

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COLLEGE CHOICE  
OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS ADMITTED TO  
THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

---

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
University of Missouri-Columbia

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

---

By  
MARVIN J. BURNS

Dr. Bryan L. Garton, Thesis Supervisor

AUGUST 2006

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COLLEGE CHOICE  
OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS ADMITTED TO  
THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Presented by Marvin J. Burns

A candidate for the degree of Master of Science in Agricultural Education

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

---

Bryan L. Garton, Associate Professor

---

Rob Terry, Professor

---

James N. Spain, Associate Professor

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to give thanks to my Lord and savior Jesus Christ for the many blessings small and large that I am bestowed in every moment of my life. Without his love and sacrifice none of this would be possible. I pray that my actions are a reflection of his love and light.

To my wife who is truly a gift and blessing from GOD. I know she was meant for me. I want to thank her for everything - for the long nights of writing, the piles of papers around the computer, the proof reading support and just being patient with me, when being patient with me couldn't have been easy. I'll love you for ninety nine years and one day after that.

To my parents, Marvin and Patricia Burns, who are a continual source of support encouragement, wisdom, and love. I'm so happy GOD gave me and my brother to you guys. Thank you for all your work, sacrifice, and patience. You two are real life Super Heroes!

To Dr. Bryan Garton, thank you so very much for taking me on as an advisee. You kept me on task and kept me motivated to keep me moving forward when I didn't think I could move at all. I can hear you saying my name, "Marvin!" as I'd come into your office and thinking to myself, I hope he didn't use up all of his green ink on this rewrite. I really do appreciate your persistence.

Dr. Rob Terry, meeting you after almost a year of emails solidified my decision to pursue a graduate degree in Agricultural Education at MU. I felt like you'd take care of me if I came here and that I wouldn't become just another graduate student you'd be

dealing with until graduation. Thanks for doing what you do and being as personable as you are.

Ce Ce Leslie, thank you for taking me on as the first Minority Student Recruiter for CAFNR. I know for a while there we were both trying to figure out just what that was, but once we got it together I felt we worked together wonderfully. I hope I was always a positive reflection on you and on CAFNR.

With those whom I've crossed paths personally, professionally, and socially during this journey and I know you are many, our interactions were meant to be and please know that it was destined by a power greater than us all. I am thankful to have been in your presence and pray the positive impact you've made on me has been reciprocated.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
ABSTRACT .....	viii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Theoretical Framework .....	4
Statement of the Problem .....	9
Significance of Study .....	11
Purpose of the Study .....	12
Research Objectives .....	13
Definitions .....	13
Assumptions .....	14
Limitations .....	15
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	16
Purpose of the Study .....	16
Introduction to Theoretical Models .....	16
Student Characteristics .....	20
Socioeconomic Status .....	21
Student Aptitudes/Attitudes .....	23
Educational Occupations/Aspirations .....	23
High School Performance .....	24
Significant Persons .....	25
Family .....	26
Peers/Friends .....	27
High School Personnel .....	27
Fixed College Characteristics .....	28
Cost/Financial Aid .....	28
Geographic Location, Size and Environment .....	29
College Efforts to Communicate with Student .....	31
Psychological, Social Barriers, and Curricular Awareness .....	32
Summary .....	33
METHODOLOGY .....	34
Purpose and Research Objectives .....	34
Research Design .....	35

Population .....	35
Instrumentation .....	36
Data Collection .....	36
Data Analysis .....	37
<b>FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Purpose of the Study .....	38
Population .....	38
Response Rate .....	38
Findings Reported by Objective .....	38
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
Purpose and Research Objectives .....	45
Research Design.....	46
Population .....	46
Instrumentation .....	46
Data Collection .....	47
Data Analysis .....	48
Summary of the Findings.....	48
Conclusions and Implications .....	51
Recommendations.....	55
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELCTION OF A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY QUESTIONNAIRE TO MATRICULANTS .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: INITIAL LETTER/EMAIL TO MATRICULANTS .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELCTION OF A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY QUESTIONNAIRE TO NON-MATRICULANTS .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: INITIAL LETTER/EMAIL TO NON-MATRICULANTS.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: INITIAL EMAIL ADDRESS REQUEST.....</b>	<b>79</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: <i>College-Choice Process: Stages, Factors, and Outcomes</i> .....	7
Table 2: <i>Admissions Criteria for Matriculants and Non-Matriculant</i> .....	39
Table 3: <i>Resident Status of Matriculants and Non-Matriculants</i> .....	39
Table 4: <i>Sources of Information used and Usefulness of the Information</i> .....	41
Table 5: <i>Extent to Which Characteristics of the College Influenced College</i> .....	42
Table 6: <i>Level of Influence of Individuals College Choice Process</i> .....	43
Table 7: <i>Level of Influence of Social Interactions</i> .....	43
Table 8: <i>Time When College Choice Process Began</i> .....	44

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Model of Influencers on Student College Choice .....	5
Figure 2: African American High School Students; Perceptions of Race-Related College Choice Factors .....	6
Figure 3: Enrollment of African Americans .....	10



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COLLEGE CHOICE  
OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS ADMITTED TO  
THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MARVIN J. BURNS

DR. BRYAN L. GARTON, THESIS SUPERVISOR

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe factors contributing to the college choice of African-American students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU).

The population for this study was of 22 African-American students admitted to CAFNR at the University of Missouri – Columbia for the Fall 2005 semester. The response rate for matriculants was 58% and for non-matriculants it was 20%.

The data revealed little difference in admission criteria between matriculants and non-matriculants. When compared to African-American residents, non-Missouri residents were less likely to attend MU. The most used and most useful source of information for matriculants was a visit to campus. The most influential institutional characteristic for matriculants was availability of scholarships. Relatives who attended MU were the most influential on the matriculants' college decision to attend MU. Campus residential halls were most influential on social interactions for matriculants and 70% of these students began the college choice process in the tenth grade.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout the United States, institutions of higher education recognize the value of recruiting students from various ethnic backgrounds. These institutions have adopted recruitment strategies to attract students who represent the diversity found in our society. In recent years, enrollment of Asian-Americans, Latinos, and African-Americans in higher education has increased; however, the increase has not been in proportion to the increase of these groups in the general population of the United States (Oesterreich, 2000). In 1980, African-Americans represented nine percent of all students enrolled in colleges and universities and in 2000 they comprised 11% of the total enrollment (Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003). In contrast in both of these years, African-Americans represented approximately 13% of the United States' general population. Likewise, the enrollment percentages of Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islanders also increased in the same time span (Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003). Trends in enrollment for these ethnic groups presents a challenge as well as an opportunity for universities nationwide to develop specific recruitment strategies to appeal to greater proportions of African-American youth with an interest in continuing their academic careers at post-secondary educational institutions (PEIS).

Post-secondary institutions across the country have implemented programs and recruitment strategies aimed specifically at increasing the enrollment of minority youth. However, these activities have not always been based on empirical research of the college choice process (Washburn, 2002). Determining the specific strategies most effective, particularly when recruiting African-American youth, requires an understanding of not

only the college choice process for African-American youth, but also students' perception of the respective institution. Yet, there has been a limited amount of research conducted to determine the impact of these recruitment strategies toward the enrollment of African-American youth in higher education. Thus, remedies for solving the problem of post secondary education for these groups is often limited to creation of programs with a set of specific components such as college preparation courses, test preparation workshops, and in completing financial aid applications forms (Bartholome, 1994). Even though programs like these are necessary, they are not sufficient for effectively assisting minority and lower income students in achieving their post secondary educational attainment (Oakes, Quartz, Gong, Guiton, & Lipton, 1993).

College choice theorists have researched the factors influencing students' decision making process when selecting PEIS. Freeman (1999), however, pointed out that there continues to be a huge void in the literature examining this process relative to underrepresented groups, especially African-Americans. College choice theorists, Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989) defined student college choice as:

A complex, multistage process during which an individual develops aspirations to continue formal education beyond high school, follow later by a decision to attend a specific college, university or institution of advanced vocational training (p. 234)

If PEIS are to develop recruitment strategies for minority youth, they need to understand why African-American and Latino students are particularly likely to attend less selective institutions, regardless of their levels of demonstrated academic ability (McDonough, 2000). A firm grasp on how ethnicity affects students' college choice is pertinent to

developing recruitment strategies to attract minority and underrepresented youth to more selective institutions.

College choice theorists state that numerous factors lead students to their final college choice and their decision to attend a particular institution. There are college choice models that address factors such as socioeconomic status or income level (Hearn, 1984), religious differences (Litten & Brodigan, 1982), geographic differences between a student's home and institution location (Paulsen, 1990), demographic differences (Cibik, 1982) as well as academic reputation (Baksh & Hoyt, 2001). Studies have shown that these factors, as well as many others such as perceptions of the institution, affect a student's college choice process and each contribute differently to the overall college choice process. The influence of ethnicity is just one more factor in this complex and demanding college choice process and PEIS must recognize this when examining students' college choice, especially when dealing with African-American youth. While Washburn (2002) contended that the influences of these factors are evident in literature, the factors are often beyond the control of the institution. Freeman (1997) argued that the failure of student choice models and programs to increase African-American participation in higher education might be due to a lack of understanding how these models and programs would work specifically within the context of African-American culture.

Certainly, a thorough comprehension of the college choice process and how specific factors, such as race and students' perception of a specific PEI, is necessary in helping focus recruiter's efforts with respect to time and resources. According to Aston and Nunez-Wormack (1991), the better integrated it [minority recruiting] is with the college's educational programs and services, the more opportunity it will have for success.

Understanding the college choice process for African-American students is the responsibility of the PEIS, and not just individual departments or programs. Ideally, an institutional wide effort conceived as a process rather than a program, recruitment of minority students would optimally engage all constituencies of the college--faculty, administrators, staff, and students--in a well-developed and deliberate plan designed to achieve specific, reasonable goals (Aston & Nunez-Wormack, 1991). Studies to assess recruitment strategies that not only focus on college preparation for minority youth, but also address the role of students' college choice and college perception, are tools that would help college recruiters at traditionally white institutions address issues such as the enrollment of African-American youth.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the work of David W. Chapman (1981), Kassie Freeman (1999), and Alberto Cabrera and Steven La Nasa (2000). These three theoretical frameworks incorporate various aspects of the college choice process that are significant to this study.

The first model by Chapman (1981) suggested that there are two specific domains, which affect a student's college choice (Figure 1). The two domains are student characteristics, which includes a student's socioeconomic status (SES) external influences on the student's college choice, such as persons significant to the student and the college cost. According to Chapman, the factors in these two domains precede the student's college choice and "Entry to College".

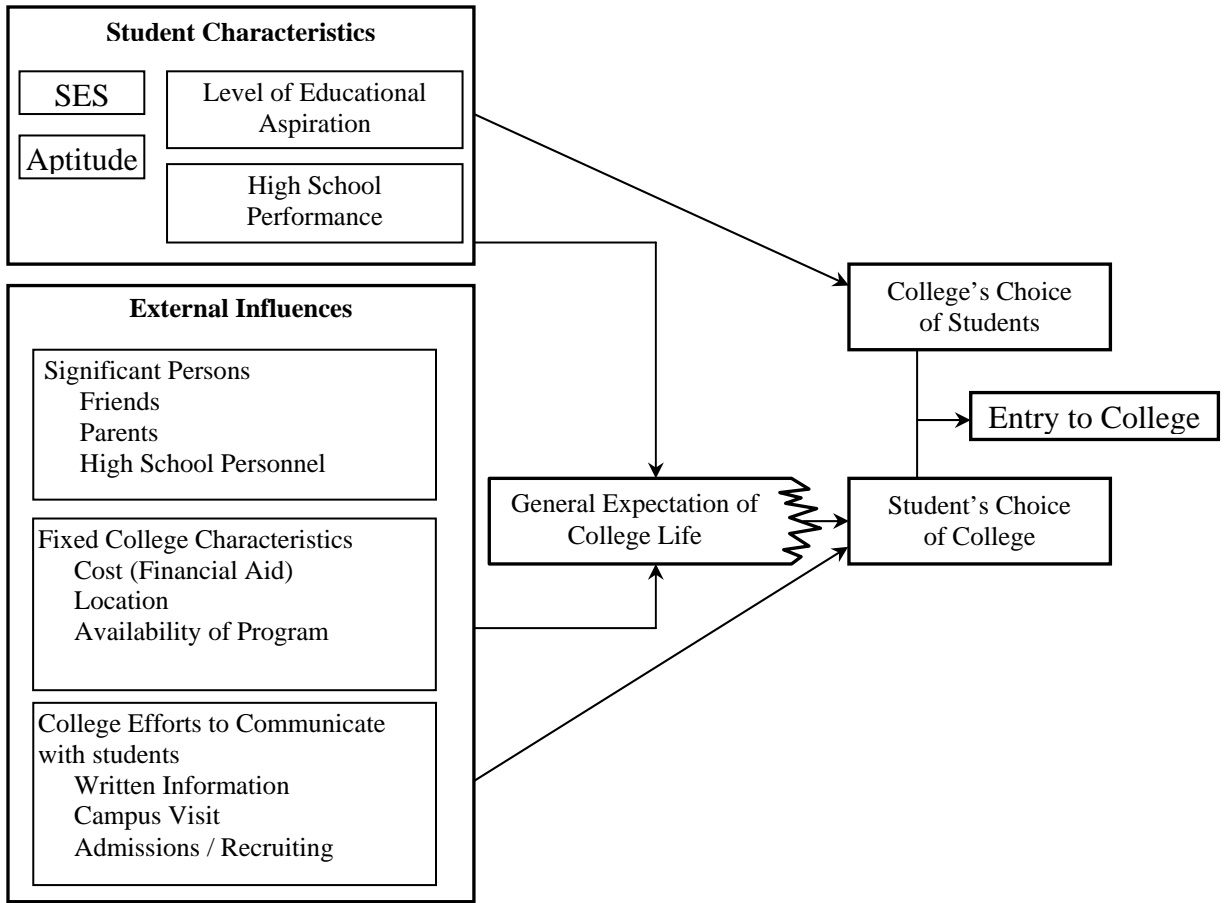
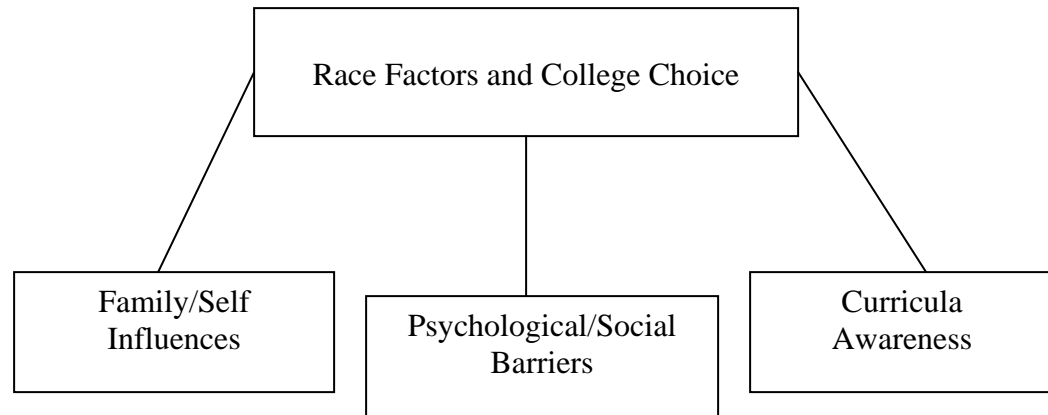


Figure 1. Chapman's Model of Influences on Student College Choice (Chapman, 1981).

Freeman's (1999) model categorizes three domains or stages that affect African-American student's perceptions and influence college choice (Figure 2). The three domains identified in Freeman's model are Family or Self Influences, Psychological or Social barriers, and Curricula Awareness.



*Figure 2.* African American High School Students' Perceptions of Race-Related College Choice Factors.

Freeman's model was conceptualized after interviewing several African-American college students' enrolled in predominately white institutions as well as some historically black institutions. Through her study Freeman concluded that Family or Self Influences, Psychological and Social barriers, as well as Cultural Awareness were the three primary influences on the college choice of African American students.

The three domains of Freeman's model are a summation of the factors which participants of her study categorized as influencers in their college decision making process. Freeman illustrated that the African-American students in her study felt need to go beyond their family's level of education and this influenced students aspirations to pursue higher education. Freeman also concluded that these students are self motivated in their decision to attend college. Likewise she observed psychological barriers as well as social barrier towards attainment for many students either to pursue or not pursue college. Lastly Freeman found that the cultural awareness through curriculum where students perceived their culture was not appreciated or included in curriculum where it was relevant.

The final model on the college choice process, taken from Cabrera and La Nasa (2000), emphasizes three distinct phases or stages in which a high school student's college choice is determined (Table 1). Each of these three stages has particular cognitive and affective outcomes that cumulatively prepare high school students to make decisions regarding their college education.

Table 1

*College-Choice Process: Stages, Factors, and Outcomes*

Stages	Factors	Outcomes
Predispositions: Grades 7-9	Parental encouragement and support Parental saving for college Socioeconomic status Parental collegiate experiences High school academic resources Student ability Information about college	Reading, writing, math, and critical thinking skills Career occupational aspirations Educational aspirations Enrollment in college-bound curriculum
Search: Grades 10-12	Parental encouragement and support Educational aspirations Socioeconomic status Saliency of potential institutions Student ability High school academic resources	Listing of tentative institutions Narrowing list of tentative institutions Securing information on institutions
Choice: Grades 11-12	Educational aspirations Occupational aspirations Socioeconomic status Student Ability Parental encouragement Perceived institutional attributes (quality, campus life, majors, availability, distance) Perceived ability to pay (perceived resources, perceived cost)	Awareness of college expenses and financial aid Awareness of institutional attributes and admissions standards Attaining scholastic aptitudes and attributes Perceived support from family and friends Institutional commitment Submission of applications Preregistration Attendance Application for financial aid



Chapman's model, which indicates high school performance and fixed college characteristics, such as cost, location and availability of programs are key factors directly related to the student's general expectation of college life and precedes the student's college choice. However, research has documented that African-Americans are more cost conscious in their college selection than Anglo students (Hoyt & Brown, 2004). Therefore, according to these researchers, the cost of attending an institution could lead an African-American student to their final college choice more quickly than Chapman suggested.

In the context of the Chapman model, Freeman domains all fall under the inclusive domain of external influences. Likewise, Cabrera and La Nasa's model is a combination of the two domains of Chapman's model, stratified by the student's grade level, and also encompasses domains of Freeman's model such as Family/Self-influences and Curricula awareness on student's college choice.

Where Freeman's model diverges from the Chapman and the Cabrera and La Nasa model is by including the influence of ethnicity on the college choice process and particularly its focus on African-American. Freeman's model also addresses social barriers as they relate to the college choice of African-American students as well as the importance of curricula awareness and could infer a lack of communication between colleges and prospective minority students. Research has shown that underserved minorities who are primarily first-generation, college-bound students are constrained by a lack of knowledge of the collegiate experience, as well as by a lack of trained professionals to advise them (McDonough, 2004).

Lastly, while Chapman's model speaks to the overall picture of the college choice process and Freeman speaks to the affect race has on the process, Cabrera and La Nasa include specific factors of the college choice process not directly addressed in the first two models. The Cabrera and La Nasa model includes the occupational aspirations of student as an important factor that leads students to their final college choice. Cabrera and La Nasa stated that students will realize the value of a particular occupation as early as seventh grade and will start to realize that attending college as crucial in securing their occupational goals. Cabrera and La Nasa also expressed that there are potential stages of development for junior high/high school students where they are most likely to be considering particular aspects of the college choice process. Their model, on some levels, gives an approximate timeline in which PEIS could coordinate their recruitment strategies to maximize the influence on students' final college choice.

### **Statement of the Problem**

No data exists to suggest that the recruitment strategies employed by the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri-Columbia have an influence on the college choice process of African-American students. Currently, the University analyzes enrollment data in its annual Enrollment Summary (2003). This summary includes data for all students who apply to the University of Missouri that are admitted the University of Missouri and the number of students that enroll, or matriculate to the University of Missouri by gender and ethnicity. However, CAFNR does not analyze data by ethnicity to determine if recruitment strategies influence students' college choice.

Using enrollment data from the Food and Agricultural Education Information System (FAEIS) it records the number of undergraduate African-American students enrolled in 55 separate agricultural degree programs for the 2002, 2003, and 2004 academic years for all 1862, 1890, 1994 Land-Grant and Non-Land-Grant Institutions. From these data, the total enrollment for MU and CAFNR follow similar trends for the enrollment of African-Americans enrolled in undergraduate agriculture and natural related sciences degrees nationally from the 2002 to 2004. These data are displayed in Figure 3.

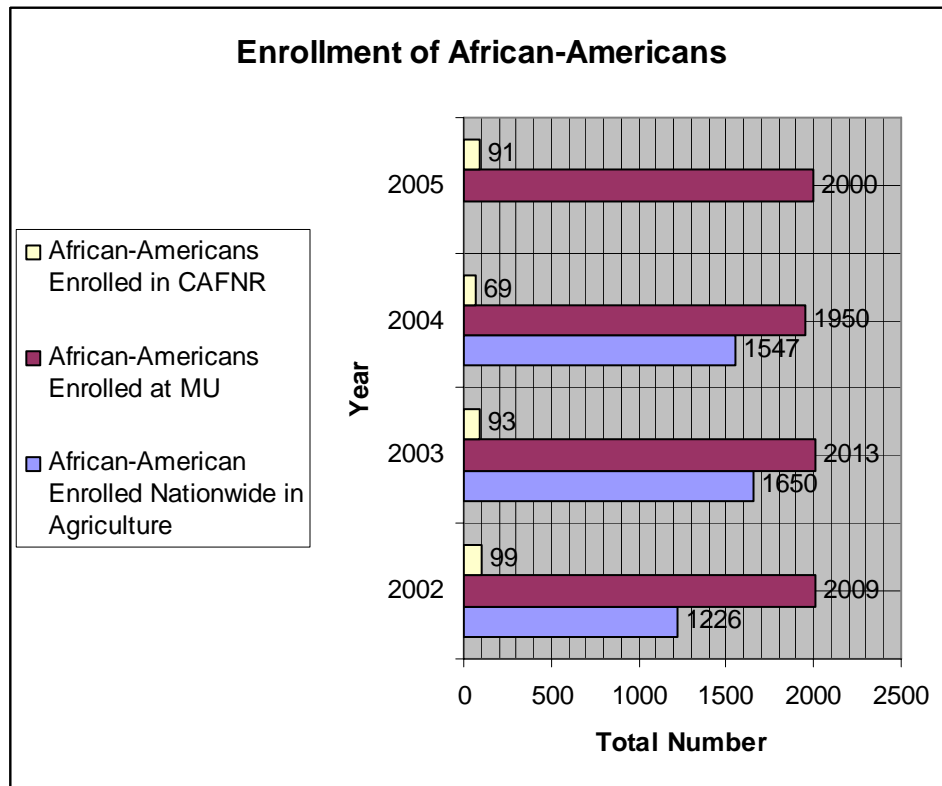


Figure 3. Enrollment of African-Americans in Agriculture

There could be multiple factors influencing the matriculation of African-Americans to higher education. However, Freeman stated (1999) that there is a decline in interest in participating in higher education among many African-American high school students.

This decrease in interest for African-Americans could translate into a decrease in collegiate enrollment and explain the variation by academic year in the national enrollment in agriculture and related sciences as well as the enrollment trends for CAFNR first time African-American students. Freeman (1999) went on to state that educators and policy makers agree that current programs have little influence on increasing the desire of many African-Americans to participate in higher education.

At the present time, the data to assess past recruitment practices and how these practices affect the matriculation and non-matriculation of admitted African-American students has not been analyzed. Furthermore, because of an increase in the percentage of enrolled African-American students in colleges of agriculture and natural resources nationwide, combined with the decrease in interest of this group to participate in higher education, CAFNR should consider examining how its recruitment strategies influence students' decision to enroll or not enroll at the university. This study will provide CAFNR with data to focus recruitment efforts and make recommendations for future recruitment strategies for African-American college students.

### **Significance of the Study**

The decision to attend college is predicated by a variety of factors that affect a student's college choice and these factors have been studied in some detail (Hossler et al 1989; Chapman 1981; Hearn 1984; Litten & Brodigan, 1982; Paulsen 1990; Cibik, 1982, Baksh & Hoyt, 2001). However, there exist little data for recruiters to determine how recruitment strategies affect the college choice process of African-American college students in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU).

While some college theorist (Anderson & Hearn, 1992) have discussed the direct and indirect influences of ethnicity and whether students choose to participate in higher education (Freeman 1999), few studies have assessed how recruitment strategies affect the college choice process for non-matriculant minority/underrepresented groups. Through an analysis of the strategies used to recruit minority students, data obtained could indicate which strategies have the greatest impact on the college choice of matriculates to CAFNR. A study of the perceptions of recruitment activities and the affects on matriculant students could provide empirical data and insight into which recruitment activities have been effective for African-American students.

Thorough analysis of the recruitment data will provide CAFNR with an assessment of its recruitment strategies for the first-time college bound and African-American students. The data will present a reference point for CAFNR to address strengths and weaknesses in its recruitment of African-American students.

### **Propose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe factors attributing to the college choice of African-American students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU). The study focused on the significant persons, fixed college characteristics, college efforts to communicate with students (Chapman, 1981), psychological/social barriers (Freeman, 1999) and occupational expectations of the students (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000) as indicators of final college choice. The study further sought to compare differences in the factors toward enrollment between the enrolled and non-enrolled African-American students in CAFNR.

## **Research Objectives**

The following research objectives were developed to guide the study:

1. Describe and compare African-American matriculants versus non-matriculants based on admissions criteria and resident status.
2. Describe and compare the sources of information used most frequently by African-American matriculants and non-matriculants in the college choice process.
3. Describe the degree to which African-American matriculants and non-matriculants found the sources of information useful.
4. Describe and compare the extent to which characteristics of the institution influenced the college choice of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
5. Compare the level of influence of select individuals in the college choice process of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
6. Describe and compare the level of influence of social interaction characteristics on the college choice process of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
7. Identify when African-Americans matriculants and non-matriculants began to make their college choice.

## **Definitions**

The following terms used in this study were as follows:

Admitted: Students officially admitted to the University of Missouri - Columbia.

Applicant: A prospective student who submitted a formal request for admission to the University of Missouri - Columbia

Matriculants: Students who enrolled and attended the University of Missouri - Columbia.

Non-Matriculants: Students admitted to the University of Missouri - Columbia yet choose not to enroll as a student.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions apply to this study:

1. Factors such as student characteristics and external influences, including family/self influences, psychological/social barriers, as well as student's predisposition at various stages of the student's high school development are basis for final college choice.
2. Significant people in a student's life have influence in his/her college choice.
3. Students of the study were capable of recalling the recruitment activities in which they had participated.
4. The students had received mailed publications from MU Admissions Office or MU Collegiate Departments prior to making their final college choice.
5. The opinions of the participants reflect their perception of recruitment activities attended.
6. The students in this study were representative of the African-American first time college students enrolled at MU.
7. The instrument (developed based on findings from previous research) accurately measured variable of interest for admitted students (Washburn, 2002).

### **Limitations**

1. The data collected is limited to first time African-American college students admitted enrolled and not enrolled to the University of Missouri for the Fall 2005

and Winter 2006 Semesters. Results and findings are generalized to participants within this period.

2. Participant's opinions of the recruitment efforts they received may have changed since they have entered their academic program at MU.
3. Participants may have changed majors since their initial declaration of major at their initial enrollment.
4. Data on mailing addresses for some of the student may have changed since they enrolled or did not enroll at MU.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Propose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe factors attributing to the college choice of African-American students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU). The study focused on the significant persons, fixed college characteristics, college efforts to communicate with students, (Chapman 1981), psychological/social barriers (Freeman 1999), and occupational expectations of the students (Cabrera & La Nasa 2000) as indicators of final college choice. The study further sought to compare differences in factors toward enrollment between the enrolled and non-enrolled African-American students in CAFNR.

#### **Introduction to Theoretical Models**

Several theoretical models have been suggested to describe the factors that influence student's matriculation to a specific university. Each of these theoretical models describes the various processes by which a high school student selects a college. The conceptual approaches to describing the college choice process and factors that lead students to their college choice can be found in three models. (Hossler et al, 1989) These three categories of college choice models are the economic, sociological, and combined models.

Economic models emphasize college choice between enrollment in a Post Secondary Educational Institution (PEI) or the pursuit of a non collegiate alternative, (Kohn, Manski, and Mudel, 1976; Bishop, 1977; Fuller, Manski and Wise, 1983; Nolfi, 1978) and choosing one PEI from other PEI (Radner & Miller, 1970; Kohn et al., 1976; R.

Chapman, 1979). Economists are interested in the relationships between the attributes of “goods” (e.g college and job characteristics) and individual choices (Jackson, 1982).

Research indicates that individuals will select a particular PEIS if the benefits of attending outweigh the perceived benefits of attending other PEIS or a non college alternative (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1985). The economic model emphasizes the decision-making process of students and their families and the variety of ways in which different student’s rate and use the college attributes to make their final college choice. (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999)

Sociological models were developed from educational and status attainment research, focusing on the aspirations of individuals desiring to pursue a PEI. The sociological model specifies a variety of social and individual factors leading to a student’s occupational and educational aspirations (Jackson, 1982). In the derivative model developed by Blau and Duncan (1967), family socioeconomic background and student academic ability are predicted to have a joint positive effect on aspirations for college. (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1985) Sociological models of college choice have focused on the identification and interrelationship of factors including parental encouragement (Sewell & Shah, 1978), influence of significant others (Chapman, 1981) and academic performance (Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969) as indicators of enrollment in PEIS.

Combined models utilize the most powerful indicators in the decision-making process from the economic and social models, providing a conceptual framework that predicts the effects of policy-making interventions (Hossler et al, 1985). There exist various types of combined models which contain multiple stages of the college choice

process. There are two general categories of combined models: a three-stage model (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Jackson, 1982; Hanson & Litten, 1982) and a multistage model typically containing between five and seven stages (Litten, 1982; Kotler, 1976; Chapman, 1984). The Hossler and Gallagher (1987) three stage model emphasizes aspiration, search, and choice. It is viewed as the “simplified, ‘collapsed’ version of the other” (Hossler et al, 1985, p.241). The major differences between the models are the descriptions of the intervening variables or characteristics and how they define institution activity to encourage student enrollment (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1985).

The theoretical framework from which this study is based is derived from the models of Chapman (1981), Freeman (1999) and Cabrera and La Nasa (2000).

Chapman’s college choice model was developed to:

“assist college administrators responsible for setting recruiting policy to identify the pressures and influence they need to consider in developing institutional recruiting policy and aid continued research in the area of student college choice” (page 490-491)

Chapman combined model (see Figure 1 Page 5) suggests a set of student characteristics in combination with a set of external influence which ultimately leads students to their college choice. The student characteristics include socioeconomic status, educational aptitude, high school performance and level of educational aspirations. External influences are grouped into three categories: significant persons, fixed college characteristics, and college effort to communicate with the students.

Freeman's college choice model (See Figure, Page 5) suggests the college choices of African-American students are influenced by family/self influences, psychological/social barriers, and curricula awareness.

Freeman's model addresses specifically the African American high school students' perception of race-related college choice factors. Freeman's sociological choice model was intended to give a:

Qualitative inquiry across a range of cities, school, and family circumstances, and give its African American student an opportunity to express their insights in their own voices and provide valuable insights for researchers and policy makers, particularly as they relate to the continuing dialogue on racial/cultural factors in education in this country. (p. 6)

Freeman looks primarily at factors which, through research, have been shown to influence the college choice of an African-American high school student entering into predominately white institutions of higher education. While Freeman's model examines how race influences the college choice of this group, it also examines the process primarily from a sociological standpoint.

The Cabrera and La Nasa model (See Table 1, Page 7) illustrates the process students and their families undergo when making decisions about college "through cognitive and affective outcomes that cumulatively prepare high school students to make certain decisions regarding their college education" (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000, p. 5).

Cabrera and La Nasa's model is intended is to:

Summarize the process students and family undergo during the predisposition, search, and choice phases, which lead to specific outcomes at various stages by

grade level starting with the seventh grade and concluded with twelfth grade level of high school. In undergoing each phase of college-choice, high school student develop predisposition to attend college, search for general information about college and make choices leading them to enroll at a given institution of higher education. (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000, p. 5 - 6)

Cabrera and La Nasa's combined model examines the stages, factors, and outcomes associated with the college choice process. Within the distinct stages of the college choice process they illustrate the predisposition, search, and choice processes at each grade level.

The remainder of the literature review will focus on the Chapman (1981), Freeman (1999) and the Cabrera & La Nasa (2000) models of college choice. Aspects of the three models particularly the overlapping factors as well as those specific to all three models will be discussed in addition to reviewing factors unique to each model.

### **Student Characteristics**

A thorough examination of the student characteristics for individuals participating in the college choice process enhances the, "breadth and variety of characteristics that impact students' college choice." (Washburn, 2000, Page 17)

College choice theorists (e.g., Anderson & Hearn, 1992; Hearn, 1991; Hossler et al., 1989; McDonough, Antonio, & Trent, 1995) have indicated a number of influences including cultural and social capital, economic and financial capital, or some combination of the two on all students choosing or not choosing higher education participation. (Freeman, 2000, p. 8)

According to Hossler et al (1985), the demographics, geographic origins, socioeconomic backgrounds, aptitude, gender, family background and student career interest of students have been analyzed to build a profile of the characteristics of students entering individual institutions.

The Chapman (1981), Freeman (1999) and Cabrera and La Nasa's (2000) models all illustrate aspects of student characteristics as an influencing factor to college selection. Each of these three models examine the influence of socioeconomic status on college enrollment, high school achievement or academic ability and educational aspiration as characteristic of students which researchers have concluded influence how students conclude their college choice. Freeman's model in particular addresses at the student characteristic of race as it influences college choice for African-American high school students. Hossler et al (1985) stated that socioeconomic status is positively associated with a predisposition to attend a PEI. In addition to a family's socioeconomic level or status, researchers have identified a student's academic ability as a predictor of students' participation in higher education (Freeman, 1999).

### **Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

Chapman's model examines socioeconomic status as a factor shown to influence the likelihood of a student's college choice at a particular institution which is relative to institutional cost. As SES relates to race, Mow and Nettles (1985) found that minority students were more likely than White students to come from social and economic backgrounds that are distinctly disadvantaged. However, further research concluded that minorities from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds had no significant

relationship with attrition at any stage of the college career (Nettles et al, 1986; Kohen et al 1978, cited in Mow & Nettles, 1985).

The Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) and Freeman (1999) models both illustrate the influence of SES on student educational attainment through family social and economic contribution to their child's college attainment. Chapman's (1981) model adds the affect of family income as an influencing factor to a student's college choice within the realm of SES. Freeman (1999) pointed out the added cultural and social capital are directly related to the education levels of the student's parents, thereby influencing a student predisposition to pursue higher education. The Cabrera and La Nasa model illustrates and mirrors the other two models in its examination of the relationship between SES and college choice, but they define the "Parents Collegiate Experience" (PCE) as an indicator of college choice in their model.

Astin (1981) found that socioeconomic backgrounds were significantly related to student outcomes when all other environmental characteristics are controlled. Astin argued that the lower the family income, the poorer the minority student's chances are for success in term of academic achievement. However, Mow and Nettles (1985) added that how researchers define SES affects their finding on college choice. Ballesteros (1986) found that SES explained more about the variation on aptitude tests than it did the type of program a student enrolled in during high school. He concluded that the higher SES students are placed in college preparatory curriculums, score higher on aptitude tests, achieved better grades in high school and college, and aspire to higher degrees than their lower SES counterparts.

### **Student Aptitude/Ability**

Chapman's (1981) model examines students' aptitude or high school achievement as an external factor to college enrollment. Chapman also stated that students' aptitude is associated with their performance on college entrance exams. According to Manski and Wise (1983), a high school student's GPA and SAT scores are very strong indicators of their enrollment into higher education. Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) also stated that student's ability is an indicator of college attainment, but they also conclude that the "ability of the student seems to moderate the amount and quality of parental encouragement" (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000, p. 9). According to Hossler et al (1985) student ability and student achievement have a significant and direct impact upon the predisposition of high school students toward a postsecondary education. Whereas parental income does not influence a high school student predisposition to attend a PEI, parents' educational level does (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999). Zemsky and Oedel (1983) found that student ability was directly related to the selectivity of the PEI that a student applied to as well as where the institution was located.

### **Educational and Occupational Aspiration**

Cabrera and La Nasa (2000), Freeman (1999) and Chapman (1981) examined the influence of students' educational aspirations on their college choice decision. According to Cabrera and La Nasa (2000), it is during the predisposition stage that a student develops occupational and educational aspirations as well as the emergence of their intentions to continue beyond the secondary level. They cited parental encouragement, parental collegiate experiences and student aptitude/ability among the factors which guide students toward their educational aspirations.



According to Stage and Hossler (1987) the single most important predictor of postsecondary educational plans is the amount of encouragement and support parents give their children. Likewise, research by Hossler et al (1989) on occupational attainment indicates that parents provide the most encouragement to the child with the highest academic ability. Therefore, the greater the quality of parental encouragement, the higher the students' educational and occupational aspirations and the more likely they are to pursue higher education.

African-Americans are particularly influenced by the expectations of a job, or lack thereof, that is commensurate with their level of education (Freeman, 1997; St John, 1991; Thomas, 1980; cited in Freeman, 1999). Freeman (1997) stated that even when there are no family members educated beyond high school, there still tends to be a strong desire for African-American students to "go beyond the family's level of schooling" (p. 10). According to Mow and Nettles (1985), African-American students entering predominantly White institution success in college was dependent upon their aspirations and goals regardless of their high school performance or admission test scores. However, special attention may need to be given to African-American males, because the factors that influence their educational aspirations are less certain (Hossler, Schmit, & Vessler, 1999).

### **High School Performance & Resources**

The high school performance of a student is most likely quantified as a grad point average (GPA) or class rank, which is often a factor in the acceptance or rejection of an applicant to a PEI. GPA and class rank are tangible values by which a PEI can base its admissions; however, they are not the best indicators of which PEI a students selects to

attend. Chapman (1981) indicated that high school performance “may trigger a whole set of other responses to the student that, in turn, help shape college choice.” (p. 494). In Jackson’s (1982) research, he found a strong correlate of high school students’ aspiration (educational or occupational) to their academic achievement (p. 239). Therefore, the higher the performance of a student in high school, the higher the academic and occupational aspirations of the student. High achieving students are also “more likely to aspire to attend a PEI and they are more likely to follow through on their plans” (Hossler, et al, 1985, p. 253).

### **Significant Persons**

Studies of the college choice process have shown that a person’s decision to attend college is influenced by individuals with personal or social ties to the student. Shepard, Schmit, and Pugh (1992) show that parents, other family members, and, to a lesser extent, peers had the largest influence of students’ college aspirations. Chapman’s model includes the influence on high school personnel as an additional significant person in a student’s college choice process.

Research by Hossler et al (1999) on significant persons to a student college choice indicated that by the junior year, the search activities of the students rose dramatically from their sophomore year. That study showed that 43% of respondents reported that they spoke with friends, teachers, counselors, or parents about college. Another 61% took information from counselors and local libraries. In addition, 55% sent off for college information and 55 % visited one or more campuses. Consequently, by the end of the junior year, teachers and counselors played an important role in assisting students learn about specific institutions.

## **Family**

Descriptive and univariate analyses by Hossler et al (1999) revealed that students in the ninth grade who talked the most with their parents (rather than with peer, teachers, or counselors) about their postsecondary plans were more likely to be planning to attend college and were also more likely to be certain of their plans. Many studies have shown that parental encouragement is highly influential on a student's college choice. The research of Carpenter and Fleishman (1987) revealed that as the level of parental encouragement increased, student achievement also increased.

According to Cabrera and La Nasa (2000), parental encouragement has two dimensions; motivational and proactive. In the motivational stage, parents maintain high educational expectations for their children. During the proactive stage, parents become involved in school matters, discuss college plans with their children and save for college (Flint, 1992, 1993; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hossler & Vesper, 1993; Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1999; Miller, 1997; Perna, 200; Stage & Hossler, 1989).

The influence of the family towards college attainment for African Americans and the way the family imparts values differs from what the research indicates about the influence of the family towards college attainment for all students (Freeman, 1997; Wilson & Allen, 1987). Freeman's model also examined the sociological relationship between family backgrounds, particularly citing a definite difference in how African Americans conclude their college choice process. Educational theorist (Becker, 1975; Cohen, 1979; Shultz, 1961) refer to the influential role that education and occupation of the father plays in how African-Americans students choose to participate in higher

education and that the mother in the African American family also has a very significant influence upon her children.

### **Peers and Friends**

Several researchers (Coleman, 1966; Fasler & Haynes, 1984; Russell, 1980; Tillery, 1973) have examined the relationships between student interaction with other college bound students and their college participation. According to Hayden (2000), opinions of friends and former students weigh heavily on the minds of African American college applicants when deciding between colleges. These studies and others expound upon the knowledge that the more a high school student interacts with other students with college plans, the more likely they are to consider going to college.

Hossler and Stage (1987, as cited in Hossler et al., 1985) showed a correlation between non-college bound students and their non college bound peers. These researchers stated that students with peers with no college plans influence the predisposition phase of students; college choice. Their research also found that students who were not planning to attend a PEI were more likely to consult their peers. While parental encouragement still is considered the greatest influence on college attainment, the effect of student's peers does add an additional dynamic to the overall college choice process for high school students.

### **High School Personnel**

Researchers have studied the influence of high school personnel on the college choice of minority students (Ekstrom, 1985; Hossler & Stage, 1997; Lewis & Morrison, 1975). Research indicates that minority students are more likely to consult with counselors about their college choice. Leslie, Johnson, and Carlson (1977) reported

research data that shows that lower-SES students are most likely to rely on information about college from their high school counselor. These researchers contrasted that upper income students cite parents, students, catalogues, college representatives, and private guidance counselors as sources for information on their college search.

### **Fixed College Characteristics**

Chapman (1984) cited that fixed college characteristics are one of the external influences which influence a student's college choice. The fixed characteristics of cost (financial aid), college size, campus environment and availability of programs are for the most part under the control of the institution. According to Hossler et al. (1985), the fixed college characteristics are more likely to become important attributes during the search stage.

### **Cost and Financial Aid**

Tillery and Kildergaard (1973) stated that cost is more influential on whether a student attends college than it is on which college he or she attends. Cabrera and La Nasa (1999) pointed to research which consistently showed a significant negative relationship between tuition increases and enrollment. Leslie and Brinkman (1988), in an examination of twenty-five studies examining the connection between tuition and college enrollment, found that all the students were sensitive to tuition cost.

According to Hossler et al. (1985) 70% of student and 87% of parents indicated that they were either "well informed" or "informed" about financial aid programs and their eligibility for financial aid. Some theorist cited that receiving aid is more important than the amount of aid received, because that aid becomes the substantive way the institutions communicate that "we want you to be part of our community" (Jackson,

1978; Freeman, 1984; Abrahamson & Hossler, 1990). Hossler, Hu, and Schmit (1998) concluded that parents' willingness to contribute, regardless of family income, has some effect on tuition and financial aid sensitivity. Their research also concluded that for students of color, financial aid offers a vehicle in attracting them to specific institutions. Chapman (1984) stated that if cost is an obstacle for the college bound students, then financial aid should reduce or eliminate the problem. Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper (1999) found that financial aid lowers the net cost of attendance for student and parents, so the positive effects of financial aid may be strictly a lower net cost of attendance.

### **Geographic Location, Size and Environment**

Location of the PEI has a significant influence on the college choice of high school students according to Wajeed and Micceri (1997, cited in Wajeed and Micceri, 1998) Their research at the University of South Florida (USF) suggested that geographic locations (proximity) is a primary motivating factor for students choosing to attend USF. They concluded that First Time In College (FTIC) and students from community colleges show enrollment preferences for institutions in their home counties or regions. Zemesky and Oedel (1983) added that in states with a large and diverse range of PEIS, high school students were less likely to attend an out-of-state PEI. Jackson (1990, p. 530) stated that most students seriously consider only colleges located relatively near their homes and presenting no extraordinary financial or academic obstacles.

Proximity is an important factor according to So (1984) among minorities. Mow and Nettles (1985) cite that through demographic evidence the geographical distribution of minority enrollment in higher education, minorities frequently enroll in public two- and four-year colleges that are close to home. Payan, Peterson, & Castille, (1984)

indicated that for minority students, lower income as well as close family and community ties, leaves many of these student unable or reluctant to attend college that are not close to home.

The size of an institution has shown to have varying levels of influence on particular ethnic groups and is different between races and gender. According to Pascarella (1985, cited in Mow and Nettles):

Large institutions may be particularly deleterious for minority groups because their members appear in such small relative numbers that it may be difficult for them to find and join peer subgroups that would enhance their integration into the institution's social environment. (p. 69)

Supporting these findings, Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) slated that African-American students who enrolled in traditionally White institutions have often interacted socially with Whites and may manifest behaviors associated with the White culture. These researchers concluded that these students learned to become bicultural, developing a repertoire of expressions and behaviors from both the White and Black community and switching between them as appropriate.

Flowers and Pascarella's (2003) research of African-American and Caucasian students in 18 four-year institutions affirmed prior research (Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr, 2000; D'Augelli and Hershberger, 1993; Gossett, Cuyjet, & Cockriel, 1996; Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000) that African-American students were more likely than their Caucasian counterparts to perceive their college environment as unwelcoming and hostile. The Studies of minority students in higher education, particularly at predominately White institutions, have shown that the campus environment is positively related to the

persistence of minority students at these institutions and is a valuable factor in the college choice process.

### **College Efforts to Communicate with Students**

In a longitudinal study conducted in the state of Indiana from 1986 to 1994 Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper (1999) concluded that information sent to the student by college ranked highest in an analysis of the sources of information that students might use to learn more about a particular college. In interviews with these students, these researchers consistently found that students threw away information from schools not on their college choice list. Their finding suggested that students are less likely to read information from a college that they did not request information about

The research of Hossler et al. (1999) indicated that students, regardless of the type of institution they attended gave low rankings to college guides and college fairs. They found that students considered the visits to high schools and college admissions representatives to be more helpful than the fair itself. Kern (2000) stated that African-American high school students seek information on college from current college students, college admissions representatives and faculty. Sevier (1993) indicated that postsecondary institutions need to develop special communication strategies for this audience. Interviews with African-American students by Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) found a feeling of betrayal at receiving a false picture of inclusive campus activities during campus visits. Freeman's (1999) study indicated that bringing students to campus often makes them feel isolated or alienated because of the cultural differences even before they officially arrive on campus particularly for students attending predominately African-American high schools. Therefore, in some cases the college visit can do more



to discourage minority students from attending a college than it does to encourage them to attend the institution.

### **Psychological Social Barriers and Curricular Awareness**

There is research to suggest barriers and influence of race on the college choice process for minority groups (Gail, 2001; Hossler, Hu, & Schmit, 1998; Freeman, 1999; Kern, 2000). Mow and Nettles (1985) discussed the predominant race of the institution, racism and social integration as influences on the college choice process and attrition of African-Americans. Research by Freeman (1999) suggested African-Americans perceive real psychological or social barriers during the decision-making process to participate in higher education.

Freeman's (1999) study of 70 African-American students from inner-city schools in New York and Washington, DC, pointed to several factors including a lack of encouragement from significant figures as one of the reasons for the decline in African-American participation in higher education. In an interview, these students also added that they are not often exposed to the visible benefits of college attainment. Some students included what Freeman referred to as an intimidation factor with respect to college attainment.

Nettles Thoeny, and Gossman (1986) found that the quality of the college experience is significantly related to the college GPA of African-American students. Students in the 2002 research by Fries-Britt and Turner that they use energy that they would otherwise use in academics to deal with negative stereotypes of the African-American race in and outside of the classroom.

## Summary

The focus of this review was to examine research related to college choice of African-American students, particularly as it relates to postsecondary institutional attainment. Factors found to influence college choice for African-American students are numerous but this literature review was focused primarily on the factors included discussed by Freeman (1999), Chapman (1981) and Cabrera and La Nasa (2000).

Freeman's model focuses primarily on factors that influence the college choice process of African-American high school students. It includes factors of family/self influences, cultural, psychological as well as social barriers as they relates to race and college attainment. Freeman's model is primarily a sociological model and examination of the college choice for African-Americans.

Chapman's model examines the college choice process from student characteristics and a combination of external influence which leads a high school student to college attainment. The external categories are grouped into three main areas: significant persons, fixed college characteristics, and institutions efforts to communicate with students.

Cabrera and La Nasa model examines the stages, factors, and outcomes of students at the predisposition, search, and choice stages of prospective high school students. Their model looks at the factors influences students at various cohorts during their middle school and high school career as those influences relate to college choice and attainment.

**CHAPTER III**  
**METHODOLOGY**

**Propose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe factors attributing to the college choice of African-American students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU). The study focused on the significant persons, fixed college characteristics, college efforts to communicate with students (Chapman, 1981); the psychological/social barriers (Freeman, 1999); as well as the occupational expectations of the students (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000) as indicators of final college choice. The study further sought to compare differences in the factors toward enrollment between the enrolled and non-enrolled African-American students in CAFNR. The following research objectives were developed to guide the study:

1. Describe and compare African-American matriculants versus non-matriculants based on admissions criteria and resident status.
2. Describe and compare the sources of information used most frequently by African-American matriculants and non-matriculants in the college choice process.
3. Describe the degree to which African-American matriculants and non-matriculants found the sources of information useful.
4. Describe and compare the extent to which characteristics of the institution influenced the college choice of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
5. Compare the level of influence of select individuals in the college choice process

of African-American matriculants and non- matriculants.

6. Describe and compare the level of influence of social interaction characteristics on the college choice process of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
7. Identify when African-Americans matriculants and non-matriculants began to make their college choice.

### **Research Design**

The design of this study was descriptive survey research. According to Ary et al. (2002) survey research uses instruments to gather information from groups of subjects. They also define descriptive research as research that asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of variables; it involves describing but not manipulating variables.

### **Population**

The population for this study consisted of 22 African-American students admitted to CAFNR at the University of Missouri – Columbia. The students first semester of enrollment was fall 2005. There were no sampling techniques used due to the small size of the population.

The students were identified by the Academic Programs Office in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and include all African-Americans admitted to the College for the fall 2005 semester. The group included 12 matriculates and 10 non-matriculates.

## **Instrumentation**

The instrument used in data collection was previously developed by Washburn (2002). The instrument was modified to address influences of college choice which research has shown to influence the decision making process of African-Americans. The individual items in the instrument were measured on a five-point Likert-scale. The modified instrument was approved by the University of Missouri – Columbia Institutional Review Board.

The instrument was assessed for reliability by the developer through a field test with a group of 34 students enrolled in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. A Spearman-Brown Split-half reliability analysis resulted in a .70 reliability coefficient, which Washburn (2002) determined to be an adequate level of reliability.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection process utilized Dillman's (1994) survey research techniques. On March 20, 2006 prior to mailing the questionnaire the non-matriculants were called or emailed to confirm the accuracy of their permanent address, as provided on their initial admission application to the University of Missouri - Columbia. The matriculants were also called or emailed on the March 20 to confirm the best address to receive the questionnaire. On March 24 non-matriculants and matriculants were sent a pre-notice letter. This pre-notice letter to non-matriculants and matriculants addressed the importance of the questionnaire, the selection process, the method of participation and how the information they provide on said questionnaire would be utilized.

On March 30 a questionnaire packet was mailed to the matriculants and non-matriculants. The questionnaire packet included an introductory letter describing the

research, the questionnaire, and self-addressed stamped return envelope.

On April 14 the non-matriculant and matriculant participants were emailed or called to verify receipt of the questionnaire and encouraged to complete or send their completed questionnaire. The researcher left, voice mail messages or email messages with matriculants, written messages with persons answering phones at the permanent addresses, as well as email messages with contact information for the researcher if the student participant had comments or additional questions.

On April 21 participants that had not returned their questionnaire were sent a reminder letter. On April 28 an additional questionnaire packet including an introductory letter describing the research, the questionnaire, the self-addressed stamped return envelope were sent to non-responders.

On May 14 participants who had not returned their questionnaire were emailed or called to verify receipt of second questionnaire and encouraged to complete the questionnaire. On May 19 participants who indicated they had not received the second questionnaire were mailed a third questionnaire packet. Data collection ended June 10.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using SPSS/PC. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, cumulative percentages, means, minimums, maximums, and standard deviations were used to describe the data.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe factors attributing to the college choice of African-American students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU).

#### **Population**

The population consisted of 22 African-Americans students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia for the fall 2005 semester. The population included 12 matriculants and 10 non-matriculants. There were no sampling techniques used due to the small size of the population.

#### **Response Rate**

Seven questionnaires out of a possible 12 were received from the matriculant group for a 58% response rate. Two questionnaires were received from the non-matriculant group for a 20% response rate. A comparison of the matriculants and non-matriculants could not be satisfied given the low response rate of the non-matriculant group; therefore, the non-matriculants were dropped from research objectives two through seven.

#### **Findings Reported by Objectives**

##### *Research Objective One – Admissions Criteria and Residential Status*

To address the first research objective, descriptive statistics comparing the

admission criteria and residential status of the matriculants and non-matriculants were reported (Table 2).

Table 2

*Admissions Criteria for Matriculants and Non-Matriculants*

<i>Criteria</i>	<u>Matriculants (n = 12)</u>		<u>Non-Matriculants (n = 10)</u>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School Core GPA	3.21	.45	2.94	.58
High School Class Rank (%)	75.9	21.5	72.0	24.3
ACT Composite Score	20.9	3.08	23.6	3.41
University Predicted GPA	2.48	.47	2.36	.56

The mean high school core GPA for matriculants was 3.21 on a 4.0 GPA scale and 2.94 for non-matriculants. The high school class rank for matriculants was 75.9 and 72.0 for the non-matriculants. The ACT composite scores were 20.9 for matriculants and 23.6 for non-matriculants. The University predicted GPA is calculated using a formula which utilizes high school core GPA, class rank, and composite ACT score. The University predicted GPA for matriculants was 2.48 and 2.36 for non-matriculants.

The following data illustrates the differences between the two groups by resident status (Table 3).

Table 3

*Resident Status of Matriculants and Non-Matriculants*

<i>State of Residence</i>	Matriculants (n = 12)		Non-Matriculants (n = 10)	
	<i>F</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Missouri Resident	9	75.0	5	50.0
Resident of Bordering State	2	16.7	4	40.0
Resident of Non-Bordering State	1	8.3	1	10.0
Total	12	100.0	10	100.0



An analysis of the residential status of the matriculants and non-matriculants revealed that 75% of the matriculants were Missouri residents and only 50% of the non-matriculants were residents of Missouri (Table 3). Two of the matriculants were from Illinois, and one from outside the United States. Four of the non-matriculants were from Illinois, and one from Maryland. Forty percent of the non-matriculants were residents of border states, while only 16% of the matriculants were residents of states bordering Missouri. Eight percent of the matriculants were residents of non-bordering states and 10% of the non-matriculants qualified in this category.

*Research Objective Two and Three – Sources of Information Used Most Frequently and Usefulness of the Information*

To address the second research objective the percentage of matriculants that used each of the sources of information was calculated (Table 4). The four sources of information used most by matriculants were: visit to campus, conversation with College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources representative, degree information from website, and printed MU publication, which all were used by 85.7% of the matriculants. Two sources of information, CAFNR information from a high school counselor and letter from a professor, were not used by any of the matriculant group in making their college choice.

The most useful sources of information were, visit to campus (4.83), participation in on campus recreational event (4.75), degree information from website (4.50), participation in student activities on campus (4.50), participation in athletic event on campus (4.50), conversation with CAFNR representative (4.33), and conversation with MU admissions representative (4.25). The least useful sources of information were

Table 4

*Sources of Information Used and Usefulness of the Information by Matriculants*

<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Information Used</i>		<i>Usefulness of Information</i>		
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>% Used</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>
Visit to campus	1	85.7	1	4.83	.51
Conversation with CAFNR Representative	1	85.7	4	4.33	.40
Degree information from website	1	85.7	3	4.50	.54
Printed MU publication	1	85.7	11	3.33	.51
Visit by MU Representative	2	71.4	8	3.80	.44
MU information from website	2	71.4	6	4.20	.83
Participated in on campus recreational event	3	57.1	2	4.75	.50
Conversation with MU Rep	3	57.1	5	4.25	.95
MU information from high school counselor	3	57.1	13	2.75	.50
Letter from MU Rep	3	57.1	10	3.50	1.29
College comparison guide	4	42.9	12	3.00	1.00
CAFNR information from website	4	42.9	7	4.00	0.00
Letter from CAFNR Representative	4	42.9	7	4.00	1.00
Conversation with Professor	4	42.9	9	3.67	.57
Participation in student activities on campus	5	28.6	3	4.50	.70
Participation in athletic event on campus	5	28.6	3	4.50	.70
CAFNR info from high school counselor	-	0.0	-	-	-
Letter from a professor	-	0.0	-	-	-

<sup>a</sup> 5-point scale: 5 = Very Influential, 1 = Not Influential

college comparison guide (3.00), and MU information from high school counselor (2.75).

CAFNR information from high school counselor and letter from a professor were not used by the matriculant group, therefore were not rated as useful.

*Research Objective Four – Characteristics of Institution Influence*

To address the fourth research objective the institutional characteristics that influenced the matriculants' college choice were ranked from highest to lowest (Table 5).

Table 5

*Characteristics of the Institution that Influenced College Choice for Matriculants*

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>
Scholarships awarded	1	4.86	.37
Availability of financial aid	1	4.86	.37
Quality of facilities	2	4.57	.78
Student support services for minorities	3	4.43	1.13
Variety of majors offered	4	4.29	.75
Academic reputation of the university	5	4.14	.69
Distance from home	5	4.14	1.46
Cost (tuition, room and board)	5	4.14	1.46
Quality of faculty	6	4.00	.57
Preparation from employment	7	3.86	1.07
Quality and reputation of courses	8	3.71	.75
Quality of students	8	3.71	.48
Prestige of the university	9	3.57	.53
Opportunities after graduation	9	3.57	1.27
Campus safety and security	9	3.57	.78
Competitiveness of admissions standards	9	3.57	.97
Sizes of classes	10	3.43	.53
Career opportunity available for graduates	10	3.43	1.40
Diversity of student body	11	3.29	1.38
Diversity of faculty	11	3.29	1.38
Prominence of university athletics	12	2.29	1.50

<sup>a</sup> 5-point scale: 5 = Very Influential, 1 = Not Influential

*Research Objective Five – Level of Influence of Select Individuals*

To address the fifth research objective the influence of select individuals on the college choice of the matriculants were ranked (Table 6).

Table 6

*Level of Influence of Select Individuals for College Choice Process of Matriculants*

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>
Relative who attended MU	1	4.00	1.00
An acquaintance/friend attending MU	2	3.83	1.47
Parent or guardian	3	3.43	1.40
College recruiter	4	3.33	1.21
Relative who attended college	5	3.00	.70
Friend in college	6	2.83	1.60
MU graduate	7	2.50	1.73
High school agriculture teacher	7	2.50	.70
High school guidance counselor	8	2.33	1.21
Graduate of CAFNR	9	2.25	1.89
Current CAFNR student	10	2.17	.98
Friend in high school	10	2.17	1.84
High school science teacher	11	2.00	1.41
Extension youth specialist	12	1.33	.57
Other high school teacher	13	1.25	.50

<sup>a</sup> 5-point scale: 5 = Very Influential, 1 = Not Influential

*Research Objective Sixth – Level of Influence of Social Interaction Characteristics*

The sixth research objective sought to describe the influence of social interaction characteristics of the university on the college choice process (Table 7).

Table 7

*Level of Influence of Social Interactions in College Choice Process for Matriculants*

<i>Social Interactions</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>
Campus residential halls	1	4.43	.78
Recreational services	2	4.14	.90
Leisure activities	3	4.00	.81
Student organizations	4	3.71	.95
Diversity of student body	4	3.71	.75
Fraternity/social life	5	3.57	1.51
Diversity of ideas on campus	6	3.43	1.27
Off campus activities	7	2.71	.95
Quality/ability of agricultural competitive teams	8	1.71	.95

<sup>a</sup> 5-point scale: 5 = Very Influential, 1 = Not Influential

Campus residence halls (4.43) and recreational services (4.14) were the most influential social characteristics of the university. The lowest rated social interactions were off campus activities (2.71) and quality/availability of agricultural competitive teams (1.71).

*Research Objective Seventh – Start of College Choice Process*

The final research objective sought to identify when matriculants began to make their college choice. Seventy percent of the matriculants reported they began making their college choice during the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, with 14% making their decision as early as ninth grade and as late as the eleventh grade (Table 8). None of the matriculants reported making their college choice prior to ninth grade or after the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

Table 8

*Time when College Choice Process Began for Matriculants*

<i>Time</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Before 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0	0
During 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1	14.3
During 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5	71.4
During 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1	14.3
During 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0	0
Total	7	100.0

**CHAPTER V**  
**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,**  
**AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Purpose and Research Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to describe factors attributing to the college choice of African-American students admitted to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU). The following research objectives were developed to guide the study:

1. Describe and compare African-American matriculants versus non-matriculants based on admissions criteria and resident status.
2. Describe and compare the sources of information used most frequently by African-American matriculants and non-matriculants in the college choice process.
3. Describe the degree to which African-American matriculants and non-matriculants found the sources of information useful.
4. Describe and compare the extent to which characteristics of the institution influenced the college choice of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
5. Compare the level of influence of select individuals in the college choice process of African-American matriculants and non- matriculants.
6. Describe and compare the level of influence of social interaction characteristics on the college choice process of African-American matriculants and non-matriculants.
7. Identify when African-Americans matriculants and non-matriculants began to

make their college choice.

### **Research Design**

The design of this study was descriptive survey research. According to Ary et al. (2002) survey research uses instruments to gather information from groups of subjects. They also define descriptive research as research that asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of variables; it involves describing but not manipulating variables.

### **Population**

The population for this study consisted of 22 African-American students admitted to CAFNR at the University of Missouri – Columbia. The students first semester of enrollment was fall 2005. There were no sampling techniques used due to the small size of the population.

The students were identified by the Academic Programs Office in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and include all African-Americans admitted to the College for the fall 2005 semester. The group included 12 matriculates and 10 non-matriculates.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used in data collection previously was developed by Washburn (2002). The instrument was modified to address influences of college choice which research has shown to influence the decision making process of African-Americans. The individual items in the instrument were measured on a five-point Likert-scale. The modified instrument was reviewed and approved by to the University of Missouri – Columbia Institutional Review Board.

The instrument was assessed for reliability by the developer through a field test with a group of 34 students in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (Washburn, 2002). A Spearman-Brown Split-half reliability analysis resulted in a .70 reliability coefficient, which Washburn (2002) determined to be an adequate level of reliability.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process utilized Dillman's (1994) survey research techniques. On March 20, 2006 prior to mailing the questionnaire the non-matriculants were called or emailed to confirm the accuracy of their permanent address, as provided on their initial admission application to the University of Missouri - Columbia. On March 24, 2006 non-matriculants and matriculants were sent a pre-notice letter. On March 30 a questionnaire packet was mailed to the matriculants and non-matriculants.

On April 14 the non-matriculant and matriculant participants were emailed or called to verify receipt of the questionnaire and encouraged to complete or send their completed questionnaire. On April 21 participants that had not returned their questionnaire were sent a reminder letter. On April 28 an additional questionnaire packet including an introductory letter describing the research, the questionnaire the self-addressed, stamped return envelope were sent to non-responders.

On May 19 participants who indicated they had not received the second questionnaire were mailed a third questionnaire packet. Data collection ended June 10.



## **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using SPSS/PC. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, cumulative percentages, means, minimums, maximums, and standard deviations were used to describe the data.

## **Summary of Findings**

### *Research Objective One – Admissions Criteria Residential Status*

To address the first research objective, descriptive statistics comparing the admission criteria and residential status of the matriculants and non-matriculants were reported.

The mean high school core GPA for matriculants was 3.21 on a 4.0 GPA scale and 2.94 for non-matriculants. The high school class rank for matriculants was 75.9 and 72.0 for the non-matriculants. The ACT composite scores were 20.9 for matriculants and 23.6 for non-matriculants. The University predicted GPA is calculated using a formula which utilizes high school core GPA, class rank, and composite ACT score. The University predicted GPA for matriculants was 2.48 and 2.36 for non-matriculants.

An analysis of the residential status of the matriculants and non-matriculants revealed that 75% of the matriculants were Missouri residents and only 50% of the non-matriculants were residents of Missouri. Two of the matriculants were from Illinois, and one from outside the United States. Four of the non-matriculants were from Illinois, and one from Maryland. Forty percent of the non-matriculants were residents of border states, while only 16% of the matriculants were residents of states bordering Missouri. Eight percent of the matriculants were residents of non-bordering states and 10% of the non-matriculants qualified in this category.

*Research Objective Two and Three – Sources of Information Used Most Frequently and Usefulness of the Information*

To address the second research objective the percentage of matriculants that used each of the sources of information was calculated. The four sources of information used most by matriculants were: visit to campus, conversation with College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources representative, degree information from website, and printed MU publication, which all were used by 85.7% of the matriculants

Two sources of information, CAFNR information from a high school counselor and letter from a professor, were not used by any of the matriculant group in making their college choice.

The most useful sources of information were, visit to campus (4.83), participation in on campus recreational event (4.75), degree information from website (4.50), participation in student activities on campus (4.50), participation in athletic event on campus (4.50), conversation with CAFNR representative (4.33), and conversation with MU admissions representative (4.25). The least useful sources of information were college comparison guide (3.00), and MU information from high school counselor (2.75).

CAFNR information from high school counselor and letter from a professor were not used by the matriculant group, therefore were not rated as useful.

*Research Objective Four – Characteristics of Institution Influence*

To address the fourth research objective the institutional characteristics that influenced the matriculants' college choice were ranked from highest to lowest (See Table 5). The highest ranked institutional characteristics were scholarships awarded (4.86), availability of financial aid (4.86), quality of facilities (4.57), and student support

services for minorities (4.43). The lowest ranked characteristic was prominence of university athletics (2.29).

*Research Objective Five – Level of Influence of Select Individuals*

To address the fifth research objective the influence of individuals on the college choice of the matriculants were ranked. The most influential individuals for matriculants were relatives who attended MU (4.00), an acquaintance/friend attending MU (3.83), and a parent or guardian (3.43). The least influential individuals were high school science teacher (2.00), extension youth specialist (1.33), and other high school teacher (1.25).

*Research Objective Sixth – Level of Influence of Social Interaction Characteristics*

To address the fifth research objective the influence of select individuals on the college choice of the matriculants were ranked. The most influential individuals for matriculants were relatives who attended MU (4.00), an acquaintance/friend attending MU (3.83), and a parent or guardian (3.43). The least influential individuals were high school science teacher (2.00), Extension youth specialist (1.33), and other high school teacher (1.25).

*Research Objective Seventh – Start of College Choice Process*

The final research objective sought to identify when matriculants began to make their college choice. Seventy percent of the matriculants reported they began making their college choice during the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, with 14% making their decision as early as ninth grade and as late as the eleventh grade. None of the matriculants reported making their college choice prior to ninth grade or after the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

### *Research Objective One – Admissions Criteria and Residential Status*

The high school class rank for matriculants (75.9) was slightly higher than the high school class rank for non-matriculants (72.9). Consequently, the ACT composite score for the matriculants (20.9) was slightly lower than the ACT composite score for the non-matriculants (23.6). The high school core GPA and University predicted GPA for matriculants and non-matriculants were similar with no practical differences. The scores on university admissions criteria would imply that matriculants and non-matriculants are similar in academic aptitude. These findings agree with the mirror the findings of Washburn (2002).

African-Americans students who were residents of Missouri were more likely to attend the University of Missouri than were African-Americans who were not residents of Missouri. According to Payan, Peterson, and Castille, (1984) minority students, often with lower income as well as close family and community ties, leaves many of these student unable or reluctant to attend college that are not close to home. Research by Jackson (1990) stated that most students seriously consider only colleges located relatively near their homes and presenting no extraordinary financial or academic obstacles. These findings of the study imply that African-Americans from non-bordering states ultimately do not choose to attend the University of Missouri.

*Research Objectives Two and Three – Sources of Information Used Most Frequently and Usefulness of the Information*

The sources of information that were utilized most by African-American matriculants were: visit to campus, conversation with College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources representative, degree information from website; and printed MU publication, all of which were used by 87.5% of the matriculants. This finding supports the research of Dominick, Johnson, Chapman and Griffith (1980) that found high school visits by college admission representatives and campus visits to be the most effective recruiting activities by college admissions representatives. Most of the sources of information were used by at least one-fourth of the African-American matriculants with the exception of CAFNR information from a high school counselor and letter from a professor. This finding would imply that high school counselors are not sharing the information about CAFNR programs with African-American students.

African-American students indicated that three of the four most used sources of information were also the most useful sources of information. The source of information used most by African-American students was, visit to campus (4.83), which was also found to be the most useful source of information. These findings do not support Freeman's (1999) study that indicated bringing students to campus often makes them feel isolated or alienated because of the cultural differences even before they officially arrive on campus particularly for students attending predominately African-American high schools. The least useful source of information by African-American students in the college decision making process was MU information from high school counselor. This

finding would imply that high school guidance counselors are not providing prospective African-American students with information about the University of Missouri.

*Research Objective Four – Characteristics of Institution Influence*

All of the characteristics of the institution had some influence on the decision making process for African-American students. Scholarships awarded, and availability of financial aid was very influential toward the selection of college. These two characteristics were ranked first in their level of influence toward the college choice for African-American. This finding confirms research by Jackson (1978), Freeman (1984) as well as Abrahamson and Hossler (1990) found that receiving financial aid is more important than the amount of financial aid received, because the financial aid becomes a substantive way the institution communicates that “we want you to be part of our community”. Scholarships awarded and availability of financial aid were very influential to African-American matriculants in this study. The quality of facilities and student support services for minorities were also very influential for African-American matriculants. The least influential characteristic of the university was the prominence of university athletics.

*Research Objective Five – Level of Influence of Select Individuals*

The most influential individual in the college choice process for African-American was relatives. This finding is in agreement with research by Shepard, Schmit, and Pugh (1992) that found, parents and other family members, and to a lesser extent peers, had the greatest influence on students’ college choice. These findings also did not support the research (Eckerstrom, 1985; Hossler & Stage, 1997; Lewis & Morrison,

1975) that minority students are more likely to consult key high school personnel for college planning assistance.

*Research Objective Sixth – Level of Influence of Social Interaction Characteristics*

The most influential social interaction for African-American students was campus recreation halls. The least influential social interaction for African-Americans was quality/availability of agricultural competitive teams. It can be concluded that residence halls, recreational services, and leisure activities are the most important social interactions on campus for African-American students. This finding would imply that during campus visits prospective African-American students should be given extensive tours of these facilities and services provided through these facilities.

*Research Objective Seventh – Begin to Make Their College Choice*

Seventy percent of the African-American matriculants began making their college choice during the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. This finding corresponds with the “search phase” (Hossler, Braxton & Coopersmith, 1989) that usually begins in the tenth grade and ends by the middle of the twelfth grade. This finding would imply that CAFNR needs to begin recruiting programs for African-American students as early as the ninth grade.

## **Recommendations**

### *Recommendation One*

The findings of this research dealt with factors that influenced the college choice of African-Americans to CAFNR. It is recommended that CAFNR focus its recruitment efforts on African-American residents within the state of Missouri. While CAFNR should not ignore students from other states, it should recognize that attracting African-American students away from their home state is a less likely scenario.

### *Recommendation Two*

Prospective African-Americans should be brought on campus as early as ninth grade. With 15 degree programs in CAFNR, prospective African-Americans should have the chance to explore all programs in some depth. Prospective African-Americans should also be exposed to the campus facilities available to students as well as touring residential halls, and recreational facilities.

### *Recommendation Three*

A CAFNR representative should regularly visit high schools within Missouri that have a substantial percentage of African-American students. This representative should develop a continuous working relationship with high school counselors and teachers, providing them with talking points highlighting intriguing facts about CAFNR and/or its degree programs. The CAFNR representative should visit students as early their junior high years and no later than their freshman year (ninth grade). This representative should be actively involved in creating programs that bring students from these junior high/high schools students on campus to visit CAFNR degree programs.

### *Recommendation Four*



CAFNR should to develop relationships with CAFNR alumni who are African-American. These individuals can serve as valuable representatives for MU/CAFNR degree programs and mentors for prospective African-American students.

*Recommendation Five*

The findings imply that African-American students are influenced by the availability of scholarships and financial aid. CAFNR should to secure donors with interest in providing scholarships specifically for minority students.

*Recommendation Six*

This study should be expanded longitudinally to track trends in college choice for African-American students in CAFNR. This study should be expanded at MU to include other divisions to compare factors that influence the college choice of African-American students in other areas. The study should be replicated at other colleges of agriculture to compare findings between the colleges, as well as between land grant, and non-land grant institutions. The data collection for this study should begin at the start of the fall semester.

## References

- Abrahmson, T., and Hossler, D. (1990). Applying marketing strategies in student recruitment. In D. Hossler and J. Beans, eds., *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Anderson, M., & Hearn, J., (1991). Equity issues in higher education outcomes. In W.E. Becker & D.R. Lewis (Eds.), *The economics of American higher education* (pp. 301-334). Norwell, MA: Kluwer.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A. (2002). Introduction of Research Education 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Wadsworth Group (pp 25, 558).
- Astin, A. W. (1982). *Minorities in American Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Baksh, A., & Hoyt, J.E. (2001). The effect of academic scholarship on college attendance. *College & University* 74(4) (pp. 3-8).
- Ballesteros, E. (1986). Do Hispanics receive an equal education opportunity? The relationship of schools outcomes, family backgrounds, and high school curriculum. In M. A. Olicas (ed). *Latino College Students*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bartolome, LI. (1994). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*. 64(2), 173-194. (EH482759).
- Becker, G. S. (1975). *Human capital* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) New York: Columbia University Press
- Bishop, J. (1977). The effect of public policies on the demand for higher education. *Journal of Human Resources* 5:285-307.
- Blau, P. M., Duncan, O.D. (1967). *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley.
- Carpenter, P., and Fleishman, J. (1987). Linking intentions and behavior: Australian students' college plans and college attendance. *American Educational Research Journal* 24:79-105.
- Cabera, A.F., La Nasa, S.M. (2000). *Understanding the College-Choice Process* New Directions for Institutional Research, no. 107 San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Chapman D.W. (1981). A Model of Student College Choice. *Journal of Higher Education* (52)5.

- Cibik, M.A., (Fall, 1982). College Informational Needs. *College & University* (pp. 97-102).
- Cohen, E. (1979). *The economics of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harper & Row.
- Coleman, J. (1966). Peer culture and education in modern society. In T. Newcomb and E. Wilson, eds., *College Peer Groups: Problems and Prospects for Research*. Chicago: Aldine
- Ekstrom, R. B. (1985). *A Descriptive Study of Public High School Guidance: Report to Commission for the Study of Precollegiate Guidance and Counseling*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services.
- Falsey, B. and Haynes, B. (1984). The college channel: Private and public schools reconsidered. *Sociology of Higher Education* 57: 111-22
- Flint, T. A. (1993.) Early Awareness of College Financial Aid: Does it Expand College Choice? *Review of Higher Education* 16(3), 309-327
- Flint, T. A. (1992). Parental and Planning Influences on the Formation of Student College Choice Sets. *Research in Higher Education* 33(3) 689-708
- Flowers, L. A., Pascarella, E. T. (2003). Cognitive Effects of College: Difference between African American and Caucasian Students. *Research in Higher Education*. 44:1 21-49
- Food and Agriculture Education Information System (FAEIS) 2006, faeis.usda.gov
- Freeman, H. (1984). Impact of no-need scholarships on the matriculation decisions of academically talented students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Association of Higher Education, Chicago.
- Freeman, K. (1997). Increasing African Americans' participation in higher education: African American students' perspective. *Journal of Higher Education*, 68(5), 523-550.
- Freeman K. (1999). The Race Factor in African Americans' College Choice, *Urban Education*, 34(1) (p. 4-25).
- Fries-Britt, S., Turner, B. (2002). Uneven Stories: Successful Black Collegians at a Black and a White Campus. *The Review of Higher Education*. 25(3) 315-330
- Hayden, M. (2000). Factors That Influence the College Choice Process for African American Students.

- Hearn, J.W. (1984). The Relative Roles of Academic, Ascribed, and Socioeconomic Characteristics in College Destination. *Sociology of Education*. 57(pp. 22-30).
- Henderson, A. T., and Berla, N. (1994). A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical on Student Achievement. Washington, D.C.: Nation Committee for Citizens in Education
- Hoffman, K., Llagas, C., Snyder, T. (2003). National Center for Educational Statistics: Status and Trends in the Education of Blacks. *US Department of Education Institute of Educational Sciences*. NCES 2003-34.
- Hossler, D., Hu, S., Schmit, J. (1998). Predicting Student Sensitivity to Tuition and Financial Aid. Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association. San Diego California
- Hossler, D., and Stage, F. (1987). An analysis of Student and Parent Data from the Pilot Year of the Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center. Bloomington: Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center.
- Hossler, D., Braxton, J., & Coopersmith, G. (1989). Understanding student college choice. In J.C. Smart (Ed), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 5, pp. 234). New York: Agathon.
- Hossler, D., and Gallagher, K. (1987). Studying college choice: A three-phase model and implications for policy makers. *College and University*, Vol 2 207-21.
- Hossler, Don., Schmit, Jack., & Vesper, Nick., (1999). Going to College, How Social, Economic, and Educational Factors Influence the Decisions Students Make. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore & London.
- Hanson, K., and Litten, L. (1982). Mapping the road to academia: A review of research on women, men, and the college selection process. In P. Perun, ed., *The Undergraduate Woman: Issues in Education*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington.
- Jackson, Gregory A., (1982). Public Efficiency and Private Choice in Higher Education. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 4, No. 2 237-247
- Jackson, G. (1978). Financial aid and student enrollment. *Journal of higher Education* 49: 548-78
- Kern, C. W. K. (2000). College Choice Influences: Urban High School Students Respond. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. 24 487-494

- Kohn, M. Manski, C., and Mundel, D. (1976). An empirical investigation of factors in influencing college-going behaviors. *Annals of Economic and Social Measurement* 5:391-419.
- Kotler, P. (1976). Applying marketing theory to college admissions. In A Role for Marketing in College Admissions. New York: The College Entrance Examination Board.
- Leslie, L. L., and Brinkman, P. T. (1988). The Economic Value of Higher Education. American Council on Education, Macmillan.
- Leslie, L. L., Johnson, G. P., and Carlson, J. (1977). The Impact of Need-Based Student Aid upon the College Attendance Decision. *Journal of Education Finance* 2(3) 269-285
- Lewis, G., and Morrison, J. (1975). A Longitudinal Study of College Selection. Technical Report 2. Pittsburgh: School of Urban Public Affairs, Carnegie-Mellon University.
- Litten, L. (1982). Different strokes in the applicant pool: Some refinement in a model of student college choice. *Journal of Higher Education* Vol 53 383-402
- Litten, L.H., & Brodigan, D.L. (1982). On being heard in a noisy world: Matching messages and media in college marketing. *College & University* 57(3) (pp. 243-246).
- Madins, Jerry B., Mitchell, Charles E. (2000). Establishing a "Level Playing Field" for Minority Students on Predominantly Anglo University Campuses. (ED455747).
- Manski, C., and Wise, D. (1983). *College Choice in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McDonough, P. (2004). College Choice and Diversity, *Diversity Digest* 8(1).
- Miller, E.I., (1997). Parents Views on the Value of a College Education and How They Will Pay for It. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*. 27(1), 20.
- Mow, S., and Nettles, M (1990). Minority student access to, and persistence and performance in college: A review of the trends and literature. *Higher education handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 6, pp. 35-105). New York: Agathon Press.
- Nettles, M. T., Thoeny, A. R., and Gosman, E. J. (1986). Comparative and predictive analyses of Black and White students' college achievement and experiences. *Journal of Higher Education*, 57(3) 289-318.

- Nettles, M.T., (1988). Toward Black Undergraduate Student Equality in American Higher Education. (pp. 3) Greenwood Press. New York, Connecticut, London.
- Nolfi, G. J. (1978). Experiences of Recent High School Graduates. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books
- Oake, J., Quartz, K. H., Gong, J., Guiton, G., &Lipton, M. (1993). Creating middle schools: Technical, normative, and political considerations. *The Elementary School Journal*, 93:5, 461-480 (EJ464549)
- Oesterreich, Heather (2000). The Technical, Cultural, and Political Factors in College Preparation Programs for Urban and Minority youth. ERIC Digest Number 158. (ED448243).
- Paulsen, M.B. (1990). College Choice: Understanding Enrollment Behavior. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 6* Washington D.C. The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.
- Payan, R. M., Peterson, R. E., and Castille, N. A. (1984). Access to College for Mexican Americans in the Southwest: Replication after 10 years. (Report No. 84-3). New York: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Perna, L. W. (2000.) Differences in College Enrollment Among African Americans, Hispanics and Whites. *Journal of Higher Education* 71(1), 117-141.
- Radner, R., and Miller, L. (1970). Demand and supply in U.S. higher education: A progress report *American Economic Review*.
- Russell, C. (1980). Survey of Grade 12 Students' Postsecondary Plans and Aspirations. Manitoba: Canadian Department of Education.
- Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *American Economic Review*. 51 1-17
- Sewell, W. H., and Shaw, V. P. (1978). Social Class, Parental Encouragement, and Educational Aspirations. *American Journal of Sociology* 559-572.
- Sewell, W., Haller, A., and Portes, A. (1969). The educational and early occupational attainment process. *American Sociological Review*.
- Sevier, R. A. (1993). Recruiting African-American undergraduates. *College University*, 68 48-52

- Sheppard, L., Schmit, J., and Pugh, R. (1992). Factors influencing high school students' changes in plans for post secondary education: A longitudinal study. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.
- Tillery, D. (1973). *Distribution and Differentiation of Youth: A Study of Transition from School to College*, Cambridge: Ballinger
- Tillery, D., and Kildegaard, T. (1973). *Educational Goals, Attitudes and Behaviors: A Comparative Study of High School Seniors*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger.
- Washburn, S. (2002). *Factors Influencing College Choice for Matriculates and Non-matriculantes into a College of Agriculture*. University of Missouri-Columbia.
- University of Missouri – Columbia, University Registrar's Office/Division of Enrollment Management. (2003) Fall Enrollment Summary.
- Wilson, K. R., and Allen, W. R. (1987). Explaining the educational attainment of young Black adults: Critical familial and extra-familial influences. *Journal of Negro Education*, 56(1) 64-67
- Zemsky, R., and Oedel, P. (1983). *The Structure of College Choice*. New York: College Board.

**APPENDIX A:**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELCTION OF A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY  
QUESTIONNAIRE TO MATRICULANTS**



## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain information from students who have chosen to enroll in the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Specifically, the study aims to determine those factors that are most influential in a student's decision to attend a college/university.

We hope you will take the time to participate in this study. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The information that you provide will help our College understand the reasons why you have chosen to join the CAFNR family, and what your perceptions are regarding the recruitment activities in which you participated. Furthermore, the information you provide will help us make decisions regarding our future recruitment efforts.

The responses you provide will remain confidential. Only summarized data will be reported in order to protect the identity of each individual respondent.

Thank you for participating in the study, and welcome to CAFNR!

<p>1. Listed below are several ways you might have learned about the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR). For each source of information, please circle Yes or No if you used the source of information in the college selection process. For each source you mark Yes, please circle how useful that source was in making your decision.</p> <p>Use the scale 5=Very Useful to 1=Not Useful</p> <p>Source of Information</p>	Did you use the information source? (Circle One)		If you marked "Yes," how useful was the source of information? (Circle One)				
	Yes	No	Very Useful			Not Useful	
a. Personal conversation with a professor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
b. Personal conversation with a CAFNR representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
c. Personal conversation with an MU admissions representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
d. Letter and/or information mailed from a professor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
e. Letter and/or information mailed from a CAFNR representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
f. Letter and/or information mailed from an MU admissions representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
g. Visit to campus	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
h. MU information on a website	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
i. CAFNR information on a website	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
j. Degree Program (major) information on a website	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
k. Printed MU publications (brochures, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
l. Visits by MU representative to your school	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
m. College comparison guides (Barron's, Peterson's, U.S. News & World Report, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
n. TV, radio, newspaper, or magazine advertisements	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
o. Participation in an on-campus recruitment program (Target Hope, Preview Mizzou, Black and Gold Day, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
p. Participation in student activity events on campus (Music, Theatre, FFA, 4-H, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
q. Participation in athletic events on campus (sports camps, state championships, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
r. MU information from High School counselor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
s. CAFNR information from a High School counselor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1

2. How influential were the following factors when making your decision regarding which university to attend?	Level of Influence				
	Very Influential				Not Influential
a. Academic reputation of the university	5	4	3	2	1
b. Prestige of the university	5	4	3	2	1
c. Quality of facilities	5	4	3	2	1
d. Quality and reputation of the faculty	5	4	3	2	1
e. Quality and reputation of the students	5	4	3	2	1
f. Preparation for employment	5	4	3	2	1
g. Cost (tuition, room and board)	5	4	3	2	1
h. Scholarships awarded	5	4	3	2	1
i. Availability of other financial aid	5	4	3	2	1
j. Size of classes	5	4	3	2	1
k. Campus safety and security	5	4	3	2	1
l. Variety of majors offered	5	4	3	2	1
m. Competitiveness of admissions standards	5	4	3	2	1
n. City in which campus is located	5	4	3	2	1
o. Distance from home	5	4	3	2	1
p. Prominence of university athletic teams	5	4	3	2	1
q. Opportunities after graduation	5	4	3	2	1
r. Diversity of the faculty	5	4	3	2	1
s. Diversity of the students	5	4	3	2	1
t. Student support services for minorities	5	4	3	2	1
u. Quality and reputation of courses	5	4	3	2	1
v. Career opportunities available for graduates	5	4	3	2	1

3. How influential was input from the following individuals in making your decision to attend the University of Missouri?	Level of Influence					
	Very Influential		Not Influential		Not Applicable	
a. Friend in high school	5	4	3	2	1	NA
b. Friend in college	5	4	3	2	1	NA
c. Parent or guardian	5	4	3	2	1	NA
d. Relative who attended the University of Missouri	5	4	3	2	1	NA
e. High school guidance counselor	5	4	3	2	1	NA
f. High school agriculture teacher	5	4	3	2	1	NA
g. High school science teacher	5	4	3	2	1	NA
h. Other high school teacher	5	4	3	2	1	NA
i. Extension youth specialist	5	4	3	2	1	NA
j. University of Missouri graduate	5	4	3	2	1	NA
k. Graduate of CAFNR	5	4	3	2	1	NA
l. College recruiter	5	4	3	2	1	NA
m. Relative who attended college	5	4	3	2	1	NA
n. An acquaintance or friend who attended MU	5	4	3	2	1	NA
o. Current CAFNR student	5	4	3	2	1	NA

4. As you think about opportunities for <u>social interaction</u> , how influential were the following	Level of Influence				
	Very Influential		Not Influential		
a. Quality and availability of recreational services	5	4	3	2	1
b. Quality and availability of student organizations	5	4	3	2	1
c. Quality and availability of off-campus activities	5	4	3	2	1
d. Quality and availability of agricultural competitive teams	5	4	3	2	1
e. Leisure activities	5	4	3	2	1
f. Fraternity and sorority life	5	4	3	2	1
g. Campus residence halls	5	4	3	2	1
h. Diversity of student body	5	4	3	2	1
i. Diversity of ideas on campus	5	4	3	2	1
k. Quality of social integration	5	4	3	2	1

5. When did you begin the decision making process to select a college of university?

(Please check one)

- Before 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 12<sup>th</sup> grade

6. When did you finalize your decision to attend the University of Missouri?

(Please check)

- Before 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- 1<sup>st</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>
- During 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 1<sup>st</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>
- During 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>
- Still undecided

7. When die you finalize your decision of a major?

(Please check)

- Before 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- 1<sup>st</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>
- During 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 1<sup>st</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>
- During 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- During 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>
- Still undecided

8. To how many other universities did you apply? (Please check)

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five or more

9. To how many other universities were you admitted? (Please check)

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five or more

10. To which other institutions did you apply? (Please check all that apply)

- St. Louis University
- Truman State University
- Washington University
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name

**APPENDIX B:**

INITIAL LETTER/EMAIL TO MATRICULANTS

---

---

**Marvin J. Burns**

124 Gentry Hall  
University of Missouri  
Columbia, Missouri 65211-7040  
Phone (573) 884-7561

P.O. BOX 30173  
Columbia, Missouri 65205  
Phone (573) 256-5772  
E-mail mjbc46@mizzou.edu

---

---

Date < insert >

«firstname» «lastname»  
«address1»  
«city\_», «STATE» «ZIP»

Dear «firstname»:

My name is Marvin Burns and I am a graduate student at the University of Missouri. I am writing to request your participation in a study of the factors that influence a student's college choice. The enclosed questionnaire is being sent to African-American students who were admitted but choose not to enroll in College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri for the 2005 year.

When you receive the questionnaire I'd appreciate if you would take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by \_\_\_\_\_. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I am interested in developing a better understanding of why students, such as yourself, chose the University of Missouri and CAFNR. As a result, it is extremely important that you return the completed questionnaire. The results of the study will be valuable to assist future students in the college decision making process.

This study is being conducted independent of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the University of Missouri; so the questionnaires should be returned directly to my address, as indicated on the return envelope. Your individual responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential by keeping your responses and identification separate at all times. Only group data will be reported and only anonymous group data will be shared with the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the University of Missouri. Furthermore, you may contact me if you desire a copy of the results.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study. If you wish not to participate in this study please place an "X" through the first page of the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self addressed and stamped envelope. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at (573) 256-5772 or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Bryan Garton at (573) 882-9599. For additional information regarding human participation in research, please feel free to contact the UMC Campus IRB Office at (573) 882-9585.

Sincerely,

Marvin Burns

**APPENDIX C:**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELECTION OF A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY  
QUESTIONNAIRE TO NON-MATRICULANTS**



## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain information from students who have chosen to enroll in the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Specifically, the study aims to determine those factors that are most influential in a student's decision to attend a college/university.

We hope you will take the time to participate in this study. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The information that you provide will help our College understand the reasons why you have chosen to join the CAFNR family, and what your perceptions are regarding the recruitment activities in which you participated. Furthermore, the information you provide will help us make decisions regarding our future recruitment efforts.

The responses you provide will remain confidential. Only summarized data will be reported in order to protect the identity of each individual respondent.

Thank you for participating in the study, and welcome to CAFNR!

<p>1. Listed below are several ways you might have learned about the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR). For each source of information, please circle Yes or No if you used the source of information in the college selection process. For each source you mark Yes, please circle how useful that source was in making your decision.</p> <p>Use the scale 5=Very Useful to 1=Not Useful</p> <p>Source of Information</p>	Did you use the information source? (Circle One)		If you marked "Yes," how useful was the source of information? (Circle One)				
	Yes	No	Very Useful			Not Useful	
a. Personal conversation with a professor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
b. Personal conversation with a CAFNR representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
c. Personal conversation with an MU admissions representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
d. Letter and/or information mailed from a professor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
e. Letter and/or information mailed from a CAFNR representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
f. Letter and/or information mailed from an MU admissions representative	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
g. Visit to campus	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
h. MU information on a website	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
i. CAFNR information on a website	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
j. Degree Program (major) information on a website	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
k. Printed MU publications (brochures, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
l. Visits by MU representative to your school	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
m. College comparison guides (Barron's, Peterson's, U.S. News & World Report, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
n. TV, radio, newspaper, or magazine advertisements	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
o. Participation in an on-campus recruitment program (Target Hope, Preview Mizzou, Black and Gold Day, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
p. Participation in student activity events on campus (Music, Theatre, FFA, 4-H, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
q. Participation in athletic events on campus (sports camps, state championships, etc.)	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
r. MU information from High School counselor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1
s. CAFNR information from a High School counselor	Y	N	5	4	3	2	1

2. How influential were the following factors when making your decision regarding which university to attend?	Level of Influence				
	Very Influential				Not Influential
a. Academic reputation of the university	5	4	3	2	1
b. Prestige of the university	5	4	3	2	1
c. Quality of facilities	5	4	3	2	1
d. Quality and reputation of the faculty	5	4	3	2	1
e. Quality and reputation of the students	5	4	3	2	1
f. Preparation for employment	5	4	3	2	1
g. Cost (tuition, room and board)	5	4	3	2	1
h. Scholarships awarded	5	4	3	2	1
i. Availability of other financial aid	5	4	3	2	1
j. Size of classes	5	4	3	2	1
k. Campus safety and security	5	4	3	2	1
l. Variety of majors offered	5	4	3	2	1
m. Competitiveness of admissions standards	5	4	3	2	1
n. City in which campus is located	5	4	3	2	1
o. Distance from home	5	4	3	2	1
p. Prominence of university athletic teams	5	4	3	2	1
q. Opportunities after graduation	5	4	3	2	1
r. Diversity of the faculty	5	4	3	2	1
s. Diversity of the students	5	4	3	2	1
t. Student support services for minorities	5	4	3	2	1
u. Quality and reputation of courses	5	4	3	2	1
v. Career opportunities available for graduates	5	4	3	2	1

3. How influential was input from the following individuals in making your decision to attend the University of Missouri?	Level of Influence					
	Very Influential		Not Influential		Not Applicable	
a. Friend in high school	5	4	3	2	1	NA
b. Friend in college	5	4	3	2	1	NA
c. Parent or guardian	5	4	3	2	1	NA
d. Relative who attended the University of Missouri	5	4	3	2	1	NA
e. High school guidance counselor	5	4	3	2	1	NA
f. High school agriculture teacher	5	4	3	2	1	NA
g. High school science teacher	5	4	3	2	1	NA
h. Other high school teacher	5	4	3	2	1	NA
i. Extension youth specialist	5	4	3	2	1	NA
j. University of Missouri graduate	5	4	3	2	1	NA
k. Graduate of CAFNR	5	4	3	2	1	NA
l. College recruiter	5	4	3	2	1	NA
m. Relative who attended college	5	4	3	2	1	NA
n. An acquaintance or friend who attended MU	5	4	3	2	1	NA
o. Current CAFNR student	5	4	3	2	1	NA

4. As you think about opportunities for <u>social interaction</u> , how influential were the following	Level of Influence				
	Very Influential		Not Influential		
a. Quality and availability of recreational services	5	4	3	2	1
b. Quality and availability of student organizations	5	4	3	2	1
c. Quality and availability of off-campus activities	5	4	3	2	1
d. Quality and availability of agricultural competitive teams	5	4	3	2	1
e. Leisure activities	5	4	3	2	1
f. Fraternity and sorority life	5	4	3	2	1
g. Campus residence halls	5	4	3	2	1
h. Diversity of student body	5	4	3	2	1
i. Diversity of ideas on campus	5	4	3	2	1
k. Quality of social integration	5	4	3	2	1

5. When you began to analyze your college options, how certain were your plans to attend the University of Missouri? (Please check)

- Absolutely Certain     Pretty Certain     Somewhat Certain     Totally Uncertain

6. MU was my backup plan? (Please check)  Yes     No

7. When did you begin the decision making process to select a college of university?  
(Please check one)

- Before 9<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 9<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 10<sup>th</sup> grade  
 During 11<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 12<sup>th</sup> grade

8. When did you finalize your decision to attend the University of Missouri?  
(Please check)

- Before 9<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 12<sup>th</sup> grade                       1<sup>st</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>  
 During 10<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 1<sup>st</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>                       2<sup>nd</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>  
 During 11<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>                       Still undecided

9. When did you finalize your decision of a major?  
(Please check)

- Before 9<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 12<sup>th</sup> grade                       1<sup>st</sup> Yr after 12<sup>th</sup>  
 During 10<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 1<sup>st</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>                       2<sup>nd</sup> Yr after  
12<sup>th</sup>  
 During 11<sup>th</sup> grade                       During 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 12<sup>th</sup>                       Still undecided

10. To how many other universities did you apply? (Please check)

- None     One     Two     Three     Four     Five or more

11. To how many other universities were you admitted? (Please check)

- None     One     Two     Three     Four     Five or more

12. To which other institutions did you apply? (Please check all that apply)

- St. Louis University  
 Truman State University  
 Washington University  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Name

**APPENDIX D:**

INITIAL LETTER/EMAIL TO NON-MATRICULANTS

---

---

**Marvin J. Burns**

124 Gentry Hall  
University of Missouri  
Columbia, Missouri 65211-7040  
Phone (573) 884-7561

P.O. BOX 30173  
Columbia, Missouri 65205  
Phone (573) 256-5772  
E-mail [mjbc46@mizzou.edu](mailto:mjbc46@mizzou.edu)

---

---

Date < insert >

<firstname> <lastname>  
<address1>  
<city\_>, <STATE> <ZIP>

Dear <firstname>:

My name is Marvin Burns and I am a graduate student at the University of Missouri. I am writing to request your participation in a study of the factors that influence a student's college choice. The enclosed questionnaire is being sent to African-American students who were admitted but choose not to enroll in College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri for the 2005 year.

When you receive the questionnaire I'd appreciate if you would take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by \_\_\_\_\_. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I am interested in developing a better understanding of why students, such as yourself, chose the University of Missouri and CAFNR. As a result, it is extremely important that you return the completed questionnaire. The results of the study will be valuable to assist future students in the college decision making process.

This study is being conducted independent of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the University of Missouri; so the questionnaires should be returned directly to my address, as indicated on the return envelope. Your individual responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential by keeping your responses and identification separate at all times. Only group data will be reported and only anonymous group data will be shared with the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the University of Missouri. Furthermore, you may contact me if you desire a copy of the results.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study. If you wish not to participate in this study please place an "X" through the first page of the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self addressed and stamped envelope. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at (573) 256-5772 or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Bryan Garton at (573) 882-9599. For additional information regarding human participation in research, please feel free to contact the UMC Campus IRB Office at (573) 882-9585.

Sincerely,

Marvin Burns

**APPENDIX E:**  
INITIAL EMAIL ADDRESS REQUEST



Hello (Insert Student Name)

My name is Marvin Burns and on I am a graduate student at the University of Missouri. I am conducting research to determine the factors that influenced your college choice and would like your participation in this research. Can you please provide me with an accurate address where you can receive this questionnaire?

The number of participants is small and your response is very important. However, if you wish not to participate in this study please place an "X" through the first page of the questionnaire when you receive it and return it with enclosed self addressed and stamped envelope.

Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at (573) 256-5772 or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Bryan Garton at (573) 882-9599. For additional information regarding human participation in research, please feel free to contact the UMC Campus IRB Office at (573) 882-9585.

Sincerely,

Marvin Burns