participated in AP courses. For the most part, however, these students felt fairly well-prepared academically. A few comments suggested that the social transition was the more difficult one. Comments regarding effectiveness of high school preparation included:

*I'd say a nine...I came in here and my science classes are just refreshers...it's the exact same thing over. I just took my classes...so far.* (4/5/06, p. 4, 173)

*Academically a nine, socially a five. I come from a predominantly, predominantly black high school so it was a big transition for me.* (4/5/06, p. 4, 184)

*I'd say a seven...I took AP courses. I felt like those are the only courses where I was actually pushed...here, like, you actually have to put some kind of effort into some things. So I'm not used to being challenged.* (4/5/06, p. 5, 221)

...when I got here, I was like -- wow! I have to get back focused and get on track, so it was really a lot more about me than maybe my high school, like I had to have...the passion and the focus and direction to do well.* (4/5/06, p. 5, 229)

...I can't say my high school didn't teach well, they really didn't care. And it was a huge high school. We had almost 6000 kids...They were throwing us out...So when you get here, it's gonna be a struggle...*(4/24/06, p. 16, 711)

*I think I was prepared...the classes that I took, you know, the teachers that I had, they did it in the college type way.* (4/24p/06, p. 5, 192)

*Academically I felt prepared...because I took AP chemistry and stuff like that in high school...Socially, I didn't feel prepared because I went to a smaller high school...You could walk down the hallways and they will say hi to you...you can't just walk down campus and have anybody just say hi to you.* (4/24p/06, p. 5, 211)

*Academically, I don't know. Maybe a little bit...my school was more like they were preparing you for a career, not exactly college...my high school was like predominantly black...I wanted to get away from that because it's not life...it's not how it's going to be when you get a job.* (4/24p/06, p. 5, 220)

*I felt well-prepared...AP English...I was really prepared when it came to writing...Mathematically...I didn't do anything my senior year. I took that off from math because it was only required that you took three years and I really regretted that because Math 109 kicked my butt really bad. And, but then again, that was a horrible professor, there was plenty of controversy about that class.* (4/24p/06, p. 6, 232)
Helpful Resources

To understand further the factors related to success at UK, the Committee explored with the first-year African American students the kinds of resources they were able to tap to help them make a successful transition to college life. The students responded by identifying different types of individuals--family members, upperclassman peers, advisors or professors--who helped them; support programs such as CARES and FSP offered through Multicultural Affairs; and programs designed to help students connect with academic and social groups, such as the Black Student Union, Greek organizations, Honors, Living Learning Communities, and MAPS. Several students cited the availability of tutoring, although some comments suggested that the quality of tutoring needs attention and the purpose of tutoring needs more understanding on the part of students. The range of responses parallels the range of individual needs that these students bring to campus, making it difficult to identify common themes among the students’ comments. The examples below were selected to emphasize the major categorical themes that emerged from the students’ comments as well as the range of specific activities within each theme:

Individuals:

My older sister...a senior here...she pushed me, because her freshman year at UK she didn't do as well, so it affected her GPA. So she told me just make sure you get a really good solid GPA your first year...So she was, like, my motivation to do well. (4/5/06, p. 6, 236)

My advisor...is really great. He's been helping me out a lot like with planning out what classes I should take...just helping me with any problems...So he's definitely a positive influence. (4/5/06, p. 9, 410)

Upperclassmen peers. Basically feeding off of their advice and wisdom of their experiences and trying to use that to do the best thing possible for us. (4/5/06, p. 10, 415)

I used my professors. Like I went to talk to them a couple of times and they helped me. (4/24p/06, p. 10, 434)

I went to CARES...that was helpful for the Math 109. I'll admit that...but other than that...knowing that if I don't, you know, get this grade point average, I'm gonna lose a lot of money. My parents are going to be paying back loans for the rest of their lives. That was really my biggest motivator to get anything done -- is the money. (4/24p/06, p. 10, 447)

Support Programs:

...multicultural affairs...they do a pretty decent job of trying to push us...offer me tutoring services and things like that, and support when you need help or basically just leaving the door open for us. (4/5/06, p. 6, 253)

...the CARES program is kind of unorganized...in the beginning of the year when we first started, like, we would go and our tutors wouldn't even be there, or they'd be like 30 minutes late. (4/5/06, p. 6, 274)

CARES has helped me...tutoring and stuff...We had to go meet with them...talk to them...how we think we're doing and what grades we think we're gonna get...So I feel that they were very helpful and I should have used it more than I did. (4/24p/06, p. 10, 418)

FSP was also very helpful...it was like, you know, reality setting in during the summer and with that, we met a lot of older people that go here...they can tell us...who's good, what class, what teacher...getting advice from them has been helpful to me. (4/24p/06, p. 10, 455)
Academic and Social Connections:
...a positive experience that I did have this year was being a part of the living learning community. I was part of the civic engagement unit...his positive reinforcement, some of the opportunities that he was, like, educating me about really inspired me to try to, you know, give it another go this semester and next year. (4/5/06, p. 10, 425)

Greek life is also a lot of fun. I have a lot of support from my fraternity brothers...and they encourage you to keep my GPA up, too. (4/5/06, p. 10, 436)

I'm in MAPS...and that has been very rewarding...get to know many professors...learned people that I know I can get tutoring from...And just different situations to make my experience at UK more close knit. (4/12/06, p. 5, 212)

Living Learning Community...science...it helps a lot. We do homework...the science lectures are really big. When you like meet a tutor in a little class you get intimate one on one talk. And it's better to really stay in step that way. (4/12/06, p. 6, 230)

I found being in the Honors program is very helpful and convenient because with your honors class, not only are the classes really small and intimate, but also you get to meet professors from different disciplines...if you choose to be in certain dorms and they're right next to each other, so you can always be with people that are having the same classes...(4/12/06, p. 6, 253)

I think a reward has been Black Student Union, just because you get to meet people, they're always doing something...something social for you to get to meet people, to take a break from classes...and have fun with your people--people that you can relate to. (4/12/06, p. 7, 307)

I'd say the same thing about the MultiCultural Center....I went there, that's how I met my really, really close friends...So I think that's a good way of connecting with people who have the same goals as you. (4/24/p/06, p. 10, 427)

Challenges, Climate and Change

The challenges faced by the fall 2005 African American first-year students tended to cluster around four categories: 1) individual factors such as staying focused, managing time effectively, and learning to take responsibility for oneself; 2) adjusting to the social atmosphere, which included coping with dorm life; dealing with cliques and trying to fit in a sometimes bewildering social climate characterized by complex interactions, or lack thereof, of blacks and whites, blacks and blacks, and other races; and finding things to do on campus and in the Lexington community; 3) adjusting to academic demands, particularly in math and chemistry classes, and developing strategies for dealing with large classes, language barriers, and different types of professors; and 4) confronting the perceptions and the reality of the existence of racism and racial stereotypes.

The choice of words of UK’s African American freshmen – disgusting, stressful, depressing, shocked, horrible, frustration, alienated, defensive, having to cope, feeling the neglect – in some cases portrayed a group that had struggled with typical first-year student issues and stress, but in other cases, the words portrayed a group dealing with an extra measure of stress associated with being black on a
large, predominantly white campus. Segregated social activities and structures, instances of racial tensions, and teachers who singled them out as the black voice in class are all examples of situations that contributed to their stress. Some students may have discovered it was more difficult to manage than they initially expected as they expressed misgivings or regret about their decisions; others coped by recognizing the part they play in getting involved and staying focused on the reason they came to UK in the first place – their future. The large number of comments below was selected to depict the barriers faced by UK’s African American students within the four categories:

**Individual Factors**
*Time management...and prioritizing...like always waiting till the last minute.* (4/12/06, p. 6, 241)

*And the only problem is, really, organizing myself...I'm just not very organized and I'm trying to get that together cause that influences time management.* (4/12/06, p. 6, 261)

*...But as far as, like, challenges go...procrastination is number one.* (4/12/06, p. 7, 284)

*...one of the biggest challenges for me...it's been FaceBook. Because if I'm on the computer, I'm going to get on FaceBook when I should be typing a paper, when I should be checking my email...* (4/12/06, p. 7, 311)

*If you've got problems like time management, procrastination, you aren't going to learn how to solve that problem...in two hours or an hour...they probably need to offer a class like that and make it a requirement for first-year students because, I'm serious, like freshmen-- they all seem to have the same problem with procrastination and time management.....* (4/12/06, p. 8, 355)

*I think I had to get used to being an individual and responsible for me, because you may not have classes with your friends...At the beginning of the year I felt like really lame. I had no friends. I had nobody. But eventually you get over that and you can do things by yourself and just have to grow up and be an individual.* (4/24p/06, p. 16, 708)

**Adjusting to Social Atmosphere**
*And just like she said, the dorms, too. I mean when you're a freshman you kind of want this to be more appealing to you...it's not going to be like clean and perfect, but I mean they need to have some kind of expectation...Just in general, especially if you're a freshman, you're not gonna want to come back.* (4/24/06, p. 6, 259)

*The biggest example I could give...BSU had free AIDS testing. And I was so mad because I'm a part of BSU and Student Government...they don't work together at all. They don't like co-exist....So I can't even like come to the BSU meeting and say, Well, SGA's having this...They look at me like--and your point is?...And I can't go to the SGA and be like, well, BSU's having this, because they'll just look at me like--OK, that's what BSU's having...But I can't necessarily blame UK for that. Like that's not their fault how organizations run.* (4/24/06, p. 8, 332)

*And beyond the grades, once you get back to your room, it's disgusting. I don't think they do a very good job of matching up people for roommates...I have had the most crazy roommate ever. She talked about suicide almost on a daily basis. Like that is the most stress...* (4/24/06, p. 10, 433)

*...it's stressful to be in dorms.* (4/24/06, p. 10, 479)

*About the social atmosphere here...I went to a predominantly white high school so I'm used to not being in a classroom without a lot of black people...it doesn't bother me anymore, because once again my focus is my future...when I did come here to UK, I noticed that the black kids were not welcoming at all. For one*
thing there are not a lot of us on campus anyway, so the few of us that are here need to stick together, because you know, like there are not a lot here anyway and people here, administrators don't care about us. You know we're just statistics to them. (4/24/06, p. 12, 523)

...That is just really depressing. I'll tell you why. It's because most of the kids who are black...are actually from Kentucky...they already knew each other. So it's like the out of state black students are being thrown into this group of population who already knew each other. Like I thought I was gonna be thrown into a population of kids that everybody was fresh...everybody's needing friends. No...they're not accepting. They don't offer you a hand for anything. You'd have to act so out of character to be like a part of them. (4/24/06, p. 13, 555)

You can find a white party any night of the week, but to find a black party, a good black party -- that's hard. That's real hard. (4/24p/06, p. 13, 566)

...it's not perfect, but it's nice. I think it's a nice campus. The people, I think...it's nice...Really it's all your part--what you do to go out and meet other people, and you know, it kind of depends on yourself -- how you interact with other people...I wouldn't say threatening. (4/24p/06, p. 16, 722)

It may be iffy...you see a big group of black people sitting with each other...you see a big group of white people sitting with each other. And if you don't know the black people, you might, you won't feel threatened, but you feel iffy--like I won't fit in there because I don't know anybody...Whereas if you see one black person by themselves or one white person...you can sit with them and still feel welcome...so I guess it depends on the size, too. (4/24p/06, p. 16, 733)

...black people hang together...they have their own little cliques...white people hang together and all the Asians. I'm used to being around everybody and I didn't really get that here. (4/24p/06, p. 4, 271)

I was the same thing. I got here and it's kind of a culture shock because I'm so used to so many different types of people and I got here and everybody's kind of like cliqued off already. (4/24p/06, p. 4, 274)

I was more shocked by the white people...I came from a high school where we had...high income, middle income, low income...preppy, punk, rock, whatever...just seeing so many people that are so alike you can tell they all shop at the same place, they all do the same thing. (4/24p/06, p. 8, 324)

I guess like between work and school, I really didn't do anything social...I really didn't know about what was really going on...(4/24p/06, p. 8, 337)

I did a lot of time analyzing my first year...I feel like an introvert now, because I don't talk to as many people. Lexington sucks basically...considering they have such a large college population, you think they would have more to do. (4/24p/06, p. 11, 480)

You can say what you want...there's plenty of things to do on campus...You would just think that there would be a lot more things oriented to this population (college students) that aren't on campus. (4/24p/06, p. 11, 496)

**Adjusting to Academic Demands**

...tutoring should be optional...we shouldn't have to be forced to go to tutoring because while I'm sitting there spending my hour with this lady who has no idea how to teach me Math 109, I could be going to "the study"... (4/5/06, p. 8, 352)

Well, pretty much what she said too about chemistry, because it's for my major, too, and it's horrible--the chemistry department. Like I go to the chem helpdesk...And first I go there, and nobody speaks English--and they're supposed to teach me chemistry?...I've been there five times and nobody speaks my language and I still have the exact same grade. (4/24/06, p. 6, 237)
...that really messed me up like first semester...I went to every party all the time...it hit me second semester. I was like I gotta study, get down, because if I don't, I won't be here...the professors here really don't care if you come to class or not and if you don't do your work, you won't get the grades that you want. (4/24p/06, p. 9, 391)

He was never available and like if you went to the class, he'd tell you the notes are on Blackboard, so half the class wouldn't come and he would just read straight off the notes. He wouldn't really like give you examples and help you go through the problems...for your understanding. He would just read directly from his notes, his power point presentation and that was it. But he had gone on vacation towards the end of the semester and another teacher...gave example problems...that was more helpful than just reading directly off the board...I know that for that class I didn't do as well as I should because in the beginning it was so bad that I wasn't interested anymore. I would just try to fend for myself. I tried to talk to another chemistry teacher. But other than that one class, all my professors have been helpful. (4/24p/06, p. 14, 617)

I learn better personally not in a class of like 500 people. I had to drop Logic 100 this semester...And other than that, all my professors were really, really good. But I think it also has to do with class size, too...You can absorb more...forces you to pay attention. (4/24p/06, p. 14, 635)

I took calculus 113 in my first semester and that's a pretty large class...it depends on where you sit and if you go to class...I was really surprised that my professor knew who I was...If you are in a large class, you have to make it smaller...sit towards the front. I don't really mind large classes. It just basically depends to me whether--the professor--how they deliver the lesson. (4/24p/06, p. 15, 650)

...if you have a smaller class, you might just have a boring teacher. I just think it depends on how the professor... (4/24p/06, p. 15, 665)

Dealing with Racism and Stereotypes
It was a complete shock being in the lecture courses with hundreds of students and three exams will determine your grade. I was freaking out...how am I going to make myself stand out in the midst of all these people? Besides the fact that I'm black, how am I going to let them know that I'm intelligent, too? (4/5/06, p. 4, 158)

...the racial stuff here...I haven't encountered any personally but I know there is always something going on where the white people at UK disagree...I just feel like this is a very racist type of school. (4/5/06, p. 11, 465)

I've heard racist comments, not only in class and it's just, like, I mean--I got accepted to Spelman--sometimes I'm just like, man, I should have gone to an all black school. (4/5/06, p. 11, 474)

Well even the dorm situation...at the beginning of the year we actually had to have a forum because there were racial slurs. There were homophobic remarks left on people's doors...A lot of religious intolerance as well...Because I'm black, I'm Christian -- that means that I'm racist and homophobic and that's not the truth -- but so that was definitely a challenge for me and that really did actually add to my frustration with UK. If my living situation was better, I would have had a much better attitude......Facilitator: ...did the forum help in any way for you?
Student: No, it didn't, it actually alienated me...it took a long time to actually undo the damage that was done by the forum. (4/5/06, p. 11, 498)

...even with the William C. Parker -- they're, like -- well, the criteria was way lower than the scholarship I had and you need it because you're dumber than me. I'm not dumber than anybody...my GPA and test scores I'm sure I stack up quite well against others...but it's like you automatically feel defensive... and it's just like that's the air that I've felt in all of my classes... (4/5/06, p. 13, 556)
...I'm the only black person out of like 120...I've been called out probably five or six times...what do you think about this? What do you think about that?...I haven't found out anything more than anybody else has in that class... (4/5/06, p. 13, 563)

...I felt like me having to cope with this campus was becoming more of a job than me just being a student on campus. Which I don't feel like should be a job, because the general population doesn't have to go through that, so why should I? (4/5/06, p. 14, 610)

...more clubs...more parties...promote diversity...it's almost as if, if you're sitting back looking from far away, you're like -- it's only the black people that are striving for this because we're the main ones that are feeling the neglect. And we're the main ones that are feeling the racist comments and gestures and stuff. (4/5/06, p. 21, 962)

...white people, they'll be like so explain to me the hip hop culture...explain this...explain this...all they know is what they see on TV...they don't know, you know what I'm saying, that not all black people are gangsters...drug dealers...gang bangers...So they're scared of us...they'll talk to us, but a large part of it is because they're scared. (4/12/06, p. 12, 545)

...I'm biracial, so I get every race looking at me like I'm a freak...it's kind of hard to fit in because people look at me...I've been dealing with that my whole life...when I see a program, you know for minorities, for blacks, I'm just like--I'm gonna be the only one there that looks like I'm tan...They just need to turn out programs that involve everybody in every race. (4/24/06, p. 7, 315)

**African American First-year Student Suggestions for Change**

- Increase African Americans on campus -- to improve the social experience for black students
- Increase African American professors, specifically in general education courses
- Increase minorities in "high" positions, including faculty teaching introductory classes, RAs -- those most visible to first-year students.
- Strengthen the recruitment process; involve current black students in recruiting; start well before the senior year; re-evaluate the content of recruitment materials to provide more useful information.
- Increase scholarships as tuition increases.
- Change public relations--what's in the newspapers regarding the academic qualifications of African Americans; less negative and more positive coverage.
- Diversify religious presence; help students learn about other peoples' culture and religion and share their own.
- Spotlight high-achieving blacks.
- More extracurricular activities, more things to do to get involved; advertise them; make them more easily accessible.
- Improve interaction among all students.
- Fund a black student interest group that has power to get things done.
- Better screening, such as taking a test and having an interview, to ensure tutors are qualified.
- Establish more, better-paying student jobs.
- Have more faculty and administration trained in cultural competence.
- Have more participation among entire student body in diversity activities, forums, etc., which need to be advertised more. Provide extra point incentives to students who participate in diversity activities, forums, etc.
- Offer an ongoing time management class that is required for all freshmen.
- Change the faculty so they care about their students; make classes smaller so they can care about you.
- Improve feeling of safety in dorms; ensure night desk personnel are awake and do their jobs.
Project IV
Persistence to Graduation: *Factors associated with the success of African American seniors*

One of the most pressing elements of the Committee's charge was to identify factors that lead to success at UK for African American students. For this research project, success was defined as having achieved senior status -- having earned at least 90 credit hours. The Committee decided to conduct a qualitative study of this population in spring 2006, using focus groups as a vehicle to collect rich, descriptive information from these African American seniors on their perspectives regarding factors important to their success at UK. The study was approved by UK's Institutional Review Board to ensure the protection of human subjects.

A total of 211 African American seniors were asked via a letter (see Appendix D-1) from Vice President William Turner to participate in a series of focus groups conducted during a two-week period in April 2006; of these, 32 participated in five focus groups established to accommodate varying schedules. In recognition of the contribution of their time, students received a $20 stipend and a $6 dining coupon.

Dr. Kenneth Tyler, an African American faculty member in the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, and Ms. Marietta Watts, an African American professional staff member in Human Resources Training and Development, served as facilitators and conducted 90-minute focus group discussions, guided by a set of questions (see Appendix D-2) prepared by the Committee in consultation with the facilitators and staff from CARES. With assistance from the Teaching and Academic Support Center, the focus group discussions were audio-taped and transcribed for review and analysis. Committee members made the commitment to read all transcripts and record their findings, which were shared and discussed at an all-day retreat on Wednesday, May 24. During subsequent meetings, Committee members achieved consensus on the following:

- UK's African American seniors viewed UK as a predominantly white institution that is very big and has large classes in which it is not uncommon to find they are the only black students in the whole class. The extent to which these seniors adjusted quickly to their predominantly white environment appeared to be related to their high school and/or county of origin. For students who grew up in predominantly white environments, it was not as different and therefore not as difficult to adjust as it was for students who attended predominantly black high schools. They also experienced racism in various forms that were both intentional and unintentional. On the other hand, the seniors made a number of positive comments about their perceptions of UK:

  ...I think that they do a good job trying to reach out to African Americans. I think that the overall school is excellent. (4/5/06, p. 4)
...I don't see anything wrong with this University as far as, you know everything outside what we talked about, like, I think I've got a good education here. I think that I've grown as a person here.. (4/11/06, p. 18)

I've always been fortunate to have really good advisors who were very encouraging. (4/19/06, p. 8)

Th hub not mutually exclusive, the factors related to the success of African American seniors fell into six broad categories: academic connection, social connection, family expectations, financial support, personal attributes, and awareness of resources and opportunities.

The seniors experienced numerous barriers in their quest for success: professors who did not care about students or teaching; lack of awareness of available resources and opportunities; the burden of having to prove oneself, to represent one's race and family, and to educate others; feelings of isolation and invisibility; limited social options; and racism, ignorance, and close-mindedness.

Not surprisingly, there is good congruence among the factors related to success, the barriers the seniors identified, and the changes they recommended for future improvements. Among their recommendations were: attain more diversity and visibility thereof among faculty, students, staff and leaders; improve awareness of resources and opportunities for all students; hire helpful professors who care about teaching; work to eradicate ignorance and nurture open-mindedness; have more things to do; and encourage more interaction among all members of the campus community.

Factors Related to Success

Six broad categories of factors related to student success encompassed multiple programs, strategies or characteristics identified by the African American seniors as what helped them get where they are today. A brief summary of the details of their responses is presented below along with supportive text representative of the thoughts and feelings of these students.

Academic Connection and Support. UK's African American seniors cited a variety of factors related to academic life that jump-started or nurtured their success. The Freshman Summer Program (FSP) and Learning Services Center (now called CARES) were both mentioned frequently as sources of support. Common threads in the students' comments suggested that getting a head start, completing credits in math and English, becoming familiar with the campus, beginning to develop support networks, and regular meetings with counselors/advisors were important outcomes of CARES and FSP, especially due to the motivational impact of having a welcoming, productive experience during the summer program. Comments included:

...yeah at FSP, like you take English and the math and you get familiar with campus, and I don't know, it kind of drives you, you feel like you got a head start in front of everybody else.

I'll say FSP did it for me...with that I knew the campus, I knew the students, I knew how to
register... (FSP) really helped us kick start everything, because I was ahead of the game when all the other incoming freshman came.

I did the freshman summer program, which helped a lot because you get a lot of insight before you start your first year, a lot of insight about what classes to take and also they helped me as well.

...I transferred from another school... and in my first year I didn't do well... I had to pretty much get my stuff together to stay in this college, and did a lot of stuff through the Learning Services Center... And they were really instrumental in just kind of giving me a basis.

Another finding was that the seniors seemed to have forged meaningful connections with the students, faculty or advisors in their academic major programs. Themes that emerged within this category clustered around the feelings of closeness, community and caring that appeared to give these students a sense of belonging and social connection within the academic environment. National experts attest to the significant influence on retention and success of this phenomenon, which is commonly referred to as "academic and social integration." Comments included:

And then as I got deeper into my major, which I'm a family studies major, and we're a pretty small major in a pretty small college, it was my professors that were always there to lend guidance.

And also I work for my advisor in the College of Agriculture, and I know that over there they're always constantly checking up on their students and they're really involved and like making sure that everything is going great and that you're comfortable and they're willing to do anything to help you.

Well, being a theater major... all the theater majors are always doing plays together... We do everything together and we pretty much just stay in that building all the time... the teachers and the students are so close... it's real comforting.

I'm in the same situation as her... being an architecture major... we are a pretty close knit group of people.

Social Connection and Support. A second set of factors was categorized as more socially-oriented in nature, as they tended to cluster around establishing relationships and becoming involved in co-curricular activities. UK's African American seniors recognized again and again the critical influence of "involvement" on their success. They developed support networks with positive peer relationships and took advantage of special resources and opportunities such as the Martin Luther King Cultural Center; the Black Student Union, serving as a Resident Advisor, being in the marching band, and so forth. The following comments depict the variety of ways in which some sort of social connection or support helped ensure the seniors' success, reflecting the broad range of individual differences that are manifest in their choices and in the kinds of activities that helped them persist:

I think my home is basically the Martin Luther King Jr Cultural Center, because I'm usually there... every day. They play music and they have study days... there's a lot of people that make their home around the Cultural Center... there's just a lot of things that go on there... I mean, that's my home.

...instead of me doing FSP I had to do marching band that whole week. So I came in with about a group of two hundred and thirty. So it was easy for me to transition into college... but at the same time I didn't get the same opportunity to network with some of the staff. (4/11/06, p. 3)
...one of the organizations that really helped me was Residence Life. I was an RA for a year...you just meet with a lot of people, a lot of people your age, peers -- and it's motivation. You see in a way you are providing an example for these younger students that are coming in and you know they want to see you do well.

...after my first year...because my grades dropped...I lost my scholarship. And my job was through--it was a student job...But they worked it out...for me to still be able to stay...they still mentored me...So I re-enrolled in school and I came back, and that's why I am here today.

Being involved as far as anything extracurricular...finding an interest...find people that have similar interests as yours, not only to gain your friendship, but that you can also find yourself leaning on...

But what has helped me continue...at UK is my involvement with activities...I also lived in a dorm for all of my five years, so that has also kept me active.

...the main motivating factor was some of the relationships that I have built when I was first here...I've seen them getting closer to graduation. That kind of got me motivated to go on and finish what I started. So mine have been friendships and relationships that you make.... (4/19/06, p. 2)

Having friends that are responsible and asking them to be kind of like your accountability partner helps a lot. (4/19/06, p. 2)

**Family Expectations and Support.** While many African American seniors clearly identified institutional variables as critical factors in their success, another theme emerged that highlighted the influence of family expectations, values and support. Seniors who came from homes where parents had college degrees as well as seniors who were first-generation students spoke to the power of family in helping them set goals, persevere, stay focused, and succeed:

...the main thing that kept me going was probably the fact that I'm the first male in my family to go to college, the first to graduate...on my mother's side and nobody's done that and I have a strong background. (4/5/06, p.7)

...a great-cousin of mine...used to talk about having to sit out in the hallways, because blacks and whites weren't allowed in the same class...so I've always had her in the back of my head hollering don't let it get you down...finish up your degree. And my father and my mom always wanted me to finish up and be the first one on my side of the family to get a college degree... (4/11/06, pp. 4-5)

...college wasn't like -- Are you going? -- Which one are you going to? After you do that, are you going to get another degree? That's the environment I grew up in. It wasn't like this was an option. It was always like not are you going to college, but where are you going? (4/11/06, p. 5)

It's a family thing for me, too. My mom... raised two kids while she was in med school. So there was always the speech, you know -- failure is not in your vocabulary and it won't be. (4/11/06, p. 5)

For me, I'd have to say a lot of it is involved with my family. Like my parents wouldn't want to come home and say, OK, I got a D in this or a C in that. It was just not acceptable for my family. So that's what really made me strive to do my best. (4/17/06, p. 1)

I'm the first one from my family to graduate from college. It's definitely pushed me. My mom...the fact that I'm still here, she's extra excited about that...But that's one thing that keeps you here. That's a motivator. (4/19/06, p. 2)
Financial Support. Highly frequent references to having the William C. Parker Scholarship clearly demonstrated the importance of this scholarship program to the success of African American students, not only for the financial support it provided but also for the achievement motivation that it sustained. Even in cases where the seniors had failed to keep their GPAs up in their earlier years at UK, regaining the Parker scholarship seemed to become a motivating and, in most cases, necessary factor. Other comments suggested that having academic scholarships allowed more time to devote to studies, and that having to work a job created more difficulty in managing the demands of being a student.

...they made sure that we had William C. Parker scholarships and they made sure that we maintained a 3.0 average, and I also had to go to CARES... (4/06/06, p. 1)

Well, when I first came to UK, I lived on campus. I had about the best year of my life and that kind of got me into trouble with...my William C. Parker scholarship. I sat out a year and a half, went back to LCC, gained my scholarship back, and came back over here. (4/06/06, p. 3)

...we had many of us who were receiving the William C. Parker -- that was another help that got me through college because I know for a lot of us, if I didn't have the William C., I wouldn't be here. (4/11/06, p. 1)

And academic scholarships definitely helped so that I could spend all of my time working (on academics)... (4/17/06, p. 1)

That scholarship. You've got to keep your GPA up...so I think that really helped me because...I saw people getting it taken away because they didn't keep their GPA up. (4/17/06, p. 3)

But the first year that I was here -- not so great. It was hard. It was really hard. Plus it was adjusting to life not at home. No mom and dad giving me money whenever I need it -- having to work a job. (4/18/06, p. 3)

Personal Attributes. Personal attributes as a category of factors related to student success differs from those discussed above. Rather than relying on direct responses of the seniors (i.e. "For me, I'd have to say a lot of it is involved with my family"), the Committee picked up on common phrases in the seniors' descriptions of various experiences ("So that was what I was mainly focused on, was just getting back on track") to get a sense of the personal qualities that characterized successful African American students at UK. Based on the Committee's reading and interpretation of such statements, they generated the list below to portray the type of African American student who navigates around or overcomes multiple barriers to achieve success at the University of Kentucky:

- Goal-oriented and focused; makes plans or pacts with other students
- Persevering in seeking information, interaction and support to meet needs
- Self-sufficient, self-directed
- Open-minded
- Adaptable, resilient
- Organized with time management skills
Involved

Awareness of Resources and Opportunities. Throughout the focus group discussions, the importance of accessing available resources and knowing about opportunities of all kinds became clear. UK's African American seniors came to realize that, although many resources and opportunities were available, it was up to them to find them. They developed a variety of strategies that included networking with other students, finding mentors, or a "just ask" mentality. The awareness appears to have been important to their success; however, the difficulty in obtaining it was a barrier that will be discussed more fully below. The following comment illustrates the outcome of one student who connected with a special type of program that others in the focus group, including the facilitators, had never heard of:

_I think the Bucks for Brains program was useful to me...I participated in that program three years I think maybe four. So that gave me an opportunity to do research, to expose myself to different areas of academics and get a better feel for what I wanted to do....It did give me the confidence that I could do something in academics and that gave me a reason to continue through college._

Barriers to Success and Needed Change

A major purpose of the focus groups with African American seniors was to seek their 1) feedback on the obstacles they confronted and overcame along the path to their success and 2) suggestions on how UK needs to change to create an environment more conducive to success. Again, the Committee identified common themes that seemed to fall into eight broad categories of concerns. These are presented below along with illustrative comments and the seniors' suggestions for change:

Bad Professors. UK's African American seniors expressed appreciation for supportive faculty and staff on numerous occasions when talking about their UK experience and the factors related to their success; however, when asked about barriers, the seniors appeared to agree that UK has a problem with the adequacy, attitude, and/or approach of some faculty they encountered in and out of the classroom. Consequently, they suggested that UK hire helpful professors who care about students and teaching.

...my freshman year I went to a teacher that I had and she basically blasted me...she basically told me that because of the way that I looked and because of the way that the business was...I couldn't, that I wouldn't be able to do it, so I was just like okay, well, wait, let me just, you know, take a step back. (4/5/06, p. 8)

...you need to hire quality teachers because right now, for example, in our USP program, you can tell which teachers are researchers and which ones are actually here to teach... (4/05/06, p. 16)

There are professors that are teaching because they don't have anything else to do with their time. They truly do not care about the students or performance and what they're learning. They don't care about the students advancing in college. (4/11/06, p. 7)

We're going to be a research university. And that's fine, but why don't you be a school, too, and teach these students...every year our tuition goes up, but then you all fall back on the teaching part, you know? Teach me, because I am paying you to teach me. So teach me. Now, write your book, too, but teach me as well. So that was a big problem I had, or a barrier. (4/11/06, p. 8)
What I'm getting out of my classes is not worth the money that I'm paying. (4/11/06, p. 20)

It seems like we have these classes with 200 people with professors that are research professors that don't know how to teach. All they do is lecture, lecture, lecture...We've got 300 students; 20 of them are in line waiting to get some help. (4/17/06, p. 12)

If I'm going into a class that's going to discuss poverty, that's going to discuss the bridge between the races, let's sit and discuss it. Just because I'm enrolled in the class, and in a lot of these classes, I've been the only African American...don't dance around it. Because you better believe my questions and my answers are going to be direct. And I believe we pay enough tuition to get honest answers and honest instruction. (4/19/06, p. 4)

I have been told that it would look horrible on my resume, especially if I wanted to get into grad school, if I was part of the black social work association...I was basically flat out told that by my advisor. And it was better just to join the social work association of America. (4/19/06, p. 7)

Lack of Awareness of Available Resources and Opportunities. Scattered throughout the focus group discussions were references to strategies for how to obtain needed information. While lack of this awareness did not emerge directly as a significant theme related to success of African American seniors, their language suggested that it was an issue:

I had to, like, put myself out there...I had to try to find clubs and different things that I could belong to...I had to try to find where everybody was...and what I could get involved with. (4/5/06, p. 6)

...one of my friends just graduated...she was really instrumental because she kind of knew the places that I should go, the people I should talk to... (4/18/06, p. 2)

...I would go in there and talk with the counselors. Also talking to the resident advisors and things like that...they help point you in the right direction. (4/19/06, p. 1)

The lack of information appeared in various forms as the discussion moved to identifying barriers, and there was evidence that it was particularly difficult for those students who lived off-campus. Students looked to both faculty and staff who are serving in various advising and counseling roles to help them, and some expressed frustrations with outcomes associated with information-seeking experiences.

Suggestions for improvement included making the availability of resources and opportunities known to everyone -- not just African Americans, developing mentoring programs, and growing CARES and similar student support programs that project a genuine caring for student well-being and success.

Additional comments included the following:

...it doesn't hurt to just ask. If you get confused, just ask because the teachers that I've come across are really willing to help you out...instead of getting real frustrated, just ask. (4/5/06, p. 10)

...and the whole information issue. That's a big deal because it's hard to find out what's going on on campus...And I attribute it to the fact that I do live off campus and that I don't go to a lot of black events because I do work a lot. So that's a barrier, obviously, having to work. (4/18/06, p. 6-7)

I didn't know anything about the student banquet...for minority students. I didn't find out about that until last month and I've been here for three years. I mean, most of the stuff that goes on, I don't have a clue. (4/19/06, p. 5)
Advisors not being informed I feel as much as they could be...I didn't find out about securing my degree application in time. So I talked to one of the advisors on the second floor and he gave me a petition to get my degree...And I went to my advisor, and he was like well, it seems like you should write this for your petition...but I'm not really sure, so go so the second floor...so I went to the second floor and I go well, do you think this will help me for my petition? And she looked at it and said I don't know...What your advisor suggested seems okay, but I don't know. I'm like, well, what have people done in the past to get their petitions qualified? She's like, I think it's just luck. And at that point, I was just like, forget it, I'm not wasting my time, I'll get it in August, this is just foolishness.... (4/19/06, p. 6)

Burden of Proving Self, Representing Race and Family, Educating Others. The burden of being a black student on UK's campus was articulated repeatedly by the African American seniors, comprising one of the strongest themes surfaced in the focus group discussions regarding barriers to success. Some seniors saw it as more of a personal issue -- having to prove something to themselves -- while others clearly were put into uncomfortable positions due to external environmental situations. Many seniors felt that not only did they have to prove something to themselves, but they had to: 1) demonstrate their intelligence or competence before others accepted them; 2) speak for their race because they were singled out as the only black voice in class; 3) worry about whether or not they represented their race and family adequately; and 4) educate others on various aspects of their culture, not only in the classroom but in the residence halls. This burden encompassed a variety of situations in which being black was a factor that prompted feelings of insecurity, anxiety, failure, and being different. The energy devoted to managing the underlying emotions is energy that could be spent on academic activities. In his theory of student involvement as the main factor in student retention and success, Astin (1999) identifies "student time" as the most salient resource available for student success. For UK's African American students, some of their time is devoted to the emotional task of managing the burden of being black on a predominantly white campus. Suggestions for improvement that relate to this concern included improving diversity of faculty, staff and students, hiring better teachers or enhancing faculty teaching skills, and creating a course requirement to help all UK students understand the black experience. Comments from the focus groups included:

I had to overcome trying to prove yourself...it's like...oh, I'm the only black person in this class...I've got to prove myself as being just as intelligent or more... (4/5/06, p. 8)

When you do group projects, you feel like they don't want to...like we're not smart enough...we had to prove ourselves and then after that, everybody wanted us in their group. So it's a matter of, well, I guess just not proving yourself to them, but to yourself. (4/5/06, p. 8)

...coming into an environment where you are the only black person and some of these people have really never seen a black person in their life, like that sometimes gets to you...it's just that burden of -- I have to sit in this class, I have to explain myself every time I say something. (4/11/06, p. 6)

...you need to make sure that you are on top of your game, so that nobody's sitting there looking at you thinking, oh, she's the dumb black girl, or you know what I'm saying? Not necessarily that they're going to think that, but you don't want people to think that, because it's just a stereotype that me, as an African American will always, you know, I guess, pay attention to. (4/18/06, p. 9)
And I always thought I had to over-validate my opinions versus my classmates. Or when an issue of race came up, I automatically had to have the correct answer. And when I didn't, I felt like a failure because I didn't know. (4/19/06, p. 4)

Feelings of Isolation and Invisibility. Another strong theme that emerged in the senior focus group discussions clustered around feelings of being lost in a "sea of Caucasians." Walking on campus, going into a class of 200-300, joining student organizations, attending meetings or presentations -- all are activities in which students participate every day; however, for UK's black students, these "everyday" activities present difficulties that white students do not experience. Publications such as the Kernel intensify feelings of invisibility when black student activities are not covered appropriately. The cumulative effect of such events threatens the sense of belonging or connection that is critical to student retention and success, further draining emotional energy and time that could be devoted to academic activities. UK's successful seniors learned to cope with these feelings -- they drew inspiration from seeing others on campus who were like them and were succeeding; they sought out black student organizations; they drew on their own personal sense of determination and family values to adjust and persevere. Suggestions for improving in this area included attaining more diversity among faculty, students, staff, administrators and the Board of Trustees; increasing visibility of black leaders on campus; and developing a mentoring program. Comments from the focus groups included:

It's kind of hard, you know, walking around campus and not seeing other people like you, but once you do see that group of people, then it uplifts you. It makes you feel like -- I can do this... (4/5/06, p. 13)

You look around and you see a sea of Caucasians and Asians and Indian faces. I don't know. It's like you're not at home. (4/17/06, p. 3)

Just to have somebody that I could identify with...Somebody who understood why my hair looks the way that it does. Didn't want to touch it, you know? (4/17/06, p. 4)

...coming here, you walk around this big old campus and you might not see anybody for about a good five minutes that looks like you...which is okay, because I've kind of adjusted to it. (4/18/06, p. 8)

Out of this whole magazine (the Kernel), why do we get this small corner and our information is not right and there's not one picture of a black fraternity or sorority on the back where they have this collage of groups? And we sent them pictures...it was in this year. (4/19/06, p. 5)

I don't know if it's a personal attribute, but a lot of organizations I was in -- I was the only member of my color. And not to say I feel inferior, I just was like -- I can't go in there -- I need to go somewhere else with a more diverse audience, not just to see African Americans, but a lot of different races. (4/19/06, p. 7)

Limited Social Options. Discussions surrounding the social atmosphere and opportunities on campus revealed a black-white dichotomy grounded in UK's history and complicated by the complexities of human needs and interaction. On the one hand, many African American seniors expressed the need to have black student organizations where they feel more comfortable and can pursue common interests
and assume leadership roles that are much easier to attain than in predominantly white organizations; on the other hand, such structures seemed to make the lack of interaction between the two groups more pronounced -- an outcome contrary to the wishes of many seniors who wanted to learn more about other ethnicities and cultures. Furthermore, if black students themselves weren't accepted by their peers or didn't participate in black organizations, then they felt ostracized by their own race and their social options were limited even further. Finally, Greek life became an issue of considerable discussion, as it relates very much to traditional university social structures such as housing, homecoming and the Student Government Association. In these three areas, in particular, there seems to be a dichotomy of black and white activities that promotes divisiveness and exclusivity. For example, the issue of Greek housing and the lack thereof for black sororities and fraternities magnifies the underlying cycle of benefits that accrue to "majority" versus "minority" populations -- to the "haves" versus the "have-nots," further eroding perceptions of equal opportunity at the University. Again, suggestions for improvement included increasing diversity of the campus community, helping black freshmen understand UK's history and the pressures they will confront, and empowering them to voice their opinions; having more things to do in general, and having more ways to encourage interaction among all members of the campus community.

Comments from the focus groups included:

...when I went to the University of Illinois...the feeling of the social atmosphere on campus was great because I saw a mixture of people, so we have all different types of people, different types of cultures...you have an exchange of different ideas, and socially I kind of see it starting, but it needs to be, you know, nurtured more. (4/5/06, p. 16)

...if UK could work on getting some more African Americans in or keeping our African American population, then...the non-black organizations that we have -- maybe we'll feel more comfortable because we'll see more of us. But because there's not more of us, we feel like...let's go make our own group for this college or this major or...because we're so few and far between. And so for us to keep our identity, for us to feel safe, for us to have our own voice...because then if we go out...that's like a sheep going out into a pack of wolves. (4/11/06, p. 16)

...black students that come on campus...have to make a choice...Each school has a black organization. You have to make a choice, and you feel that pressure quickly. Either you join up with the black students or you don't and get called, well, the ostracized. You get ostracized out of the way, you lose, you have to lose. It's a losing scenario. (4/11/06, p. 17)

And the reason why white fraternities and sororities have houses on campus is because they can afford it...They have over 150 members on their roster...They can afford 150 to 200 people to toss over $2000 almost $3000 a year just for sorority. We can't. (4/11/06, p. 17)

I kind of feel lost that I have to turn to alternative cultural activities. Because I found myself using the student discount, I've been to the symphony, I've been to the opera, things like that, but not too many things that are offered for us. There's not a lot out there. And I find that troubling. It may be a small town, but I find that troubling.
Racism, Ignorance and Close-mindedness. A final and powerful theme clustered around racism and its effect on UK's African American students. The UK experiences related by the African American seniors produced persuasive evidence of the existence of racism on campus and in the Lexington area. In some cases, racism is inadvertent, as individuals make statements that are not intended to harm, but are hurtful because they reflect the presence of racial stereotypes, a lack of awareness of their existence, and a lack of sensitivity to the harm that they do. In other cases, these seniors experienced or observed overt comments and actions that clearly communicated to them a lack of acceptance, tolerance, and respect due to the color of one's skin. In either case, the seniors expressed frustration over the ignorance and close-mindedness that gets in the way of encouraging interaction and personal growth for all members of the campus community. And in either case, UK's African American students are confronted once again with having to deal emotionally with issues that detract from the time devoted to academic activities and the opportunity for an engaging, successful university experience. Suggestions for improvement related to this area included increasing diversity; hiring faculty who care about student success; having more campus events throughout the year to help expand horizons; and creating a course requirement to help all UK students understand the black experience. In the words of one senior who was prompted as to what should replace ignorance, the reply was, "An educational institution." Other comments were:

...our professor who was over the association...she's one of those people that did not expect minorities to do as good as we did in our major, and there was a friend of mine, we wanted to run for president and vice president of the association...we ended up winning...it just felt like she was just trying to deter us, trying to get you off the track. (4/5/06, p. 9)

I had residents leave my building the first day of school because they weren't going to have a black RA. So it's there... (4/11/06, p. 14)

I had white people tell me I wasn't even black because I wasn't a thug, you know what I'm saying? (4/17/06, p. 6)

I feel like once I leave here, as far as racism or whatever it is, I don't think there's too much more that's going to be new to me out in the real world. (4/17/06, p. 6)

Just talking about the barriers...I think mine is the racism. I'm from Oregon, so I was used to being the only black person in the class. But like you said, the interaction is really different here. And some of the black people here seem like they're mad at one level. And sometimes when I'm in a racist environment, I tend to become mad at others who will walk by or something and not speak or look down. (4/17/06, p. 6)

I go somewhere with my sister or my brother, and you're getting strange looks, you're getting people grabbing their purses, pushing their stuff under the table...and you're seeing that. And you don't see that if I go to Philadelphia...If I go to Chicago, I don't see people acting like that...when you come to Lexington, I don't know what it is about Lexington, but it's worse. (4/18/06, p. 6)

In my mind, I thought that I was going to be just as equal in the same playing field as the rest of the students, regardless of color. This is what I thought coming to college. But when I got here, I soon realized that my professors did not have the same expectations of me. And I kind of internalized that at first, until after talking to my other fellow African American students, and they kind of were feeling the same way. (4/19/06, p. 3)
African American Senior Suggestions for Change

During the focus group discussions, the African American seniors were asked to imagine that they had a magic wand and they could wave that wand and automatically change anything they wanted to change at the University of Kentucky. The list below summarizes their responses, many of which were mentioned above as ways to help alleviate the barriers to their success:

- More diversity with professors, from every race; expand faculty recruiting; post employment opportunities on African American websites.
- Advertise and recruit more African American students; work with Black Achievers; involve actual students in recruiting visits and activities; go to students' schools and "step into their environment, make them feel comfortable" during recruiting; involve successful black alumni; recruit more African Americans outside of Kentucky.
- Recruit from more areas of the world, diverse people of color, not just African Americans.
- Increase funding for and expand CARES, the Freshman Summer Program, and the Come See for Yourself program; nurture and grow these programs, rather than cutting them.
- Increase scholarship funding.
- Hire quality teachers who have a passion and desire to teach; "change a lot how professors teach in the classroom;" hire more professors and hire those that are eager to help students.
- Don't make diversity a "hot topic" for the year; keep on it consistently; have diversity programming year-round, not just in February.
- Leadership should be more visible and approachable.
- Have more events and opportunities and things to do on campus to help students meet different people and expand their horizons and view points.
- Replace ignorance and apathy with open-mindedness; be open to the possibilities of things that can happen; tear down traditions that get in the way of improving cultural awareness, education and interaction.
- Have 3-4 blacks on Board of Trustees to bring greater diversity of viewpoints.
- Help new black freshmen understand UK's history and the pressures they may experience and empower them to voice their opinions.
- Build a new student center that is student services friendly, has better equipment and technology, and promotes interaction; add attractions such as a Chili's restaurant and a bowling alley.
- Create a required class for every UK student to help them understand the black experience.
- Increase black visibility and voices on issues, especially from black leaders on campus.
- Offer a mentoring program that pairs seniors with freshmen/sophomores.
- Ensure awareness of resources and opportunities for everyone, not just African Americans.
Project V
Leaving UK: Factors associated with attrition of African American first-year students after one and two years of enrollment

While institutional data and focus group information can provide some insights into the reasons that African American students choose to leave the University of Kentucky, the Committee agreed that a necessary component of its research agenda must be to solicit such information directly from students themselves. The final project in the 2005-06 academic year, therefore, consisted of a telephone survey of African American students who enrolled at UK as first-time, full-time degree seeking students either in fall 2003 or fall 2004 and who were no longer enrolled as of spring 2006. Again, the Committee used the services of the UK Survey Research Center and its African American interviewers to conduct the phone survey beginning in mid-May and continuing into early June in hopes that the students would be home for summer break if they had enrolled at another institution. The interviewers attempted up to 20 times, as needed, to contact 180 students in the population of interest, with the following results: 42 interviews were completed; 4 students were determined to be ineligible; 4 students refused; 10 students failed to return a call-back request; and 120 students were never reached. The 120 students not reached included wrong numbers, disconnections, calls block, and no responses to call attempts. Consequently, the telephone survey completed interviews with only 23.3 percent of the students who had dropped out of UK; of those that were contacted and eligible, the response rate was 91.3 percent.

The Committee was disappointed with the large number of previous African American students who could not be contacted for the telephone survey, but even more so with the small number of completed interviews. A total of only 42 responses makes it difficult to conduct meaningful analyses and make generalizations to the total population, as breakdowns to item responses tend to reflect the situation of very small numbers of students. With this qualification, the Committee identified the following major findings of this survey:

- Problems associated with financial constraints and the rising cost of tuition were the most frequently cited reasons for leaving (24%); interestingly, in the most recent Survey of the First Year Experience conducted by the Office of Institutional Research, 24 percent of respondents said they were very concerned about their ability to pay for college. Another 39 percent were somewhat concerned.
- Secondary reasons for not returning to UK included poor grades (19%) and homesickness or problems at home (10%).
- The major areas where the students did not feel particularly successful during their time at UK were in managing time effectively (50%), forming meaningful relationships with faculty (40%), and adjusting to academic demands (36%).
Approximately two-thirds were pleased with the social climate at UK.

Nearly all (93%) felt that they had been treated with respect by UK faculty.

When asked to estimate how they spent their time, nearly two-thirds (64%) said they studied or worked on homework 10 or fewer hours per week; one in five (19%) socialized or partied 20 or more hours per week; 31 percent worked off-campus more than 15 hours per week; and nearly half (48%) went home two or more weekends per month.

Two-thirds of the students who left UK enrolled at another two- or four-year institution, while the remaining students were working.

When asked what UK could have done to help them stay at UK, the most common response related to helping financially or lowering tuition; a few cited the need for smaller classes and more individualized attention and for more activities with multicultural groups.

To summarize, the feedback from the African American students who chose to leave UK was consistent with findings from other research efforts of the Committee: financial concerns, academic problems, and a variety of miscellaneous reasons contributed to the decision to leave. Questions that probed the quality of the UK experience and the students' efforts also produced answers consistent with previous understandings. Issues with time management, faculty connections, adjusting to academic demands, balancing studying and socializing, holding a job off campus, and perhaps too many trips home may have resulted in a lack of focus and perseverance that UK's African American seniors emphasized as critical to their success.
A Synthesis of Research Findings: Discussion and Recommendations

The factors related to success for African American students at the University of Kentucky may be classified as individual or institutional. Individual factors include family influences, ability to pay for college, and personal attributes that students bring to the campus environment; whereas, institutional factors are those that students discover shortly before or after their arrival – opportunities for academic connection and support; social connection and support; available financial support; and awareness of resources and opportunities. Other institutional characteristics such as size, diversity, communications, and the beliefs and attitudes of individual members of the campus community introduce additional factors that may influence a student's sense of good fit and connection. These institutional factors appear to interact with individual ones to construct barriers to success that may vary for different students. Consequently, student feedback obtained in the focus groups tended to vary greatly among individual students. The Committee's analysis and discussions as presented below emphasize those factors that appeared to be common for African American students as a group. Seven common themes emerged from the discussions, serving as the framework for specific programmatic recommendations.

Professional and Personal Growth

The Committee recognizes that for new and enhanced initiatives to be successful, the entire campus community must work together to create a safe, caring and welcoming environment. Such efforts begin with the plans, priorities and actions of top administrators. This involves not only increasing diversity and its visibility, but promoting a strong sense of personal responsibility for everyone at the University -- faculty, staff and administrators -- to embrace and nurture diversity. Acknowledging that all of us continue to experience professional and personal growth throughout our lives, the Committee recommends:

Providing a comprehensive program of professional and personal growth in the area of multicultural awareness for faculty and staff, beginning with top level administrators. Current efforts include brief sessions on diversity during employee orientation and voluntary programming. A more inclusive, systematic method for such programming is necessary.

Increasing diversity and increasing the visibility of the University’s multiethnic and multiracial human environment, to include the placement of artistic and photographic images of people of color in common areas, e.g., Student Center, walkways, residence halls, administration building, White Hall Classroom Building, Young Library, etc.
Creating an annual, ongoing diversity program that begins each year with a diversity immersion day, during which multicultural awareness programming for new administrators, faculty and staff occurs and activities for students commence.

Reviewing and improving current hiring and interview policies and procedures to reflect positive attitudes toward diversity as an important job qualification.

Pre-college Outreach and Recruitment

The path to success at the University of Kentucky begins well before UK identifies prospective students during their high school years. As students move through their preparatory years, the choices they make inevitably have an impact on the pool of available, qualified students who can matriculate successfully at UK. Results of the Committee's research support a hypothesis that African American students as a group may not be completing an appropriately rigorous high school curriculum. The history of first semester GPAs for these students shows a range from 2.15 to 2.39, suggesting that the first-year students may not have been as well-prepared as they felt at the time of the focus groups. The lack of a rigorous high school curriculum may contribute to this situation if students are earning high grades for courses of average difficulty. A relatively low percentage reported completing four years of course work in science, foreign languages, and social science. The recent study that found unintentional bias in the college choice advice high school counselors gave to African American students suggests that they may not be receiving adequate advice regarding the rigor of curricular choices as well. Coupled with survey results showing that African American students do not spend an optimal amount of time studying and that 80 percent of students who are not retained earned first semester GPAs of less than 2.0, academic focus and preparation for college level work emerged as explanatory factors in the success of African American students -- African American students as a group need intensive, additional support and guidance to develop the academic focus and intellectual skills necessary to succeed in college. Some are not optimally prepared academically due to poor advising, planning and curricular choices in high school; consequently, they may not have developed adequate study habits, time management skills, and reasonable expectations for what it takes to be successful and make the adjustment to the academic rigor at UK. Taken together, these factors suggest that intervention in the preparatory years is necessary, desirable, and potentially fruitful.

One point in the preparatory path that the University may be able to influence in such a way as to expand the pool of highly qualified African American students is at the middle school level. During the middle school experience, students begin to make curricular choices that have long-term future
implications for their readiness and confidence to pursue college level academic work. As evidenced by recent findings of unintentional bias among high school counselors, legitimate concerns exist regarding the advice given to, and choices made by, African American middle school students. The Committee believes that the University of Kentucky can make a difference in the choices and outcomes of African American students during these critical years. We recommend:

**Strengthening the Minority College Awareness Program (MCAP),** which is housed in the Office for Multicultural and Academic Affairs, to develop an extensive, well-organized, ongoing middle school outreach program that will influence curricular choices of students through the following: 1) educational materials and meetings with diverse populations reached through community and church organizations; 2) student and parent access to a UK mentoring website similar to the concept implemented by the California State University System (see Appendix E-1); and 3) a summer program such as the Camp UK program described in Appendix E-2. These programs should be designed to educate and inform both students and parents about postsecondary opportunities and the impact of choices made in middle school, so they are better positioned to seek advice and make decisions on their own behalf. Enhancing intellectual skills and preparing for the ACT should also be emphasized in these programs.

Secondly, UK can be more proactive in mentoring and nurturing high achievement orientation and results with the high school student population. Historically, UK has not been aggressive in offering local high school level opportunities that facilitate successful completion of a rigorous high school curriculum and, at the same time, introduce prospective students to the UK experience. Again, the Committee believes that UK can and should be more instrumental in shaping the size and quality of future recruitment pools by aggressive programming in the high schools. We recommend:

**Implementing energetic, well-organized, ongoing high school programs with Bluegrass Region high schools, at a minimum, and also including other high-diversity, high-density areas such as Central High School in Louisville, and considering:** 1) dual credit programs and 2) student development and parental programs, including summer programs that bring students to campus. An example is the summer program proposed in 2005 by the OMAA: a summer 4-5 week residential program for African American 9th, 10th, and 11th graders. These programs should emphasize UK's interest in African American students and their future as well as shape their academic preparation and expectations about what it
takes to be successful college students.

Next, the Committee believes that UK can be more proactive in its traditional recruitment activities. The fall 2005 students who chose to enroll elsewhere suggested that UK could promote itself more effectively than it has in the past and respond more quickly with financial aid offers. Students in the focus groups also suggested that UK should expand its use of existing African American students and successful African American alumni in the recruiting process, and also evaluate and re-design recruitment and admissions materials to convey critical information such as how to pay for college -- in addition to the traditional messages. The Committee is aware that improvements made during the 2005-06 recruiting year have yielded exceptional results and also that the University is now engaged in an intensive marketing study to identify strategic initiatives and improvements designed to recruit a larger, more qualified, highly diverse student population in the future. We recommend:

Continuing to improve and evaluate recruitment strategies in response to African American student concerns and suggestions as provided in this report as well as the recommendations of the marketing study.

Finally, the Committee is concerned about UK's current admission strategy that uses a combination of ACT scores and high school GPAs to make selective admission decisions. The evidence resulting from the regression analysis was quite clear in identifying the high school GPA as the strongest predictor, by far, of successful completion of the first semester of academic work. As the national debate continues and strengthens regarding the use of standard scores as the gatekeepers to higher education opportunities, UK should begin its own effort to re-visit and re-think its admission philosophy. Furthermore, the senior focus groups communicated clearly the existence of a set of personal attributes that were important to the success of UK's African American seniors. A revised admission philosophy and strategy should take such factors into consideration. We recommend:

Implementing a research-based review of UK’s admissions criteria with the goal of developing a model that is more accurate and inclusive in its ability to predict success at UK. The review should include a transcript analysis that will provide research-based evidence of the impact of high school curricular choices on success at UK.

Financial Support

Results of the various research projects completed by the Committee documented the high level of importance that financial support and the cost of education play in African American students' decisions to attend UK -- and their decisions to leave. This area comprised the number one factor that African American students who chose NOT to attend UK cited as important in their decisions;
likewise, it comprised the number one reason cited by African American students from the fall 2003 and 2004 entering classes who chose NOT to return to UK. Existing first-year student survey data showed that at the end of the second semester nearly two-thirds of African American freshmen were concerned about their ability to pay for college. The African American seniors consistently cited the importance of the Parker scholarship program in helping them stay focused and succeed. Again, the Committee is aware that a significant amount of new resources were devoted to African American student scholarships in recruiting the fall 2006 class, and all indications are that the effort was highly successful. To sustain an ongoing effort in the future, as tuition and fees continue to increase, we recommend:

**Studying the financial question of affordability and scholarship levels in coordination with the marketing analysis that is now underway and implementing changes to achieve a high level of efficiency and effectiveness in the use of scholarship funds to promote diversity.**

One additional area of concern and opportunity emerged from the research findings, and it is a topic of much discussion related to improving retention -- students who work. In the regression analysis, the number of hours a student planned to be employed in the fall semester was negatively associated with African American students' first semester GPA, which in turn, is highly related to student retention. Also, decades of research summarized by Astin in his student development theory found that holding a part-time job on campus is actually a positive factor in retention. The Committee believes that students who work will continue to make up a substantial part of the undergraduate population, and as tuition and fees increase in the future, so will the pressure to work. We recommend:

**Investigating current student employment opportunities, including work study options, and hiring processes to identify ways to improve student engagement through on-campus work and make more effective use of work-study opportunities within the major.**

**Academic Engagement**

Connecting academically in the classroom, with the major department, or with other special programs emerged as highly important for the success of African American students. This finding was not surprising, especially given the years of research on retention and repeated conclusions that the quality of academic life, more than anything, is the key to student success and retention. The availability and reputation of academic programs was one of the most important factors in African American students' decisions to attend UK. Barriers identified by first-year or senior African American students included numerous academic issues such as the availability and quality of academic support services, adjusting to academic demands, and "bad professors" who were not engaged in the teaching process.
Both first-year and senior African American students also cited racial tensions and burdens associated with speaking for their race in the classroom as sources of discomfort and stress. While some students reported that they did not experience racism at the University of Kentucky, it was clear that others did. This reality constitutes the climate for African Americans on UK's campus, and it is a reality that is unique to the African American experience. It is also an important explanatory factor in the success of these students at the University of Kentucky -- African American students as a group experience a high level of stress in adjusting to the University of Kentucky due to coping with issues of race -- ranging from feeling isolated and disconnected to being the target of overt racism. This additional type of stress may create a distraction that competes with the quality and quantity of time needed to devote to academic pursuits and achieve the highest level of success possible.

The Committee believes that UK must work to improve the undergraduate experience in the classroom and in non-classroom settings that promote interaction with faculty. For African American students, this includes working to remove issues of race that interfere with the quality and quantity of time-on-task for academic success. We recommend:

**Engaging deans in the design and implementation of an annual, ongoing, university-wide program that includes the following components:**

1. meaningful faculty development programs that concentrate on multicultural awareness programming for all who teach undergraduates, but especially those teaching first-year students, including part-time instructors and TAs.
2. involvement of African American faculty in teaching UK101 and other high-enrollment, high-visibility lower level courses.
3. special programming to connect African American students with African American faculty who might not normally interact with undergraduates: a fall kick-off event that brings both groups together; seminars and professional development presentations scheduled regularly throughout the year; a journal club where faculty meet with students for open discussion; and/or a summer reading requirement that can serve as the basis for interaction and discussion.

The area of academic support for African American students deserves additional attention. The African American first-year students and seniors gave a great deal of credit to the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) for helping them make the transition to college life, begin to develop support networks, and become acclimated to the campus. They also expressed several times the importance of getting a head start on other incoming students by completing courses and earning a good GPA. The CARES program was cited numerous times as a positive factor in helping African American students
maintain their academic focus and their GPAs; however, a few students expressed concern about the quality of tutors. Finally, the Freshman Survey results showed that African American students are taking advantage of tutors, but they are not participating at a high level in other academic offerings designed to help students make a successful transition to college: UK101, Discovery Seminars, Living Learning Communities, and the Writing Center.

**Percent of AA Students Reporting Participation in Selected Classes or Services during the First Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in UK 101</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in a Freshman Discovery Seminar</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the Writing Center in Young Library</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Tutoring in a Course</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in a Remedial Course</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined a Greek Organization</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of First-year Experiences conducted in Spring 2004

To ensure that African American students have the academic support necessary to be successful, we recommend:

- **Engaging the appropriate deans in developing aggressive, college-based intervention programs that establish minimum requirements in terms of student participation, mid-term grade reports, and follow-up to an early alert system.**

- **Conducting a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of tutoring programs (participation rates, level and kind of tutoring, subsequent performance, etc.)**

- **Relocating CARES to a more central place on campus or at least more central to the flow of student traffic and hiring additional CARES staff (2 counselors) to manage the increasing number of students.**

- **Expanding the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) on a recurring basis for all**
students who want to participate and helping them connect with African American faculty during the summer.

Reconsidering the concept of cluster scheduling such that it is built around a theme that will attract students with common interests and especially African American students.

Social Opportunities

The African American seniors emphasized involvement and positive interactions with faculty, students and staff as critical elements in their success. During the analysis and discussions of the data, the Committee was hard pressed to identify common themes in terms of the kinds of activities that encouraged involvement and interaction on campus. Responses ranged from participating in Living Learning Communities (LLC) to Honors to participating in activities at MLKCC. The common element was not in a particular type of activity, but in the involvement itself and the rewarding interactions that resulted.

When asked about barriers, the discussions centered around difficulties that African American students encounter on a predominantly white campus: the burden of being the Black voice in various situations -- in the dorms and in the classroom; feelings of isolation and invisibility; limited social options; and racism. UK's African American first-year students confirmed the difficulties associated with connecting socially. These students struggled with traditional transitional issues faced by all new students, such as adjusting to the demands of academic life as well as dorm life. Like the seniors, however, several first-year students cited having to deal with issues of racial tensions, stereotypes, and remarks that compounded the difficulties commonly associated with adjusting to college. The research of Fries-Britt and Turner (2002), who also conducted a qualitative study of the African American student experience on a traditionally white campus, revealed similar findings.

The importance of the need for greater diversity comes into play in a significant manner when issues of social atmosphere and opportunities are considered. The small number of African American students on campus creates a need for social structures that allow African American students to meet together and support one another. Complications arise and opportunities shrink, however, when African American students form their own cliques or ostracize other African American students who participate in "white" opportunities. The social landscape becomes limited, confusing, and complicated for African American students in a manner that white students do not experience. Moreover, African American students sometimes find themselves the only African American on a dorm floor of all white students, further complicating the quest for finding a sense of belonging at the University. Dealing with the
The complexities of the social climate creates yet another source of stress for African American students that students in general do not experience. It is particularly critical for first and second-year students who may not have declared a major and found an academic home. Therefore, while the University of Kentucky continues to work to increase diversity, it must also work to provide more opportunities for African American students to become involved, interact with different groups, and have a rewarding social experience. We recommend:

- **Implementing an annual, ongoing program of social opportunities for African American faculty and students to allow natural mentoring relationships to emerge between faculty and students and between first-year students and upperclass students.**

- **Requiring some type of diversity programming during summer advising or Welcome Week. Be proactive, rather than reactive, in promoting positive relationships among all students. Students should begin their time at UK with a full understanding of expectations for their personal behavior and a new appreciation for the diversity they will experience on our campus.**

- **Helping to strengthen the Black Greek program and other Black student organizations. Be proactive in adding new ones. For example, explore with student groups such as Black fraternities and sororities the possibility of providing space designated for living together or for use as chapter rooms.**

- **Finding the space and resources to offer on-campus activities and “night-spots” such as Wildcat Wild Nights, coffee houses, rathskellers, and lounges with themes (cultural, arts, theater, poetry, music, games of logic, etc.) that attract all kinds of students and promote greater interaction than is now possible on UK’s campus.**

- **Offering more LLCs with solid programming to create conditions for interaction among students of different racial/ethnic groups and to give African American students, in particular, more choices about their living arrangements: African American, Multicultural/racial/ethnic, Community Service, etc, based on a student interest assessment.**

**Student Development**

The words of the African American students who participated in the senior focus groups
resonated with phrases that communicated important information regarding the personal and social skills that fueled their success. Staying focused, persevering, managing time, seeking information and interaction, nurturing positive relationships -- all suggested that these students possessed a high level of self-sufficiency and self-confidence and a strong sense of personal responsibility. Some may have possessed these skills upon their arrival; others may have developed them as they adjusted to university life. The University can and should do more to facilitate student development in these areas, and the students themselves suggested such initiatives as an ongoing time management class, expanding CARES, helping others understand the Black experience, and creating more opportunities for interaction. We recommend:

**Offering an ongoing seminar on time management that continues throughout the semester and allows students to drop in and out based on their needs.**

**Offering courses to assist students in developing the kinds of personal attributes exhibited by the seniors: goal-orientation, positive thinking, avoiding procrastination, etc. Enroll more students in UK101 where such courses can be promoted and advertised.**

**Providing additional funds that will allow OMAA to increase activities such as leadership workshops, motivational speakers, and other student development activities.**

**Awareness of Resources and Opportunities**

Finally, an overarching concern emerged from the focus group discussions from the many comments students made about a lack of awareness of resources, opportunities and activities. For students who live off-campus or hold down a job or who may be first-generation students without family advice to help guide them, the comprehensiveness and complexity of the University of Kentucky present obstacles to the awareness needed for taking full advantage of all that UK has to offer. We recommend:

**Creating a one-stop shopping website to let students know where to go for different kinds of fun, help, food, advice, support, etc., rather than just listing offices (See University of Maryland example in Appendix E-3).**
Next Steps

- Receive feedback from President and Provost
- Engage academic deans and academic support units in finalizing recommendations and plans for improvement.
- Assign responsibilities.
- Maintain the Committee to conduct additional research.
- Charge the Committee with evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of these recommendations.
Appendix A
Appendix A-1  

Final OLS Regression Model  
First-Semester Grades on Institutional Data and Freshman Survey Data  
2003 and 2004 African American Freshman Cohorts

Summary of Stepwise Selection Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<th>Model R-Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Pr &gt; F</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High School Grade Point Average</td>
<td>0.2867</td>
<td>0.2867</td>
<td>118.9</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ACT Composite Score</td>
<td>0.0590</td>
<td>0.3457</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Hours Devoted to Homework in Senior Year</td>
<td>0.0298</td>
<td>0.3756</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rated Importance of College Academic Focus</td>
<td>0.0112</td>
<td>0.3868</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>0.0214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Expected Weekly Hours Employed During First Term</td>
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<td>4.91</td>
<td>0.0275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Involvement in Serious Romantic Relationship During Past Year</td>
<td>0.0092</td>
<td>0.4061</td>
<td>4.49</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table above shows the marginal contribution (Partial R-Square) of the six variables selected for the final model.
Appendix B
Appendix B-1

Hello, may I speak with [2]###? My name is [I]## from the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. I am calling on behalf of the UK Office of Multicultural and Academic Affairs to ask you a few questions about how you made your college choice. Specifically, we are trying to collect some information from African-American students who were admitted to UK but chose not to enroll here. This will only take a few minutes of your time and all of your answers will be completely confidential. Your answers will help UK understand how it can enroll more African-American applicants in the future.

Q1. Elapsed Time of Interview
Q2. Elapsed Time of Interview
Q3. N/A
Q4. Applicant State of Origin
Q5. Gender
Q6. High School GPA
Q7. ACT (with converted SAT scores)
Q8. Parker Scholarship
Q9. Parker Scholarship (Date Offered)
Q10. Academic Scholarship
Q11. Academic Scholarship (Date Offered)
Q12. UK Financial Aid Office Need-Based Scholarships
Q13. Federal Grants
Q14. KY CAP Grants
Q15. KEES
Q16. Private or Outside Grants or Scholarships
Q17. Work Study
Q18. Loans
Q19. Estimated Date of Initial Financial Aid Package
Q20. Total Value of Financial Aid Package
Q21. Date Financial Aid Application Data Received by UK
Q22. N/A
Q23. Let me start by asking you a few background questions. First, could you tell me how many schools you applied to, including UK?
Open end

Q24. Including UK, how many of those schools accepted you to enroll?
Open end

Q25. Thinking back to when you were applying to colleges, what are the reasons you chose to apply to UK?
Open end

Q26. What school did you choose to attend?
Open end

Q27. In your own words, please tell me why you chose not to attend UK.
Open end

Q28. In your own words, please tell me why you chose [Q06]## instead of UK.
Open end

Q29. N/A

Q30. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... The cost, including tuition, room and board, and books? Would you say this was:
<1> Very important,
<2> Somewhat important, or
<3> Not very important

Q31. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... Financial aid offered, such as scholarships, loans, stipends or grants? Would you say this was:
<1> Very important,
<2> Somewhat important, or
<3> Not very important

Q32. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... Academic reputation? Would you say this was:
<1> Very important,
<2> Somewhat important, or
<3> Not very important

Q33. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... Total enrollment, or size, of the institution? Would you say this was:
<1> Very important,
<2> Somewhat important, or
<3> Not very important

Q34. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... The number of black students at the school? Would you say this was:
<1> Very important,
<2> Somewhat important, or
<3> Not very important
Q35. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... 
The number of black faculty at the school? Would you say this was: 
<1> Very important,  
<2> Somewhat important, or  
<3> Not very important

Q36. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... 
Distance from your home? Would you say this was: 
<1> Very important,  
<2> Somewhat important, or  
<3> Not very important

Q37. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... 
The climate of the local community? Would you say this was: 
<1> Very important,  
<2> Somewhat important, or  
<3> Not very important

Q38. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... 
You already have friends that go there? Would you say this was: 
<1> Very important,  
<2> Somewhat important, or  
<3> Not very important

Q39. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... 
The availability or prestige of the majors offered? Would you say this was: 
<1> Very important,  
<2> Somewhat important, or  
<3> Not very important

Q40. When you chose [Q06]## over UK, how important was... 
Your Parent's or Guardian's influence? Would you say this was: 
<1> Very important,  
<2> Somewhat important, or  
<3> Not very important

Q41. Thinking about how challenging the coursework can be in college, when you made your college choice, did you think that the curriculum at UK would be more challenging, less challenging, or about the same as at [Q06]##?  
<1> UK more challenging  
<2> About the same  
<3> Other school more challenging

Q42. When did you first start hearing from colleges asking you to apply? 
<1> Before High School  
<2> 9th grade/freshman year  
<3> 10th grade/sophomore year  
<4> 11th grade/junior year  
<5> 12th grade/senior year  
<6> After High school graduation/GED completion

Q43. When did you first hear from UK?  
<1> Before High School  
<2> 9th grade/freshman year
Q44. How soon after you applied to UK were you informed you had been admitted?
Open end

Q45. How did this amount of time compare to how soon you heard from other schools?
<1> Heard from UK quicker
<2> About the same time
<3> Heard from other school quicker
<4> Didn't hear from/apply to other schools

Q46. How did this amount of time compare to how soon you heard from [Q06]?##?
<1> Heard from UK quicker
<2> About the same time
<3> Heard from other school quicker

Q47. Did [Q06]## give you a scholarship?
<1> Yes
<2> No

Q48. Did [Q06]## give you any other financial aid such as stipends, grants, loans, or work study?
<1> Yes
<2> No

Q49. Were you offered any financial aid such as scholarships, loans, stipends or grants from UK?
<1> Yes
<2> No

Q50. Was the amount offered by [Q06]## more than what you were offered by UK?
<1> Yes
<2> No

Q51. Who offered you financial aid first, UK or [Q06]##?
<1> UK
<2> Other school

Q52. Did you visit the UK campus during "Come See For Yourself?"
<1> Yes
<2> No

Q53. Did you visit UK any other time?
<1> Yes
<2> No

Q54. How many other times?
Open end
Q55. During your campus visit(s) to UK, how would you describe the experience? 
Open end 

Q56. How about for your parents or guardians? What was their experience during the visit to UK? 
Open end 

Q57. How many other schools did you visit before making your college choice? 
Open end 

Q58. In general, how did those visits compare to your visit to UK? 
Open end 

Q59. Academic institutions often develop a reputation within local or regional communities. Can you tell me of any reputation UK has in your community that are seen as POSITIVE reasons people might want to go to school here? 
Open end 

Q60. How about negative things? Are there things that people in your community would see as a NEGATIVE reputation for UK that would make them want to avoid coming here? 
Open end 

Q61. What could UK have done differently to get you to attend UK? 
Open end 

Q62. In your opinion, what can UK do in the future to increase the likelihood that African American students will want to attend UK? 
Open end 

Q63. One last question. We may be interested in following up with some students to find out more about their college search experience. Would you be willing to be contacted for a more informal talk about this issue? Your answers to this survey would still be confidential. 
<1> Yes 
<2> No 

Q64. The number I reached you at is [1]#. Is this the best number to reach you? 
<1> Yes 
<2> No 

Q65. Starting with the area code, would you please give me a better number? 
Open end 

Q66. Respondent's understanding was: 
<1> Excellent 
<2> Good 
<3> Fair 
<4> Poor
Appendix C
Appendix C-1

March 17, 2006

Rm 1307 Kirwan Tower
CAMPUS 0149

Dear Mr.   :

Since we met last August at the orientation event sponsored by my office for Black freshmen, a lot has happened. Most importantly, you have stayed on track and are about to complete your first year at UK. This note is sent to request your help as we try to understand some things about your first year experience. We look forward to your return next year and hope even better services can be provided for incoming freshmen in the future.

On behalf of the UK administration and faculty, I am asking you to spend a little time sharing your experiences. Please select one from the blocks of time below to attend and participate in a focus group designed to explore the educational and social experiences of Black students at UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td>1-2:30 PM</td>
<td>203 Student Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>3-4:30 PM</td>
<td>318 POT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>6-7:30 PM</td>
<td>318 POT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>3-4:30 PM</td>
<td>231 Student Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your opinions are very important to us and we encourage your participation in one of these groups. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw your participation at any time without consequences. Your participation and opinions will be confidential and you will not be identified in any reports resulting from the focus groups. All information gathered in these focus groups will be used in efforts directed toward improving the educational experiences for all students.

As a token of our appreciation for attending one of the focus group discussions, you will receive $20 cash. Please indicate your willingness to participate by contacting Connie Vaughn at 257-7915 or csvaug1@email.uky.edu to let her know which of the sessions you prefer to attend.

UK is a better place because you have studied here. Your attendance and participation in this focus group activity will help us again – to meet our challenges, realize our dreams, and succeed.

With sincere thanks,

William H. Turner, PhD
Vice President & Associate Provost

cc: Interim Provost Smith
Appendix C-2

Focus Group Questions for Black First-year Students

Application, Admission and Enrollment Decisions

**Question 1:** Think back to when you were applying to colleges. Just talk about some of your reasons for coming to UK.

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What were the reasons you applied to UK?
- Where was UK on your list of preferences for going to college?
- For those of you who applied to other colleges and were accepted to one or more of them, why did you ultimately decide to come to UK?
- What do you think about the way UK went about recruiting you?

Expectations about UK and College Life

**Question 2:** When you were in high school, what did you expect college life to be like? What did you expect UK to be like?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- How has UK met your expectations?
- How have you been disappointed with your UK experience this year?

Academic Preparation and Support Services

**Question 3:** Tell us about your high school experience and how it prepared you for academic work at UK.

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What would you do differently in high school to improve your chances of success at UK?
- What could high school teachers and counselors do to help students prepare academically for college?

**Question 4:** What have been the largest barriers to your success at UK?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What strategies have you used to overcome these barriers?
- What could UK do better to minimize or remove these barriers?

The Climate On- and Off-Campus

**Question 5:** For a moment, let's consider your feelings about the UK campus community. What is the climate like for you here?
Potential Probes, if necessary:
- Is the campus warm and friendly, or cold and unfriendly?
- How welcome or accepted do you feel?

**Question 6:** Talk about your sense of connection to the larger UK community of students, faculty and staff.

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- How have you met and formed meaningful friendships with other students?
- How does your social life at present differ from what you expected when you applied to UK?
- What role have campus organizations played in your life at UK?
- What about individuals? Have you developed an important relationship with specific faculty or staff members?

**Question 7:** Now think about the surrounding Lexington community. What did you expect Lexington to be like as a college town?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- Have you been involved in any community activities that helped you be successful? How did they help?

**The Climate in the Classroom**

**Question 8:** Consider now the climate inside the classroom. How would you describe your experiences within the classroom?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- How did you relate or interact with professors in the classroom?
- How did you relate or interact with other students in the classroom?

**Final Thoughts**

**Question 9:** What concerns have you been grappling with that haven’t yet come up in our conversation today?

**Question 10:** Is there anything else that you think it is important for us to know that we haven’t discussed up until now?
Appendix D
Appendix D-1

March 17, 2006

15 Briarwood Dr Apt 2
Frankfort, KY  40601

Dear Ms.     :

Congratulations on reaching your senior year at UK. Because you stayed on track and are in position to graduate, some vital lessons can be passed on to other students like you. This note requests your help as we try to understand some things about your UK experience and look forward to providing services for students like you in the future.

On behalf of the UK administration and faculty, I am asking you to spend a little time sharing your experiences with us. Please select one from the blocks of time below to attend and participate in a focus group designed to explore the educational and social experiences of Black students at UK.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>DAY</th>
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Your opinions are very important to us and we encourage your participation in one of these groups. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw your participation at any time without consequences. Your participation and opinions will be confidential and you will not be identified in any reports resulting from the focus groups. All information gathered in these focus groups will be used in efforts directed toward improving the educational experiences for all students.

As a token of our appreciation for attending one of the focus group discussions, you will receive $20 cash. Please indicate your willingness to participate by contacting Connie Vaughn at 257-7915 or csvaug1@email.uky.edu to let her know which of the sessions you prefer to attend.

UK is a better place because you have studied here. Your attendance and participation in this focus group activity will help us again -- to meet our challenges, realize our dreams, and succeed.

With sincere thanks,

William H. Turner, PhD
Vice President & Associate Provost

cc:   Interim Provost Smith
Appendix D-2

Focus Group Questions for Black Seniors

Reflections on Your Academic Career at UK

Question 1: As a senior you’ve successfully navigated through most of the hurdles that face an undergraduate trying to earn a degree. Tell us about the biggest barriers to your success at UK.

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What strategies have you used to overcome these barriers?
- Did you use any academic support services (e.g., The Study, Mathskellar) to help you with your studies? If so, how worthwhile were these services?
- What could UK do better to help you overcome the barriers you’ve encountered here?

Question 2: What personal qualities or activities have contributed to your academic success at UK?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What advice do you have for students who are just beginning their college careers at UK?
- How would your advice differ for Black students who are just beginning?

Question 3: What would you tell a friend back at home who is trying to decide whether to attend UK?

The Climate On- and Off-Campus

Question 4: For a moment, let’s consider your feelings about the UK campus community. What is the climate like for you here?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- Is the campus warm and friendly, or cold and unfriendly?
- How welcome or accepted do you feel?

Question 5: Talk about your sense of connection to the larger UK community of students, faculty and staff:

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- Have you met and formed meaningful friendships with other students?
- How does your social life at present differ from what you expected when you applied to UK?
- What role have campus organizations played in your life at UK?
- What about individuals? Have you developed an important relationship with specific faculty or staff members?

Question 6: Now think about the surrounding Lexington community. What did you expect Lexington to be like as a college town?
Potential Probes, if necessary:
- Have you been involved in any community activities that have helped you be successful? How did they help?

The Climate in the Classroom

**Question 7:** Consider now the climate inside the classroom. How would you describe your experience within the classroom?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- How do you relate or interact with professors in the classroom?
- How do you relate or interact with other students in the classroom?

Overall Satisfaction with the UK Experience

**Question 8:** Think about your UK experience and the education you have received at UK. Then complete this sentence: If I had college to do all over again, I would . . . .

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What could UK have done to make college a more rewarding academic experience? To improve its support of student success?
- Are there things that UK could have done to improve your social life?

**Question 9:** What do you think your future relationship to UK will be like?

Potential Probes, if necessary:
- What are your thoughts about joining the Alumni Association?
- What are your thoughts about returning for graduate study?

Final Thoughts

**Question 10:** What are the concerns you’ve been grappling with that haven’t come up in our conversation today?

**Question 11:** Is there anything else that you think it is important for us to know that we haven’t discussed up until now?
Appendix E
SAT code for CSU Mentor is 3594

now’s the time to...

plan & explore

• Learn more about a CSU campus
• Start your planning with the High School or Transfer Planner
• Find the campuses that meet your needs
• Prepare now for math and English courses at the CSU
• NEW Veterans Education Opportunities

plan

Use powerful planning tools to help you plan your path into college, a clear and easy path to learn about:

• Admission requirements
• Financial aid options
• Cost to attend

explore

With 23 great campuses there is certainly one that is right for you. Use these tools to explore your choices:

• Learn more about a CSU campus
• Compare colleges
• And more!

apply

It’s quicker and easier to apply online. Start your CSU application here, and learn more about the application process.

• Apply today
• Is your campus still accepting applications?
Appendix E-2

CAMP UK

Each spring, sixth grade teachers will be asked to nominate graduating sixth grade students for CAMP UK. Students should be nominated based on their ability to contribute to diversity at UK and their academic promise. Approximately 100 students will be selected to participate in a two day program on campus that features:

- A simulation on “what is college”
- An opportunity to tour the UK Library and an Agricultural Experiment Station
- Lunches with faculty, staff and students
- A visit to student life areas on campus (Student Center, Johnson Center, and Residence Halls)
- A mini leadership workshop
- A science experiment
- Newspaper/reading/research workshop
- Computer Workshop

**Students Going into 9th Grade**

**Day 1**

10 – 12 PM  Check In; Receive Schedule and T-Shirt for Students
Assignment to small groups (10 per group)

12 – 2 PM  Lunch for students and parents/guardians
Welcome by President and/or Provost
Discussion of goals of Camp UK
Slide Show about UK

2:00 PM  Parents Depart
Students participate in a simulation: What is College?
Students “register”; apply for financial aid; go to class; plan their schedule

3:00 PM  Debrief simulation

4:00 PM  Computer Workshop: Graphic Design

5:00 PM  Scheduled recreational activities at the Johnson Center

6:00 PM  Dinner in small groups
Introductions
Values “Picture”
What I want to be when I grow up!
What I like about school
7:30 PM  Movies
9:00 PM  Parents pick up students

Day 2

8:00 AM  Students check in for Day 2 and receive another t-shirt
8:00 – 8:45  Breakfast
8:45 AM  Visit a UK Agricultural Experiment Station
What does this have to do with college?
10:00 AM  Tour of UK Library
Assignment: Find a book in the library
11:00 AM  Newspaper/reading workshop (small group)
Poster Session
12:30 PM  Lunch and “free” time
1:30 PM  Finish Poster Session
2:30 PM  Science Experiment (small group)
4:30 PM  Tour UK Museum
What does this have to do with college?
5:30 PM  Recreation
6:30 PM  Dinner with Parents
Certificate distribution
Display Posters
Give a UK book bag to participants
Give Parents a photo alum with pictures of their student participating in program
Brief speech about the affordability of college (scholarships, grants, loans)

Same Students – Year 2 – Students Going into 10th Grade

These students may or may not stay on campus

Day 1

8:00 – 9:00 AM  Check in and receive T-shirt, copy of program
Breakfast
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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| 9:00 AM    | Welcome to Students and Parents  
How is Year Two Different from Year One of Camp UK?  
Goals of Year Two |
| 9:30 AM    | Parents Leave  
Students visit a classroom and meet a professor  
What’s a professor and how is a professor different from a high school teacher? |
| 10:30 AM   | Visit local historical site with UK professor |
| 12:00 Noon | Lunch (small groups)  
Catching Up since last year  
What are your favorite subjects? How did you do academically?  
Are you involved in any clubs or organizations at school, church or in your community? Is this a good idea? Why? |
| 1:30 PM    | Arts Core for 3 groups  
Science/Math Core for 3 groups |
| 3:00 PM    | Rotate |
| 4:30 – 5:30 PM | Process; Which core did you like the best? Why?  
What are some of the disciplines in which you can major in college?  
What if you like more than one discipline or area? |
| 5:30 PM    | Dinner |
| 6:30 PM    | Celebrating our Heritage  
Simulation |
| 7:30 PM    | Interactive Games and Recreation |
| 9:00 PM    | Parents pick up students |

**Day 2**

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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| 8:00 AM    | Students check in and receive second Tee Shirt  
Breakfast |
| 9:00 AM    | Wellness  
Mind and Body; Nutrition; Sleep; Exercise  
Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco  
Show and Tell—visit Exercise Physiology laboratory at the Medical School |
10:00 AM  English/comprehension/reading tips  
Why is reading a book important? Is that the same as reading something on the Internet?

11:30 AM  Communication skills  
Why can’t I say, “hey” and “dude” and “you know” and “like” all the time?

12:30 PM  Lunch and panel discussion with UK professors from different Disciplines  
Students sit with professors at lunch and ask them questions (questions given to students to ask)

2:00 PM  Practicing good study and note taking skills  
Why is studying important?  
Do I have to study to make good grades?

2:15 PM  Break

2:30 PM  Recreation and games at the Johnson Center

4:00 PM  Music  
More than rap and rock and roll

5:00 PM  Visit Student Volunteer Center  
Why is volunteering so important?

6:00 PM  Dinner with Parents and Students  
How Parents can Partner with UK to ensure that college is in their student’s future  
How to pay for college  
Gift for student: UK Sweatshirt, mouse pad, UK pen set  
Gift for parents: Book about college

Year 3 – Same Students Going into 11th Grade

Day 1

8:00 – 9:00 AM  Check in at residence halls  
Receive t-shirt

9:00 – 10:00 AM  Breakfast with Parents and University Folks  
Why Choose UK?  
Residence Hall Rules and Expectations

10:00 – 11:00 AM  Students divided into small groups by interests and meet with faculty
11:00 – 12:00 Noon  Students write in their journals about their goals

12 Noon – 1:30 PM  Lunch with faculty researchers
                  How can you change the world?

1:30 – 3:00 PM  College simulation
                Problems, issues, and “fitting in”

3:00 – 4:30 PM  Johnson Center activities

4:30 – 6:00 PM  Break

6:00 – 7:30 PM  Dinner and panel discussion with UK Ambassadors

7:30 – 10:00 PM  Games and movies at the Student Center

**Day 2**

7:30 – 8:30 AM  Breakfast

8:30 – 10:30 AM  Research Project/Poster Session
                  Library

10:30 – 12 Noon  Debriefing in small groups

12:00 – 1:30 PM  Lunch with Mayor, Director of Chamber of Commerce, etc.
                  Why I (mayor, etc.) went to college?

1:30 – 3:00 PM  UK 001

3:00 – 4:30 PM  Johnson Center

4:30 – 5:30 PM  Break

5:30 – 6:30 PM  Living in the Residence Halls
                Why living in the residence halls is important

6:30 – 8:30 PM  Dinner with Parents
                President Todd/Provost Speaks
                Gifts to parents and students
Same Students - Year Four – Students Going into Twelfth Grade

Day 1

8 – 9:30 AM Check into Residence Halls
   Breakfast with Parents and Students
   Goals of Year Four
   Students receive a Tee Shirt that says, “UK Class of XXXX”
   Residence Hall Rules and Expectations

9:30 – 10:30 Small Groups
   Catching Up
   Most interesting subjects; most challenging
   Out of class activities during the last year

10:30 – 12:00 Career Exploration

12 Noon Lunch at the Medical Center

1:00 PM Tour and Introduction of Professional Programs at the Medical Center
   (Pharmacy, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Public Health, Allied Health)

3:00 PM Break

3:30 PM Tour of Law School – discussion with Law School Students
   “When and why I decided to attend Law School”

4:30 PM Johnson Center
   Aerobics, Weight Training, Dancing, Sports
   Benefits and setting up a program

6:00 PM Dinner with Invited faculty from professional schools to sit on a panel and discuss why they chose their particular field
   Offer of Early Admission
   Other incentives???

8:30 PM Student Activities

11:00 PM Lights Out

Day 2

8:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM  Students allowed to “choose” a major and explore that major
What’s a major? What courses are required for a major? What grade point averages are required? Students break up into small groups and meet with UK faculty in those areas

10:00 AM  “Mock” Lecture
Students asked to take notes and take a short quiz after lecture

11:30 AM  Break

12:00 Noon  Lunch

1:00 PM  Community Service Project
Divided into teams

4:00 PM  Debrief experiences

5:00 PM  Free Time (Johnson Center, etc.)

6:30 PM  Dinner with Student Leaders
The Importance of Getting Involved on Campus

8:30 PM  Student Activities

11:00 PM  Lights Out

Day 3

8 – 9 AM  Breakfast

9:00 AM  Goal Setting
Setting Goals and Developing a Plan to Achieve Them
Role Models and Heroes

10:30 AM  Preparing for College Admission – UK Admission Staff
What do I need to do to be ready to go to college?
How do I find out information about colleges?
How do I decide whether a college is a good fit for me?

12 Noon  Lunch with UK Ambassadors

1:30 PM  Academic Skills Enhancement Strategies

3:00 PM  Break

3:30 PM  Time Management
4:30 PM  Free Time

6:30 PM  Reception for Students and their Parents with President Todd
Gift to Students: Class of XXXX Jacket and IPOD
Gift to Parents: “Proud Parent of Future UK Student” Bumper Sticker
Magnet with telephone numbers of UK faculty and staff if they have questions
Community Service
Diversions
Eating
Events
Learning
Living
Resources and Services
Special Programs
Student Organizations
Working

Community Service

- Community Service-Learning
- Virtual Leadership Center

Diversions

- Campus Recreation Services
- Intramural Sports
- Sport Clubs
- Golf Course
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Movies
- Hoff Theater information and schedules.
- Stamp Union Ticket Office
- Student Entertainment Events (SEE)
- University of Maryland Observatory
- Weekends at Maryland

Eating On Campus

- Dining Services
- Quick Food and Cafés
- Restaurants
- Stamp Student Union Food Court

Events

- Today @ Maryland
- The University’s main calendar
- Academic Calendar
- Alumni Calendar
- Call 1-800-336-UMCP or e-mail the Alumni Association.
- Art Gallery
- Athletic Schedules

Campus Recreation Services (CRS) has some of the most advanced recreation, sports and fitness facilities in the nation.

The CRS facilities include the new Campus Recreation Center (CRC), Reckord Armory, Ritchie Coliseum, and the weight and fitness areas in the Health and Human Performance (HHP) building.
Learning

Arts and Humanities
- Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies Programs
- Digital Technology in the Arts and Humanities Events
- History Department Events
- Linguistics Department Colloquia

Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Dept. of Economics Seminars and Workshops
- Scientific Research on the Internet

Business
- Decision and Information Technologies Department Seminars

Education
- Center for Children, Relationships and Culture
- Education Policy, Planning, and Administration Events

Engineering
- Chemical Engineering Seminars
- Civil Engineering
- Institute for Systems Research Colloquia and Seminars

Journalism
- Seminars

Libraries
- College of Library and Information Studies Events

Public Affairs
- Brody Public Policy Forum
- Center for International Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM) Forums

Science and Technology
- Astronomy Colloquia
- Chemistry and Biochemistry Research Seminars
- Computer Science Lectures
- Distinguished Lecturer Series
- Math Department Seminars
- Meteorology Seminars
- Physics is Phun
- UMIACS Computational Linguistics Colloquium Series
- University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies (UMIACS) Logic and AI Seminar Series
- University of Maryland Observatory
- University of Maryland Space and Cosmic Ray Physics Seminar
- Web Clinics, Academic Information Technology Services
- Summer Sessions

Living

Residence Halls
- Off-Campus Apartments and Housing
- Graduate Housing
- Specialty Housing